RESEARCH ARTICLE

Event Participation Among Airline Management Students: A Case Study at Lapu-Lapu City Aerospace University

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Abstract

Engaging in recreational activities helps students foster creativity, imagination, and physical and cognitive abilities while promoting social interaction. Such activities allow students to explore and master their surroundings while overcoming personal challenges. This study aims to examine the participation of Airline Management students in events at an Aerospace University in Lapu-Lapu City. Following Creswell's approach to data analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face at Indiana Aerospace University. Eight participants from the Bachelor of Science in Airline Management program took part in the study. Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. The analysis revealed key themes: 1) Growth through participation and experience, 2) Overcoming scheduling conflicts, 3) Effective planning and schedule management, and 4) Implementing attendance policies. Findings indicate that students face scheduling challenges due to academic priorities, career goals, and personal commitments. Strategies such as time-blocking and digital tools are used to manage schedules. Students seek meaningful involvement in events that align with their interests and contribute to their holistic development. Moreover, a balanced approach to attendance policies is necessary, acknowledging valid reasons for absences while ensuring accountability. Future research should explore students' motivations, effective planning techniques, event experiences, and attendance policies in greater depth. These insights will contribute to enhancing student engagement and the overall educational experience in aerospace education.

Keywords: *Airline Management, student participation, events*

Introduction

Recreational activities allow students to tap into their creativity and enhance their cognitive and physical abilities while fostering social interaction. These activities help students face their fears and create environments they can control. Recreational and academic activities are essential for students as they encourage physical activity, reduce obesity, improve communication, and aid in adapting to the academic environment. They also enhance readiness for learning and develop problem-solving skills (Edustepup.com, 2022).

Events play a significant role in fostering positivity within an organization by promoting camaraderie among students through engaging academic and social activities. These events are crucial for students in the Airline Management degree program (IAU-AirWatch, 2023). Participation in university events offers students the opportunity to gain new skills, boost self-confidence, and enrich their educational experience (Christison, 2013). For students at Indiana Aerospace University, participating in events such as the Acquaintance Party, Intramurals, Airline Management Day, Students' Day, and various seminars is considered an essential part of their academic journey, where personal development and growth are emphasized (Hospitality & Tourism Society in Indiana, 2023).

Student engagement involves the investment of time, effort, and resources by both students and institutions, aiming to optimize the student experience and enhance both academic outcomes and institutional performance (Trowler, 2010, as cited by Gourley, 2015).

Despite the institution's efforts to encourage participation through incentives like online shopping vouchers, Mendes and Hammett (2020) found that student engagement remained low. When asked, students noted that such activities distracted them from their studies without offering direct benefits. In light of economic constraints faced by higher education institutions, ensuring student success and retention has become crucial, and maximizing student engagement could play a pivotal role in achieving these goals (Gourlay, 2015). The researchers observed these challenges and conducted this study to better understand the participation of Airline Management students in university events, to create a Program Enhancement Plan based on the findings.

Research Question/ Objectives

This study sought to address the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of Airline Management students in participating in events at Indiana Aerospace University?

2. What challenges do Airline Management students encounter in participating in university events?

3. What opportunities can the administration explore to address the challenges faced by students in engaging with university events?

4. What recommendations can be made based on the findings of this study?

Methodology

This study explores the participation of Airline Management students in events at Indiana Aerospace University in Lapu-Lapu City. A qualitative approach was used to investigate the experiences of these students. Qualitative research is an effective method for examining complex phenomena, offering an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The sections below discuss the research design, sampling process, data collection methods, data analysis, and steps taken to ensure trustworthiness.

Research Design

This study utilized a Single Case Study design. According to Yin (2003), a case study approach is appropriate when the research focuses on answering "how" and "why" questions, when the behavior of the participants cannot be manipulated, when the study aims to address contextual factors relevant to the phenomenon, or when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not easily defined.

Participants/Respondents

The participants in this study were eight Airline Management students from Indiana Aerospace University. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. The Program Head of Airline Management helped identify students who met the following criteria: (a) they were enrolled at the university for the 2023–2024 academic year, (b) they had experience participating in university events, and (c) they were proficient in English.

