CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the population, sampling, the survey tool (questionnaire), and procedure of data collection.

Population

The populations of this study were people who had experienced with low cost airlines. They include those who had first time experience and had a plan to fly with them in the future.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this study, since it was difficult to get a complete list of all passengers who flied with low cost airlines. The researcher selected the equal number of 100 passengers in each airline. Those airlines are AirAsia, Tiger Airway, Nok Air, and One Two Go by Orient Thai. The total sample size is 400.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study was an attempt to explain the factors affecting customers' adoption of low cost airlines innovation. Thus, the data to be collected related to modifications to theory, implantation and consonance between the outcomes of adopter characteristics and the characteristics of low cost airlines as an innovation.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are two research approaches often used in social science research studies, including information systems. While the quantitative research involves numerical representation and operation of observation for purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observation reflects, the qualitative research on the other hand involves non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, emphasizing mostly on the process and meaning that are not rigorously examined or measured, in terms of quantity

amount of intensity or frequency. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasized the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables, not process (Bellenger, et al., 1989; Casebeer and Verhoef, 1997; Easterby-Smith, et al., 1991; McDaniel and Gates, 1996; Miles, 1994; and Zikmund, 2000).

Quantitative method

A methodology was considered to be a part of a paradigm (Guba and Lincolan, 1994). Although the concepts are often used interchangeably, this section addresses and justifies the choosing quantitative methodology as an appropriate technique to collect data to investigate the research problems. Broadly, a research methodology covers strategic decisions about the selection of data collection methods, and also more tactical decision about scaling procedures and measurement, sample and data analysis (Aakerm Kumar and Day, 2001; and Zikmund, 2003;).

A quantitative research seeked causes and facts from the outsiders' view, or from a worldview perspective (Vidich and Lyman, 1994). They believe that there is reality that can be studied and that stands 'objectively' and value free outside that reality (Morrall, 2001). Moreover, the quantitative research findings are based on the researcher's interpretations of events and the relationship between variables (Mores and Field, 1996).

Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) argued that variables and relationships are the central idea in the quantitative research. This is the key objective in this research. Therefore, quantitative methodology was useful in providing detailed planning prior to data collection and analysis, because they provide tools for measuring concepts, planning design states, and for dealing with sampling issues (Neuman, 2003; and Zickmund, 2003).

The quantitative method utilizes statistical measures and controls procedure that decreases the bias and confound variable as much as possible (Emory and Cooper, 1991). Quantitative research is an effective technique in addressing, to a large extent, many of the problems of reliability, internal validity and the external validity of measures and procedures (Guaba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, this method was used to increase the quality of the research outcomes.

In order to collect information to address the research questions and hypotheses, there was a need to gather data form different sources. This source would include airlines customers, in order to measure a customer's ideas regarding the airlines services and their intention to adopt.

Survey methodology

The survey method was suitable for this study for two main reasons. Firstly, respondents could not be easily assigned to control and treatment groups on a prior arrangement basis. Secondly, the variables of interest ware difficult for the researcher to manipulate (Emory and Cooper, 1991). Moreover, it had been argued that this design of the qualitative study was an appropriate method for studying industrial relationships (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995; Anderson, 1994). However, Hakansson and Snehota (1997) argue that survey methodology is the key to establishing information reports. Thus, the survey research is an appropriate approach to test hypotheses and measure many variables, including multiple indicators.

Neuman (2003) argues that surveys are very beneficial in producing information that is inherently statistical in nature. Surveys are usually designed with the objective of measuring awareness, knowledge, behavior, and opinion (Zikmund, 2003; and Mlkhotra, 1993). In particular, surveys are suitable for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviors (Nueman, 2003). Moreover, it is probably the best method available to collect original data describing a large population directly (Babbie, 1990).

The questionnaire method was selected from two main reasons. First, because there had been very few studies that have investigated the factors influencing the adopting and flying with low cost airlines. This study collected data in order to have a broad picture of consumers' beliefs about characteristics of product innovation such as the benefit of low cost airlines, in order to understand the important factor that drive the development and classify consumer behavior is relation to innovation of low cost airlines in Thailand. The data gathering instrument of this research was a questionnaire. Each part was designed for specific purpose and elaborated as follows:

Section 1: Demographic information

This section consists of 2 parts which were the general information and the travel experience with low cost airlines. The question asked airlines passengers to specify their socioeconomic characteristics data that include occupation, age, education level and personal income per month.

Furthermore, the second part of this section was about the travel experience. The questions asked the travel experience of passengers and the purpose to travel.

