

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING MODEL
BASED ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
CONCEPT AND SELF ESTEEM THEORY TO
ENHANCE SERVICE MIND OF AIRLINE
PERSONNEL**

Romrudee Vess¹

Archanya Ratana-Ubol²

Sombat Suwanpitak³

Abstract: This research was aimed to develop a training model for the airline personnel who are directly responsible for providing services to passengers such as cabin attendant, ground staff, reservation staff & ticketing staff (Front Line Staff). This research theory based on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory and integrated by using non-formal education training model to develop a new training model in order to enhance service mind of the airline personnel that consisted of 3 main factors: a) Basic principles, b) Processes and c) Procedures.

Keywords: Non-Formal Education, Training, Airline, Transformative Learning, Self-Esteem, Service Mind

Introduction

Airline business is one of the most successful business branches in Thailand. Meantime they also face many crises such as the world economic crisis, oil price increasing, natural disaster, politics, other competitors from low cost airlines and especially new comer airlines from the Middle East as they have advantage from the low oil price (about 6 Baht per liter). About 50% of the airline income in Thailand was spent on fuel expense that forced the airlines put more efforts to plan the new strategies to compete other airlines. One of the strategies is enhancing service mind of airline personnel which is the most efficient tool and enrich personnel competency. Then the airline personnel need to learn new technology or innovation focused on services continuously. The non-formal education training model should be developed specifically for front line staff, due to the strong competition in airline business. The non-formal education aims to develop the intelligence of learners, decision-making, self-directed learning, and value of human being, wellbeing and beneficial to social problem solving (Kiatiwan Amatayakul, 1987) which could serve airline strategy by developing training model focus on enhancing service mind.

The training should be done continuously and be

sustainability. Training is a tool that can promote learning in adults at work because it is the system that can enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the personnel to improve and increase operational efficiency according to the organization direction or policy. The purpose of training has several aspects which depend on the objective of training such as 1) Training to solve the problems in organization that means they find out that those problems can be solved by training (from training needs survey). 2) Training to prevent the problem that may occur in the future, this type of training should be conducted when the organization plan or expect to change the organization structure or change the new method of work or rotate the staff that the existing training may not suitable. This type of training is proactive and well-planned to prevent the conceivable problem. 3) Training to develop human resources to enhance their potentials as a long term planning. This type of training is not related to any problem but it looks forward to the best practice in the organization. The training shall be conducted continuously and cover the entire organization. (The Civil Service Commission, 1989)

To enhance such excellence service mind, the airlines have to change their concept in service training. One of the ideas to change is transformative learning concept (Mezirow, 1991). The airline personnel will be able to change their ways of thinking and their perception in providing services to passengers. Critical reflection is the main technique in the learning process of change concept. The activities about critical reflection are focused on past experiences of learners and share their experiences to meet the purpose of change. Furthermore only the transformative learning concept may not sufficient to enhance service mind of airline personnel.

To encourage such desirable service mind characteristics, the airline personnel must develop self-esteem which is ability to be confidence and optimistic person, to overcome the obstacles and consciously control the crisis, proactive thoughts and willing to take responsibility, to be tolerance with goal directed. People with low self-esteem has no confidence, pessimistic, intolerance against problems, aggressive, anxiety and no willingness in working with people. (Lawrence, 2000; Karen, 1993)

The training model that based on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory has been developed and focused on changing the new service conceptual framework that opens wider and capable of self-discovery. Hence researcher has developed training model of non-formal education according to the concept of Houle (1981).

¹ Ph.D. Candidate in Non-formal Education, Department of Life Long Learning, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

² Associate Professor, Department of Life Long Learning, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

³ Deputy Permanent Secretary, Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand

Objectives

1. To identify the training needs for enhancing the service mind of the airline personnel.
2. To develop a training model based on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory to enhance service mind of the airline personnel.
3. To determine the comparative study of service mind enhancement between the two groups: the experimental group using the developed training model and the control group using the basic training model of the airline personnel.
4. To analyze the factors related to airline personnel's professional success, problem and hindrances as well as some guidelines of the service mind training model.

Expected benefits

1. A non-formal training model for the airline personnel which shall be successful factor in enhancing service mind and be useful in development of the airline personnel.
2. This training model shall be used broadly by other organizations involved in service provider to enhance their own staff's service quality.
3. This research provides the guideline to develop more efficient of service training model for the personnel in services fields.
4. The factors related to success, problem and obstacle in using this developed training model will be the useful data in service improving of HRD.

