

COMMITMENT OF THAI CABIN CREW TO THE BRAND IMAGE OF THAI
AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED



Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

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AN ABSTRACT
BY
MULLIKA KOOSMITHI

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The purposes of this study were to determine the views of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's (TG) Thai cabin crew with regard to their levels of agreement with TG's brand image, and their willingness and ability to project that image to customers. Data were collected by means of a specially designed questionnaire focused on TG's declared brand image and that image as seen from the perspective of Keller's (2008) seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 cabin crew members who were Thai citizens and had at least five years experience working as cabin crew with TG. The findings showed that the respondents agreed with the firm's declared brand image at the "Strongly" level. Over 95% of the responses to the survey indicated that the respondents believed they could influence customers vis-à-vis TG's brand image. With regard to the respondents' willingness to project TG's brand image to customers, 76.13% of the responses were at the "Willing" and "Very Willing" levels. Concerning the respondents' ability to project

TG's brand image to customers, 71.40% of the responses were at the "Able" and "Very Able" levels. There was a high correlation between the respondents' willingness and ability.



ความมุ่งมั่นในการเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์บริษัทการบินไทยจำกัด (มหาชน)
ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทย



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตาม
หลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ

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การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษา ระดับความเห็นพ้องกับภาพลักษณ์บริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทย และระดับความเต็มใจ รวมทั้งระดับความสามารถในทักษะของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยในการเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์บริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) แก่ผู้โดยสาร

เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลคือแบบสอบถามที่ออกแบบมาเป็นพิเศษ มุ่งเน้นที่ภาพลักษณ์ของบริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) และมุ่งมองต่อภาพลักษณ์นั้นตามแนวความคิดเรื่องการรับรู้ของลูกค้ายในเชิงคุณภาพ 7 มิติ ของ Keller (2008)

กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการศึกษาคือพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยผู้มีประสบการณ์ในการทำงานเป็นพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินของบริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) ตั้งแต่ 5 ปีขึ้นไป จำนวนทั้งสิ้น 100 คน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามเห็นพ้องกับภาพลักษณ์ของบริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) ในระดับ “เห็นด้วยมาก”, กลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวนมากกว่า 95% เชื่อว่าสามารถจูงใจผู้โดยสารให้เห็นถึงภาพลักษณ์ของบริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) ได้, กลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 76.13% มีความเต็มใจในการเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์ของบริษัทการบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) แก่-

ผู้โดยสารอยู่ในระดับเต็มใจถึงเต็มใจมาก, กลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 71.40% ระบุว่ามีความสามารถในการ
การเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์ขององค์กรอยู่ในระดับสามารถปฏิบัติได้ถึงสามารถปฏิบัติได้มาก และ
ค่าสหสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความเต็มใจและความสามารถในการเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์ขององค์กรแก่
ผู้โดยสารของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม พบว่ามีความสัมพันธ์กันสูง



The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of the Business English for International Communication Program and the Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University.

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May, 2011

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	1
Research Questions.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	14
Scope of the Study.....	14
Participants.....	15
Method of the Study.....	15
Definition of Terms.....	16
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	17
Brand.....	17
Brand Image.....	21
Perceived Quality.....	24
Brief History of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.....	35
Related Research.....	38
3 METHODOLOGY.....	42
Participants	42
Research Instrument.....	43
Data Collection.....	53
Data Analysis.....	54
4 FINDINGS.....	55
Part 1: Status and Professional Experience.....	56
Part 2: Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image.....	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Chapter	Page
Part 3: Projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image.....	69
5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION.....	96
Conclusions.....	96
Discussion.....	100
Limitations of the Study.....	104
Recommendations for Further Study.....	105
REFERENCES.....	107
APPENDIX.....	112
Appendix 1: Table and Figures.....	112
Appendix 2: Questionnaire.....	117
Appendix 3: Approval Letter.....	122
VITAE.....	124

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Summary of TG's operating results for fiscal year 2008.....	Appendix 1
2 Status and Professional Experience.....	56
3 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image.....	58
4 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Declared Brand Image.....	60
5 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension.....	61
6 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension.....	62
7 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension.....	63
8 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension.....	64
9 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Durability Dimension.....	65
10 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension....	66
11 The Levels of Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension	67
12 Summary and Overall Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image.....	68
13 Statements Believed Influence by Respondents.....	70
14 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image and Values to Customers.....	72
15 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Declared Brand Image.....	74

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

Table	Page
16 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension.....	75
17 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension.....	76
18 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension.....	77
19 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension.....	78
20 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Durability Dimension.....	78
21 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension....	79
22 The Levels of Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension	80
23 Summary and Overall Willingness to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image.....	81
24 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image and Values to Customers.....	82
25 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Declared Brand Image.....	84
26 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension.....	85
27 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension.....	86
28 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension.....	87

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

Table	Page
29 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension.....	88
30 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Durability Dimension.....	88
31 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension.....	89
32 The Levels of Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image as Seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension	90
33 Summary and Overall Ability to Project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image.....	91
34 The Comparisons of the Mean Scores for Willingness and Ability.....	92
35 The Relationship between Willingness and Ability.....	93

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Crude oil price 2003-2008.....	Appendix 1
2 IATA international passenger traffic growth (% change year-on-year): December 2007 to November 2008.....	Appendix 1
3 Brand identities of Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd.	Appendix 1
4 Quality and its effect on customer retention.....	25



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

“The airline industry is in distress and calling may day” (Kositchotethana, 2008).

Kositchotethana’s choice of the term ‘may day’ is particularly apt as it is derived from the French ‘*m’aider*’ meaning ‘help me’ and has become an international signal word used as a distress call, (Merriam-Webster’s, 1996). Since the year 2008, the world airline industry has faced a difficult operating environment, has struggled to survive and has called for help. The crisis can be attributed to three major factors: high fuel prices, the global economic slowdown, and less demand for travel. This has created a great challenge for the airline industry.

According to “2000s energy crisis” (2009), high fuel prices, the first factor, brought the world’s airlines collective losses. Aviation fuel accounts for 25-30% of the industry’s operating costs. From the mid-1980s to September 2003, the price of a barrel of crude oil on the New York Metals Exchange (NYMEX) was generally under \$25 per barrel. In late 2003, the price rose above \$30 and peaked at \$147.30 in July

2008. This is shown graphically in Figure 1: Crude oil price 2003-2008 in Appendix 1: Tables and Figures. The possible causes of the price increases were instability in Russia and the Middle East, a decline in petroleum reserves, and a high petroleum demand growth in developing countries.

Mr. Giovanni Bisignani, Director General and CEO of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), wrote that every dollar increase in the price of a barrel of oil, pushes airline industry costs up by \$1.6 billion (Bisignani, 2008).

