

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDEAL AIRLINE ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The research study is an attempt to assess the significance of the training, which comes under the core function of human resources management. The organization selected for the purpose of the study is a hypothetical airline organization. The various external and internal factors have strong influence on the organization. The airline(s) earlier operated in the government sector, known as Indian Airlines Limited and Air India Limited. An attempt was made to assess the training practices adapted by the airline management. Training and development play a vital role in the development of performance at all levels throughout the organization. The basic core areas identified for the purpose of the study are operations, engineering, commercial, and the other supportive functions like finance, human resources, information technology, etc. The management of the organization has taken various market-driven policies to improve the performance, sustain it in the long run, and retain its market share in the airline market scenario. The data collection process consists of primary data. The structured instrument was administered to the eighty sampled respondents. The collected data was computed and statistically tested. The Likert Five Point Scale technique was applied. The inferences were stated based upon the overall consistency. The professional experts have opined that the latest training inputs were to be inducted and training has to be imparted purely on a need basis. The overall study has resulted in that the training variable has significantly contributed to the development of the overall capability of the organization, which finally leads to sustainability in the long run.

KEYWORDS: Training, Dynamic Environment, Performance, Technology and Sustainability.

Introduction

The objective of the present study was to focus on the significant role played by training function which normally functions under Human Resources Management department (HRM) / Personnel Department. The organization selected for the purpose of the study was as ideal airline. The nature of product of an airline is "space". It is highly perishable. The nature of business is transportation of live stock and non live stock. The price paid the consumer is costly. Obviously, the customer expects high quality of service. The airline organization is service oriented organization. It formulates various market driven promotional strategies to attract and retain the existing and potential customers. The airline organization has accorded top priority to the consumer satisfaction. The airline business was not an easy task. It has to satisfy the mandatory requirements stipulated by the government. The private operators always ensure to achieve the high profitable returns which is possible through the improvement of performance of the employees at all levels.

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Evolution

The post independence period witnessed the growth of airline with remarkable success which was measured in terms of physical performance and financial performance with some deviations which were common in any business entities. The airline organizations existed earlier was known as Indian Airlines Limited (IAL), Air India Limited (AIL), and Vayudoot Limited. The Vayudoot Limited was merged with IAL and AIL as per the policy decision of the government. The policy makers have implemented the economic reforms in all sectors. Accordingly, the ministry of civil aviation has implemented the liberalized policies in airline sector also. Many of the entrepreneurs have entered into the airline market. Earlier, the airline organizations were functioned under the umbrella of public sector undertaking (PSU). The policy makers like Directorate of Civil Aviation has provided various facilities and motivated the private operators. The public sector airline has faced tough competition from private operators. The private operators in airline market have adopted various market driven strategies to improve their market share. As per the directions, the IAL and AIL were amalgamated and operated in the name of AIL. Subsequently, the TATAs group has acquired the AIL.

Need and Significance

The entry of various business men into the airline market has felt the need to induct training right from the inception of the organization. The raw candidates joined the organization may or may not have the experience related to the airline. The profitability of airline depends upon its overall physical and financial performance. The induction and orientation of training emphasized great significance to increase the performance to the green horn, existing employees and also to shoulder the new responsibilities for new projects, assignments in case of any expansion, diversification activities. The major core functions identified in an airline were operations, cabin crew, engineering, stores and purchases, commercial, and other supporting departments like finance, human resources, vigilance and security, industrial engineering, information technology. The new entrepreneurs in the field of an airline recognized the importance of training which play a vital role for sustainable development from the long term perceptive. The airline has to strictly adhere to the technical standards / norms prescribed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The training is imparted to various persons designated as aircraft technicians, master technicians, foremen, engineers, ground support staff, cabin crew / airhostesses, flight pursers, operations staff like pilots / copilots and the other ground work personnel associated with operations, commercial staff, materials management staff, security / vigilance personnel etc. It is felt that the training is continuous process. The refresher courses are conducted from time to time. It felt the need to induct the latest training technology, methodology, infrastructure, induction of technology in various functions, and ambience training facilities, acquisition of talented / competent instructors, and utilization of modern training aids like simulators to cater the needs of various types of aircraft like Airbus / Boeing etc. The training function accelerates the performance of the employees working at various levels throughout the network of the organization. The trained personnel are expected to perform well and reduce the gap between the present performance and desired performance. The systematic training has also incorporated for development of behavioral performance which is felt very important especially in those areas where there is direct contact between airline staff and customer. It contributes for the development of the organizational productivity which could be measured with appropriate profitability analysis. It facilitates for generation of foreign exchange. It provides employment opportunities to thousands of people directly and indirectly. It fosters for integration of people across the globe.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the demographic profile of the respondents
- To assess the attitudes of the respondents towards the content factors
- To provide suggestions basing upon the overall consistency.

Hypothesis

It is a tentative statement. Its validity has to be tested.

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** Training contributes significantly for sustainable development of the organization.
- **Alternate Hypothesis (H_a):** Training does not contribute significantly for sustainable development of the organization.

