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THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION, AND BEHAVIOUR OF PASSENGERS ON THREE LOW-COST CARRIERS WHICH OFFER OPERATING SERVICES IN THAILAND

ORAPHAN DECHA¹

ABSTRACT

Low-cost carriers or budget airlines are an operation model running on simplified routes with point-to-point transit services: they adopt all strategies business such as choice of the secondary airport, the ways of selling tickets, fast turnaround times. Usually it will mainly focus on short-haul flight routes between 400 and 600 nautical miles, without catering and entertainment services on the flight. The strategy will cut down the price to a lower level and they can have saved will any benefit for the passengers. Low-cost carriers have changed the traditional idea of air travel.

This paper presents the attitudes towards service quality, satisfaction, and behaviour of passengers for three low-cost carriers which offer operating services in Thailand. The survey questionnaire was designed and administered to 110 respondents, passengers who used the services.

The survey questionnaire was designed and administered to 110 passengers who travelled on one of the three low-cost airlines operating in Thailand which were surveyed proceeding one weeks with the four hypotheses as service quality and passenger's satisfaction, satisfaction and word-of-mouth, satisfaction and repurchase intention, and satisfaction and feedback by using the performance component of the service quality scale is SERVPERF as an instrument.

The sampling found that the dimension's importance of service quality tested as flight schedules, flight attendants, tangibles, and ground staff; those things can be able to explaining the passenger satisfaction. Mostly influenced to passengers are flight schedule, it will be positive in word-of-mouth communication and get repurchase again for the next time. The passenger did not prefer to flight changing which they will be complaint the services. The sampling cannot define the causality impacts of service quality, satisfaction, and behaviour. Moreover, satisfaction with the airline industry is based on service quality. In addition, the research should have several satisfy factor. The study has not definitively established causality among the attitudes towards service quality, satisfaction, and behaviour intentions. Moreover, the satisfaction is based only on service quality. Further future research should examine the causality and other possible satisfaction factors.

The managers of low-costs airlines who have not traditionally placed a high priority on quality should be aware of the importance of service quality and passenger satisfaction for determining the behavioural intentions of passengers by low-cost carriers.

Keywords: Service quality, Customer satisfaction, Low-cost carriers

INTRODUCTION

The aviation sector has become the most important segment in the economic development of a nation. It plays a vital role in moving people or products from one place to another, be it domestic or international, especially when the distances involved are far. In a highly competitive environment the provision of high quality services to passengers is the core competitive advantage for an airline's profitability and sustained growth. In the past decade,

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as the air transportation market has become even more challenging, many airlines have turned to focus on airline service quality to increase service satisfaction. Service quality influences a firm's competitive advantage by retaining customer patronage, and with this comes market share. Delivering high quality service to passengers is essential for airline survival, so airlines need to understand what passengers expect from their services.

According to ITF (2000), the operation of the low-cost carrier model involves point-to-point services, usually low-cost carriers will pointy on short-haul flights of between 400 and 600 nautical miles, with no catering or entertainment service in-flight. The special characteristics of low-cost carriers are that they typically use secondary airports, have standardised fleets and do not offer any frequent flyer programmes. The no-frill business model, based on providing affordable services to their customers, might include online booking, self check-in, and limitations on both the weight and the number of checked bags. In addition, low-cost carriers may charge for extra food, priority seating and boarding, and flight entertainment.

The behavioural intentions of customers are recognised in the literature as significant predictor of the profitability of service enterprises (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Anderson et al., 1994; Slater and Narver, 1995; Supattra, 2014). The costs and the revenue of firms are affected by repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth recommendation, and customer feedback. Moreover, there is strong evidence that service quality has either a direct influence on the behavioural intentions of customers and an indirect influence on intentions, mediated through customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Cronin et al., 2000).

Passengers' perceptions of low-cost airlines and full-service carriers

Low-cost carriers have remodelled the competitive environment within broadened markets and have made an important effect in the world's domestic passenger markets, which had earlier been largely controlled by full-service carriers. Table 1 provides a summary of the characteristics that differentiate between main network carriers and no-frills carriers.