Section 2: The communication process

This section consisted of 3 questions that include the communication behavior and the role of communication. These questions asked about the media from which the passengers search information about low cost airlines and the consequence after receiving information from low cost airlines. A five-point scale was used to measure the frequency of exposure. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, by which 1 means "never," 2 means "rarely," 3 means "sometimes," 4 means "often," and 5 means "always."

The last question asked about the influence of media that affect them in decision making. There provides the list of 10 media channels in persuading the traveler to adopt the low cost airlines. A five-point scale was used to measure the frequency of exposure. The scale rages from 1 to 5, by which 1 means " least influential," 2 means "little influential," 3 means "moderate," 4 means " influential," and 5 means "most influential."

Part 3: The characteristics of low cost airlines as innovation

This part was consists of 9 questions that the questions about the advantage of low cost airlines and the safety confidential of low cost airlines. Moreover, there included the passengers' opinion regarding their service. A five-point scale was used to measure that influence. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, by which 1 means "mostly disagree," 2 means "disagree," 3 means "no-opinion," 4 means "agree," and 5 means "mostly agree."

Part 4: The adopter characteristics

This section consisted of the questions asking about the characteristics of passengers who traveled by low cost airlines. This part was divided into 2 sections that is the intention to fly and the personality characteristics. The first section consisted of

2 questions. These questions were the intention to fly with low cost airlines. The answer choices were provided. Other questions were the important reasons to fly with low cost airlines.

The second part was the general consumer behaviors. These questions asked about the passenger opinions when they consider buying for new product. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, by which 1 means" mostly agree," 2 means" agree," 3 means" no-opinion," 4 means" disagree," and 5 means" mostly disagree."

Data collection procedures

Collecting data was conducted in a variety of ways and from various sources. Each data collection method had advantages and disadvantages. Sekaran (2000) stated that although personal interview of face-to-face interviews have the advantages of flexibility in adapting and clarifying the questions, they have cost, time and geographical limitations.

The questionnaires were distributed to 400 low-cost airline passengers of low-cost carriers at Bangkok International Airport. The passengers were at Bangkok International Airport, and they were asked to fill out the questionnaire by themselves.

The researcher had to contact the director of Bangkok International Airport to obtain approval for distributing and conducting the questionnaires. An official letter from the university explaining the study proposes, survey instruction and questionnaires was issued then was faxed and the survey package brought to the Airport office. Then, the researcher distributed the questionnaire in the departure area by herself. So the researcher collected the data in about five months.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) program was used to interpret the information. However, the researcher had checked and assessed the questionnaires for completeness and accuracy before coding data and analyzing that information. For the variables, each question was given a variable name before being entered to the computer program. All data was presented by statistic summary in cross tabulation.

Chi-square (x^2) was employed to investigate the relationship between the independent variables (types of media, innovation characteristics, and characteristics of adopters) and the dependent variable (decision to adopt).

The level of significance at .05 was established to determine the acceptance or rejection of each hypothesis.

RQ1: What are the communication process of low cost airlines to generate adoption among the passengers?

The researcher used Chi-square to identify the relationship between communication process of low cost airlines and passenger decision to fly with low cost airlines. However, to analyze the data for customers' decision, the researcher need to recode the Likert scale from 1= mostly disagree, to 5 = mostly agree.

To identify the meaning of passengers' perception, the researcher declared the mean values in 5 ranges, as follows:

1.00 - 1.80 = mostly disagree

1.81 – 2.60 = disagree

2.61 - 3.40 = Moderate

3.41 – 4.20 = agree

4.21 – 5.00 = mostly agree

RQ2: What are the characteristics of low-cost airlines as an innovation?

The researcher used Chi-square to identify the relationship between characteristic of low cost airlines as innovation and decision to fly with low cost airlines. However, to analyze the data for customers' decision, the researcher need to recode the Likert scale from 1= mostly disagree, to 5 = mostly agree.

To identify the meaning of passengers' perception, the researcher declared the mean values in 3 ranges, as follows:

1.00- 1.80 = mostly disagree

1.81 – 2.60 = disagree

2.61 - 3.40 = Moderate

3.41 – 4.20 = agree

4.21 – 5.00 = mostly agree

RQ3: What are the characteristics of adopters of low-cost airlines?

The researcher used Chi-square to identify the relationship between characteristic of adopters (low cost airlines' passenger) and decision to fly with low cost airlines. However, to analyze the data for passengers' decision, the researcher grouped scale from 5 levels (never, rarely, sometimes, often and always) to 3 levels (never-rarely, sometimes, often-always).