Assumption

It is assumed that the training variable alone improves the performance, kept as constant. There are certain controllable factors like motivation, growth, incentives, recognition that are considered as dummy variables which have strong impact on the performance of the employees.

Literature Survey

The scholarly literature has evidenced that there are voluminous works on training in airline related. It is still found research gap which could be bridged by focusing on future research. Birdsong, J., & Reesman, K. L. (2024) have opined that the current workforce in pilot profession will loose almost by 50% of its eligible pilot population within next 15 years due to certain reasons like retirements, leaving an emerging workforce of Generations Y and Z . The authors also felt that the methods of training are computer based, flight simulation devices, aircraft training, and the new immersive technologies and associated learning methods to train military pilots may offer value in training the emerging civilian pilot workforce. Maria F. Larrea, Steven Hodge, & Others (2024). The contributors have opined that prompt reconsideration of current training programmes necessitated for a more holistic, contextually rich approach to cabin crew learning emergencies. Captain William Hamman,(2010). The author has advocated that the current technologies of airline aircraft are at the cusp of an explosion in the new design, missions and capabilities. There will be more advancement in technologies regulations, and procedures to control the aircraft from the ground which provide challenges and opportunities. Peter Allen Schlichting San Diego, (2022). It was felt that the airline captains balance many variables when flying their passengers' jet managing their flight crew. These variables are more closely related to aeronautical science, aeronautics, mechanical and technological concepts and subjects. Gibbs, L., Slevitch, L., & Washburn, I. (2017). The authors have advocated that that the frontline employees like flight attendants create a critical impression of the service by their behavioral attitudes that affects customers' perceptions and satisfaction. The contribution (Ehsan A. Tahmasebi Hasan Karimi M., 2015) has evidenced that the conceptual design algorithm for space hybrid propellant systems and method of performance simulation are the findings of the study. The study has shown that the implementation of present algorithm for a specified space mission and also study on variation of performance parameters.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out at Hyderabad. The respondents identified are those who familiar with various operational activities of an airline organization i.e., retired persons from airlines, air force, Airports Authority of India etc.

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to training function in various core functions of air line located at Hyderabad. The operational terms are analyzed separately for demographic factors and content factors.

Methodology

The study was based upon fact finding perceptual/ attitude survey. It was based on the collection of data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data collection process consists of administration of structured questionnaires to elicit the responses of the identified respondents. The sample consists of eighty (80) intellectual respondents. The response pattern is expressed in percentage form. The Likert Five Point Scale was employed. The secondary data was collected from sources like published sources e.g., approved journals. The raw data collected from primary sources was analyzed and computed. The simple statistical techniques are applied. The conclusion part consists of findings, discussion and suggestions.

Primary Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out for operational terms under Section – A (Demographic Variables) and Section –B (Content Variables)

The operational terms identified for the purpose of the study are analyzed in tabular form. Table 1 has indicated that 30 percent of the respondents are in the age group 40-50 years; 26 percent are in the age group 50-60 years; 18 percent are in the age group above 60 years. It is inferred that majority of the sampled respondents have positively responded towards training function. The gender composition has indicated that 76 percent are males and 26 percent are females. It is inferred that the male dominated respondents have responded towards training function. The marital status composition has indicated that 88 percent are married. The qualification variable has evidenced that 46 percent are

graduates; 26 percent are post graduates and 26 percent have intermediate qualification. It is found that only 2 percent are doctorates. The occupation category has indicated that 46 percent are in private sector; 24 percent are in government sector; 16 percent are in agriculture sector and 6 percent are in entrepreneurial occupations. The experience variable has indicated that 46 percent of the sampled respondents are in the group 20-30; 24 percent are in the group 30-40; 20 percent are in the group 10-20 years and 10 percent are in the group up to 10 years. The income variable has indicated that 26 percent of the respondents are in the group above 700000; 26 percent of the respondents are in the group 500000-700000; 22 percent of the respondents are in the group 300000-500000; 10 percent of the respondents are in the group composition 100000-300000 and 4 percent of the sampled respondents are in the group up to 50000 only.

Inference

The operational terms / background factors have indicated that majority (30%) are in the age group, male dominated group (76%); mostly married (88%); majority (46%) are graduates; mostly belong to private sector (46%) followed by government sector (24%); majority (46%) of have decent length of experience; and the high income group consists of only 26%. It is inferred that the demographic profile has indicated that the majority of the respondents have positively responded towards training function

Table 1: Primary Data Analysis: Demographic Profile of the Respondents Section - A

Variables	Category	Frequency (%)
Age	20-30 Years	14
	30-40 Years	12
	40-50 Years	30
	50-60 Years	26
	Above 60 Years	18
Gender	Male	76
	Female	24
Marital Status	Married	88
	Unmarried	12
Qualifications	Intermediate	26
	Graduate	46
	Post Graduate	26
	Doctorates	02
Occupation	Government	24
	Private	46
	Entrepreneur	06
	Consultancy	08
	Agriculture	16
Experience	Up To 10 Years	10
	10-20 Years	20
	20-30 Years	46
	30-40 Years	24
Income (INR) (Monthly)	Up to 50,000:00	04
	50,000:00 – 1,00,000:00	06
	1,00,000:00 – 3,00,000:00	10
	3,00,000:00 – 5,00,000:00	22
	5,00,000:00 – 7,00,000:00	32
	7,00,000:00 and above	26