Table 1: Product features of low-cost and full-service carriers

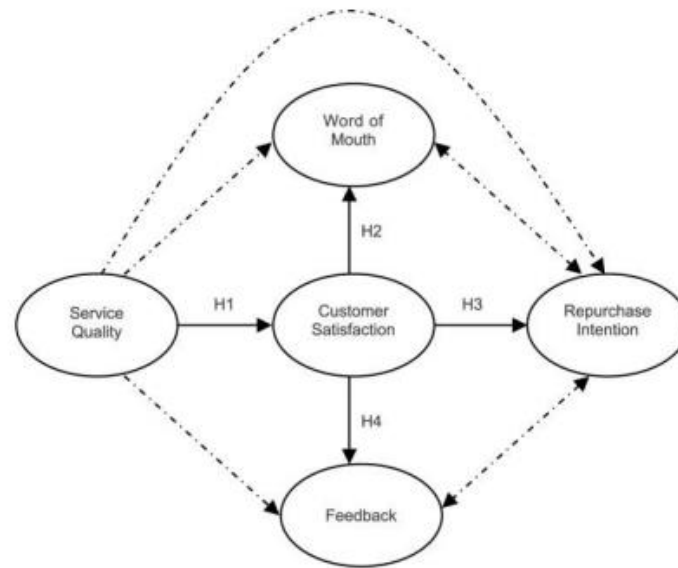
Product features	Low-cost carriers	Full-service carriers
Brand	One brand: low fare	Brand extensions: fare and service
Fares	Simplified fare structure	Complex fare structure and yield management
Distribution	Online and direct	Online, direct, travel agent
Check-in	Booking	Ticketless, IATA ticket contract
Airports	Ticketless	Primary
Connections	Secondary	Interlining, code share, global
Class	Point-to-point	Alliances
Segmentation	One class (high density)	Two class (mixture of seating capacity)
In-flight	Pay for convenience	
Aircraft	Very high	Complementary extras
Turnaround time	25 minutes turnaround	Medium to high: Union contracts
Product	One product: low fare Advertising on board	Multiple integrated product Low turnaround: congestion/labour
Ancillary	Sales	Multiple integrated product Focus on the primary products
Aircraft type	Single type commonality	Multiple types scheduling complexities
Seating	Small pitch, no assignment	Generous pitch, offers seat assignment

Customer services	Generally underperforms	Full service, offers reliability
Operational activities	Focus on core (flying)	Extension maintenance, cargo

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

A conceptual model for the present research is presented in Figure 1, showing the conceptual framework for the research. This model depicts certain hypothesised relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intention.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the research



Hypothesis regarding service quality and satisfaction

H1. Perceived service quality positively influences passengers' satisfaction

Although a relationship between service quality and satisfaction is suspected in the literature, it is probable in the context of the newly established Thai low-cost carriers that satisfaction is influenced by perceived service quality. Passengers of airlines gather a great deal of their experience through direct experience (Powpaka, 1996). Tangible dimensions and service-delivery practices are essential in this experience because airlines are qualified by limited passenger interactions and customisation (Schmener, 1986).

Hypothesis regarding satisfaction and word-of-mouth

H2. Passenger satisfaction positively influences positive word-of-mouth

Although both satisfied and dissatisfied customers might relate their activities through word-of-mouth, the literature advises that customers who are satisfied provide more frequent and more positive word-of-mouth exposure.

Hypothesis regarding satisfaction and repurchase intention

H3. Passenger satisfaction positively influences repurchase intention

Satisfied customers are normally more loyal in terms of repurchase behaviour unless costs become very high or better opportunities are available elsewhere. Anton (1996, p. 47) explained that customers switch suppliers because they are not satisfied with a company's perceived worth, relative to the competition.

