A Study of government owned airport's service quality: The case of Hua Hin Airport

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Abstract

The purposes of this study was to study the satisfaction level of passengers towards the service quality of Hua Hin Airport by using SERVQUAL instrument to analyse the GAP of passenger expectation and perception. The researchers aim to use the outcome of this study for further preparation for the readiness of Hua Hin Airport in the direction of service quality. This study was quantitative research with survey by distributing "Satisfaction Survey" Questionnaire to 180-sample population. The questionnaire focuses on the analysis of SERVQUAL with 5 dimensions of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The results of study were as follows; (1) There were no significant differences between passenger expectation and perception toward Hua Hun Airport service quality. (2) Tangibility is the most sensitive factor toward passenger expectation. (3) Empathy is the number one satisfaction that passengers considered on Hua Hin Airport service quality. (4) Shopping & dinning area, Ground transportation options and Flight Information screens around terminal areas were indicated as the most urgent issues for improvement from the Gap Analysis. (5) There were some parts of SERVQUAL and Gap Analysis demonstrated that Hua Hin Airport performance obtained perception over expectation. Those areas were on some parts of Tangibility, Responsiveness, Assurance and all part of Empathy.

Keywords: Hua Hin Airport, Service Quality, SERVQUAL

Introduction

According to the growth of tourism in Hua Hin and nearby provinces, the need in transportation has been widely increasing. Air transport becomes an optional transportation for many airlines due to the existence of Hua Hin Airport. There has been an expansion of air transport in Hua Hin Airport during the last 4-5 years. Air Asia is one of those, operating non-stop flights from Malaysia to Hua Hin for four days a week since 18 May 2018. 80% of passengers is Malaysian and 20% of them is various nationalities. (บ้านเมือง, 2561)

Hua Hin Airport is a governmental airport under the Department of Airports, Ministry of Transportation. It is located in the northern part of Hua Hin. It was once used only for military under the operation of Royal Thai Air Force under the name of Boh Fai Airport. On 3rd February 1961, it was transferred to be managed by The Department of Airports and changed the name to Hua Hin Airport. (Department of Civil Aviation, 2013) In fact, it was inactive airport. According to the statistic in year 2017, there were only 278 commercial flights with 2,780 passengers and 26,330 flights for flying lesson, military and flights for artificial rain.

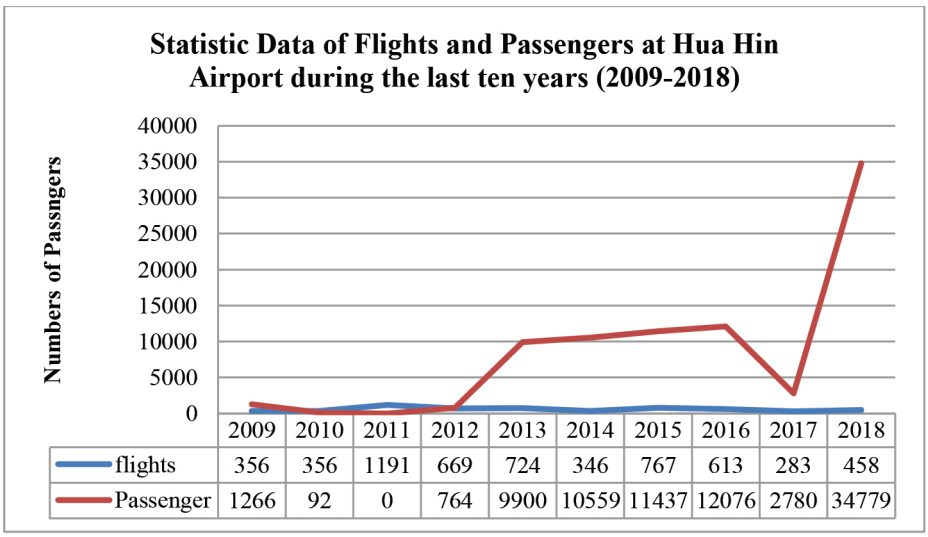
Hua Hin Airport has asphaltic concrete runway with a length of 2,100 metres and width of 35 metres and three asphaltic concrete taxiways with a total length of 155 meters and width of about 23 metres and a shoulder with a width of 5 metres at each side. The passenger terminal has an area of 7,200 square metres, and the departure lounges is able to cope up to 300 passengers at peak hour and approximately 864,000 passengers per year. (Department of Civil Aviation, 2013) In fact, many airlines are interested in operating the route to Hua Hin Airport, but the limitation is the width of runway only support for small aircraft. Hence, Hua Hin Airport plans to increase more budget to expand the air-side both runway and apron, estimated as 350 million Bath, which is anticipated for 2020 fiscal year. (กิตตินันท์ นาคทอง, 2561)

