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Relationship between Passengers' Service Quality and Perception of Airline Communication towards Selection of New Normal Flight Service

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Abstract

This research aimed to 1) To study personal factors of passengers towards selection of new normal flight service 2) To measure passengers' service quality level in new normal flight service 3) To measure the levels of passengers' perception of airline communication in new normal flight service and 4) To study the relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service. The researcher used the questionnaire instrument and distributed the 400 questionnaires to respondents. The statistical analysis was frequency, mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Correlation. The results of the study found that most of the respondents were business owners (=22.00%). The results of perceived service quality level from service quality dimensions were highest at assurance (mean = 4.31) and then reliability at high level (mean = 4.16). The overall perceived service quality was at high level (mean = 4.12). The relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service was at a moderate level ($r=0.454$).

Keywords: Service Quality, Airline, New Normal

Introduction

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, passengers did not use airline more frequently because of fear and uncertainty of airline services. However, some passengers need to fly with consideration of service quality and effective communication from the airline. The service qualities are such as procedure, caring of passengers, etc. The passengers need more confidence and service quality from flying. Since service is intangible and invisible, there is a need for communication from airlines towards the passengers. The communication included knowledge, updated information and so on. This research aimed to study the relationship between passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service.

Objectives

1. To study personal factors of passengers towards selection of new normal flight service
2. To measure passengers' service quality level in new normal flight service
3. To measure the levels of passengers' perception of airline communication in new normal flight service
4. To study the relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service.

Research Questions

1. What are the personal factors of passengers?
2. What level of passengers' service quality in new normal flight service?
3. What level of passengers' perception of airline communication in new normal flight service?
4. What are the relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service?

Literature Review and Theory

This research includes concepts, theories and related researches as 1) perceived service quality and service quality dimensions 2) Communication Theory 3) New Normal and 4) Related Researches.

Perceived service quality is the service quality perceived from service users. Service quality is created by service provider and should meet the needs and satisfy service users. The perceived service should be higher than expectation (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeitham, 1990) and service quality dimensions which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Communication Theory can be defined as the process by which a message is transmitted by a person. Send a message to the receiver to convey an idea or message from the source to the recipient with the intention causing the recipient to change some behavior of the recipients (Everett and Floyd, 1971). Communication affects another one's mind. Therefore, it includes writing, speaking, music image and human behavior (Weaver, 1953). Effective communication depends on the communication process and elements such message, media,

sender, and receivers (Berlo, 1960). During covid-19,

New normal is a way of life happened after a change, such as covid-19. New normal is a way that people change their lifestyles and behaviors and then practically behave in the society (Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, 2019). For aviation industry, CAAT or the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand announced the condition of new normal when coronavirus disease 2019 spread. During the covid-19 outbreak the airlines and passengers need to follow the announcement strictly, which are 1. passengers needs to show the test results of Covid-19 check by RT-PCR or Antigen Test Kit (ATK) 2. airline needs to arrange space and skip the seats 3. airline needs to communicate updated information of Covid-19 spread and 4) airline needs to consider the rules and regulations during covid-19 spread such as prohibition of eating and drinking during flight and maintained the hygiene operation at all time.

The related researches are a study on tourism behavior of Thai tourists during the epidemic situation of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) (Rojanapanitikul and Ngaoprasertwong, 2019), Analysis of the COVID-19 Response: Impact on the Aviation Industry (Seanyen et al, 2020), Factors influencing the change in new normal tourism behavior after the Covid-19 epidemic (Keawchoo, 2020) and factors affecting the selection of a new normal Thai travel (Tangtenglam and Pongpanich, 2021).

Methodology

The researcher developed the questionnaire instrument from the concepts of service quality dimensions and distributed the questionnaires to 400 samples who were the passengers traveling during pandemic period. There is a screen question asking the questionnaire respondents about experience of flying in 2020-2021 when there was covid-19 pandemic spread duration. The questionnaires divided into 3 parts as 1) personal data 2) service quality dimension as empathy, assurance, responsiveness, reliability and tangibles and 3) airline communication. The statistical analysis in the study was frequency, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson’s Correlation. The 5 level Likert’s Scale was used to measure (1 as lowest and 5 as highest). The questionnaire has been approved its content validity by IOC more than 0.70 and the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient Analysis was equal to 0.91.

Results

The results showed 1) personal data 2) service quality dimension 3) airline communication 4) relationship of passengers’ service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service.