Hypothesis regarding satisfaction and feedback

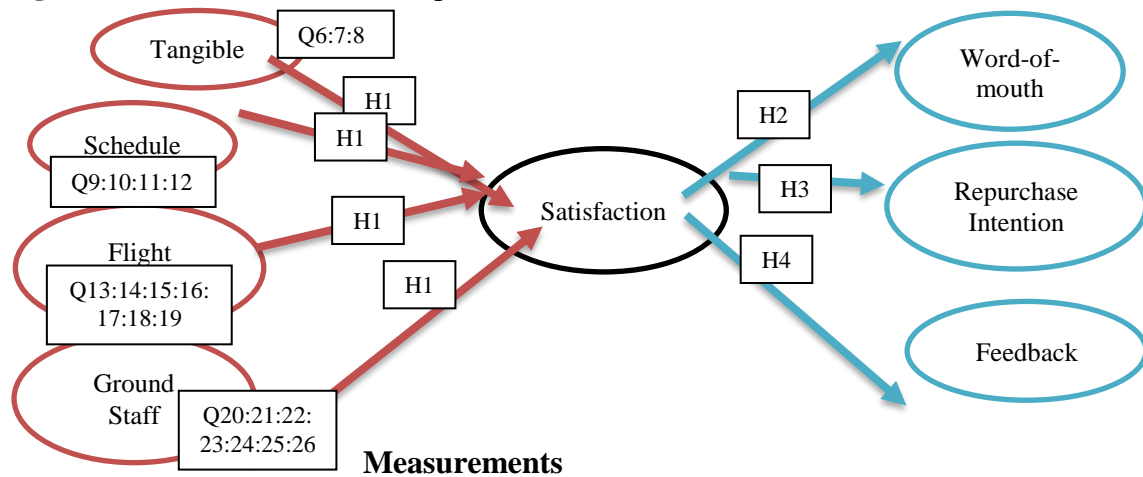
H4. Passenger satisfaction negatively influences level of feedback.

Customers tend to provide negative feedback when they are dissatisfied with the service. Nonetheless, if customers respect that the service provider has tried to improve the worst services or if they attribute the poor service to external causes, dissatisfaction and negative feedback are less likely to happen. In the case of airline services, passengers are often unable to identify the causes of poor services such as they might not be able confident whether flight delays are due to bad weather or to maintenance failure on the part of the airline. Therefore, customers might use expectation or satisfaction as a proxy for the level of quality that they should receive.

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

The sample for the study consisted of passengers who had flown on any of the three low-cost carriers in Thailand in 2015. The passengers for the sample were desired by a quota sample ensure are balancing an equal on representation of all low-cost carriers in accordance with the size of their operations in terms of flights per week, such as Thai Air Asia (54.9%), Nok Air (42.4%) and Thai Lion Air (2.7%). Data were collected using primary data sources. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, which consisted of three sections on the following aspects: first, choice of low-cost airlines; second, service quality are focus on SERVPERE instrument; satisfaction, such as fares being reasonable, airline's service and overall of airlines; and behavioural intention, such as word-of-mouth repurchase intention, and passenger feedback; third, demographic profile of respondents. The questions were phrased in the form of statements scored on five-point Likert type scale; ranking from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

Questionnaires were distributed to passengers waiting in the departure and arrival lounge of the domestic airport (Don-Mueng International Airport) in Bangkok, and downloading web-links by online questionnaire and sending a link through social channels, such as Facebook and line chat application programmes. The survey was managed on February 2015. A total of 110 completed questionnaires were received from passengers of Thai Air Asia (52 persons), Nok Air (48 persons), Thai Lion Air (12 persons), and other airlines (two persons). The mean age of respondents was 26–35 years and 45.5 per cent were female. About 48.2 per cent were Thai nationals. The Thai respondents had an average monthly income of 20,000–40,000 THB at the time that the study was conducted. The respondents had made on average 2.5 flights (36.4%) in the preceding past five years. Approximately half of all respondents (46.4%) had travelled for visits to family or friends, another third (39.1%) for leisure purposes, and the remainder for business and meeting with the officer.