However, there used to be many schedules commercial flights operating at Hua Hin Airport such as the route of Bangkok – Hua Hin – Samui by Bangkok Airways, Suvarnabhumi – Hua Hin by SGA Airlines, Kuala Lumpur – Hua Hin by Berjaya Air, Hat Yai – Hua Hin by Thai Lion Air, Chiang Mai – Hua Hin by Kan Air. (กิตตินันท์, 2561) Unfortunately, they all terminated the routes after conducting not more than one year.

Since the government launched the project of “Thailand Rivera” or “The Royal Coast of Four Regions” which are Petchburi, Prachuap Khirikhan, Chumporn and Ranong to be luxurious beach cities as same as Riviera in France, there has been a stable development in many aspects especially the infrastructure. As a result, Hua Hin seems to have brighter future for air transportation. The Ferry service linking between the western coast (Khao Takiap Pier, Hua Hin) and the eastern coast (Bali Hai Pier, Chon Buri) was established. The high-speed train from Bangkok toward the south is being constructed. As the advantage of location, Hua Hin Airport are planned to be as

a connecting hub of triple transportation-types, which are land, rail and air transportation. (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2019)

According to the statistic data from Department of Airports (2019) regarding to the traffic of commercial flight in Hua Hin Airport from 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2018, it was reported that there was 125 movements of Air Asia (AXM) in both arrival and departure flights with the numbers of passengers, 17,946 paxs for arrival and 16,725 paxs for departure. In addition, there were 100 charter-flights movement in both arrival and departure with 14 arrival passengers and 42 departure passengers. The number of both flights and passengers was many times increased from the previous year, 2017. In addition to that, according to the report this year, there were 100 flights with approximately 9,000 passengers for both arrival and departure during January to March. The number seems to continue increasing gradually. Thus, Air Asia aims to operate more routes to Hua Hin Airport such as Chiang-Mai, Macao, Singapore, Penang and Jakarta. (กิตตินันท์ นาคทอง, 2561)



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
flights	356	356	1191	669	724	346	767	613	283	458
Passenger	1266	92	0	764	9900	10559	11437	12076	2780	34779

Figure 1: Statistic data of flights and passengers at Hua Hin Airport during the last ten years (2009-2018) Source: Department of Airports (2009-2018)

Figure 1 shows the statistic data of flights and passengers at Hua Hin Airport during the last ten years from 2009 to 2018. It can be seen that there has been lots of movements both flights and passengers, especially while there were commercial flights running at Hua Hin Airport, during 2012 to 2016, Berjaya Air, Thai Lion Air and Kan Air.

The rising number of passengers and flights in Hua Hin Airport affects to the operation management of the airport. Service quality is one element to define the efficiency of the airport, as it is the key to understand the passengers' satisfaction. Thus, the researcher is interested in studying the service quality of Hua Hin Airport by gathering the information of satisfaction level from the passengers travelling in and out Hua Hin Airport. Those information will also be analysed the difference between the expectation and perception regarding to service quality. The researcher aims to use the result and outcome to improve the service quality of Hua Hin Airport to be able to provide satisfaction on passengers and to be ready for the growth of air tourism. Also, the researcher aims to propose the result from this research to Hua Hin Airport in order to prepare the readiness in problem handling and conducting other parts of Hua Hin Airport.

Purpose

1. To study the satisfaction level of passengers towards the service quality of Hua Hin Airport
2. To analyse the GAP of passenger expectation and perception regarding to the service quality of Hua Hin Airport towards the passengers' satisfaction.

Literature Review

Customer needs and expectation

Passengers expect a high service quality experience when they travel through an airport. Factors affecting their satisfaction are the sense of place, the cleanliness of the airport and facilities, the convenience of equipment and facilities used in the airport as well as the staff working in the airport. (ACI, 2019) Prakash and Mohanty (2011) mentioned in their research that customers' expectation is also affected by the marketing activities and other external influences as well as word of mouth. Customer expectation identifies two types of service quality as 'technical', what they get from the service and 'functional', how the service is delivered.

Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction is a comparison between the expectation before a purchase is made and the perception of actual service performance. Satisfaction occurs when a service perception is higher

than expectation, while dissatisfaction comes when perception is lower than expectation. (Yusof, Joseph & Shah, 2016)

Customer satisfaction is the measure of how services and products meet or exceed customer expectation. It is the degree of positive or negative affect the customers' feeling towards a product or services. According to Brady and Cronin (2001), it was mentioned that the passengers evaluate their satisfaction through the convenience of facilities used in the terminal as well as the departure gate. Moreover, Bitner (1992) also said that factors influenced on passengers' satisfaction were the cleanliness, the convenience of facility and the environmental condition.

Service Quality

Quality is one of the most important factors to affect customer's buying decision. Service quality is a comparison between customer's expectation and their perceptions. Grönroos (1990) mentioned that the overall perception of service quality is the gap between customer's expectation and their actual experience. Furthermore, Service Quality is the key to understand how to increase passenger satisfaction and improve performance. In terms of evaluate the airport service quality; the aspects involved should be concerned with the departure and arrival procedure such as the embarkation and disembarkation, immigration, transit and connection, baggage claim, customs, infrastructure and service. The service quality in the airport was classified into convenience, check-in time, the efficiency in service, the kindness of staff, the information visibility, and the security. (Yang, Park & Choi, 2015) In order to evaluate the service quality, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) found the important tool called SERVQUAL composed of five dimensions, which are

(1) Tangibility: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, persons and material of communication.

(2) Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service accurately.

(3) Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and deliver prompt service.

(4) Assurance: Knowledge and confidence as well as the courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.

(5) Empathy: Caring and pay attention individually to customers.

Tangibles dimension focuses on the appearance of the staff, equipment and other instruments as well as the materials used for communication. According to the study of Fodness and Murray (2007) the dimension affect passengers' perception of service quality were the airport layout and functionality as well as the signs and symbols. The movement of passengers through the airport seems to be the first factor affecting to their satisfaction. The study of Jeju International Airport by Yang et al. (2015) also found that the most important aspects affect passengers' expectation appeared as the cleanliness, the facility signs and basic facilities of an airport such as restaurant and toilets. In this research, the analysed topics covered the comfort, surrounding area and the

cleanliness of terminal and toilets as well as the baggage claim area and the shopping and dining area. It also included the staff appearance, the convenience of equipment used in the terminal such as the trolley and the wheelchair, the disabled and baby changing facilities, the communication materials and the flight information screen. (Tseng, Ho & Liu, 2008)

Reliability focuses on the stability of organizational operation and the ability to achieve what was promised. (Parasuraman et al., 1988) According to the study of Aydin and Yildirim (2012) on SERVQUAL, the reliability should include (1) the promise to do something within a certain time, (2) a sincere interest in solving customer's problem, (3) perform the service right the first time, (4) provide the service at the time of promised, and (5) insist on error free record. Thus, this research aimed to study the reliability of equipment used in the airport, which covered the accuracy of direction signs around terminal, the clarity and accuracy of PA system for boarding announcement as well as the reliability of baggage handling system. Furthermore, ground-handling services are needed to provide promptly and appropriately.

Responsiveness focuses on the willingness to help the passengers with the courteous and prompt service. (Parasuraman et al., 1988) According to the study of Airport Service Quality on Kaohsiung International Airport by Chao, Lin and Chen, (2013), it also suggested that the waiting time and the processing time affected to the perception of service quality. In addition to that, the study from Aydin and Yildirim (2012) covered the analysed topics in Responsiveness dimension as the willingness of employee to help customers, the ability of employee to give prompt service to customers, the responsibility in providing service within the certain time and the ability to respond to customers' requests in anytime. The result was found as significant. Hence, this research aimed to analyse the waiting time of each procedures in the airport, which included the security, the immigration and the check-in time. Furthermore, it covered the factors of willingness and the activeness of staff to assist passengers as well as to provide prompt services.