Table 1 *Personal Data*

Profile Factors	Particulars	F	%
Gender	Male	144	36.00
	Female	256	64.00
Age	18-29 years old	113	28.20

	30-39 years old	95	23.80
	40-49 years old	67	16.80
	50 years old and more	125	31.30
Education Level	Less than Bachelor	58	14.50
	Bachelor Degree	226	56.50
	Master Degree	95	23.80
	Higher than Master Degree	21	5.30
Occupation	Student	76	18.80
	Government Officer/ State Enterprise Employee	72	18.00
	Company Employee	79	19.80
	Business Owner	88	22.00
	Others	85	21.30
	Purposes of Flying	Travelling	162
Training and Seminar		73	18.30
Personal Business		58	14.50
Family Visit		99	24.80
Others		8	2.00
Frequency of Flying During New Normal	1-2 times	138	34.50
	3-4 times	129	32.30
	5-6 times	82	20.50
	7-8 times	40	10.00
	More than 8 times	11	2.80
Types of Airlines Fling During New Normal	Full Service Airlines	51	12.80
	Low Cost Airlines	349	87.20

The result of personal data showed that most of the respondents were 256 females (=64%), mostly, age around 50 years and more (=31.30%), mostly education level was bachelor degree (=56.50%), mostly occupation was business owners (=22%), Mostly, the purpose of flying was travelling (=40.50%). Mostly, the frequency of flying during new normal was 5-6 times per year (=34.50%), and Types of airlines flying during new normal were low cost airlines.

Table 2 *Perceived Service Quality Level from Service Quality Dimensions*

Service Quality Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1. Empathy	4.11	0.66	High
2. Assurance	4.31	0.51	Highest
3. Responsiveness	3.95	0.42	High
4. Reliability	4.16	0.48	High
5. Tangible	4.10	0.55	High

Total	4.12	0.52	High
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The results of perceived service quality level from service quality dimensions were highest at assurance (mean = 4.31) and then reliability at high level (mean = 4.16). The overall perceived service quality was at high level (mean = 4.12).

Table 3 *Level of Perception of Communication (about the new normal flight)*

Perception of Communication	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1. Knowledge	4.22	0.73	Highest
2. Enough Online Media	4.18	0.70	High
3. Variety of Media	4.20	0.71	High
4. Updated Information	4.22	0.78	Highest
5. Trust	4.31	0.75	Highest
6. Understandable	4.15	0.75	High
7. Feedback of Communication	4.14	0.81	High
8. Benefits of Communication	4.07	0.74	High
9. Offline Communication	4.18	0.76	High
10.Repeated Use after Communication	4.28	0.76	Highest
Total	4.19	0.74	High

The results of the levels of perception of communication about new normal flight were highest at trust (mean = 4.31), repeated use after communication (mean = 4.28), knowledge (mean = 4.22) and updated information (mean = 4.22), respectively.

Table 4 *The Relationship of passengers’ service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service*

Service Quality Dimensions	Pearson’s (r)	Relationship	Direction
1. Empathy	0.196	Low	Positive
2. Assurance	0.252	Low	Positive
3. Responsiveness	0.283	Low	Positive
4. Reliability	0.370	Moderate	Positive
5. Tangible	0.393	Moderate	Positive
Total	0.454	Moderate	Positive

The results of the relationship of passengers’ service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service were at low for empathy (r = 0.196), assurance (r = 0.252) and responsiveness (r=0.283), and at moderate level for reliability (r=0.370) and tangible (r=0.393). Overall, the relationship of passengers’ service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service was at a moderate level (r=0.454).

Discussion and Recommendation

The results of the perceived service quality showed that assurance is at a highest level (mean = 4.31). This means that the passengers perceived that the airlines have good procedure when managing during new normal flights. Regarding perception of communication about new normal flight, the highest scores were trust (mean = 4.31), repeated use after communication (mean = 4.28), knowledge (mean = 4.22) and updated information (mean = 4.22), respectively. Overall, the relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service was at a moderate level ($r=0.454$). The results of the study are similar with the related research from tourism behaviors (Rojanapanitikul and Ngaoprasertwong, 2019) and aviation industry (Seanyen et al, 2020) about managing tourism and aviation industry during new normal, including the factors affecting selection of a new normal Thai travel (Tangtenglam and Pongpanich, 2021). The recommendation of the study was the airlines should improve the responsiveness such as provide immediate answer since this dimension is lowest (mean = 3.95). The results of the relationship of passengers' service quality and perception of airline communication towards selection of new normal flight service were at low for empathy ($r = 0.196$), assurance ($r= 0.252$) and responsiveness ($r=0.283$). This means there is low relationship with service quality (empathy, assurance and responsiveness) with the communication.

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