Figure 2: Model specifications with variables

Service quality. The service quality dimensions used in the study were developed based on a focus group discussion with seven experienced customers of low-cost carrier services; and the SERVPERF instrument (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). In the focus group, the traditional dimensions of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness were discussed to evaluate their appropriateness for measurement of service quality in the context of low-cost carrier services. The discussion resulted in a general with regard to four broad factors: (1) tangible factors, such as the newness of the airplane, and seats; (2) flight schedule factors, such as convenience of routes schedule, on-time departure and arrivals, and flight cancellations; (3) flight attendants, such as good attitudes, helpful, prompt service, and friendliness with the passengers; and (4) ground staff, such as high speed of service on the ground, easy to manage time and increased passenger satisfied. In all, a total of 21 items were primarily developed for four constructs (three; Q6, 7, 8 for tangibles, four; Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12 for schedule, and seven each; Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19 for flight attendants, and ground staff; Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26). All items were measured on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Satisfaction.

Passenger satisfaction was measured by reference to three items: (1) satisfaction with fares, (2) satisfaction with services, and (3) overall satisfaction with the airline. These items were developed from a value-based definition of customer satisfaction that is widely used in the literature (Heskett et al., 1994; Schneider and Bowen, 1995). All items were measured on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Behavioural intention.

Items for feedback, word-of-mouth, and repurchase intention were adopted from Soderlund (1998). All items were measured on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Data analysis

Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 18. The first sector is frequencies analysis of demographic factors (Table 1), such as gender; age; education; occupation; and income per month. Another frequencies analysis of low-cost airline choices by the question consisted of travelled by low-cost airline, which low-cost airline in Thailand, total times have flown in last five years, purpose of travel, and ticket distribution. The second sector is descriptive analysis of statistical means, standard deviations, and

correlation were calculated for all constructs. T-test was used as a way of testing the hypothesis and regression analysis was executed to examine the relationships between variables. This is in line with what has been used in similar empirical studies: for example were used Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis for using with Microsoft Excel and 18 to analyse data collection. Reliability and validity were used Cronbach α was test the internal consistency for all items under respective variables. Hair et al. (1998) advise that a Cronbach α coefficient over 0.6 is adequate for basic research. The reliability of each construct was assessed by using the Cronbach α measure, which is the experiment was ranging from 0.604 to 0.863, indicating that the scale is internally consistent and reasonably free of measurement error. To ensure the quality of the study tool, a pilot study was also carried out, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability of various service factor and satisfaction factor.

Factor	Number of statements	Number of cases	Cronbach's α
Tangibles	3	110	0.712
Flight schedule	4	110	0.702
Ground staff	7	110	0.863
Flight attendant	7	110	0.823
Passenger satisfaction	3	110	0.657
Repurchase intention			
Word-of-mouth	2	110	0.798
Feedback	2	110	0.604
	2	110	0.688

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of mean and standard deviations

Descriptive statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	
Tan1	110	1	5	3.77	.864	
Tan2	110	1	5	3.82	.911	
Tan3	110	1	5	3.62	.908	
FS1	110	1	5	3.38	1.049	
FS2	110	1	5	3.66	.911	
FS3	110	1	5	3.72	.900	
FS4	110	1	5	3.29	1.199	
GS1	110	1	5	3.79	1.024	
GS2	110	1	5	3.73	1.149	
GS3	110	1	5	3.25	1.119	
GS4	110	1	5	3.52	.896	
GS5	110	1	5	2.73	1.172	
GS6	110	1	5	3.63	1.039	
GS7	110	1	5	3.51	1.115	
FA1	110	1	5	3.39	1.024	
FA2	110	1	5	3.79	.879	
FA3	110	1	5	3.65	.841	
FA4	110	1	5	3.50	.916	
FA5	110	1	5	3.45	.973	
FA6	110	1	5	3.64	.974	
FA7	110	1	5	3.69	1.064	
PS1	110	1	5	3.81	.840	
PS2	110	1	5	3.73	.877	
PS3	110	1	5	3.83	.833	
RI1	110	1	5	3.69	1.064	
RI2	110	1	5	3.56	.914	
WM1	110	2	5	3.62	.928	
WM2	110	1	5	3.48	.965	
FB1	110	1	5	3.52	.896	
FB2	110	1	5	3.72	.900	
Valid N (list wise)	110					