Assurance focuses on the knowledge, preparation and courtesy of the staff and the ability to convey the confidence to passengers. (Parasuraman et al., 1988). According to the study of Aydin and Yildirim (2012) on SERVQUAL, the assurance should include the behaviour of employee instilling trust to customers, and being consistently courteous to them. Employees are also expected to have enough knowledge to answer customers' enquiries with courtesy to customers. Hence, this research aimed to study the competency in operational control individual such as the knowledge of terminology and the language skill as well as the work experience to bring along with the trustworthiness. Besides, it also included the courtesy of staff in each procedure of security, immigration, check-in process and shop and dining area.

Empathy focuses on the caring and individual attention the staff provides their passengers. (Parasuraman et al., 1988) According to the study of Evaluation of the airport service quality by Pabedinskite and Akstinaite (2013), it was founded that the analysis of empathy to the

passengers covered the taking care of them and meeting their special needs. The study also founded that a person responsible for contact on rental issues (adequate and prompt information provision) also affected to the overall service quality. Thus, this research focused on the consideration of staff as well as their attention to provide to passengers. In addition, it also covered the accessibility of ground transport and the sufficient numbers of staff providing to assist passengers in an appropriate and prompt action to meet the special needs of passengers.

According to Chomchanai Bunluesintu (2015), with regards to the study on the perception of service quality toward the satisfaction of departure passengers in Suvarnabhumi Airport of Wattana Poonthongchai, it was founded that the perception in service quality of tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy has the strong relation to the satisfaction, while the quality of reliability has no connection to the overall satisfaction.

Reserch framework

Service quality of Hua Hin Airport was identified based on previous studies. Five dependent variables; Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy; were considered to measure the passengers' satisfaction toward the service quality of Hua Hin Airport.

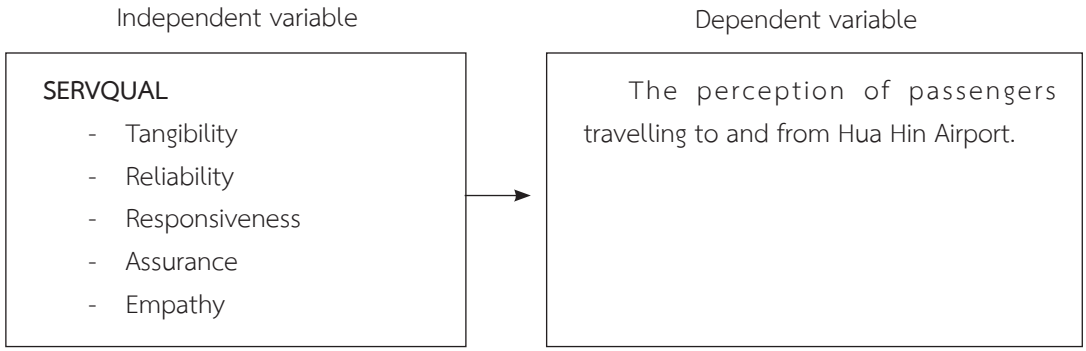


Figure 2: Research framework

The research framework is shown in Figure 2.

Hypothesis

This study manipulated a hypothesis test to indicate whether the difference between the models utilised was in fact statistically significant. The paired T-Test assuming unequal variance was used to evaluate the anticipating accuracy of the respective models and also to test the hypothe-

sis (H0) that there is no significant difference in the anticipating accuracy (Panarat Srisaeng, Baxter, Richardson & Wild, 2015).

H_0 : There is no statistical difference between the mean value of passengers' expectation and perception level.

Methodology

This study is the quantitative research. To gather data, questionnaires were used as a research tool.

Population and sample

This study was conducted on target population of passengers who had travelled inbound and outbound Hua Hin Airport during the last month, May 2019. The samples in this study were 180 passengers travelling to and from Hua Hin Airport. Convenience sampling method was used to collect data through closed-ended questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed based on previous researches.

Data Collection

The data was accumulated directly from passengers by questionnaires. The sample in this study was 180 passengers travelling to and from Hua Hin Airport and Kuala Lumpur. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data through close-ended questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. First part was related to respondents' demography including age, gender, education, nationality and income (Kotler, 2000). The second part focused on the passenger behaviour toward travel information including travel purpose and travel frequency. The third section was divided into five dimensions of SERVQUAL focusing on two main areas of airport facilities and staff services. Respondents were asked to indicate their expectations and perceptions separately regarding to their experience at the airport. They were asked to evaluate each characteristic using an five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 (strongly dissatisfied) 2 (dissatisfied) 3 (Neutral) 4 (satisfied) 5 (strongly satisfied). This section was adapted from Gilbert and Wong (2003).