Major Concept and Theory

Transformative Learning Concept

Transformative Learning is a term that used by Jack D. Mezirow who is an adult educator developed from the perception that adults had high capability of freely thinking and action and believed in foundations of human behavior. He states "Transformative learning for emancipation education is the business of all adult education" (1990) That is a result of thinking system, overall beliefs, values, attitudes and feelings that are used to interpret things or experiences of people that can be changed. The changes that make adult see themselves and their world. The process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide actions. Transformative learning replaces a point of view or mind-set with one that is more developed or mature. The goal of this learning concept is learner empowerment through critical reflection for a more participatory learning society. This transformative process results in reflective action from changes in life experience

Mezirow suggests a 10-step process for transformative learning as follows:

1. Experience a disorienting dilemma.
2. Undergo self-examination.
3. Conduct a deep assessment of personal role assumptions and alienation created by new roles.
4. Share and analyze personal discontent and similar experiences with others.
5. Explore options for new ways of acting.
6. Build competence and self-confidence in new roles.
7. Plan a course of action.
8. Acquire knowledge and skills for action.
9. Try new roles and assess feedback.
10. Reintegrate into society with a new perspective.

Self-esteem Theory

Self-esteem is a term in psychology to reflect a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent", "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. Self-esteem is the sum of attitudes which depend on perceptions, thoughts, evaluations, feelings and behavioral tendencies aimed toward ourselves, the way we are and behave, and our body's and character's features. In short, it's oneself evaluative perception.

The importance of self-esteem lies in the fact that it concerns to ourselves, the way we are and the sense of our personal value. Thus, it affects the way we are and act in the world and the way we are related to everybody else. This is very important for the person who engaged in service providing.

It exists as a consequence of the implicit judgment that every person does about, on one side, our abilities to face life's challenges, that is, to understand and solve problems, and, on the other side, our rights to achieve happiness, or, in other words, to respect and defend our own interests and needs.

Person with a healthy level of self-esteem

- firmly believe in certain values and principles, and are ready to defend them even when finding opposition, feeling secure enough to modify them in light of experience.
- are able to act according to what they think to be the best choice, trusting their own judgment, and not feeling guilty when others don't like their choice.
- do not lose time worrying excessively about what happened in the past, nor about what could happen in the future. They learn from the past and plan for the future, but live in the present intensely.
- fully trust in their capacity to solve problems, not hesitating after failures and difficulties. They ask others for help when they need it.

- consider themselves equal in dignity to others, rather than inferior or superior, while accepting differences in certain talents, personal prestige or financial standing.
- take for granted that they are an interesting and valuable person for others, at least for those with whom they have a friendship.
- resist manipulation, collaborate with others only if it seems appropriate and convenient.
- admit and accept different internal feelings and drives, either positive or negative, revealing those drives to others only when they choose.
- are able to enjoy a great variety of activities.
- are sensitive to feelings and needs of others; respect generally accepted social rules, and claim no right or desire to prosper at others' expense

Research has consistently shown a positive correlation between how people value themselves and the level of their academic attainments. The development of high self-esteem should be just as valuable a goal for educationists as the development of intellectual skills as well as the enhancement of service mind. Researcher chooses the study of Denis Lawrence (2000), who worked for many years with adult learning and has researched the importance played by confidence and self-esteem in the learning process. His program "Building self-esteem with adult learners" was created the learning opportunity based on the principle of learners taking control of their own learning. The Self-esteem Enhancement Program was selected to use in this research which consists of 3 self-esteem questionnaires.

Conceptual Framework

Input is as follows:

1. Transformative Learning Concept (Mezirow)
2. Self-esteem Theory (Lawrence)
3. Service Mind Concept (Zeitham & team)
4. Career Development Concept
5. Non-formal Education Training Model (Houle)

Process is as follows:

A training model for airline personnel according to Houle's Concept (1972) which has 7 stages: 1) the analysis of training needs and appropriate training activities, 2) the decision to conduct and choose the best for training, 3) the objective 4) the training design, 5) the training plan that conforms to the performance and lifestyle, 6) conduct training 7) the training evaluation.

Output is as follows:

The airline personnel service mind enhancing which indicated by level of airline business & service knowledge, service attitude, service behavior and service mind characteristics.

Research Methodology

For the research on "The development of a training

model based on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory to enhance service mind of the airline personnel", the researcher uses the quasi-experimental research along with quantitative techniques and content analysis, in both the control group and experiment group with pretest - posttest research design.

Subjects: The subjects were the front line airline personnel who are directly responsible for providing services to passengers such as cabin attendant, ground staff, reservation staff & ticketing staff and consented to take part in this developing training.

Experimental process

There were 4 phases of research, as summarized below:

Phase 1: Study training needs to enhance service mind of the airline personnel. The outcome was the useful information to develop a non-formal training model in the Phase 2. In this Phase, the researcher followed the process of Houle's non-formal training model, stage 1; Analysis the training needs and specific the appropriate training activities, as follows;

Step 1: Select the populations and control group.

