KUNNAPAT KANKAEW

International College; Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

THANASUWIT THABHIRANRAK

SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, 10300

TAWATCHAI SUPHUAN

SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

SUPAYOTIN NA SONGKLA

SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

SSRUICS' GRADUATES COMPETENCIES IN AIRLINE BUSINESS PROGRAM

Abstract:

This study aim to survey the competencies of graduates in airline business of International College; Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRUIC). As well as to evaluate the competencies enhancing effective in service work. This was longitudinal research employed both qualitative and quantitative method in gathering data. The samplings were 2 batches of SSRUIC's graduates in airline business program. There were 1st and 2nd batches total 86 graduates. Accurately, the focus groups were conducted with 2 sampling groups; along with in-depth interview their peers and superiors then the triangulation was tested. The 5 key competencies were found most appropriate in service work. Those are personality and grooming, good human relation, service minded, punctuality, and ethic and moral. The 1st batch believed that ethic and moral were most important; meanwhile personality and grooming were crucial for 2nd batch. Notwithstanding, superiors and peers of 1st and 2nd batch found that human relation and service minded were the coexistence quality of SSRUIC graduates respectively. Afterward, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was run to assess the competencies that related to professional competencies. The result illustrated that the most significant competencies correlated to professional competencies were responsibility, and analytical thinking skill. Albeit, the stepwise of multiple regression was tested and found that the results were in consistent to focus group conducted.

Keywords:

Competency, Education, Airline Business, Curriculum, Networking

Introduction

The education and human capital development are pivotal for the country, as Pitsuwan (2012) former of Secretary- General ASEAN stated at Thailand Human Vision 2020 that Thailand required educating and preparing its human capital ready for the dynamic world on 4 key issues. The first is various choice of occupations, second is readiness for multitasking; this means that one capable of doing diverse function at a time, third is communication skills since the ASEAN unification will allow Thais to communicate with more people, and last is the fitness of government refers to strategic planning to enable and support multiple business for their competitiveness in the market. These will lead the growth of country. SSRUIC is the institutional that provide teaching and learning in English with its philosophy and vision to develop quality knowledge graduate in business and service industry, and a quality study program in English with worldwide applicability respectively. The cooperative learning was applied as well as the curriculum was updated according to the Office of the Higher Education Commission. This study was conducted to follow up "*The internship assessment result in airline business program*" done in 2014; found that the level of satisfaction toward SSRUIC intern students was high, and some of them got a job in airline companies. The growth of air transportation in South East Asia region, the air service restrictions and labor will be displaced among members. Hence, many universities in Thailand operate airline business program and cooperate with airlines to serve the industry (Kankaew 2014). Then this study would be beneficial for further development curriculum and students' competencies. As Belobaba, Odoni, & Barnhart (2009) mentioned that the workforce has ability to affect the airline's performance positively or negatively.

Literature Review

Competency is an intentional act of person according to the context related to his capability (Boyatzis, 2008). McClelland (1973) formulated competence theory and pointed out that competencies express themselves in behavioral traits, experiences, skills and knowledge. While Spencer & Spencer (1993) fragmented people competencies into two categories; hidden and visible. The hidden refers to motives, traits, and self-concept. Meanwhile, motives and traits are core personality, which represent personal characteristics. Personal characteristics differentiate people's behavior and competence. It is noteworthy to notice that motive and traits are embedded within the individual. The latter is a self-concept consisting of attitudes and values that can be changed through training. The visible part is knowledge and skills. These competencies can be improved by training and education. There are several methods of teaching. One of the effective approaches is cooperative learning proposed by Kagan & Kagan cited in Kankaew (2014) for instance think-pair-share. This is the interaction approach, which allows student has profound effect on the social and academic development. Whereas, UNICEF (2000) revealed that education is complex, the quality of education involved with learners' state of mind and health as well as the environments. Barrett et al. (2006) suggested five keys of quality education were effectiveness, efficiency, equality, sustainable and relevance. Nichanong & Kankaew (2013) proposed that well-trained, experienced teacher was better transfer knowledge and skills to student. So they introduced on producing teacher by innovating teacher education cluster model. This model called triple "I" consisting of initiation, implementation and institutionalization for education quality. The concept is to

create network with various parties akin local government, private organization and corporate or school whom will employ teacher. Wattanachareonsil & Yoopetch (2012) disclosed Thai employees' competencies in airline ground service were "being polite, respectful, being helpful, paying good attention and creating a positive moment of truth".