According to TBM Staff (2008), the global economic slowdown and less demand for travel, the second and third factors, were first started by the sub-prime financial disaster in the U.S.A. The crisis spilled into the wider economy, bursting the commodity price bubble and taking most leading world economies into recession. The rapidly slowing world economies reduced demand for air travel in the second half of 2008. A report from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) (Muqbil: 2008), showed a decline in the growth of international passenger traffic from 7.6% in 2007 to 4.1% in 2008.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in a report entitled, "Global aviation industry now shrinking by all measures" (IATA, 2009), Asia Pacific carriers faced the most difficult operating environment, with a 9.7% decline in international passenger traffic in November 2008 and had the most aggressive capacity cuts at 5.1%. The second largest drop, a 4.8% decline, was with North American carriers. European carriers lost 3.4% of their international traffic. African carriers had a traffic decline of 1.6%. Latin American carriers saw a slight decline in growth to 3.3% compared to 4.5% growth in October 2008. On the contrary, Middle Eastern carriers were the only group that increased their traffic, up to 5.6% from 3.5% growth in October 2008. Figure 2: IATA international passenger traffic growth (% change year-on-year): December 2007 to November 2008, in Appendix 1 presents these declines graphically.

These three factors (high fuel prices, the global economic slowdown and less demand for travel) brought enormous changes to the airlines. In order to recover their losses, several airlines such as America Airlines, United Airlines and Qantas began to shrink their fleets, decrease flights by between 10% and 20%, ground some aging aircraft, cut back routes, and cut jobs (Kositchotethana, 2009). Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways are examples of airlines that reduced their fuel expenses by cutting

weight on some aircraft (“Asian airlines go lightweight,” 2008). Raising fuel surcharges on tickets began to be applied by many airlines such as Qantas, Air France, Lufthansa, British Airways, and Thai Airways International (Armstrong, 2008). In addition, the *Economist* reported that some smaller airlines; Aloha Air Group, ATA Airlines, Skybus Airlines and Oasis Hong Kong Airlines went bankrupt (“Trouble in the air”, 2008).

Thailand's airlines, including the national carrier, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (TG), were also badly affected by volatile fuel expenses, foreign-exchange losses, the global financial crisis, a sharp drop in passenger numbers, and political turmoil (Chantanusornsiri, 2009).

Table 1: Summary of TG's operating results for fiscal year 2008, included in Appendix 1, presents the financial effects of the crisis and the negative impact on TG's operating results in 2008. While revenue increased 1.6% from the previous year, operating expenses increased 10.8%. Along with other factors this resulted in a net loss of 21.379 billion baht.

According to the 2008 annual report of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009), the loss

was due largely to high fuel prices, the downturn in travel demand, and the closure of airports by political protesters; Phuket and Had Yai Airports in the beginning of September 2008, and Suvarnabhumi and Donmueng Airports from November 26 through December 3, 2008. To recover its losses, TG reduced its operating costs by undertaking several actions: stopping the Bangkok to New York direct flight and the Bangkok to Johannesburg service (Sritama, 2009); reducing frequencies of some routes which reported declining passenger numbers such as China, Taiwan, Japan, and New Zealand; and planning to stop flying two routes: Bangkok to Phitsanulok and Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son (Thongrungsri, 2009). TG also has delayed deliveries of new jetliners, reduced weight by adjusting the number of meals and drink services on board, slashed overtime payments, minimized expenses on cargo operations and cut the number of cabin crew per flight and their overseas accommodation (Mahitthirook, 2009). According to a report in *The Nation* ("Thai reassures staff over health of carrier amid liquidity shortage," 2009), TG needed 34 billion baht to refinance its short-term debts and boost its liquidity. Twenty-two billion baht has been raised, but another 22 billion baht has been requested from the Finance Ministry to bail the company out of financial difficulty.

In short, airlines worldwide have suffered since 2008. Many did not survive. Those that did survive have had to take strong measures to remain in the market. Further steps must be taken to improve the competitiveness of the airlines seeking to endure the on going crisis.

One of the strategies that airlines and other types of firms can use to protect themselves and weather the storm is branding.

Temporal (2001) viewed successful branding as the strongest weapon in a company's armory and the best guarantee of corporate survival. Powerful brands provide long-term growth, higher profits, and increased asset value. Keller (2008) stated that "brands can help to identify and provide meaning to the different services provided by a firm" (p. 16). For example, the Thai AirAsia brand signals images to buyers such as low fair tickets, no-frills, short haul flights, free seating and convenient booking (Company profile, 2009). Brand image, consumers' perceptions of and preferences for a brand, is an important means of differentiation, i.e. how consumers see competing brands as different from each other. A brand states its various differentiating dimensions to its consumers including its brand associations and values.

Keller (2008) believed that a firm's brand image is reflected by associations held in consumers' memories. These associations influence purchasers powerfully, i.e. consumers buy not only a product, but also the associations that go with the product such as power, wealth, sophistication, and identification with other users of the brand (Realrangsutthar, 2007). Associations come in all forms and refer to direct and indirect descriptive features that characterize a product or service in the minds of consumers. These associations include such elements as user life-styles, product classes, competitors and countries of origin. Examples of brand associations carried in the minds of consumers of Bangkok Airways' services may include such notions as a private Thai owned airline, small, full service, expensive, Koh Samui or the company's campaign slogan; "Asia's boutique airline". A brand name such as Thai Airways International Public Company Limited may carry many associations in the minds of people such as Thailand's national carrier, world-class airline, full service, Thai gracious hospitality services, purple color, purple orchid, expensive and/or the company's campaign slogan; "Smooth as silk". Brand associations contribute to a firm's brand image, and make the brand interesting, memorable and appealing to its consumers.

Other than brand associations, Kotler (2003) added that the brand image also says something about the producer's values, for example; Mercedes stands for high performance, safety and prestige. Values of a firm become part of its brand image as customers integrate them into their global perceptions of the brand. Corporate values tend to permeate all activities of the firm, or at least its image. Firms that stress "innovation", "conservation of the environment" or "local partnerships" are communicating values. Customers, in turn associate these values with the firm's image in positive or negative ways. One of the major values expected by customers is high product and service quality.

Customers' perceptions of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service compared to alternatives is known as perceived quality. Keller (2008) stated that the perceived quality of a brand can be measured by rating seven dimensions: performance, features, conformance quality, reliability, durability, serviceability, and style and design. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

According to Company profile (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009), TG has defined and declared its brand image as modern, innovative, progressive, and a celebration of everything that makes Thailand unique. To fix that

image in customers' minds, TG emphasizes, a wide variety of destinations, safety and scheduling, and fulfilling customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well-being. To sustain and communicate the brand image, TG has articulated its corporate philosophy, "World Class, High Trust and Thai Touch", and its corporate vision, "To be the First Choice Carrier, with Touches of Thai". TG also has declared its values as representing the unique culture and traditions of Thailand, inspiring not only TG's outward appearance, but also its gracious hospitality on the ground and in the air. Taken all together, this forms the foundation of TG's brand image.