Instruments

Data was primarily collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers. Before conducting the interviews, the researchers received training to ensure consistency in interview techniques and to improve the trustworthiness of the data. Research assistants were enlisted when needed, and all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each participant was assigned a code to maintain anonymity, and all data was stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

Procedure

The study followed Creswell's (2012) seven-phase data collection process: 1) selecting cases that meet the study's criteria, 2) obtaining permission to conduct the study, 3) contacting potential participants while assuring confidentiality and anonymity, 4) starting data collection promptly to maximize the amount of information gathered, 5) documenting interview records, 6) discussing field notes with participants for feedback, and 7) coding and organizing the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face at Indiana Aerospace University. Before data collection, permission to record the interviews was obtained. All information gathered was kept confidential to protect the participants' identities.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is akin to assembling a puzzle, where various pieces such as interviews, notes, and observations are gathered and then analyzed for patterns and themes. Researchers used coding to categorize similar responses and group them by theme (Saldana, 2021). Initially, the data was organized and prepared for analysis, with interview transcripts being carefully reviewed and re-read. Audio recordings were also analyzed. The data was transcribed into a Microsoft Word table organized by questions, with key phrases and sentences grouped under common themes to ensure consistency. Finally, the researchers connected these themes to narrative passages and provided a thorough interpretation of the data's meaning.

Results

Upon reviewing the in-depth interview transcripts for the study titled "A Case Study of the Airline Management Students' Participation in the Events in an Aerospace University in Lapu-Lapu City," the researchers identified the following key themes: 1) Thriving through participation and experiences, 2) Resolving scheduling conflicts, 3) Planning and managing schedules effectively, and 4) Implementing effective attendance policies. Below are the notable statements from the participants:

Theme 1: Thriving through Participation and Experiences

"Thriving through participation and experiences" refers to not just taking part in activities but actively benefiting from those experiences. It involves gaining value, growth, and personal satisfaction through active engagement in different life aspects. It

emphasizes active involvement rather than passive participation.

When Participant 1 was asked about the experiences of airline management students participating in events at Indiana Aerospace University, they mentioned:

"Last year, we participated in the Airline Management Day, which was the first time such an event was organized in our department. I'm grateful for the opportunity because it not only enhanced my academic experience through games relevant to our program, but it also supported my personal growth by fostering communication with classmates and fellow students within the same department."

Participant 2 shared a similar sentiment:

"By taking part in that event, we, as airline management students, gave ourselves the chance to grow, not just as students but as individuals, which helped prepare us for our future careers."

Participant 3 stated:

"Because of my involvement, I met new people and was chosen to lead a team. It was empowering to know people were depending on me, which boosted my confidence and revealed potential I didn't know I had."

Participant 4 also added:

"Joining as a Madriga dancer last year was exhausting, but I enjoyed every moment. The event significantly contributed to my learning, especially socially, as I made friends from other departments."

When asked the same question, Participant 5 commented:

"It was a great experience because, in academics, instructors offer incentives, and I enjoyed participating in the contest. The games helped me discover my competitive nature. Socially, I'm already quite outgoing, but it was nice to see students here showing respect, despite our differences."

Participant 6 shared:

"One event that really impacted me was the flight cabin crew training we had months ago. It improved my skills for emergency situations. Personally, I'm an open book, but I learned something valuable from that training."

Participant 7, however, reflected on a more personal experience:

"I attempted to join, but I felt I couldn't do it. Looking back, I realize I missed out on many opportunities because I let my negative thoughts hold me back."

Finally, Participant 8 mentioned:

"I've participated in Aerodays, played volleyball, and choreographed pop jazz. These experiences have been impactful, particularly in teaching me how to manage my time effectively."

This study supports the theory of participation for youth pursuing independent interests and ambitions, highlighting their role as potential drivers of social change (Alison Taysum, 2020). Active learning, where students show their learning through engagement, is essential for growth (Robert et al., 2020). Research further suggests that involvement in organizations or clubs can offer adolescents a chance to improve academically, boost self-esteem, and explore their identities (Donnell, 2020).

Theme 2: Resolving Scheduling Conflicts

Scheduling conflicts occur when two or more events overlap, creating difficulties for individuals to attend or fulfill all their obligations. The process of managing these conflicts involves finding solutions to prevent clashes in scheduled activities.

Participant 1 shared their experience regarding challenges in engaging with university events:

"Scheduling conflicts and a lack of awareness are major factors that sometimes create a feeling of disconnection from the university community."

Participant 2 echoed this view:

"Logistics, scheduling issues, and the challenges faced by students, such as living far from school, are all factors that hinder participation. When we are given morning practice times, for example, some students face problems with transportation, weather, and timing."

Similarly, Participant 3 noted:

"There are two specific factors that hinder participation: 1) Lack of interest—if students don't find the events relevant to their academic or personal goals, they might not engage. 2) Transportation difficulties—especially for off-campus students or commuters."

Participant 4 mentioned:

"I haven't experienced major obstacles, but I believe the conflict of different schedules among students could pose a challenge."

Participant 5 responded:

"Here in Indiana, schedules aren't always consistent. They change depending on the situation, which can make participation difficult."

Participant 6 added:

"Sometimes the schedule conflicts arise due to large gaps between classes. For instance, when there is a long break between classes, it's not a productive gap, and this affects our participation in events."

