

Training on performance of employees in etihad airways

[Environment](#), [Air](#)



This research project aims to investigate the impact of training on the employees of El Etihad, a well known airline based in the Middle East with operations across the world.

1. 1. Overview

Training and development play very important roles in the enhancement of individual abilities and professional advancement of organisational employees (Gerber & Lankshear, 2000). Numerous changes have occurred in the global economic and business environment since the end of the Second World War. Such changes, which have intensified in nature and scope since the 1980s, include rapid advancement in technology, the dismantling of physical and economic barriers between nations, the development of instantaneous methods of communication across long distances, and sharp reduction in costs of international travel (Gerber & Lankshear, 2000).

The phenomenal increase in international travel is an integral part of globalisation and has in turn led to immense churning in the airlines industry (Craig & Douglas, 2000). The airline industry has witnessed the emergence of numerous new airlines across the world, even as well established and once famous airlines have had to close down. Whilst new airlines like Ryan Air and Easy jet have come up in the UK, numerous new airlines have sprung up in China, India and the Middle East. Such growth in the airline industry has resulted in intensification of competition, segmentation of customers, and the emergence of low cost airlines and chartered trips (Craig & Douglas, 2000). Etihad is one such airline, which was established in 2003 in Abu Dhabi and has in a short period of time grown significantly both in operations and

in sales. Operating in an intensely competitive environment, the organisation needs to improve its sales and operational efficiencies in order to break even and become financially viable (Craig & Douglas, 2000).

It is widely recognised that with all other things being equal, the competitive advantage of organisations, both in production and in service sectors, is determined by the quality of organisational employees and the levels of customer service (Eaton, 2001). The role of employees is especially important in service sectors like hotels and airlines, where individual customer satisfaction is often dependent upon the quality of service provided by organisational employees. All modern day airlines, big and small, recognise the importance of employees and their role in the achievement of competitive advantage and organisational growth (Eaton, 2001).

Airline employees, both on the ground and those who fly, are chosen with great care and trained continuously and intensely in order to improve operational efficiencies, customer service and competitive advantage.

1. 2. Aims and Objectives

This research project aims to determine the role of training of employees in Etihad airlines on the organisational efficiency, customer service, and competitive advantage of El Etihad Airlines. Its objectives are as under

To examine the role of training in improvement of organisational efficiency and competitive advantage of organisations.

To investigate how training can improve the performance of employees in the airlines sector.

To investigate and assess the ways in which training can help the performance of employees at Etihad Airways

1. 3. Research Questions

The research questions for this project are framed as under:

Research Questions 1: What are the organisational advantages of training?

Research Question 2: How can such advantages improve the performance of employees in the Airlines sector?

Research Question 3: How can training improve employee and organisational performance at Etihad Airways?

Research Question 4: How will such improvement impact the operational and financial performance of Etihad Airways?

1. 4. Terms and Definitions

Terms and Definitions

Details

Epistemological Approach

The approach of knowledge

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

The two main methods of social research

Population

The group of people or things under study in research projects

Sample

A small portion of the population that is expected to have the attributes of the larger population

1. 5. Limitations of Study

This study will be limited by the amount of information accessed during the course of investigation of primary and secondary sources. Whilst extensive efforts will be made to obtain relevant information, it is very possible that some facts that are relevant may not be unearthed. Such inadequacies could limit the final analysis and results of the project.

2. Literature Review

Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways was established in July 2003, through the proclamation of a royal decree by Sheikh Khalifa, the President of the UAE. Etihad is the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, and offers air travel within country and to numerous other global destinations (iloveindia. com, 2009). It is based in Abu Dhabi, the capital of UAE. The company is yet to post a profit and has faced difficult times in the wake of the global economic downturn of 2008 (iloveindia. com, 2009).

Competition in the Airline Industry

The airline industry has faced very challenging times over the course of the past decade and continues to face multifaceted and tough situations. The industry suffered extremely in the days after the September 11 attacks, when worldwide drops in air travel compelled a number of celebrated airlines, counting the likes of Swissair, to seal operations because of enormous operational and financial losses (Yousfi, 2008). The huge hike in fuel costs in recent years, which in 2007 shot up to more than 140 USD per barrel and now floats between USD 70 and 75 per barrel, is adversely affecting the operations and finances of all passenger airlines. The airline industry, globally, has suffered losses worth billions of dollars in recent periods and expects to make a nominal profit of 0.05% in 2011 (Yousfi, 2008). Etihad has not just been adversely affected by adverse global environmental circumstances but also by competition from strong Middle East airlines like Qatar Airlines and Gulf Air. The organisation faces extremely strong international and local competition, and is finding it difficult to break even and thereafter make profits (Yousfi, 2008).

Training and Development

Training and Development constitutes the overall organisational strategies and policies that are adopted by organisations for helping employees to improve their individual and collective organisational abilities and skills (Adiele, 2009). Training initiatives aim to build workforces with better ability in order to allow organisations and employees to attain their objectives for customer satisfaction and service. Training represents all the activities that

are taken up, both by organisations or individually by employees, to improve employee performance in existing or associated areas of employment (Adiele, 2009).