The relationship between Keller's seven dimensions of perceived quality and TG's declared brand image is presented more completely in Chapter 2.

To complete this introductory view of brand image, one further element must be added: services differ greatly from physical products. This must be carefully considered when firms choose to change or adjust their brand images.

Airlines are service-oriented businesses. According to Kotler (2003), airlines offer a major service accompanied by minor goods and services. For example, airline passengers buy the transportation service. The service includes some tangibles such

as food, drinks and a ticket stub. The service requires a capital-intensive good, an airplane, for delivery of the service, but the primary product delivered is a service.

Certain inherent elements differentiate services from physical products. According to Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley, and Rudelius (1997), services have four unique elements: 1) intangibility, buyers cannot see, hold, or touch the service before it is bought; 2) inconsistency, service quality varies with each service provider's capabilities and day-to-day job performance; 3) inseparability, buyers cannot separate the deliverer of the service from the service itself; and 4) inventory, the service cannot be stored. Because of these elements of service, airlines need to differentiate their products by branding.

In summary, branding is a way to increase a firm's chances of success. Brands help distinguish one product or service from others of the same type, as well as define and position the company's offerings. Brand image, including the firm's values, is an important means of differentiation. A strong brand image leads to long-term growth, higher profits and increased asset values. Differentiation of products and services can be made in the minds of people through brand associations and perceived quality. Finally, Airlines are service-oriented businesses and the four elements of service (intangibility, inconsistency, inseparability, and inventory) make services differ from

physical products. This must be considered in the formation of a service firm's brand image. Finally, the delivery of well defined services must be made by a service provider. At this point, the service provider becomes part of the service and the image of service, and be extension, the image of the brand. This is true whether the service provider is seen by the customer as an ATM or a waiter/waitress in an expensive restaurant. This is an important realization for a firm like TG.

For service firms like TG, employees are viewed as part of the brand. Employees, especially frontline employees, those that are seen by the customers to deliver the service, affect customers' relations with the firm and influence the firm's success. In the eyes of customers, frontline employees are seen as company representatives and part of their company's brand image. The traits and behaviors exhibited by employees will directly or indirectly have implications for consumers about the services they provide and the strength of the brand image. Berkowitz et al. (1997) stated that "...in services marketing, the employees play a central role in attracting, building, and maintaining relationships with customers" (p. 354). Jones & Decotiis, as cited by Lovelock (1996), wrote that service quality in service-based businesses depend absolutely on the ability of an operation's employees to deal graciously with customers

in all situations. Solomon (1986) added that the actual service rendered is intangible; its attributes are embodied in the person delivering the service.

According to Reid and Bojanic (2001) employees take part in the success of products and services, and therefore are critical to the successes of companies. But, frontline employees, those who are seen to deliver the services to the customers, play very important roles in creating positive experiences for customers and cementing a company's brand image in their minds.

Allen and Wilburn (2002) added that employees accomplished this by sharing their beliefs and accepting their company's goals and values; by showing their willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of their company; and by communicating their strong desire to maintain membership in their company with customers. Because of this, employees, especially frontline employees who are in direct contact with customers, need to assess themselves in two ways. Firstly, frontline employees need to determine their degrees of agreement with and commitment to their companies' brand images and values. Secondly, frontline employees need to evaluate their own willingness and ability to make the necessary efforts to provide the services that exemplify their companies' brand images and the values included therein. Only if

the frontline service providers believe in a firm's image, and are willing and able to exert the effort necessary to communicate the firm's image and inseparable values to customers will the firm develop and maintain a strong brand image which will translate to customer loyalty and result in long-term growth, higher profits, and increased asset values.

This study aims to investigate the views of TG's Thai cabin crew, TG's most prominent frontline service providers, about their level of agreement with TG's brand image, and their willingness and ability to project it to customers. This leads directly to the two proposed research questions.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following two research questions:

1. How strongly do Thai cabin crew agree with the brand image of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited?
2. How willing and able are Thai cabin crew to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image to customers?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be beneficial in the following ways: firstly, TG employees, and especially cabin crew, may gain a better understanding of TG's brand image at the time of the study, as well as their roles in maintaining and developing it. Secondly, the findings also may be useful as a guide for TG to improve the quality of its services together with employee motivation and work skills. Finally, this study may be beneficial to other airlines and service-oriented businesses that wish to strengthen their brand images and to researchers who are interested in the study of the airline industry and brand image in particular.

Scope of the Study

This research focused on measuring the strength of Thai cabin crew members' agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image, along with their willingness and ability to contribute to the maintenance and development of that image. Keller's (2008) model of the seven dimensions of customer perceived quality was used as the lens through which this study was focused.

One hundred Thai Cabin Crew of Thai Airways International Public Company

Limited were included in the study.

Participants

The participants of this study included 2% of all of TG's Thai cabin crew, or 100 respondents. The respondents were Thai citizens and had at least five years experience working as cabin crew for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.

Method of the Study

A specifically designed questionnaire was created to collect the data from 100 Thai cabin crew members at the Operations Center, Suvarnabhumi Airport between 23 August 2010 and 15 September 2010, from 6.00 to 9.00 a.m. and from 19.00 to 22.30 p.m., the times most likely to find large numbers of possible respondents in one place.

The primary data were analyzed by descriptive statistics: percentages and means.

Definition of Terms

Perceived Quality: Seven measurable dimensions of customer perceived quality and value (brand image) that drive customers' product or service purchasing decisions: performance, features, conformance quality, reliability, durability, serviceability, and style and design (Keller, 2008)

TG's declared brand image: Modern, innovative, progressive, and a celebration of everything that makes Thailand unique; its declared values representing the unique culture and traditions of Thailand, inspiring not only TG's outward appearance, but also its gracious hospitality on the ground and in the air; and TG's corporate philosophy and vision statements

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explores brand and brand image. This is followed by literature on perceived quality focusing on Keller's seven dimensions. Branding actions undertaken by Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (TG) are presented throughout to establish the correspondence between theory and practice. A brief history follows for readers who may not be familiar with it. Finally, previous research on brand image of airlines in Thailand is presented. The aim of this chapter is to provide readers with a practical understanding of the theoretical background that forms the basis of this study.

Brand

According to the American Marketing Association as cited by (Keller, 2008, p. 2), "a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors".

Kurtz and Boone (2006) indicated that a firm can identify its brand by a brand name and/or a brand mark. A brand name is part of a brand consisting of words, letters, and/or numbers that form a name that people can vocalize. A brand name is a tool used to identify and distinguish a firm's offerings from those of its competitors. "THAI", for example, is a brand name of TG.

