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Use of Global Distance Education Program in Educational Goals of Airline

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Abstract

Recently there has been an explosive growth in online distance learning which is rapidly transforming traditional learning habits with the more recent ones that uses the latest technology. As establishments nowadays are conscious of the necessity for being more integrative and innovative compared to the past, they question about the need to change management mentality in order to survive in a competitive market. Perceiving human as a value and an important valuable asset, directors of organizations look for the ways of changing of qualifications in workforce. To be able to accomplish this change, they need to alter the organization's training applications to ensure their own survival. Today, organizations tend to improve and gain from the managers out of their own resources by different approaches. As time and financial resources are restricted the newest technologies help them in succeeding this aim. Global distance education is one of the easiest supporters in this regard. In this study the historical developments of Turkish airlines (THY) are succinctly reviewed. Followed by the current position of global distance education in THY is to be highlighted. In this context, Turkish Airlines (THY) and Management Trainee Program of THY are taken as sample. "Harvard ManageMentor" (HMM) is being used for training purposes in Turkish Airlines and the researcher has aimed to explain how this program is being implemented in Turkish Airlines in detail and how the Harvard ManageMentor program corresponds to the needs of THY educational goals. It was concluded that HarvardManage Mentor supported the educational priorities of THY and e-learning programs by time saving and efficiency. Additionally THY educational goals were found to be in harmony with HMM. For further research, the staff of THY whom has been trained under HarvardManage Mentor, could be polled by online surveys. Based on surveys filled out, the results can be used for further discussions and probings.

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1. Introduction

Online education exploits the Internet intended for course supply for the student and educator customarily in different locations. Learners interconnect electronically with the educator and other learners (Sims, Dobb & Hand, 2002). Assignments and assessments are deferred to electronically. Educators, instructional designers, and course developers use technology to present course content. Course content can be presented through recorded lectures, slide presentations, text-based documents, interactive online activities of various forms, audio files, video files, pod casts, wikis, live chat sessions, online discussions, live online presentations, video conferencing, and other methods (Lisa, 2013: 2). Still some other people are observing a “systemic lack of awareness” in appropriate uses of technology in the field of education (Desai, Hart & Richards, 2009: 329).

Nevertheless, the general use of online education brings ease and time effectiveness especially for the working people who have limited time. This issue of time becomes more crucial especially in the tourism industry where the employees of the industry have to deal with people and establish service 24 hours a day and all year the round. Therefore the necessity of online education has to be underlined within the tourism industry. Many corporations have executed online learning to meet training and professional development needs. In a research by Trierweiler and Rivera (2005), participants expected future growth of online learning within their respective businesses. Professionals are utilizing online education to meet continuing education needs. Personal interest classes are also available online which provide opportunities to participate in online courses for almost any topic (Lisa, 2013: 2). Turkish Airlines (THY) THY has on going education programs for the flight cabin and airport personnel and Managerial School-Leaders of Tomorrow. Especially for the staff with managerial position they preferred to use online education of Harvard Manage Mentor.

Professional cultures are usually regarded in educational research as a typical context for acquiring and applying knowledge and skills (Nistor, et al, 2013: 737). Srite et al. (2008) suggested that cultural values influence technology acceptance and use; in particular, individualism/collectivism^a directly influences the use of computer-based learning systems.^b Collectivist societies show eagerness to classroom tutoring whereas individualist societies would find online teaching more efficient. Downey, Wentling, Wentling, and Wadsworth (2005) evaluated the relationship between national culture and the usability of an online learning system and reported that individuals from cultures with low power distance indicators found the system more beneficial as compared to individuals from high power distance^c cultures (quoted from Lee, 2010: 279). Nistor et al. (2013: 736) focused the fact that distance education is a geographical necessity for Turkey and even Downey et al (2005) believes that low power distance individuals prefer online education, or Srite et al. (2008) comments about collectivist cultures about technology and online education (and Turkey with score of 66 seems to be in high power distance group and Turkey, with a score of

^a Turkey, with a score of 37 is a collectivistic society. This means that the “We” is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans or organisations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty. Communication is indirect and the harmony of the group has to be maintained, open conflicts are avoided. The relationship has a moral base and this always has priority over task fulfillment. Time must be invested initially to establish a relationship of trust. (Hofstede Centre, <http://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html>)

^b Hofstede describes culture using five dimensions that were initially identified in a worldwide study among IBM staff (Hofstede 2001): Power distance index (PDI) represents the extent to which the less powerful members of a culture accept the unequal distribution of power within the same culture.

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) deals with the intolerance for unstructured, i.e. novel, unknown, surprising or unusual situations that the members of a society show.

Individualism (IDV) (vs. collectivism) refers to the quality of ties between individuals, and to the degree of integration into cohesive groups within society.

Masculinity (MAS) (vs. femininity) is a preference for assertiveness, achievement and material success; contrasted with femininity, which emphasizes relationships, modesty and caring.

Long-term orientation (LTO) (vs. short-term orientation) comprises values such as thrift and perseverance, as opposed to respect for tradition, the fulfillment of social obligations and face-saving, which are representative of short-term orientation.

^c Turkey scores high on this dimension (score of 66) which means that the following characterises the Turkish style: Dependent, hierarchical, superiors often inaccessible and the ideal boss is a father figure. Power is centralized and managers rely on their bosses and on rules. Employees expect to be told what to do. Control is expected and attitude towards managers is formal. Communication is indirect and the information flow is selective. The same structure can be observed in the family unit, where the father is a kind of patriarch to whom others submit. (Hofstede Centre, <http://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html>)

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