Training in organisations comprises of two important segments, i. e. internal training and external training (Vemic, 2007). Internal training is provided within the organisation. Such training can be classified into off-job and on-job training, on-job training standing for the improvement of skills through the actual participation of workers in their jobs and off-job training standing for learning enhancement through observation; either in class rooms or in the work place (Vemic, 2007). External training represents training that is arranged outside companies, mostly by consultants and professionals (Vemic, 2007).

Need for Training and Development

Employees need to be trained for various reasons. Whilst staffing of employees is carried out on the basis of their overall suitability for the jobs expected of them by way of educational background and achievements, prior training and working experience, changes in work place and environmental conditions, as well as alterations in work requirements, often require employees to enhance their skills (Lowson, 2002). Training needs could arise because of reasons like (a) the inculcation of fresh technologies and work processes, (b) alterations in manufacturing, service or other work processes, (c) the need to prepare employees for additional responsibilities, (d) the need to prepare workers to take on improved responsibilities, (e) the need to develop their awareness about environmental and business

circumstances and (f) the need to develop or alter their attitudes and behaviours (Lowson, 2002).

Organisations are progressively emphasising on the importance of ethics in the work place (Vemic, 2007). Modern organisations are informing employees about the ethical direction of their organisations and the requirement for employees to maintain ethical codes of conduct. Apart from ethics, training programmes are frequently designed to give employees interpersonal skills and conflict minimisation techniques (Vemic, 2007). Inculcation of the requirement for preservation of work place harmony also helps workers in improving their relationships with others. Training also plays a key role in inculcating safety in working processes (Vemic, 2007).

Benefits of Training and Development

HR experts are agreed on the positive benefits of training, not just for junior members of the workforce, but even more for supervisors and managers, for augmentation of individual and organisational productivity and performance (Gerber & Lankshear, 2000). Suitable and well planned training assists workers to develop their skills and knowledge, as well as to acquire new skills. Many studies have shown that employees can toil considerably faster and with lesser errors after proper training. Such training allows them to do their jobs better and enables them to take on new responsibilities. Whilst training assists organisational performance and efficiency, it also increases employee worth and augments their value in the employment market (Gerber & Lankshear, 2000). Please see Appendix 2, which details the various benefits of training and development in the form of a chart.

3. Research Methods

3. 1. Methodological Perspectives

3. 1. 1. Important Research Factors

Research in areas management come under the broad scope of economic research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The research methodology for such assignments is determined in agreement with the doctrine of social research and is shaped by the character of the subject under study and the infrastructural and other resources available with the researcher. The choice of suitable research methods and techniques involves the selection of precise research methods and the most appropriate sources of information (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3. 1. 2. Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Research

Social research methods are fashioned by two broad and different research approaches, namely the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. These approaches are fashioned by dissimilar epistemologies and require the use of distinct research techniques, both for acquisition and for analysis of data (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Please see Appendix 1

Most theories put forward by researchers need substantiation, measured by relevant quantitative data Quantitative research is an inquiry into an identified problem, and based on testing theories. The goal of quantitative methods is to determine whether the predictive generalizations of a theory holds true. Quantitative political research thus refers to the use of measurement in the analysis of behaviours and attitudes. Quantitative political analysis makes great use of statistical concepts and theories in its

execution. In a situation that involves the behavioural analysis of large numbers of people, sometimes running into hundreds of thousands, statistical analysis is the most convenient way of arriving at a logical conclusion. The use of statistics by way of various tools like predetermined sampling methods, probability, correlation and regression analyses is used to present findings that support or contradict research hypotheses.

Quantitative analysis is initially somewhat bewildering to stereotypical political researchers, who mostly have backgrounds in the liberal arts and are unfamiliar with statistical models. However, the models used are reasonably simple and decision making is restricted to choosing the level of data to be used, the choice of the sampling technique, the sample size and the appropriate tool for measuring variability. The measurement of variability, which involves computation of means, medians, modes, standard deviations and coefficients of correlation and regression, is the only stage in quantitative analysis that requires a certain amount of number crunching. However, software for their computation is universally available and researchers, these days have little to do other than feeding in the results of surveys and questionnaires. Apart from these descriptive techniques for data analysis, statistical inferential techniques that involve generalising from a sample to the whole population are also regularly used in qualitative research methodology.