A brand mark is a symbol or a pictorial design that distinguishes a product. A brand mark is recognized by sight. Examples of TG's brand marks since the airline's founding in 1960 are described below.

The "Dancing Man" figure was designed by HSH Prince Kraisingh Vudhijaya in 1960. This symbol represented a stylized classical Thai dancer, and reflected values of culture and hospitality of Thailand (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009).

A new petal-like sema leaf logo was created by Walter Landor Associates in 1975. This logo signified a Buddhism-related object seen at temples throughout the country. Purple, pink, and golden yellow were the three major colors of this symbol. The logo combined several visual elements, suggestive of a tropical orchid, the richness

of Thai silk, and hints of classical design motifs (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2008).

TG's present brand mark was designed by Interbrand and launched in 2005.

This symbol became more energetic with the use of a more vibrant color composition while maintaining the Thai identity. Purple represents the modern age and a Thai orchid, golden yellow represents Thai arts, and vivid pink often appears as part of silk pattern designs. The strong "THAI" logotype indicates the company's strength and stability (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009).

The three brand marks and logotypes of TG since 1960 are presented in Figure 3 attached in Appendix 1.

Kotler (2003) viewed a brand as an offering from a known source. Companies address needs by putting forth a value proposition, a set of benefits they offer to customers to satisfy their needs. The intangible value proposition is made physical by an offering to the consuming public. Kotler believed that such a statement could include a combination of products, services, information and experiences.

Keller (2008) explained the importance of a brand to both customers and firms.

To customers, a brand identifies the source or maker of a product or service and allows customers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or provider. A brand takes on special meaning to customers through their past experiences with the product or service and its associated marketing program. Customers decide which brands satisfy their needs and which ones do not. As a result, a brand provides a shorthand device, or means of simplification for customers' product decisions. To a firm, a brand serves an identification purpose, i.e. to simplify product handling or tracing. A brand helps to organize inventory and accounting records. A brand also offers the firm legal protection for unique features or aspects of the product or service. A brand can retain intellectual property rights and give legal title to the brand owner.

In summary, a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combinations thereof intended to identify and differentiate a product and/or service of one company or group of companies from competitors. A brand name is the part of the brand that people can vocalize. A brand mark is recognized by sight. A brand also communicates important functions and values to both customers and other firms.

Brand Image

A number of marketing experts have defined brand image in a variety of similar ways. The views of two prominent experts are presented below.

Kotler (2003) said that brand image was made up from associations in customers' minds. The customer's image of a brand varies with his or her experience as filtered by the customer's selective perceptions, distortions, and memories of his or her experiences with the brand. To Kotler, a brand image was a complex symbol that conveyed six levels of meaning: attributes benefits, values, culture and personality of the brand in the minds of customers, as well as the customers' beliefs about the profile of users of the brand.

Keller (2008) refined Kotler's definition of brand image. He stated that brand image was consumer perceptions of and preferences for a brand, measured by the various types of brand associations held in their memories. Keller believed that brand image depended on the properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempted to meet customers' psychological or social needs. He believed that people thought about a brand abstractly, rather than about what the brand actually

did. Thus, brand image referred to more intangible aspects of a brand. Customers formed imagery associations with brands directly from their own experiences with the product or service, or indirectly through what they heard about the brand from other sources of information.

In its Company profile (2009), Thai Airways International Public Company Limited presented its value proposition to customers. This is summarized hereafter. TG identified itself as modern, innovative, progressive, yet celebrating everything which makes Thailand unique--Thai culture, traditions, warm hospitality and the way Thai people extend these values to travelers. The overall objective of TG's brand statement was to enhance the corporate philosophy: "World Class, High Trust, and Thai Touch". TG's corporate vision was stated: "To be the First Choice Carrier, with Touches of Thai". To project those values in customers' minds, TG focused on a wide variety of destinations, safety and scheduling, and fulfilling customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well-being.

With this value proposition, TG set the branding process to transform TG's brand values into a brand image in the minds of customers. The stated values reflect the values of Thailand and inspired TG's outward appearance and its gracious

hospitality on the ground and in the air. The new corporate identity was portrayed with a stronger “THAI” logotype, new state-of-the-art aircraft, a more modern and attractive interior design of transit lounges and airplanes, entertainment systems, the use of the Thai gesture of greeting (Wai), the Thai language, new female cabin crew in-flight uniforms, Thai food, and superior services.

Once offered to customers, TG’s value proposition became part of TG’s brand image as customers formed brand associations in their minds based on their own experiences and information received from other sources.

In summary, brand image is formed by consumers’ perceptions of a brand, as reflected by the brand associations held in their minds. Customers form imagery associations with a brand directly from their own experiences or indirectly through other sources of information. Companies, like TG, advance the process of branding, or building a brand image, by formalizing value propositions and declaring their brand images to customers.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is related to brand image and can be used to influence customer purchase behaviors and lead to improved financial performance. This theory of perceived quality is presented below.

According to Keller (2008), perceived quality refers to customers' perceptions of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service when compared to alternatives and with respect to the intended purposes of the product or service offered. He believed that brand image associations signal a certain level of quality which transform into value perceptions about products and services. Keller said that perceived quality and value drive customers' product or service purchasing decisions and have strong links to business' outcomes such as profitability, market share, revenues, and sales volume.

Allen and Wilburn (2002) gathered studies on the relationship between product and service quality and profitability. The results showed that the level of quality of a product or service affected overall customer satisfaction. Higher levels of customer satisfaction were linked to greater economic returns for the product or service provider.

Their framework suggested that customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, customer value perceptions, and brand image interact to affect an individual's decision to repurchase a product or service, which in turn drives the financial performance of the providing firm.

Their model is presented in the Figure 4 below.