Data analysis

In order to achieve the objective of this research, which focuses on customer satisfaction and the service quality, the SERVQUAL instrument was used. The IBM SPSS 22 statistical programme was used for the study in data analysis. The mean, variance and the categories and characteristics of data were described by the descriptive statistic focusing on the difference between perceptions and expectations.

To analyse data, this study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The demographic variables were analysed using frequency and percentage. Mean score and standard deviation were performed to analyse each independent variables. Gap analysis was used to analyse the difference between

passengers' expectation and passengers' perception. The analysis of passenger satisfaction towards the service quality of Hua Hin Airport by analysing from mean, standard deviation and translate the mean into the level of satisfaction by using the description of five-point Likert scale. The statistics tool used is Paired sample T-test. (Jiang, Baxter & Wild, 2017)

Results

	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender			6. Income Per Month(USD)		
Male	70	38.9	Less than 500	58	32.58
Female	110	61.1	501-1,000	28	15.73
2. Age group			1,001-2,000	32	17.98
19-	8	4.44	2,001-3,000	24	13.48
20-29	74	41.11	Over 3,001	36	20.22
30-39	54	30	7. Education		
40-49	24	13.34	Less than High School	10	5.62
50-59	16	8.89	High school	30	16.85
60+	4	2.22	Diploma	30	16.85
3. Marital Status			Bachelor	76	42.70
Single	108	62.79	Master	30	16.85
Married	60	34.88	Doctoral	2	1.12
Divorced	4	2.33	8. Purpose of travel		
4. Ethnic			Business	14	7.78
Chinese	98	54.44	Visiting friends or relatives	2	1.11
Asia	72	40	Tourism or holiday	160	88.89
European	8	4.44	Study	0	0
North America	0	0	Others	4	2.22
South America	0	0	9. travels by flights made over last 12 months		
Other	2	1.11	Less than 2	64	35.56
5. Career			2-4	68	37.78
Government and public sector employee	4	2.22	5-7	26	14.44
Private Sector employee	114	63.33	Over 8	22	12.22
Business owner	24	13.33			
Student	20	11.11			
Retiree	4	2.22			
Other	14	7.78			

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study's respondents

Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic and basic information of the respondents. According to the table, most of the respondents (61.1%) were female and 38.9% were male. Most of them were single (60%) and in the age of 20-29 years (41.1%) and 40-49 years old (13.3%). The majority of them (42.2%) held Bachelor degree. Most of respondents are Chinese (54.4%) and work

in private sector employee (63.3%). Most of the respondents had income less than 500 USD (32.2%). Their travel purpose is mostly for tourism and holiday (88.9%). The frequency of their travelling by flights is around 2-4 times per year (37.8%).

Table 2: Mean and GAP analysis: difference between respondents' expectation and perception.

	Expectation				Perception				GAP
	$\bar{X}$	SD	level	Rank	$\bar{X}$	SD	level	Rank	
Tangibility	3.83	.89	Medium	1	3.72	.94	Medium	4	0.11
Reliability	3.80	.81	Medium	3	3.76	.89	Medium	3	0.04
Responsiveness	3.78	.88	Medium	4	3.82	.95	Medium	2	-0.04
Assurance	3.74	.90	Medium	5	3.62	.93	Medium	5	0.12
Empathy	3.82	.96	Medium	2	3.89	.91	Medium	1	-0.07
Total	3.80	.88			3.87	.92			0.07

Table 2 presents $\bar{x}$, SD and ranking quality factors of respondents' expectation and perception. The result shows that the overall expectation is in medium level. The highest rank was "Tangibility" following by "Empathy" and the least was "Assurance". The result of overall perception level was also the same, with the medium level. The terms of "Empathy" was the highest, following by "Responsiveness" and the least was "Assurance".

The Highest GAP between the expectation and perception was shown in terms of "Tangibility".