Quantitative analysis involves two other major tasks that influence the quality of the final analysis, namely data collection and the final validation of results. Data collection can happen directly through the use of

questionnaires and surveys, from opinion polls or from pre-existing material, like results of other research efforts or official statistics. Harrison (2001) states that opinion polls are often used to obtain indications about public preferences while exit polls help in forecasting results. The voluminous material available from official sources is also used as base data in quantitative research on many occasions, after satisfaction of its validity for the Qualitative methods of analysis are fundamentally different and are applied when the issue under study is subjective in nature and open to different ways of interpretation (Neuman, 2005). Qualitative research methods are fashioned by interpretivist epistemology and concern detailed examination of multifaceted subjects that are frequently profound and incapable of being satisfied with yes or no responses. Qualitative techniques involve obtaining understanding human behaviour in depth as well as the reasons that govern such behaviour, i. e., the how and why behind attitudes and consequent decision-making. Samples are therefore small and focussed and techniques incorporate skilled and extensive interviewing of respondents, observation and examination of documents (Neuman, 2005). The major difference between quantitative and qualitative research techniques lies in much greater involvement and the elimination of detachment, which however is integral to quantitative research involving large samples and surveys. Numerous techniques, including participant observation, ethnography, ethno methodology, dramaturgical interviewing, case studies, unobtrusive observation, content analysis and historiography form part of the repertoire of the student using qualitative methodology for research. There are very few step by step rules in this methodology and the

objective is to arrive at the real reasons behind what people actually do, as opposed to what they say, e. g. in surveys.

Whilst most research assignments call for the use of either quantitative or qualitative methods, some multifaceted and multidimensional issues necessitate the use of both techniques (Neuman, 2005).

3. 1. 3. Choice of Information Sources

Information sources are generally categorised into primary and secondary sources. Secondary information sources consist of all the information on the subject that is available to the public at large in the form of published material, more specifically books, articles, both journal and magazine, and other publications (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Primary information is obtained from sources that are part of or are integral to the subject under study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Whilst primary information is commonly obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, such information is also available from specific public domain sources like organisational or departmental publications, publications authored by the subjects under study, interviews given by them to reliable media publications, and otherwise from information disseminated through personal or organisational websites (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3. 2. Research Design

The research project is complex and its design will need to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. It is proposed to investigate the responses of a small group of 25 airline employees of Middle

East airlines on the proposed benefits of training. This will help in obtaining information from airlines employees on their perceptions of training, especially on the training techniques that could help them in their jobs.

Whilst it could be difficultly to obtain permission from airline managements for the conduct of such a survey, a recommendation letter from the institution should help in obtaining their agreement to participate.

Qualitative interviews with three senior or middle level airlines staff, especially with people associated with the HR function will also help in obtaining detailed information about the role of training in improving the performance of airline employees.

3. 3. Population and Samples

The population, for the purpose of this assignment, consists of the employees of Etihad Airways. With the operations of employees of most employees in the airlines sector being reasonably similar, the population can be taken to be all people employed in the airline sector in the Gulf States. The sample for the quantitative survey is fixed at 25 airline employees. The size of the sample is fixed on a non-probabilistic basis and has been decided in line with the abilities and resources of the researcher in conducting the survey.

Qualitative interviews are expected to be conducted with three airline employees. The choice of three respondents for qualitative employees is reasonable considering the detailed work required in conducting qualitative

interviews. The sample size for qualitative interviews is thus determined at three respondents.

3. 4. Data Collection

Data collection for quantitative interviews with 25 airline employees will be through carefully constructed questionnaires that will contain a maximum of 15 multiple choice questions. The questionnaire will be easy to use and will be administered by 3 volunteers at airline terminals, only after approval of airline managements.

Data will be collected for qualitative analysis from direct interviews with carefully chosen officials, engaged in middle or senior management positions in the airline sector in the Gulf countries. The questions for the interviews will be both open and close ended in nature. The interviews will be audio taped and thereafter transcribed into typed documents.

3. 5. Research Ethics

Appropriate care will be taken to ensure the adoption of ethical rules and norms that are pertinent to business research (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

All information sources used for the purpose of study will be acknowledged carefully and comprehensively (Bryman & Bell, 2007). All participants will be informed of the nature of the assignment and its purposes. Respondents have been informed of their right to confidentiality and of refusing to answer all or any of the questions asked of them. All respondents have also agreed in writing of their unilateral and unforced willingness to participate in this study (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3. 6. Data Analysis

The analysis of data will need to be done with reference to the research questions of this project. Data collected from the questionnaire survey will first be carefully transcribed and tabulated, and thereafter analysed with the use of standard statistical tools and techniques.

Analysis of data obtained during direct interviews will be conducted after the contents of the audio tapes are carefully transcribed along with notes on behaviours of respondents during the course of interviews. It is important in such cases to bring out the nuances that are not available in the typed manuscripts of the interviews.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Quantitative Research

Qualitative Research

Is Objective in nature

Is Subjective in nature

Depends upon Measurement

Depends upon Interpretation

Researchers are independent of the Process

Researchers are part of the Process

Sample size is very important

Sample size is not important

Used for testing theory and dependent upon early Literature Review

Used for developing theory and as such Literature Review is an ongoing process

Reasoning is logistic and deductive and establishes relationships and causation

Reasoning is dialectic and inductive and establishes meaning, discovery

Report is generally in the form of statistical analysis and strives for generalization

Report is narrative in nature, dependent upon interpretation and works towards uniqueness