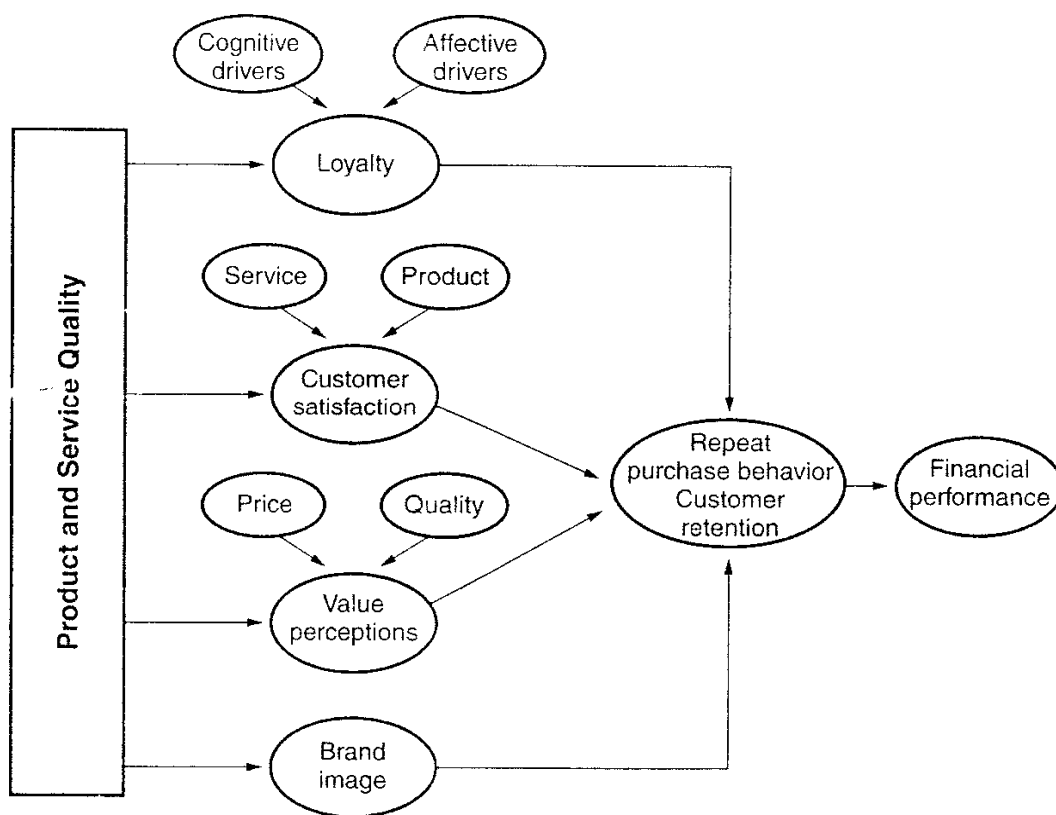


FIGURE 4: Quality and its effect on customer retention.

Source: Linking Customer and Employee Satisfaction to the Bottom Line (Allen and Wilburn, 2002).

The framework shows that customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, customer value perceptions, and brand image are influenced by product and/or service quality. Customer loyalty, the first intermediate, involves cognitive drivers—the attitudes that are more rational in nature and may involve the customer's critical assessment of his or her relationship with the supplier such as his or her attitudes toward the supplier's product quality, problem resolution and distribution structure. It also includes affective drivers—the emotional attachment a consumer may develop for a product or service provider that may relate to the brand, its image or the company's employees. Customers who are strongly loyal in the attitudinal sense will be more likely to repeat purchasing than customers who are not. Customer satisfaction, the second intermediate, may rise and fall based on product or service quality experiences. Customer value perception, the third intermediate, varies according to price and quality. A substantial increase in price could yield a precipitous decline in value perceptions. Similarly, if product quality begins to slip, it is very likely that customer satisfaction will decline accordingly. Brand image, the fourth intermediate, is affected by product and/or service quality. Customers often form more favorable perceptions of a product and/or service with a brand they already feel positive about. Customers with strong positive emotions toward a brand

image tend to continue repurchasing despite the adversities of lower product and/or service quality. Positive output from each of the four intermediate variables leads to repeat customer behavior and customer retention. This in turn leads to improved financial performance of the firm providing the product and/or service.

Kotler (2003) added that quality products and services offered by firms earned more profit because premium quality allows firms to charge premium prices. Such firms benefits from more repeat purchases, consumer loyalty and positive word of mouth. Further, their costs for delivering higher quality are not much higher than for firms producing lower quality products or services.

For service-oriented businesses, one instrument used to measure the level of perceived quality of a service is the SERVQUAL scale. Allen and Wilburn (2002) discussed this multi-item scale that was created in 1988 by Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml. This scale consisted of five dimensions and focused on the performance component of the service quality model in which quality was defined as the disparity between expectations and performance. The five dimensions of the scale are presented below.

1. The Tangible Dimension includes the appearance of facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
2. The Reliability Dimension addresses the service provider's ability to perform dependably and accurately.
3. The Responsiveness Dimension involves the service provider's willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. The Assurance Dimension is identified as the knowledge base and courtesy of employees and their ability to install trust and confidence in customers.
5. The Empathy Dimension relates to the service organization's caring and individualized service.

Keller (2008) also recognized the importance of having a model to measure the levels of customer perceived quality. He identified seven dimensions of customer perceived quality and value: performance, features, conformance quality, reliability, durability, serviceability, and style and design. The seven dimensions are outlined below. Each dimension is accompanied by illustrative examples offered by Kotler

(2003). While Kotler's examples are taken from a previous and unrelated work, they illustrate Keller's dimensions well.

1. Performance

Keller (2008) defined the performance dimension as the levels at which the primary characteristics of the product or service operates. These levels can be categorized as low, medium, high or very high. A Mercedes-Benz, for example, provides higher performance levels than a Hyundai: the Mercedes rides smoother, goes faster and lasts longer (Kotler, 2003).

2. Features

Keller (2008) identified the features dimension as the secondary elements of a product that complement the primary characteristics. Kotler (2003) addressed what he called the varying features that supplement the product's basic functions. McDonald's added Playlands at a number of its U.S. and international restaurants to cater to young customers. Oral-B put a blue dye in the center bristles of its toothbrushes. As the dye fades, it tells customers when they need a new toothbrush.

General Motors offered the OnStar system which included the global positioning system (GPS) on selected vehicles.

3. Conformance Quality

Keller (2008) defined the conformance quality dimension as the degree to which a product or service meets specifications and is free of defects. Kotler (2003) added that this included the degree to which all the produced units were identical and met the promised specification. He offered a hypothetical example. Suppose a Porsche 944 was designed to accelerate from 0 to 60 miles per hour within ten seconds. If every Porsche 944 coming off the assembly line did this, the model would meet the promised specification and the Porsche 944 would be said to have high conformance quality. The problem with low conformance quality was that the product would disappoint some buyers and might affect company profitability.

4. Reliability

Keller (2008) viewed the reliability dimension as the consistency of performance over time and from purchase to purchase. Kotler (2003) addressed reliability by noting two meanings. The first meaning focused on the product not

malfunctioning or failing within a specified time period. The second meaning pointed at the service as being trustworthy; the ability of the service providers to perform the service consistently and accurately. Mercedes-Benz and Singapore Airlines are examples of firms with high levels of reliability. Every Mercedes-Benz customer believes that the car they purchase will provide the same performance level and will not fail for a long period of term. Singapore Airlines enjoys an excellent reputation, in large part because of its flight attendants' skill in providing the service consistently and accurately over a long period of time.