As shown in Table 3, the passengers were obviously content with the overall quality of airline services, as demonstrated by the mean satisfaction (passenger satisfaction; PS1, PS2, PS3) score of 3.79 and the mean service quality scores between 3.45 (ground staff; GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS5, GS6, GS7) and 3.59 (flight schedule; FS1, FS2, FS3, FS4, and flight attendant; FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, FA6, FA7), all on a five-point scale. With regard to the service quality, respondents were least satisfied with the measurement of schedule; with a mean score of 3.59. The standard deviation on ground staff is 1.073, which was greater than with other dimensions, which indicate that the respondents tended to have extreme views about the airline's ground staff services, even though lower satisfaction ratings were influent. Respondents generally conferred a positive rating on behavioural intentions. Provision of feedback to the service providers had a mean score of 3.62, passengers' repeat purchase intentions had a mean score of 3.63, and positive word-of-mouth communications to friends and families had a mean score of 3.55.

The relationship between passenger satisfaction and feedback is relatively moderate ($r=0.569$): it is a positive relationship (opposite to the negative relationship commonly explained in the literature). It is clear that satisfied airline passengers also provide feedback to the airlines; however, they do so at a lower level of intensity. The extremely strong relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intentions, $r = 0.557$ (repurchase intention), is related to word-of-mouth communication, which indicates that passengers who were satisfied with the service were more likely to recommend positive things to their families and friends. The finding provides empirical support for the argument that passenger's judgements of service quality of low-cost airlines in Thailand influence their level of satisfaction, and this level of satisfaction in turn influences their behavioural intentions.

Testing of hypotheses

H1. Perceived service quality positively influences passengers' satisfaction

Table 4: Results of the R square analysis for H1: Service quality positively influences passengers' satisfaction

Model summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.771 ^a	.594	.579	.41719

a. Predictors: (constant), flight attendance, flight schedule, tangible, ground staff

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.776	4	6.694	38.461	.000 ^b
	Residual	18.275	105	.174		
	Total	45.051	109			

a. Dependent variable: passenger satisfaction

b. Predictors: (constant), flight attendance, flight schedule, tangible, ground Staff

The model summary table shows that R square = 0.594. This means the service quality variable (flight attendant, flight schedule, tangibles, and ground staff) positively influences passenger satisfaction approximately 59.4%.

Table 5: Results of the regression analysis for H1: Service quality positively influences passengers' satisfaction

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.882	.245		3.599	.000
	Tangible	.281	.078	.312	3.614	.000
	Flight schedule	.054	.069	.063	.785	.434
	Ground staff	.115	.082	.143	1.401	.164
	Flight attendant	.353	.104	.366	3.384	.001

a. Dependent variable: passenger satisfaction

From the coefficients table as shown the standardised coefficients (Beta) of the four paths (flight attendant, flight schedule, tangible, and ground staff) were 0.366, 0.063, 0.312 and 0.143, respectively. The critical ratios (t-values) for these paths were 3.384, 0.785, 3.614, and 1.401. These findings provide support for H1. The dimension of tangible (aircraft convenience) is the most important aspect of service quality for passenger satisfaction, whereas the least important is the flight schedule.

H2. Passenger satisfaction positively influences positive word-of-mouth

Table 6: Results of the R square analysis for H2: Passenger satisfaction positively influences for word-of-mouth

Model summary				
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.626 ^a	.392	.387	.62749

a. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.451	1	27.451	69.720	.000 ^b
	Residual	42.524	108	.394		
	Total	69.975	109			

a. Dependent variable: word-of-mouth

b. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

The model summary table shows that R square = 0.392. This means the passenger service variable positively influences positive word-of-mouth approximately 39.2%.

