



Exploring Airlines in Thailand: The Content Analysis of Thai Airlines' Mission and Vision Statements

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Abstract

Mission and vision statements provide some information about an organization. They inform the stakeholders of an organization about the characteristics and objectives of the organization. This paper aims to study both vision and mission statements of the airlines in Thailand. The mission and vision statements of 12 out of 17 Thai nationality scheduled airlines were analyzed with the content analysis technique. The validity was tested with Cohen-Kappa's coefficient, and the inter-rater agreement is acceptable (0.75). The result shows that the airlines in Thailand mainly focus on self-concept, employee, product and service.

Keywords : Vision, Mission, Airline business, Content analysis

Introduction

The vision and mission statements are important since they should reflect the direction of the company. According to Raynor (1998), the vision statement expresses the company's future position. It also expresses what a company wants to become in the future and encourage the employees and the investors (Campbell and Yeung, 1991a; Cowley and Domb, 2012; Kotter, 2012). Mission statement is equally as important as the vision statement. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the mission statement provides the guide path for the company to accomplish its vision (Campbell and Yeung, 1991a; Halpern and Graham, 2013).



Kemp and Dwyer (2003), Lin and Ryan (2016) and Lin et al (2018) have conducted the pieces of research on airlines' mission statements. All of these studies focus on international airlines at the international level and focus mostly on mission statements only.

World air transport demand has some hard times, i.e., the world recession in 2008, which caused a considerable drop in air transport demand (International Civil Aviation Organization, 2013); however, air transport in Thailand never stops growing. The number of flights has been increasing continuously at a rate of 6 to 8 percent per year and reached one million flights per year in 2017 (The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand, 2019). According to CAAT (2019), there are 17 registered Thai nationality scheduled airlines and 11 registered non-scheduled airlines. The research objectives of this study are

- to examine the vision and mission statements of the airlines in Thailand.
- to evaluate the current focus and direction of airlines in Thailand

The researchers organize this paper as follows; section 1 presents the introduction of this paper. Section 2 presents the literature review of airlines' vision and mission statements and the research framework. Section 3 describes the methodology of content analysis. Section 4 presents the content analysis result, and finally, section 5 provides the discussion and conclusion.

Literature Review

The term "vision statement" is sometimes confused with other terms such as "goals," "company values," or "business philosophy." The vision statement is the statement that should express business direction and its desired position in the future (Campbell and Yeung, 1991b). A vision statement also reveals the business purposes (Slintak and Dvorsky, 2019). According to Levin (2000), the practical vision should reflect the future scenario in which the missions and goals of the business are accomplished. The vision statement has been an interesting subject for literature in business management since the 1980s (Levin, 2000). Some scholars have conducted the researches focus on the vision statement per se (Campbell and Yeung, 1991a; Raynor, 1998; Levin, 2000), and some scholars have studied focus on the vision statement in the different industries or businesses (Castro and Lohmann 2014; Allen et al., 2018). The good vision should be (Kantabutra, 2008; Kantabutra and Avery, 2010):



- Concise – the vision statement should not be lengthy, but the briefness should not diminish the meaning of the statement.
- Clear – the vision statement should be understandable for everyone.
- Future-oriented – the vision statement should focus on the future perspective of the business.
- Challenging – the vision statement should drive the people toward the expected outcome.
- Inspiring – the vision statement should express the worthy idea.

Despite the importance of vision statements, the study on vision statements in the aviation industry is very limited. The authors are not able to find the study on the vision statement of airlines from accessible resources.

A mission statement is a statement that defines what the business task is; in other words, what the business will do and will not do (Bolland, 2017). There are many different explanations for the mission statement. Campbell and Yeung (1991b) explained that the mission contains four elements, which are purpose, value, behavior standard, and strategy. The mission statement should distinguish the company from other companies (David and David, 2003). Khalifa (2012) purposed the redefined definition of a mission statement as “a resolute commitment to creating significant value or outcome in service of a worthy cause.” The mission statement is important because it makes the employees understand the purposes of the company and provides the framework for management when making the decision for task prioritization, marketing strategy, financial prioritization and brand positioning (Jackson et al., 1996; Mersland et al., n.d.; Lin and Ryan, 2016). The right mission statement should strengthen a company’s performance, which would result in the achievement of a company’s goal (McDermott et al., 1996). However, Mullane (2002) noted that a mission statement would be useful if only it is proper and updated. David and David (2003) suggested that a good mission should embody the following components:

- Target market
- Product/service’s value
- Firm’s geographical target
- Concern for profit and survival
- Public image



- Technology
- The value and ethics of a firm

Unlike the vision statement, the mission statement of the airlines has gained more intention from researchers. Kemp and Dwyer (2003), conducted the content analysis of international airlines' mission statement and found ten themes for airlines' mission statement. Lin et al. (2018) conducted similar researched and found that mission statements of international airlines focus on product/service and customer. The mission statement is essential for airlines since it distinguishes an airline from others, and it supports the branding strategy of the airlines (Law and Breznik, 2018; Lin and Ryan, 2016).

In this article, the researchers examined both vision and mission statements of the airlines in Thailand and categorize the content of those statements. By reviewing the mission and vision statements of the airlines in Thailand, the researchers are able to describe the current focus and direction of the airlines in Thailand (figure 1).

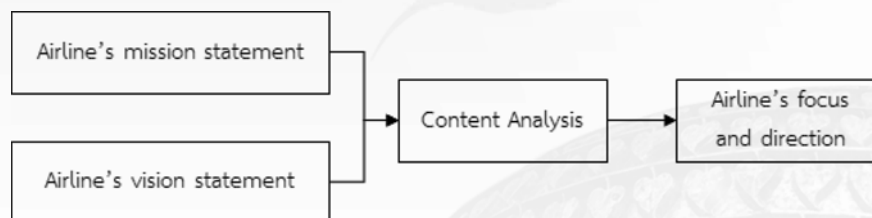


Figure 1 Research framework

Methodology

This research is a secondary qualitative descriptive study. The content analysis method was implemented to summarize the vision and mission statements of the airlines in Thailand. The population of this study is the 17 commercial scheduled airlines listed by The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (2019).

Data Collection

The researchers looked for the airline's vision and mission statements from airlines' websites or airlines' annual report in January 2020; however, some airlines have suspended their operation and do not provide any information. Therefore, the researchers needed to exclude 5 airlines from this study. The researchers collect the vision and mission statements



form 12 Thai registered scheduled airlines. Unfortunately, 2 airlines provided only their vision or mission statements. The data collection detail is shown in table 1.

Table 1 Vision and mission statements collected from airlines in Thailand.

Airlines' Name	Vision Collected	Mission Collected
Thai Airways	Y	Y
Bangkok Airways	Y	Y
Thai Smile Airways	Y	Y
Nok Air	Y	Y
Nookscoot Airlines	Y	Y
Thai Air Asia	Y	Y
Thai Air Asia X	Y	Y
Thai Lion Airs	Y	Y
Thai Viet Jet	Y	Y
Asia Atlantic Airlines	Y	
New Gen Airways	Y	Y
Kan Air		Y

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed with content analysis method. Content analysis is a technique for analyzing the content of the written text (Krippendorff, 2013). According to Krippendorff (2013), it can reveal the idea of the message and communication in a particular text. Content analysis can be both an inductive or deductive approach (Elo et al., 2014). This study implements a deductive approach since it is appropriate for the study based on the pre-existing framework (Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Armat et al., 2018). Content analysis has been used in various studies about vision and mission statements (Castro and Lohmann, 2014; Lin and Ryan, 2016; Allen et al., 2018; Law and Breznik, 2018). The content analysis was implemented in this study to understand the vision and mission statements of different airlines in Thailand. The researchers adopt the content analysis procedures provided by Bengtsson (2016). There were four main steps to perform content analysis, namely, decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016).



Decontextualization

Firstly, the researchers had to read the whole text to understand the overall content of the subject being studied and also to get familiar with the data. The researchers then broke the text down into meaning units or units of analysis which contain insight or meaningful information. In this study, the units of analysis are the themes of vision and mission statements.

Recontextualization

The researchers had to re-read the original text again in order to make sure that the units of analysis obtained from the decontextualization step provide suitable and sufficient information for the objectives of the study, and to decide whether to include or not include the excluding units in the analysis. If the excluding units contain significant information, the researchers include such units in the analyzing process.