5. Durability

Keller (2008) explained that the durability dimension refers to the life expectancy of the product or service. Kotler (2003) identified durability as a valued attribute for certain products. Customers are willing to pay more for products that have a reputation for being long lasting such as certain vehicle and kitchen appliances. It might be added the McDonalds has been serving meals that provide high levels of satisfaction to customers for over fifty years.

6. Serviceability

Keller (2008) defined the serviceability dimension as the ease with which a product or service is provided, even when difficulties arise. Kotler (2003) focused on products in this case and referred to this dimension as “repairability”. He thought of the ease of fixing a product when it malfunctions or fails. Some products include a diagnostic feature that allows service people to correct a problem over the telephone or advise the user how to correct it. Hewlett-Packard, for example, offered online technical support called “e-support” and real-time “chat” online for its customers.

7. Style and design

Keller (2008) defined the style and design dimension as the appearance or feel of quality in customers' minds. Kotler (2003) said that style described how the product looked and felt to buyers. Style has the advantage of creating distinctiveness that is difficult to copy. Montblanc pens, Godiva chocolate and Harley–Davidson motorcycles are examples of brands for which aesthetics play a key role. Kotler identified design as the totality of features that effect how a product looks and functions in terms of customer requirements. Airline seats, and the space between them; airline

meals, and the ease with which they can be served and eaten in limited space; and boarding passes which are easy to use when passengers' hands are full of baggage, passports and possibly small children all would be examples of the importance of design. Kotler noted that design also offered a potent way to differentiate and position a company's products and services. Apple computer, for example, launched iMac in 1998. It featured a sleek, curvy monitor and hard drive, all in one unit, and one-button Internet access in a translucent casing. One month after becoming available in stores, this model was the number-two best-selling computer.

TG's declared brand image corresponds very closely to Keller's seven dimensions of perceived quality.

1. Performance: levels at which the primary characteristics of the product operate. TG has identified itself as a world-class airline which is highly trusted by customers. This implies that TG has positioned itself at a very high performance level.

2. Features: secondary elements of a product or service that complement the primary characteristics. Thai traditions and culture, warm hospitable service on the ground and in the air, a wide variety of destinations, safety

and scheduling are examples of TG's features that support its basic image function as a world-class air transportation service provider.

3. Conformance Quality: the degree to which the product meets specifications and is free of defects. TG is determined to fulfill its customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well-being.

4. Reliability: consistency of performance over time and from purchase to purchase. TG is committed to reassuring its customers with its corporate philosophy: world class, high trust and Thai touch. This implies that TG promises to deliver the same unique, superior products and services to customers at every purchase. TG's staff must perform services consistently and accurately.

5. Durability: the expected life cycle of the product or service. TG has signaled its full commitment to such features as safety, scheduling, comfort and well-being. This implies that TG guarantees the quality of its products and services such as arriving at destinations safely and on time and having provided for the full comfort and the general well-being of every customer on every flight far into the future.

6. Serviceability: ease of servicing the product. TG has identified its services as world-class standard services. This implies that TG's customers always are treated at a world-class standard even if malfunctions or mishaps occur along the way.

7. Style and Design: appearance or feel of quality. TG has defined its style and design characteristics as modern, innovative, progressive and representative of Thai culture and traditions.

In summary, perceived quality is the customers' perceptions of the overall quality of a product or service compared to alternatives. In Keller's model, perceived quality includes seven dimensions which can be measured: performance, features, conformance quality, reliability, durability, serviceability, and style and design. TG's declared brand image corresponds closely with Keller's model.

Brief History of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited

Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (TG) was established on May 1, 1960 as a joint venture between Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) which

initially held a 30% capital share of two million Baht, along with Thailand's domestic carrier, Thai Airways Company (TAC). TG first operated out of Bangkok to nine overseas Asian destinations. The first flight, on Sunday, May 1, 1960, was a DC-6B aircraft flying from Bangkok to Hong Kong, Taipei, and Tokyo. Intercontinental services began to Sydney, Australia in 1971, followed by flights to Europe in 1972; to Los Angeles in North America and the Middle East in 1980; and to Johannesburg, South Africa in 2006 (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009).

Since it was founded in 1960, TG has expanded and developed its business. On April 1, 1977, TG became fully owned by the Thai people. In 1979, TG launched non-stop flights to European destinations utilizing two Boeing B747-200 aircraft. In 1983, TG introduced its Royal Executive Class services. In 1988, TG and its parent company, TAC, merged into a single airline which brought together domestic and international air operations. On June 25, 1991, TG was allowed by the government to list its shares on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. In 1997, TG, Lufthansa, Air Canada, SAS and United Airlines formed the world's first and largest cooperative airline association called the "Star Alliance". On May 1, 2005, TG started nonstop flights from Bangkok to New York employing the Airbus A340-500. On October 2006, TG first

introduced three flights a week from Bangkok to Johannesburg. Both non-stop flights to New York and Johannesburg were later suspended because of the global economic downturn (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2008).

In 2010, TG's main business was the transport of passengers, cargo and mail on regularly scheduled flights, and chartered flights to domestic and international destinations. As of October, 2009, TG had a total of 96 aircraft including 18 Boeing 747-400, 6 Boeing 777-300, 8 Boeing 777-200, 6 Boeing 777-200ER, 9 Boeing 737-400, 4 Airbus 340-500, 6 Airbus 340-600, 20 Airbus 330-300, 17 Airbus 300-600, and 2 ATR-72. TG's route network covered 62 international flights to 35 countries around the world and served 12 domestic points of interest (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009).

In summary, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (TG) has grown from a small joint venture airline in 1960 to an independent world class airline and member of the world's largest cooperative airline association, "Star Alliance" in 2010. TG, like all airlines, has been hit by the global economic downturn starting in 2008 and is seeking ways and means to improve its financial performance.

Related Research

Research from various sources concerning brand image of airlines in Thailand has been collected and is presented below.

Pikulsiri (2004) conducted a study comparing the perspective of passengers with different personal backgrounds, flight schedules and travel frequencies, and media exposures to the service image of Phuket Airlines. The study was conducted with 375 Thai and foreign passengers of Phuket Airlines by use of a questionnaire. The results showed that both the overall and the specific passengers' perspectives on the service image of Phuket Airlines were positive; however, passengers with different nationalities, occupations, and incomes had different perspectives on the service image of the domestic airline; passengers with different flight schedules differed in their perspectives on the service image of Phuket Airlines; and passengers with different exposures to resource persons and mass media sources were different in their perspectives on Phuket Airlines' service image.

Vimuktananda (2005) studied passengers' view points toward the image of Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd. (TG). A survey of 400 Thai respondents was

conducted by use of a questionnaire. The results indicated that the overall level of Thai passengers' views of the image of TG was at a moderate level. The demographic factor of gender indicated different views. The demographic factors of age, education level, occupation, income, and travel experience did not indicate any different views of TG's image.