Hypothesis: Mean of expectation are not different form Mean of perception

Table 3: Hypothesis test between Two Means of expectation and perception. The paired t-test assuming unequal variance was used to test hypothesis (H0) that there is not significant difference in two means.

	Expectation level $\bar{X}$	Perception level $\bar{X}$	t	Sig.
Tangibility	3.83	3.72	2.262	0.031*
Reliability	3.80	3.76	1.721	0.091
Responsiveness	3.78	3.82	-1.148	0.157
Assurance	3.74	3.62	-3.782	0.004*
Empathy	3.82	3.89	-5.133	0.007*
Total	3.80	3.87	1.447	0.150

Table 3 presents the Paired T-Test (Test Concerning a Difference Between Two Means of one normal population: Paired) According to the table; Paired t-test was performed to test the research's hypotheses. The results t-test are presented in Table 3 which shows that p-value (two tails) is 0.150 ≥ 0.05, therefore accept the null hypothesis. This implies that the average of expectation is not significantly different form average of perception at 95% confidence interval of the difference.

Table 4: Gap analysis of Hua-Hin Airport Service quality: **Tangibles Dimension**

	Expectations Average	Perceptions Average	Gap	Paired t-test	
				t	Sig.
Tangibles	3.83	3.72	0.11	2.262	0.031*
The comfort, surrounding area and cleanliness of terminal	3.96	3.94	0.02		
The cleanliness of toilets	3.90	3.99	-0.09		
The staff appearance (grooming)	3.89	3.8	0.09		
The convenience of equipment used in the terminal (e.g. trolley, wheelchair)	4.04	4.1	-0.06		
The communication materials (e.g. brochures and map)	3.73	3.67	0.06		
Disabled and Baby changing facilities	3.74	3.64	0.10		
Flight information screens around terminal areas	3.74	3.54	0.20		
Ground transportation options	3.87	3.67	0.20		
Baggage claim area	3.88	3.78	0.10		
Shopping & dining area	3.57	3.08	0.49		

Table 4 presents p-value 0.031 ≤ 0.05. It appears that the average of expectation and perception of service quality in terms of "Tangible" dimension is generally different. The gap between expectations and perceptions in *"Shopping & Dining Area"* is the biggest gap, following by the factors of *"Flight information screens around terminal areas"* and *"Ground transportation options ".*

Other factors of *"Disabled and Baby changing facilities", "The staff appearance", "The cleanliness of toilets"* and *"Baggage claim area"* have similar results in general. The small differences between expectation and perception are *"The convenience of equipment used in the terminal" and "The communication materials".* Lastly, *"The comfort, surrounding area and cleanliness of terminal"* has a smallest gap.

When expectation exceeds perception (E>P), it implies that passengers are dissatisfied with most of tangible variables, except the cleanliness of toilets (-0.09) and the convenience of equipment (-0.06).

Table 5: Gap analysis of Hua Hin airport service quality: **Reliability Dimensions**

	Expectations Average	Perceptions Average	Gap	Paired t-test	
				t	Sig.
Reliability	3.80	3.76	0.04	1.721	0.091
Accuracy of direction signs around terminal	3.78	3.77	0.01		
Clarity & Accuracy of PA system for boarding announcement	3.78	3.71	0.07		
Reliability of baggage-handling systems	3.83	3.76	0.07		
Ground handling services are provided promptly and appropriately	3.81	3.81	0		

Table 5 presents p-value 0.091 > 0.05. The result shows that the average of expectation and perception of service quality in terms of "Reliability" dimension is not significantly different. Factors of *"Clarity & Accuracy of PA system for boarding announcement"* and *"Reliability of baggage-handling systems"* are in the same gap of 0.07 between expectation and perception, following by the factor of *"Accuracy of direction signs around terminal"* which almost has no difference between expectation and perception, while *"Ground handling services are provided promptly and appropriately"* has no difference. It implies that passengers are dissatisfied with all of reliability variables.