Participant 7 also had an experience with scheduling:

"Last night, I wasn't aware of an event hosted by the Engineering department, and if I hadn't attended class, I wouldn't have known about it."

Finally, Participant 8 explained:

"Since I play volleyball and participate in pop jazz, there have been times when I had to choose between events, dropping one to attend the other."

This issue calls for more effective scheduling strategies to resolve conflicts and enhance participant availability. It has been proposed that one way to address these issues is through host-to-host negotiation schemes and scheduling re-optimization, where event timings are adjusted based on participants' availability (Steffan Boodhoo & Patrick Hosein, 2017).

Theme 3: Planning and Managing Schedules Effectively

Effective planning and management of schedules is vital for personal and professional success. It involves allocating time and resources efficiently to achieve set goals and requires ongoing learning and adaptability to enhance productivity.

Participant 1 expressed:

"I believe that implementing a flexible scheduling system that considers students' academic commitments would help improve attendance at events."

Participant 2 suggested:

"Improved communication would help us better address our concerns and requirements, which would make event participation more manageable."

Participant 3 supported this idea:

"I believe better planning and collaboration between event organizers, school officials, instructors, and staff would help improve future activities."

Participant 4 recommended:

"Event organizers should allocate ample time for each activity and consider the schedules of all students involved."

Participant 5 added:

"Students should not be forced into activities that disrupt their focus on classes. Scheduling should be followed strictly to avoid conflicts."

Participant 6 suggested:

"Perhaps event schedules should be shared well in advance, and exemptions should be given for students who can't attend due to prior commitments."

Participant 7 opined:

"Students should be motivated to attend events not because they are required but because they genuinely want to be involved."

Finally, Participant 8 shared:

"More incentives should be provided for students attending events to encourage better participation and attract a larger audience for future activities."

Effective scheduling involves clear plans and proper management to prevent delays and improve productivity (K. Deepika, 2016).

Theme 4: Implementing Effective Attendance Policies

Establishing effective attendance policies is crucial for maintaining a productive educational or work environment. These policies should balance flexibility and accountability to create a positive atmosphere. Regular assessments of the policy's effectiveness are needed to make necessary adjustments.

Participant 1 mentioned,

"I think Ms. Hermione is a good model for promoting student engagement. Her approach inspired me to pursue a career as a flight attendant and businesswoman."

Participant 2 observed,

"The acquaintance party was a successful event because it gave students a chance to meet, collaborate, and showcase their talents, which also helped build confidence."

Participant 3 shared:

"Last year's Acceptance Rites in the Aviation Department were well-organized and successful, with almost all students participating."

Participant 4 added,

"I haven't experienced much in the way of successful event models at other universities, but the Aviation Department's acquaintance party was a fun and entertaining event."

Participant 5 noted:

"Compared to events at USJR, here at Indiana, events often don't have a clear schedule and are rushed. At USJR, there's more time for preparation and practice."

Participant 6 shared:

"I've seen many successful flight attendants who have inspired me, but I believe Indiana should focus more on students' personality development within the program."

Participant 7 mentioned:

"I've noticed that some events are unique, such as the confetti drop, which isn't done here at Indiana. Despite this, many of my friends attended the event."

Participant 8 suggested:

"Indiana should try events similar to those at USJR, where attendance is mandatory, and they could include more attractive sports."

This suggests that attendance policies can benefit from clear expectations for students, with adjustments to encourage participation and enhance course outcomes (Comeford, 2022).

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the participation of Airline Management students in events at an Aerospace University in Lapu-Lapu City, revealing important insights into the various factors influencing their engagement. Based on the perspectives of the eight participants, four key themes emerged: "Thriving through participation and experiences," "Resolving scheduling conflicts," "Planning and managing schedules effectively," and "Implementing effective attendance policies." These themes illustrate the complexity of the students' experiences and highlight the different aspects of their involvement.

The findings indicate that students are motivated by a range of factors when addressing scheduling conflicts, including academic obligations, career goals, personal commitments, and the desire for a well-rounded university experience. These diverse motivations point to the need for flexible scheduling systems that accommodate the unique needs of each student.

Additionally, the research emphasizes the critical role of effective planning and schedule management. Students use various strategies, such as time-blocking, prioritization, and digital tools, to balance their academic and extracurricular activities. This underscores the importance of developing strong time management skills and providing the necessary resources to support students in their planning efforts.

The study also highlights the importance of crafting attendance policies that strike a balance between flexibility and accountability. Students value policies that recognize legitimate reasons for absence while encouraging consistent participation. This suggests that attendance policies should be tailored to address the diverse needs and situations of students.

Finally, future research in this area can expand on these findings by exploring students' motivations, planning methods, event experiences, and the effectiveness of attendance policies. This deeper exploration can provide valuable contributions to improving the student experience in aerospace education and help educational institutions enhance student engagement and success.

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