Table 7: Results of the regression analysis for H2: Passenger satisfaction positively influences word-of-mouth

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.593	.359		1.652	.102
	Passenger satisfaction	.781	.093	.626	8.350	.000

a. Dependent variable: word-of-mouth

From the coefficients table, as shown, the standardised coefficients (Beta) of passenger satisfaction was 0.626. The critical ratio (t-values) for these paths was 8.350. These findings provide support for H2. It is apparent that satisfied passengers respond strongly in terms of positive word-of-mouth.

H3. Passenger satisfaction positively influences repurchase intention

Table 8: Results of the R square analysis for H3: Passenger satisfaction positively influences repurchase intention

Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.557 ^a	.310	.304	.75494

a. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.665	1	27.665	48.539	.000 ^b
	Residual	61.554	108	.570		
	Total	89.218	109			

a. Dependent variable: repurchase intention

b. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

The model summary table shows that R square = 0.310. This means passenger satisfaction positively influences repurchase intentions approximately 31%.

Table 9: Results of the regression analysis for H3: Passenger satisfaction positively influences repurchase intention

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.659	.432		1.525	.130
	Passenger satisfaction	.784	.112	.557	6.967	.000

a. Dependent variable: repurchase intention

The coefficients table shows that the standardised coefficient (Beta) of the passenger satisfaction was 0.557. The critical ratio (t-values) for these paths was 6.967. These findings provide support for H3. It is apparent that the significant on the level of satisfaction, the more likely it is that the customers with travel with the same airline for their next journey.

H4. Passenger satisfaction negatively influences level of feedback.

Table 10: Results of the R square analysis for H4: Passenger satisfaction negatively influences level of feedback

Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.569 ^a	.324	.318	.64747

a. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.688	1	21.688	51.733	.000 ^b
	Residual	45.276	108	.419		
	Total	66.964	109			

a. Dependent variable: feedback

b. Predictors: (constant), passenger satisfaction

The model summary table shows that R square = 0.318. This means passenger satisfaction negatively influences the level of feedback approximately 31.8%.

Table 11: Results of the regression analysis for H4: Passenger satisfaction negatively influences level of feedback

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.990	.371		2.672	.009

Passenger satisfaction	.694	.096	.569	7.193	.000
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a. Dependent variable: feedback

From the coefficients table, as shown the standardised coefficient (Beta) of the passenger satisfaction was 0.569. The critical ratio (t-values) for these paths was 7.193. These findings do not support H4. It is apparent that passengers who were satisfied with the service quality were more likely to provide feedback, which is opposed to the findings commonly reported in the literature.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be stated that the characteristics of low-cost airlines added more variety to the airline industry and made it more competitive and attractive. The resulting of dynamics which seem due to the change in the business models and market conditions, should be considered a chance for the airlines and the passengers. Although the passengers now have a huge choice, the airlines that are most receptive and creative will turn out to be successful. However, airlines must be cautious that they do not forget once again that in the end the passenger makes the choice. For instance, ancillary revenue must remain optional and must form a smaller part of the ticket price. Additional charges for services that are not really considered optional will break the relationship between the passenger and the airline. Finally, passengers will buy tickets from airlines they believe offer a fair deal. In the market, which offers a variety of alternative business models, there will always be a competitor who will do it differently.

The three low-cost airlines in Thailand have encountered persistent financial shorted since they are starting in the low-cost airline market. The factor of broken the revenues over which low-cost airlines have little control such as high fuel prices, internal departments, the entrenched position of dominant full services airlines, and political session. Despite evidence that prosperous low-cost airlines in other parts of the world have not only offered low fares to their passengers but also have been responsive to services quality that the airline provides to passengers, Thai low-cost airlines have infrequently adopted measures to improve on service quality and passenger satisfaction as a solution to their problems. The current study investigated whether service quality and satisfaction influences passengers' behavioural intentions including word-of-mouth, repurchase intention, and provision of feedback in the case of low-cost airlines operating in Thailand, such as Thai AirAsia, Nok Air, and Thai Lion Air.