Table 6: Gap analysis of Hua Hin airport service quality: **Responsiveness dimensions**

	Expectations Average	Perceptions Average	Gap	Paired t-test	
				t	Sig.
Responsiveness	3.78	3.82	-0.04	-1.148	0.157
Security – Queuing time	3.73	3.79	-0.06		
Immigration – Queuing time	3.73	3.67	0.06		
Check-in – Queuing time	3.71	3.76	-0.05		
Willingness and Activeness of staff to help passengers	3.88	3.91	-0.03		
Staff provide prompt service	3.86	3.95	-0.09		

Table 6 presents p-value 0.157 > 0.05. The result shows that the average of expectation and perception of service quality in terms of "Responsiveness" dimension is almost not different. The factor of *"Staff provide prompt service"* has a biggest gab of only -0.09, following by *"Queuing time of security and immigration"* and *"queuing time of check-in"* respectively. The least gap shows in *"Willingness and Activeness of staff to help passengers"*.

When perception exceeds expectation (E<P), it implies that passengers are satisfied with most of responsiveness variables, except immigration (0.06).

Table 7 : Gap analysis of Hua-Hin airport service quality: **Assurance dimensions**

	Expectations Average	Perceptions Average	Gap	Paired t-test	
				t	Sig.
Assurance	3.74	3.62	0.12	-3.782	0.004*
Security- courtesy of staff	3.80	3.93	-0.13		
Immigration - courtesy of staff	3.76	3.89	-0.13		
Check-in courtesy of staff	3.82	3.97	-0.15		
Shop & dining area – courtesy of staff	3.68	3.67	0.01		
Professional & knowledgeable level of staff	3.79	3.90	-0.11		
Language skill of staff	3.80	3.81	-0.01		
Trustworthiness of staff	3.72	3.86	-0.14		

Table 7 presents p-value 0.004 ≤ 0.05. It appears that the average of expectation and perception of service quality in terms of "Assurance" dimension is significantly different. The biggest gap between expectations and perceptions shows in the factor of *"Check-in courtesy of staff"*, following by *"Trustworthiness of staff"*. Factors of *"Security - courtesy of staff"* and *"Immigration – courtesy of staff"* are in the same gap of -0.13, while the factor of *"Professional & knowledgeable level of staff"* is lesser than that with the gap of -0.11. The least one shows in factors of *"Shop & dining area – courtesy of staff"* and *"Language skill of staff"*.

When perception exceeds expectation (E<P), it implies that passengers are satisfied with most of assurance variables, except the shop & dining area (0.01).

Table 8 : Gap analysis of Hua-Hin airport service quality: Empathy dimensions

	Expectations Average	Perceptions Average	Gap	Paired t-test	
				t	Sig.
Empathy	3.82	3.89	-0.07	-5.133	0.007*
Consideration of staff	3.81	3.89	-0.08		
Staff attention provided to passenger	3.82	3.92	-0.10		
Accessibility of ground transport	3.81	3.84	-0.03		
Enough staff standby to assist passengers in an appropriate and prompt action to meet the special needs of passengers	3.83	3.92	-0.09		

Table 8 presents p-value 0.007 ≤ 0.05. The result shows that the average of expectation and perception of service quality in terms of "Assurance" dimension is fairly different. The biggest gap between expectations and perceptions appears in the factor of *"Staff attention provided to passenger"*. Factors of *"Consideration of staff"* and *"Enough staff standby to assist passengers in an appropriate and prompt action to meet the special needs of passengers"* almost have similar results in general. The least difference is the factor of "Accessibility of ground transport". It implies that passengers are satisfied with all of empathy variables.

Conclusion

The study of Service Quality toward Hua Hin International Airport can be summarised as follows; This research is the study of Service Quality on 5 factors from the SERVQUAL instrument which are Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The SERVQUAL was used to justify Passenger Expectation and Satisfaction and also to indicate the Gap of each factor for the

next improvement. Firstly, the majority of passengers who answered the Satisfaction Survey Questionnaires are Female, single, age is between 20 and 29 years old. Chinese are the main ethic of passengers with Bachelor degree graduation. Most of them are employed by private sector with less than 500 USD incomes per month. Their purpose of travel is tourism or holiday with 2-4 flights made yearly.

Secondly, the result of passengers' expectation and perception on Hua Hin Airport service quality toward five dimensions of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy are "average". That means the passengers do not expect much on this small airport and their satisfaction are just "fine". The outcome shows that Tangibility and Empathy are respectively the upmost issue related to their expectation followed by
Reliability, Responsiveness and Assurance is the least they concern. Whereas the most satisfied dimension is Empathy followed by Assurance, Responsiveness, Reliability and the least are Tangibility.