Siriwej (2006) studied the perception of the new corporate identity of Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd. (TG). The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data from 394 employees. The results showed that the sample group had a high perception of five positive dimensions: Agreeableness, Enterprise, Competence, Chic and Informality, and a low perception of two negative dimensions: Ruthlessness and Machismo. Division was the most effective personal factor that impacted on the perception of all seven dimensions. Competence was ranked higher than the other dimensions while Ruthlessness and Machismo were the most influential dimensions.

Feongkeaw (2007) studied corporate and brand images of low cost airlines: Nok Air, Thai Air Asia, and One-Two-Go. The survey population was 400 people in Bangkok who never traveled on low cost airlines and 400 people who traveled on low cost airlines. The data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The results showed

a statistical difference between low cost airline users and non-users in terms of age, education, occupation, and income; a statistical difference between the two groups of respondents with regard to the image of low cost airlines was identified; and a statistical correlation between the media exposure of users and non-users of low cost airlines was found with regard to the image of low cost airlines.

Realrangsutthar (2007) studied the factors of innovative product and service improvements, warranty programs, advertising communications and third party appraisals that affect the brand images of low cost airlines in Thailand and the differences between local and international low cost airlines in Thailand. The study included 400 foreign passengers. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that each factor studied influenced the brand images of the airlines. The brand images of local low cost airlines were inferior to the brand images of international low cost airlines in Thailand.

The related research presented above illustrates the recent studies on brand image of airlines in Thailand. However, no research could be found on front line employees' views on the brand images of their own companies. For this reason, this

research explores the levels of agreement of TG's Thai cabin crew with TG's brand image, and their willingness and ability to project that image to customers.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of the study and is divided into the following sections: participants, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

Participants

The participants in this study included two percent of all of TG's Thai cabin crew. According to TG's employment data, as of March 31, 2009 (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009), TG employed a total of 5,886 cabin crew, of which 662 were supervisors and 179 were Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese cabin crew, leaving 5,045 Thai cabin crew. Two percent of this total is 100.90 persons. One hundred Thai cabin crew were included in this study.

Participation in this study was restricted to only Thai citizens working as cabin crew for TG. This limitation was made for two reasons. First, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited is the national carrier of Thailand and, therefore, Thai cabin crew would be the most concerned with and directly affected by the brand

image and success of the airline. Second, Thai employees compose the large majority of TG cabin crew.

All participants in the study were also required to have at least five years experience working as TG cabin crew. This ensured that they had had sufficient time to understand and appreciate TG's brand image and values as well as their own roles and positions in the firm. Five years experience is also an indication of the respondents' commitment to their careers at TG and the long term success of the airline.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was specially designed to survey: the respondents' levels of agreement with TG's brand image and their levels of willingness and ability to project TG's brand image to customers. The content of the questionnaire were reviewed by an expert from TG to assure appropriateness and was pilot tested to verify the clarity of the questionnaire and the ease with which respondents could complete it.

As all TG cabin crew are fluent in English and TG's brand image has been published on TG's Intranet and Internet sites and communicated to cabin crew through numerous other media in English, the questionnaire was prepared and distributed to respondents in English only. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix 2: Questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts.

Part 1: Status and Professional Experience

Part 1 of the questionnaire prequalified Thai cabin crew for inclusion in the study population. Possible participants were asked to affirm that they were Thai citizens and had at least five years experience working as cabin crew for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited before they were permitted to complete the questionnaire. Compliance with the prequalification criteria was noted on each completed questionnaire for the sake of transparency.

Part 2: Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's

Brand Image

Part 2 of the questionnaire explored the respondents' levels of agreement with TG's brand image. The questionnaire required the respondents to rank their levels of agreement with 23 statements reflecting TG's declared brand image and the seven dimensions of customer perceived quality as described by Keller (2008). The agreement ranking scale extended from "Very Strongly" to "Very Weakly or Not At All".

The levels of agreement requested of the respondents in the questionnaire were the following:

4 = Very Strongly

3 = Strongly

2 = Weakly

1 = Very Weakly or Not At All

The following terminology was used to describe the findings.

<u>Score Range</u>	<u>Descriptive Terminology</u>
--------------------	--------------------------------

3.5 and above	= Very Strong/Strongly (depending on grammatical context)
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2.5 to 3.49	= Strong/Strongly
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1.5 to 2.49	= Weak/Weakly
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1.49 and below	= Very Weak/Weakly or Not At All
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Part 2 of the questionnaire was designed in direct response to the call by Allen and Willburn (2002) for frontline employees, who are in direct contact with customers, to assess themselves to determine their degrees of agreement with their company's brand image.

Part 3: Projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image

Part 3 of the questionnaire identified which of the elements of TG's declared brand image and components of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality (Keller: 2008) the respondents believed they could or could not influence in the

minds of customers and how strongly TG cabin crew were willing and able to try to influence the elements and dimensions that they could.

The questionnaire asked the respondents, firstly, which of the same 23 statements as used in Part 2 they believed they could or could not influence in the minds of customers. Then, the respondents were obliged to rank their willingness to project TG's brand image and values to customers on a scale from "Very Willing" to "Unwilling", and their ability to do the same on a scale from "Very Able" to "Unable"

The levels of willingness of the respondents to project TG's brand image and values to customers were measured on the following scales:

4 = Very Willing

3 = Willing

2 = Hesitant

1 = Unwilling

The following terminology was used to describe the findings.

<u>Score Range</u>	<u>Descriptive Terminology</u>
--------------------	--------------------------------

3.5 and above	= Very Willing
---------------	----------------

2.5 to 3.49	= Willing
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1.5 to 2.49	= Hesitant
-------------	------------

1.49 and below	= Unwilling
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The levels of ability of the respondents to project TG's brand image and values to customers were measured on the following scales:

4 = Very Able

3 = Able

2 = Unsure of Ability

1 = Unable

The following terminology was used to describe the findings.

<u>Score Range</u>	<u>Descriptive Terminology</u>
--------------------	--------------------------------

3.5 and above	= Very Able
---------------	-------------

2.5 to 3.49	= Able
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1.5 to 2.49	= Unsure of Ability
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1.49 and below	= Unable
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The responses to this part of the questionnaire were related to the second call by Allen and Wilburn (2002) for frontline employees to evaluate their own willingness and ability to make the necessary efforts to provide the services that exemplify their company's brand image.

Space for respondent comments was provided at the ends of both Part 2 and Part 3.

Finally, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient or Pearson's correlation (r) was employed to measure the correlation between the respondents'

willingness and ability. In describing the findings, the following values of the Pearson's

Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used:

+1 = Perfect correlation

0.81 and above = High correlation

0.51 to 0.80 = Medium correlation

0.50 and below = Low correlation

0.00 = No correlation

-1 = Perfect negative correlation

The correspondence between the 23 statements in Parts 2 and 3 of the questionnaire and TG's declared brand image and Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality are presented below.