The findings of the study are compatible with those of prior research in the conclusion that the impact of service quality is an important determinant of customer satisfaction and quality and satisfaction influence behavioural intentions regarding word-of-mouth, repurchase intentions, and feedback. More specially, passengers are pointed of overall satisfaction with the four dimensions of service quality are examined, such as tangibles, flight schedule, flight attendants, and ground staff. In this regard, it is interesting that the dimension of flight schedule had the lowest mean rating, which differs from the other dimensions. Nonetheless, the correlation between flight schedule and passenger satisfaction is average, very low, which indicates that should be more improvement in flight schedule as this is a significant problem that requires attention for Thai low-cost airlines. The dimensions of flight attendants and tangibles had a significant influence on satisfaction. Therefore, the service that is offered by ground staff and flight attendants very strongly influences passenger satisfaction in the case study.

In contrast to the findings ordinarily reported in the literature, the current study found a positive relationship between the level of satisfaction and feedback to the service provider. This finding suggest that low-cost carrier passengers provide positive feedback if their expectations are met (and negative feedback if they are unmet, at a very low level). Moreover, the study finds that passengers who do not intend to provide negative feedback are likely to remain silent

and turn to other airlines. Examination of the connections among service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions exposes that satisfaction plays a direct role in improving passengers' intentions to become involved in word-of-mouth activities and repurchase. However, satisfaction has a weaker correlation with the provision of feedback: unsatisfied customers are inclined to move to other airlines. Passengers who engage in word-of-mouth activities were found to become loyal customers subsequently. Having more satisfied passengers is thus shown to be important in developing loyal passengers.

Implications

The findings of the study have significant implications for managers of low-cost airlines, especially in terms of: the quality of services that are provided; and the significant influence that satisfaction has on the behavioural intentions of their customers. Managers should be aware that, among the various dimensions of service quality, reliability of flight schedule was especially significant in supporting the satisfaction of the customers of Thai low-cost airlines. It is apparent that timely operation of the flight schedules is critical for customer satisfaction. In addition, the satisfaction of passengers was significantly influenced by the performance of the flight attendants and the quality of the interior of the aircraft, such as technology, aircraft type, and comfortable seating. It is thus apparent that managers of low-cost airlines in Thailand could improve for the customer satisfaction by maintaining or improving the quality of services offered by their flight attendants and the quality of the tangibles connected with the service. It is also apparent that the use of customer complaints (received through a website or other means) as a performance pointer is supported by the current findings. The satisfaction of passengers in this study has a significant relationship with feedback.

Limitations and suggestions

The study has several acknowledged limitations. The first relates to the generalisability of the findings. Although the study is generalised a large sample, it is necessary to be cautious in applying the findings only in the context of Thai low-cost airlines because: people who travel on low-cost airlines in Thailand represent a relatively high-income group of the population; and Thailand is unlike other South-East Asian countries in offering good land transportation to all parts of the country. Second, passenger satisfaction in this study was rather narrowly conceived in terms of only four dimensions of service quality. Although 54.5% of the variation in passenger satisfaction was explained by the four service dimensions studied here, the remaining 45.5% is explained by other factors that were examined in this study, but the result is very low. For example, passenger satisfaction might be influenced by such factors as financial incentives for flight delays, the image of the low-cost airlines, and clear in airfares. It might be worth undertaking future studies to include these, and other factors, to assess their explanatory power. The third limitation concerns the method of analysis of the study. The findings regarding the causal relationships among service quality, passenger satisfaction, and behavioural intentions in this study are therefore provisional. Further research should be conducted with panel study data to investigate these causal relationships (Biddle and Martin, 1987).

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