Table 2 Categories and definition for vision and mission statements

Categories	Definition
Profitability	Commitment to economic objectives
Product/Service	Main products and services of the airlines
Market	Market area, location
Public Image	Corporate social responsibility, environmental issue
Customer	The airlines' target customer
Employee	Human resource, employee concern
Self-Concept	Competitive advantage, unique selling point
Philosophy	Beliefs, core-value of the airlines
Technology	Technology implementation, research, and development
Safety	Safety of passenger and employee

Categorization

The researchers categorized mission and vision statements in different categories regarding the theme of the mission and vision statements of the airlines. These categories were set a prior to the analysis by adopting the framework provided by Kemp and Dwyer (2003), Lin et al. (2018), Law and Breznik (2018), Raynor (1998) and Castro and Lohmann (2014). The categories are listed in table 2



Compilation

The researchers have identified and examined characteristics and insight into airlines' mission and vision statements. In this stage, researchers explain the result by drawing up the conclusion based on the finding of the study. The researchers discuss the essence of different units of analysis and the essence of each category.

Validity

To test validity, the researchers separately coded vision and mission statements of the airlines and calculated inter-rater agreement by using Cohen Kappa's coefficient. The inter-rater agreement of both mission and vision statements coding is 0.75 which is an acceptable rate (Cohen, 1960; McHugh, 2012)

Descriptive Result

The visions of most airlines in Thailand express the market and self-concept. 7 airlines (63%) state the target market of the airlines in their visions and 6(54%) airlines state the self-concept of the airlines in their visions. Profitability, product, and service, customer, technology, and safety are rarely stated in the visions of airlines in Thailand. There are only 3(27%) out of 11 airlines stated about the target customer of the airlines, while 2(18%) airlines stated about profitability in their visions. Technology and safety are mentioned only in 1(9%) airline's vision. The missions of most airlines in Thailand express the product and service, customer, employee, and self-concept. 9(81%) airlines focus on the product/service of the airlines and 8(54%) airlines' missions focus on customers and employees of the airlines. 7(63%) airlines in Thailand focus on their self-concept. Safety is mentioned in 6(54%) missions statement of the airlines. Technology and public image are mentioned in 4(36%) airlines' mission statements. Profitability and philosophy are mentioned in 3(27%) airlines' mission statements. Only 2 airlines(18%) state about the market in their mission statements. The results are presented in table 3 and 4.



Table 3 Descriptive statistics of categorized vision of airlines in Thailand

Categories	Vision		
	Frequency	Percentage	Example
Profitability	2	18%	National premium airline with touches of THAI and effective management for sustainable profitability
Product/Service	0	0%	-
Market	7	63%	To be the leading airline in Asia
Public Image	0	0%	-
Customer	3	27%	To be the largest low-cost airline in Asia and serving the 3 billion people who are currently underserved with poor connectivity and high fares
Employee	0	0%	-
Self-Concept	6	54%	Regional favorite airline with the heart of Thai
Philosophy	0	0%	-
Technology	1	9%	Innovations for travelers. We never stop to innovate to make your journey not only enjoyable but a convenient one.
Safety	1	9%	To be the market leader of the Thai aviation industry, providing the safest, most affordable and reliable connection to the world with the touch of Thainess

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of categorized mission of airlines in Thailand

Categories	Mission		
	Frequency	Percentage	Example
Profitability	3	27%	Maximizing shareholders' return on investment is and shall always be an important measure of our success. Our profitability mission is to use our.



Table 4 Descriptive statistics of categorized mission of airlines in Thailand (continued)

Categories	Mission		
	Frequency	Percentage	Example
			assets effectively in order to generate optimal and sustainable profits for all of our stakeholders
Product/Service	9	81%	Maintain the highest quality product, embracing technology to reduce cost and enhance service levels
Market	2	18%	Nok Air strives to be the number one choice among low fare airlines in Thailand, providing customers true satisfaction through affordability, reliability, convenience, innovation and care
Public Image	4	36%	To provide support and assistance and demonstrate responsibilities to the society and the environment, as the national airline.
Customer	8	72%	We must never forget that our passengers choose which airlines to fly with. Our continued success depends on our customers and we promise to give them the best possible products and services available in the industry.
Employee	8	72%	To be the best company to work for whereby employees are treated as part of a big family
Self-Concept	7	63%	To attain the lowest cost so that everyone can fly with AirAsia
Philosophy	3	27%	Provide our customers with a flight experience that exceed expectation by maintaining the leading edge in safety and service, through innovation and teamwork and to provide a safe and fun work environment to our team that motivate creativity, maximize productivity and translate into excellent customer service.