Step 2: Design instrument for training needs survey which checked and approved by 5 expertises

Step 3: Collect data

Step 4: Analyze data

Phase 2: Development a non-formal training model, based on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory to enhance service mind of the airline personnel. The researcher used information from the Phase 1 to design and develop the research. In this Phase, the researcher followed the process of Houle's non-formal education model stage 2 - 5, as follows:

Stage 2: Make decision to conduct and choose the well-considerate method for training.

Stage 3: Set the objectives of training

Stage 4: Design the training method according to learners' background, learning ability, facilitator's competence and experience in service field, clear direction of training design, sequence of contents based on learners' need and competency, training schedule, appropriate training methods, cooperation between trainers/facilitators and learners, learning sources and evaluation criteria.

Stage 5: Plan the training that conform to the performance and lifestyle of learners.

This phase, the researcher designed and applied another 2 sets of instruments for the research tools as follows:

Set 1: the assessment tools for testing knowledge, attitude, behavior and service mind characteristic of airline personnel.

Set 2: the self-esteem questionnaires that consist of Self-esteem questionnaire, Emotionality

questionnaire, Introvert/extravert questionnaire, and Stress questionnaire.

Phase 3: Implementing the training model. In this Phase, the researcher followed the process of Houle's non-formal education model stage 6, conduct training; with transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory to enhance service mind of the airline personnel that was divided into 3 modules as follows:

Module 1: Airline business trends

Module 2: Service potentiality development

Module 3: Self development

Phase 4: To study the relevant factors and problems in developing and guidelines for using the training model. The information from the Phase 4 was used to improve the training model. In this Phase, the researcher followed the process of Houle's non-formal education training model Stage 7, the training evaluation as follows:

Step 1: Design instrument for interviewing the facilitator/trainer of the experiment group about the developed training model.

Step 2: Analyze the training results from using this training model.

Step 3: Follow up the output of this research after one month of training.

Research Finding

The research findings were divided into 4 main parts based on the research objectives as follows:

Part 1: The results of the training needs and the specific workplace context of airline personnel in organizing service mind training components and activities revealed that they lacked three basic disciplines: a) airline business trends, b) potentiality of services and c) self-development were given emphasis.

Part 2: The results of the proposed training model focused on transformative learning concept and self-esteem theory to enhance service mind of airline personnel consisted of three main factors: a) Basic principles, b) Processes and c) Procedures.

Basic principles referred to (1) the awareness and comprehension of airline customers' necessities, (2) the perspective transformation in service, (3) the self-esteem building, and (4) the physical and psychological wellbeing.

Processes referred to a series of action that all stakeholders should restrict on practical applications to airline personnel's service mind learning consisted of three steps: (1) integration of transformative concept and self-esteem theory, (2) training content delivery, and (3) training activity.

Procedures referred to a set of actions which was the official way of preparing the service mind learning solutions to the developmental training of airline personnel consisted of eight factors: (1) training objectives, (2) participants, (3) trainers and facilitators, (4) training venue, (5) training schedule, (6) training activities

(7) training evaluation.

Part 3: The results of the comparative study of service mind enhancement between the two groups showed that the experimental group obtained more airline business trends, potentiality of services as well as better understanding of service knowledge, attitude, behavior and characteristic. Thereof, by higher means of scores on all theoretical concepts and principles more than the control group equipped with ordinary training themes and approaches. In addition to the score of stress modification revealed that the experimental group using the integration of specific theoretical concepts into service mind training had fewer score on it than the control group at the 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance.

Part 4: The results of an analysis of factors that influenced success, related problems and hindrances as well as the training guidelines for the service mind training model revealed that practitioners and responsive organizational units should be encouraged to pursue ways into accomplishments on service mind, consisted of five components were (1) service experience sharing between functions, (2) transformative learning practices, (3) meditations for self-esteem, (4) body and mind exercise, and (5) trainers.

The results of this research will allow airline personnel be able to develop their own service skills. Furthermore, plus learning how to control emotion by practicing meditation and personality development will increase confidence and self-esteem. The changes from the inner mind in delivering services to airline passengers could enhance the service mind sustainability.

References

- GrÖnroos, Christian. (1990). *Service Management and Marketing: managing the moments of truth in service competition*. Lexinton Books.
- Houle, Cyril O. (1981). *Continuing Learning in the Profession*. U.S.A., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Knowles, Malcolm S., Holton III, Elwood F., and Swanson, Richard A. (1998). *The Adult Learner*. 5th Ed. Houston: Gulf Publishing.
- Lawrence, Denis. (2000). *Building Self-Esteem with Adult Learners*. Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London.
- Mezirow, Jack. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Ratana-bol, Archanya. (1997). *The Process of Non-formal Education Training Model*. Bangkok: Department of Non-formal Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University.
- Zeithaml, Valarie A., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. L. (1990). *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Zeithaml, Valarie A., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A Multi-item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality. *Journal of Retailing*, Spring, 1988.