Source: Primary Data

Primary Data Analysis: Content Variables: Section – B

Table 2 has indicated the response pattern of the sampled respondents. The response pattern of most of the respondents is positive towards the function. The airline has strong philosophy and commitment for development of performance through training intervention which results in success. The air line has identified certain core functions and support functions where training is imparted on need basis especially focused on technical areas to meet the mandatory requirements. The airline has felt that the training is continuous process and has to meet the requirements in case of any modification,

expansion, diversification, merger with other airlines etc. It bridges the gap between the actual performance and desired performance. It reduces the cost, damages and damages, the trained staff should apply the learned skills at actual job spots. The airline has to induct the new training technology, competent / skilled instructors to achieve long term sustainability. The trained staff has to be motivated with incentives. Management has to provide the growth opportunities. The evaluation of training should be done at various stages i.e., pre-during -post training and also at job spots.

Inference

It is inferred that the training variable contributes and accelerates for the development of the overall productivity.

Testing of Hypothesis

The statement "Training contributes significantly for sustainable development of an airline organization" has obtained the score which has considerable impact on the sustainable development of the airline in the long run. The Null Hypothesis was accepted.

Limitations

- The present study is basically quantitative, not qualitative.
- The results of the study is focused on training in an ideal airline organization may or may not applicable to the other organizations.
- Training variable alone is considered as it improves the performance which may not always true in real situation. There are certain other variables like motivation, growth, recognition that impacts significantly on the performance of the employees.

Table 2

SL No.	Questionnaire	Response (%)
01.	Airline organization has initiated strong philosophy and commitment for development of performance through training	96
02.	Success of an organization depends upon the performance of the staff employed at various levels	82
03.	Airline has identified core areas to impart technical training on need basis to meet the mandatory requirements stipulated by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation	96
04.	Core functional areas identified in an airline are Operations – Pilots/Cabin Crew/ Aircraft Engineering/ Materials/Commercial/Security & Vigilance and supporting departments	93
05.	Training is continuous process and imparted to the staff at the time of Induction & Orientation / Ab-initio / Refresher /Conversion training	84
06.	Training improves the performance of an employees at job	88
07.	Training bridges the gap between the actual and desired performance	72
08.	Training reduces the costs, damages, wastage that finally benefits the airline	78
09.	Training facilitates for growth opportunities of employees	81
10.	Airline has equipped with latest training technology, the best infrastructure, sophisticated training aids like modern simulators, skilled instructors and hygienic training culture	82
11.	Trained employees should be in a position to apply the learned skill at actual job spot	69
12.	Airline has adopted the best method of Cost Benefit Analysis to assess the training sessions	86
13.	Organizations motivates the trained employees with attractive incentive system	78
14.	The refresher training sessions enhances the capabilities of slow or average learners	71
15.	Training process should be updated from time to time to meet the competitive edge at global level	88
16.	An opportunity to learn and equip the new skills, knowledge and behavior has to be provided to all the employees.	86
17.	Trained staff performance has to be monitored at actual job spot	92
18.	Evaluation of training at various stages like "Pre – During – Post Training – Job Spot" is very essential	82
19.	Training accelerates for the overall organizational productivity.	78
20.	Training contributes significantly for sustainable development of an airline organization.	87

Discussion

The subject experts, professional and academicians have felt that the airline whether new or old one have to induct the latest technology like Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning in training

methodology process. The competencies of instructors in all core functions like operations-pilot, cabin crew, aircraft engineering etc., should be updated. The refresher programmes have to be conducted on continuous basis to meet the mandatory requirements. The airline should provide online learning facilities to the employees. The attractive incentives motivate the trained staff to apply the learned skills at actual job spots. The research gap in the areas of training if any has to be analyzed and remedial measures have to be taken on priority basis. The airline has to formulate the market driven strategies to retain their leadership and to meet the competitive edge.

Suggestions

The ideal airline organization irrespective of its size, nature of operational activities like regional connectivity basis, domestic operations within India or International operations have to equip with full-fledged training in house / internal training facilities to cater the needs of its employees on continuous basis. The newly established airline may utilize the services of external training houses. The indigenous training technology may be utilized which results in savings in foreign exchange. The latest / updated training manuals have to be provided to the employees by the airline. The latest technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Machine Learning (ML) may be utilized in core technical training operational areas like pilots, cabin crew, aircraft engineering, ground support engineering etc. The airline organization has to focus on research in all core functional areas and the concepts of total quality management, business process re-engineering and benchmarking practices may be incorporated. The attractive incentives may be provided to the trained staff. The evaluation has to be carried out at various stages to assess to what extent the trained staff is able to transfer their learned competencies at actual job spots.

Conclusion

It is found that the objectives stated for the purpose of the study were met. The demographic profile has indicated that majority of the respondents have positively responded towards various background variables and content variables. The overall study has resulted in that the training variable has significantly contributed to the development of the overall capability of the organization, which finally leads to sustainable development in the long run.

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