Methodology

This was a longitudinal study to assess graduates from SSRUICs' airline business program. The samplings were 2 batches; there were 35 students for 1st batch enrolled in year 2009 and 27 students graduated in year 2013, whereas there were 59 students for 2nd batch enrolled in year 2010 and 59 students graduated in 2014 respectively. The sampling was 45 graduates who work in Bangkok only. Total questionnaires were distributed to all sampling with 3 extras for their colleagues, 1 for supervisor or managers. The qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in gathering data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to assess the competencies that related to professional competencies. As well as the stepwise of multiple regression More accurately, the focus groups were conducted with 2 sampling groups; along with in-depth interview their peers and superiors then the triangulation was tested.

Results

There were 171 questionnaires returned including 45 from graduates, 10 from supervisors and 116 from colleagues. Ten competencies were found with 5 key competencies. as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Illustrates key competencies found

Competencies	Mean	S.D.	Level of Importance
Language and Communication	3.88	0.52	Important
Personality & Grooming	4.27	0.56	High important
Ability to applied Information Technology	3.90	0.61	Important
Positive thinking	4.13	0.62	Important
Good human relation	4.37	0.54	High important
Service-minded	4.37	0.58	High important
Punctuality	4.25	0.44	High important
Ethic & Moral	4.26	0.47	High important
Responsibility	4.16	0.46	Important
Analytical thinking skills	4.11	0.43	Important

As refer to table 1, the competencies that all graduates felt important were personality and grooming, good human relation, service-minded, punctuality, and ethic and moral. And further discussion in focus group, the 1st batch believed that ethic and moral were most important; meanwhile personality and grooming were crucial for 2nd batch. Furthermore, the correlation among 10 listed competencies with professional competencies at workplace was tested by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as demonstrate in table 2.

Table 2. Illustrates the correlation of 10 competencies with graduates professional output at workplace

Competencies	Professional Competencies			
	Knowledge in job	Proficiency	Job outcome	Ability in handling situation
Language and Communication	r=0.327**	r=0.332**	r=0.240**	r=0.350**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.002	p=0.000
Personality & Grooming	r=0.395**	r=0.306**	r=0.333**	r=0.407**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Ability to applied Information Technology	r=0.233**	r=0.316**	r=0.137	r=0.264**
	p=0.002	p=0.000	p=0.075	p=0.000
Positive Thinking	r=0.419**	r=0.368**	r=0.335**	r=0.439**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Good Human Relation	r=0.347**	r=0.336**	r=0.343**	r=0.403**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Service-minded	r=0.357**	r=0.317**	r=0.403**	r=0.425**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000

Table 2. Illustrates the correlation of 10 competencies with graduates professional output at workplace (Continue)

Competencies	Professional Competencies			
	Knowledge in job	Proficiency	Job outcome	Ability in handling situation
Punctuality	r=-0.364**	r=0.388**	r=0.315**	r=0.417**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Ethic & Moral	r=0.356**	r=0.327**	r=0.337**	r=0.400**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Responsibility	r=0.501**	r=0.452**	r=0.430**	r=0.542**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000
Analytical Thinking Skill	r=0.454**	r=0.532**	r=0.402**	r=0.541**
	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000	p=0.000

significant level at 0.01

From table 2 reveal that all 10 listed competencies related with professional competencies. The highest related were responsibilities and analytical thinking skill with 0.542 and 0.541 score accordingly. However, the multiple regressions analysis also conducted to test the factors that support professional competencies as shown in table 3.1- 3.4

Table 3.1 Illustrates the factors that support professional competencies. (Job outcome)

Predictor	b	S_b	Beta	t	p
Responsibilities (X_1)	0.229	0.066	0.259	3.489	0.001
Analytical Thinking Skills (X_2)	0.257	0.058	0.307	4.399	0.000
Positive Thinking (X_3)	0.143	0.052	0.185	2.757	0.006
Language and Communication (X_4)	0.126	0.047	0.167	2.703	0.008

Adjusted R^2 = 0.433 Homoscedasticity = 1.093

Table 3.1 found that four competencies including responsibilities, analytical thinking skills, positive thinking and language and communication were represented the professional competencies in the area knowledge in job of SSRUICs' graduates in airline business; with the adjusted R^2 equal 43.30

Table 3.2 Illustrates the factors that support professional competencies. (Proficiency)

Predictor	b	S_b	Beta	t	p
Analytical Thinking Skills)X_1(	0.335	0.068	0.364	4.902	0.000
Positive Thinking)X_2(	0.123	0.061	0.145	2.029	0.044
Language and Communication)X_3(	0.138	0.054	0.166	2.526	0.012
Responsibilities (X_4)	0.153	0.077	0.157	1.993	0.048

Adjusted R^2 = 0.358 Homoscedasticity = 1.093

Table 3.2 found that four competencies including responsibilities, analytical thinking skills, positive thinking and language and communication were represented the professional competencies in the area of proficiency of SSRUICs' graduates in airline business; with the adjusted R^2 equal 35.80

