

Reality Shock Affecting the Motivation to Work of New Flight Attendants: An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Flight Attendants Who Left Their Jobs Early

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Abstract : Flight attendant:FA is one of popular occupation, especially in Asian countries, and the decision to be hired is made after clearing a high multiplier. On the other hand, immediately after joining the company, they experience unique stress due to the fact that the organization requires them to perform security and customer service duties in a highly specialized and limited space and time. As a result, despite the high level of difficulty in joining the company, many new recruits retire early at a high rate. It is commonly said that 30% of new graduates leave the company within three years in Japan and speculated that Reality Shock:RS is one of the causes of this. RS is that newcomers experience refers to the stress caused by the difference between pre-employment expectations and post-employment reality. The purpose of this study was to elucidate the mechanism by which the expertise required of new FA and the expectation of expertise held by each of them cause reality shock, which affects motivation and the decision to leave. This study identified the professionalism required of new FA and the impact of that expectation for professionalism on RS through an exploratory study of the experiences and psychological processes of FA who left within three years. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with five FA who left a major Japanese airline at an early stage, and their experiences were categorized, integrated, and classified by qualitative content analysis. They were chosen under a number of controlled conditions. Then two major findings emerged: first, that pre-employment expectations defining RS were hierarchical, and second, that training amplified expectations of professionalism, which strongly influenced early turnover. From these, this study generated a model of RS generative process model of FA that expectations are hierarchical and influential. This could contribute to the prevention of mental health deterioration by reality shock among new FA.

Keywords : reality shock, flight attendant, early turnover, qualitative study

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