Table 4 Descriptive statistics of categorized mission of airlines in Thailand (continued)

Categories	Mission		
	Frequency	Percentage	Example
Technology	4	36%	Maintain the highest quality product, embracing technology to reduce cost and enhance service levels
Safety	6	54%	To strictly practice international standards of safety in both flight and ground operations.

Discussion

Airlines in Thailand are focusing on their self-concept. The result has showed that 54% of the airlines state self-concept in the visions and 63% show self-concept in the missions. The airlines focus on their core competencies, which are in line with the suggestion by Raynor (1998) and Kotler and Keller (2016) that the vision should state the core competencies of the company. There is a clear difference in self-concept between full-service and low-cost airlines; the full-service airlines tend to express the elegance and uniqueness while the low-costs airlines tend to express the worthiness and reliability. The airlines also focus on the customer and the products/services; 72% and 81% of the airlines mention customers and products/services respectively in their mission statements.

Most of the mission statements representing customers also imply product or service, e.g., “Our continued success depends on our customers and we promise to give them the best possible products and services available in the industry.” Such a statement is based on the willingness to meet customer demand by providing the product or service that customers expect (Kemp and Dwyer, 2003).

The market is mentioned in visions much more than in missions of the airlines. The airlines position themselves in a specific geographical area; for example, the vision statement of an airline states that “To be the leading airline in Asia” while vision statement of another airline states that “To become ASEAN’s leading airline that offers superior quality, service, and value in every scheduled charter flight.” Only 2 (18%) airlines focus on the market in their mission statements. This finding contrary to the study by Lin et al. (2018), which found that



58% of airlines in the world state their target market, especially the airlines in Europe that operate in the multi-country environment. The reason behind this finding may emerge from the fact that most airlines in Thailand operate small and medium-size aircraft to similar destinations so it might not be very essential for them to distinguish themselves from competitors by focusing on the target location.

The airlines also focus on their employee; 72% of the airlines mention about the employee. This finding is different from the result of the study by Lin et al. (2018) which only 42% of the international airlines mention the employee in their mission statements. The airlines in Thailand may pay attention to their employee because the employee is an essential factor for the company's performance (Amin et al., 2014). The ground staff and cabin crew are also prominent factors affecting customer loyalty (Chonsalasin, 2020).

Safety is the top concern for this industry (Boksberger, 2011), therefore, it is surprising that only 1 airline mention about safety in its vision and only 6 out of 11 airlines mention about safety in their missions even though Thailand failed to pass ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program in 2015 and just passed this assessment in 2017 (Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, 2017). This result reveals the critical point needing improvement for airlines in Thailand. In addition, safety is highly concerned by the passenger (Bellizzi et al., 2020). The airlines should put safety as one of their missions to make sure that the safety standard will never be neglected. Technology, philosophy, public image and profitability are fewer concern aspects (less than 35%) for airlines in Thailand. This finding is in-line with the study by Lin et al. (2018). The airlines should pay more attention to these aspects; especially, the technology aspect. Innovative technology can improve customer satisfaction and reduce airline's cost (Fuad, 2020)

Conclusion

The missions and visions are not the absolute indicators for determining airlines' success; yet, it provides the framework for decision making of long-term goals. This paper aims to explore the airlines in Thailand through their visions and missions. Visions and missions of the airlines should reflect the focus and direction of the airlines. The result showed that the airlines focus on their self-concept, customer and employee. Safety is rarely concerned for airlines in Thailand and this reflects some problems that the airlines in Thailand do not



concern enough about safety even though it is highly concerned with this business. The scope of this paper focuses on only airlines in Thailand. The studies in the future may focus on airlines at the regional level or focus on the business model of the airlines e.g. low-cost or full-service airlines. It is also important to reevaluate visions and missions in different periods of time.

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