

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	Thailand Airport Operation Model for the Low-Cost Carriers
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An expansion of low-cost carriers (LCC) has increased the number of air passengers and visitors within a tourism system. This growth has also challenged airports by shaping their operations. This study came forth because of the deficiency of research on the links between Thailand airport operations and low-cost carriers, and the airport operational pattern for such carriers. Thus, the purposes of the study were to 1) study the operational efficiency of Thailand airports from low-cost carriers' perspectives, 2) investigate levels of importance and efficiency in operational attributes and operational procedures of Thailand airports, 3) analyze low-cost carrier passengers' requirements toward Thailand airports' operational attributes, and 4) propose Thailand airport operation model for the low-cost carriers.

A review of literature comprehended the matter of airport operation. Consequently, nine operational procedures and 33 operational attributes were extracted in order to measure operational efficiency of Thai airports.

Mixed research methodology was employed in this study. 423 sets of questionnaires were distributed to collect quantitative data from LCC passengers whereas semi-structured interviews were also conducted to collect qualitative data from 27 LCC passengers, 30 LCC staff, and 7 airport executives in four Thai airports during November to December 2013. Content analysis was used on interview results while descriptive statistics (i.e., frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (i.e., paired sample t-test and ANOVA) as

well as Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) were employed for the analysis of quantitative data.

The research results found that, 1) in low-cost carriers' views, Thailand airports were efficient in providing a number of security check points, security agency cooperation, standard safety equipment, a wide range of ancillary services, friendly staff, and regular meetings with airline representatives. However, capabilities of security staff, airline and passenger facilities, language ability and attitudes of airport staff, service allocation, unequal treatment, price of food & goods, and terminal function designs were areas of inefficiency, 2) safety & security, washrooms, information services, parking facilities, connecting gates, and Wi-Fi showed high importance levels whilst most attributes and procedures were at a 'somewhat efficient' level, 3) LCC passengers required better services on overall areas; especially, internet connections, washrooms, connecting gates, security, information, parking facilities, eating facilities, and ground transport connection, 4) 'Thailand airport operation model for the low-cost carriers' was then proposed with specific requirements on operational procedures with four operational components (i.e., safety & security, facilities & equipment, services & staff, and infrastructure).