Thirdly, according to the outcome above Tangibility and Empathy shall be focused. The Gap analysis has demonstrated that the upmost issues on Tangible that affect Passenger's Satisfaction are Shopping & dinning area, Ground transportation options and Flight Information screens around terminal areas. These three problems, then, should be primarily upgraded. Besides, Accessibility of Ground Transport and Consideration of staff improvement are also needed as they relates to Empathy aspect of passengers' perception.

Interestingly, there are many parts that Hua Hin Airport service quality performance over expectation of passengers. Those are (1) The cleanliness of toilets and the convenience of equipment used in the terminal – (Tangibility), (2) Queuing time - (Responsiveness), (3) Courtesy, Professional and Knowledgeable level, Language skill and Trustworthiness of staff - (Assurance), (4) Consideration and Attention of staff, Accessibility of Ground Transport and Enough staff to assist passengers - (Empathy).

Referring to the research of Service Quality Factors Affecting Satisfaction of Thai Customers at Suvarnabhumi International Airport by Winarat Phuwapatchaikit (2016), the outcome of the research demonstrated that Suvarnabhumi Airport is satisfied with high rated by passengers on the aspect of human resources on Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy issues. The airport was reckoned by answerers as satisfied at international level. With these evidences, it seems like there is shining future in Hua Hin Airport as Hua Hin Airport possesses potentiality in Human Resources which is proved by over rated on passengers' satisfaction toward their expectation. Performance of staff, therefore, can be strength to achieve Service Quality if well enhanced. Nevertheless, Tangibility is the key obstacle in case Hua Hin Airport gets more visitors. The airport should prioritise these issues as they are the prime factors towards passenger satisfaction as proved by the evidence from the study and corresponds with the research of Passengers' Expectation of Airport Service

Quality: A case study of Jeju International Airport, (Yang et al., 2015) which indicated that airport users responded more sensitively regarding their evaluation to physical services rather than human services. From this point of view, the deficiency of budget on investment and alignment might be the key. Suvarnabhumi, which is state enterprise, can access more volume of capital easier and be quicker on decision making in comparison with Hua Hin Airport which is state owned. Utapao Airport is another airport that Hua Hin should study its Model. Despite Utapao is just a few hours far from Suvarnabhumi Airport but it obtains a good response from airlines with rising number of passengers. Furthermore, it is considered to be the prospective Aviation City in responding Thailand Mega Project East Economic Corridors by Dr. John D. Kasarda - the airport business consultant. (ฐานเศรษฐกิจ มัลติมีเดีย, 2560)

In summary, all five dimensions - Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy are required to enhance if the airport aims to reach higher Passengers' Satisfaction. The Tangibility (Shopping and dinning area, Ground Transportation options and Flight Information screens around terminal areas), Reliability (Clarity & Accuracy of PA system for boarding announcement, baggage-handling systems) Assurance (shopping & dinning) and Responsiveness (immigration) are the most important issues for urgent improvement.

Direction to improve Hua Hin Airport Performance

1. All concerned parties should escalate the airport facilities, which from the research result, affects passengers satisfaction. The project should not only cover shopping and dinning, ground Transportation to downtown, flight Information screens and signs but also broaden to airport environment both indoor and outdoor, exchange currency and vat refund services, check in kiosk, phone network and internet as well as advertisements or any feature to encourage Hua Hin Tourism.

2. Human Resources is another factor which will influence satisfaction of passengers. The airport should provide adequate number of well-trained personnel in order to effectively respond passengers' requirement and the rising volume of visitors.

Recommendation for further study

The passenger perception of service quality on airside is another issue which should be examined in which to prepare Hua Hin Airport an entire satisfaction toward passengers view. Another concern is marketing aspect as apparently, Hua Hin is close to Bangkok and there are several options for cheaper and not much significant on journey period in comparison with air ticket. Traveling by air from Bangkok to Hua Hin, then, is rarely interested. That's why there were some terminations of airlines' routes in recent decade. Thus, the study of Utapao Airport Model should be considered including cooperated study with airlines on profitable routes as the airport revenues relies on numbers of take off and landing of airlines and number of visitors. The higher traffics of Hua Hin

Airport not only generate income to the airport itself but also create more job opportunities to the community and strengthen Thailand Mega Project Southern Economic Corridor.

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