MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES OF THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL

By

Sasicha Suebsaeng

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)

School of Public Administration
National Institute of Development Administration

ISBN 974-231-247-8

2001
MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES OF THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL

Sasicha Suebsaeng

School of Public Administration

The Examining Committee Approved This Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)

S. Thawong
Professor
Committee Chairman
(Sombat Thamrongthanyawong, Ph.D.)

Suchart Prasith-rathsint
Professor
Committee
(Suchart Prasith-rathsint, Ph.D.)

Fredric William Swierczek
Associate Professor
Committee
(Fredric William Swierczek, Ph.D.)
ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation : Major Factors Affecting Performance of Frontline Employees of Thai Airways International

Author : Mrs. Sasicha Suebsaeng
Degree : Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)
Year : 2001

This research aims at studying major factors affecting performance of frontline employees of Thai Airways International (Public) Company. The objectives of this study are threefold: first, to examine the influence of major factors which include organization climate, participativeness, perceptions of organizational politics, autonomy, organization commitment and group performance on the two facets of performance (work performance and contextual performance); second, to explain the interrelations among these variables; and third, to explore the difference in all relationships among the above set of variables in passenger contact and non-passenger contact frontline employees.

This research is a single organization case study. The conceptual model is developed on the basis of management theories, in which perceived organization behavior and motivation factors have great influence on individual performance.
Research methodology uses an integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis through a survey study and interviews of key informants who are immediate managers of frontline employees.

The research results indicate that there are differences in effects of organization behavior and management factors on performance of different groups of frontline employees. There are four factors which directly affect performance of passenger-contact frontline employees: participativeness, perceptions of organizational politics, autonomy, and organization commitment. In the non-passenger contact group, only two factors have strong influence on performance: autonomy and organization commitment. Essentially, organization commitment has the most significant power in predicting performance in both passenger contact and non-passenger contact frontline employees.

This research suggests that organization commitment of frontline employees should be taken as the organization strength. It should be elevated together with other influential factors such as participativeness and autonomy.

At the same time, management and executives should also put some efforts into trying to minimize the employees' perceptions of organizational politics and instead try to promote their morale in order that they be encouraged to perform to their utmost capability. Decentralization and empowerment can serve as useful tools to promote trust and confidence, prompting frontline employees to perform at international standards.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Dr. Sombat Thamrongthanyawong, Dean of the School of Public Administration, the National Institution of Development Administration (NIDA), the Chairperson; Professor Dr. Suchart Prasith-rathsint, Director of Ph.D. Program in Social Science, Ramkhamhaeng University, Methodologist; and Dr. Fredric William Swierczek, Coordinator of International Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) in Vietnam Program, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Substance Advisor, for their proper guidance and support and most importantly their invaluable advice, constructive comments and suggestions.

I wish to convey my gratitude to the Vice Presidents of Thai Airways International (Public) Company Limited, for their kind coordination in support of the survey and interviews of frontline employees. They are: Mr. Kobchai Srivilas, Executive Vice President of Technical Department, Mr. Kawin Asawachatroj, Vice President of Cargo and Mail Department, Mr. Prasert Khlongwathanakith, Vice President of Subsidiaries and Investments, Flt.Lt. Sukasem Nuangwang, Vice President of Special Project overseeing Ground Support Equipment and Ramp Services, and late Mr. Charnchai Surassananant, former Vice President of Ground Customer Services Department. In particular, I would extend my heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Sumalee Nakorntap, Vice President of Information Technology Services Department, who has given me encouragement and
full support throughout all these years of my doctorate study.

My special thanks go to Associate Professor Dr. Kannikar Sookasem, School of Applied Statistics at National Institute of Development Administration for her guidance and support in data processing and also Associate Professor Surin Niyamangkoorn, Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Kasetsart University, in his support on data processing with the application of path analysis technique.

I owe my special thanks to Dr. Brian Sheehan, Dean of International College, Rangsit University, for his kindness and prompt assistance in editing this dissertation.

I am also grateful to all professors and guest lecturers of this Ph.D. international program who have given knowledge and inspiration for the achievement of the doctoral degree during my study in this program.

Last but not least, I am thankful to my beloved mother, Dr. Sansook Suebsaeng, my brothers, Mr. Sakesom Suebsaeng, and Mr. Sakdisan Suebsaeng, and my son, Mr. Panalert Sirivongse, for being so supportive and understanding. To them and my late father, Dr. Somsakdi Suebsaeng, this work is humbly dedicated.

Sasicha Suebsaeng
November 2001