Table 3.3 Illustrates the factors that support professional competencies. (Knowledge in Job)

Predictor	b	S_b	Beta	t	p
Responsibilities (X_1)	0.311	0.278	0.083	0.266	3.346
Language and Communication)X_2(	0.106	0.146	0.059	0.164	2.487
Analytical Thinking Skills)X_3(	0.119	0.213	0.074	0.216	2.893
Positive Thinking)X_4(	0.158	0.170	0.065	0.187	2.606

Adjusted R^2 = 0.349 Homoscedasticity = 0.882

Table 3.3 found that four competencies including responsibilities, analytical thinking skills, positive thinking and language and communication were represented the professional competencies in the area of ability in handling situation of SSRUICs' graduates in airline business; with the adjusted R^2 equal 34.90.

Table 3.4 Illustrates the factors that support professional competencies. (Ability in handling situation)

Predictor	b	S_b	Beta	t	p
Responsibilities (X_1)	0.217	0.096	0.196	2.270	0.024
Service-minded)X_2(	0.182	0.061	0.231	2.991	0.003
Analytical Thinking Skills)X_3(	0.228	0.083	0.218	2.750	0.007

Adjusted R^2 = 0.251 Homoscedasticity = 1.611

Table 3.4 found that there were three competencies including responsibilities, service-minded and analytical thinking skills were represented the professional competencies in the area of job outcome of SSRUICs' graduates in airline business; with the adjusted R^2 equal 25.10. The multiple regression results were consistent to focus group conducted. The graduates from both batches indicated that language and communication skill in English and third language especially Chinese were necessary. Likewise, analytical thinking skill, self-assured, ethic & moral and positive thinking were crucial. Besides, the information technology was one of the essential for today working life. By the same token, graduates were appreciated cooperative learning which focus on student center as SSRUIC did practice.

Conclusion

There were 5 key competencies out of 10 that graduates founded important for their work in service industry by using likert scale evaluation; including personality & grooming, good human relation, service-minded, punctuality, and ethic & moral. Howbeit, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was run to analyze whether 10 listed competencies correlated with professional competencies (knowledge in job, proficiency, job outcome, ability in handling situation). The result reveal that 2 highest related were responsibilities and analytical thinking skill. Then the multiple regression with stepwise selection was used to measure related competencies; found that 4 competencies consisting of analytical thinking skill, positive thinking, language and communication, and responsibilities were related to professional competencies in proficiency, knowledge in job, and job outcome. Meanwhile, the ability in handling situation found that there were 3 competencies related; responsibilities, service-minded, and analytical thinking skills. Thereafter, the information from two focus group, in-depth interview of peers and supervisor was analyzed. The competencies found were language and communication, analytical thinking skills, self-assured, ethic and moral, positive thinking and information technology skills.

In summarization, there were 4 most important competencies found. Those were analytical thinking skill, positive thinking, language and communication, and responsibilities. Additionally, the cooperative teaching and learning, the cooperation with public & private organizations which SSRUIC practice found beneficial and useful to graduates.

References

Barrette et al., (2006). The Concept of Quality in Education: A Review of the International Literature on the Concept of Quality in Education. *EdQual Working paper No. 3*. [Online] A Research Programme Consortium on Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries. Available from: http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/ImpQuality_RPC/intlitreview.pdf. [Accessed: 10th April 2015].

Belobaba, P., Odoni, A., Barnhart, C. (2009). *The Global Airline Industry*. Wiltshire: Wiley.

Boyatzis, E. R. (2008). Competencies in the 21st Century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27, 5-12.

Kankaew, K. (2014). The Internship Assessment Result in Airline Business Program. *Proceeding from International Science Conference*. Berlin.

McClelland, D. C. (1973). Testing for Competence rather than for intelligence. *American Psychologist*. 28, 1-40.

Nichanong, C., Kankaew, K. (2013). Innovation Construction of Teacher Education Cluster for ASEAN Best Practice. *Proceeding from The Inter-University Cooperation Program*, Brunei.

Pitsuwan, S. (2012). Thailand Human Vision. *Journal of HR Intelligence*. [Online] Vol. 7 No. 2. , 1-3. Available from: http://www.journalhri.com. [Accessed: 10th April 2015].

Spencer, L. M., Spencer S. M. (1993). Competence *at Work: Models for Superior Performance*. New York: Wiley.

UNICEF. (2000). *Define Quality Education.* Working papers series: Education Section, Program Division. New York.

Wattanachareonsil, W., Yoopetch, C. (2012). Thailand's Human Resource Competencies in Airline Service Quality: Voices from the Airline Industry. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*. 11, 280-302.