Statements	Correspondence
1 to 6	TG's Declared Brand Image
7 to 9	Keller's Performance Dimension
10 to 15	Keller's Features Dimension
16 to 18	Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension
19	Keller's Reliability Dimension
20	Keller's Durability Dimension
21	Keller's Serviceability Dimension
22 and 23	Keller's Style and Design Dimension

Statements 1 to 6 are declarations made by TG about their own brand image.

These statements can be found in numerous media sources inside and outside of TG.

Statements 7 to 23 have been formulated to reflect Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. Note that some of Keller's seven dimensions have more or less statements than others. This is because TG itself stresses some dimensions more than others.

Once the 23 statements had been reviewed and placed in the questionnaire, the questionnaire was reviewed by a senior in-flight service department supervisor to insure that the questionnaire accurately and fully reflected the brand image desired by TG.

To test the clarity of the questionnaire, the appropriateness of responses and the ease with which respondents could complete the questionnaire in the survey environment, a pilot test was conducted on April 8, 2010 with ten Thai cabin crew in the TG Operations Center at Suvarnabhumi Airport. The trial revealed that each respondent took 5-10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and encountered no major difficulties. The time required to complete the questionnaire would not upset either cabin crew or TG's Operations Center. Comments and suggestion received from the pilot test group were used to refine and improve the questionnaire before its use as the final research instrument.

All 23 statements as finalized can be seen in Appendix 2: Questionnaire.

Data Collection

Official TG approval to collect the data for the study on TG premises was received on 18 August 2010. The approval letter is attached in Appendix 3: Approval Letter.

The data were collected between 23 August 2010 and 15 September 2010.

Questionnaires were distributed to and collect from respondents in the TG Operations Center at Suvarnabhumi Airport from 6.00 to 9.00 a.m. and from 19.00 to 22.30 p.m.. These are the two periods of time each day most likely to find large numbers of TG cabin crew in the Operations Center. At these times, TG cabin crew are doing check-in and pre-flight briefings before performing their flight duties, or check-out procedures after ending their duties.

The researcher approached TG cabin crew members in the TG Operations Center from both departing and arriving Thai flights and asked these individuals if they would be willing to participate in a master's degree research project. For those individuals who agreed to participate and who met the prequalification criteria, the researcher gave them the questionnaire copies along with a brief explanation of the

directions for each part of the questionnaire. The respondents marked the questionnaires by themselves. The researcher waited nearby for two reasons: first, to answer any procedural questions the respondents might have had, and two, to collect the completed questionnaires. The researcher did not influence the participants' responses in any way. The data collection procedure was repeated until 100 questionnaires were collected.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed by descriptive statistics: mean and percentage scores. The findings are presented in the form of tables followed by descriptions and explanations in Chapter 4. Conclusions, recommendations for further study, and limitations of the study are offered in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the Commitment of Thai Cabin Crew to the Brand Image of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.

The data obtained from the completed questionnaires are presented below and divided into the same three parts as in the questionnaire: Part 1, Status and Professional Experience; Part 2, Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image; and Part 3, Projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image.

Part 1 of the questionnaire simply verifies the qualifications of the respondents to participate in the study. The findings in Part 2 of the questionnaire lead to the answer of the first research question and are summarized on tables 3 to 12. The findings in Part 3 of the questionnaire form the basis for the answer to research question 2 and are summarized on tables 13 to 34.

Tables are presented to display the findings and a brief description is offered following each table.

Part 1: Status and Professional Experience

The status and working experience of the respondents in the study are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 STATUS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Statements	Respondents	Percent
I am a Thai citizen.	100	100.00%
I have 5 years experience (or more) working as a cabin crew member for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.	100	100.00%

Table 2 shows that all of the 100 respondents were Thai citizens and had at least five years experience working as cabin crew members with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, i.e. all participants met the prequalification criteria.

Part 2: Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand

Image

Part 2 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to identify their levels of agreement with their company's brand image as reflected by 23 statements about TG's declared brand image and Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. The findings are presented in Tables 3 to 12 and lay the foundation for the answer to the first research question.

Table 3, below, presents an overview of how strongly the respondents rated the 23 statements in the Part 2 of the questionnaire concerning Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image. The four level scales are presented in numeric totals and percentages. Since all 100 respondents rated all 23 statements, a total of 2,300 responses were calculated and are presented on the four scales below.

TABLE 3 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE

Statements	Very Strongly	Strongly	Weakly	Very Weakly or Not at All
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1	16 (5.47%)	60 (4.70%)	22 (3.17%)	2 (4.76%)
2	9 (3.08%)	64 (5.02%)	24 (3.46%)	3 (7.14%)
3	8 (2.73%)	61 (4.78%)	28 (4.04%)	3 (7.14%)
4	39 (13.35%)	47 (3.68%)	12 (1.73%)	2 (4.76%)
5	15 (5.13%)	61 (4.78%)	23 (3.32%)	1 (2.38%)
6	16 (5.47%)	57 (4.47%)	23 (3.32%)	4 (9.52%)
7	19 (6.50%)	49 (3.84%)	27 (3.90%)	5 (11.90%)
8	8 (2.73%)	65 (5.10%)	27 (3.90%)	0 (0.00%)
9	10 (3.42%)	49 (3.84%)	40 (5.78%)	1 (2.38%)
10	39 (13.36%)	53 (4.16%)	7 (1.01%)	1 (2.38%)
11	25 (8.56%)	61 (4.79%)	14 (2.02%)	0 (0.00%)
12	24 (8.21%)	63 (4.94%)	13 (1.87 %)	0 (0.00%)
13	9 (3.08%)	57 (4.47%)	29 (4.19%)	5 (11.90%)
14	17 (5.82%)	64 (5.02%)	19 (2.74%)	0 (0.00%)
15	6 (2.05%)	60 (4.70%)	32 (4.62%)	2 (4.76%)
16	5 (1.71%)	48 (3.76%)	45 (6.50%)	2 (4.76%)
17	1 (0.34%)	52 (4.08%)	45 (6.50%)	2 (4.76%)
18	1 (0.34%)	42 (3.29%)	55 (7.94%)	2 (4.76%)
19	1 (0.34%)	44 (3.45%)	52 (7.51%)	3 (7.14%)
20	6 (2.05%)	60 (4.70%)	34 (4.91%)	0 (0.00%)
21	5 (1.71%)	51 (4.00%)	41 (5.92%)	3 (7.14%)
22	8 (2.73%)	42 (3.29%)	50 (7.22%)	0 (0.00%)
23	5 (1.71%)	64 (5.02%)	30 (4.33%)	1 (2.38%)
Total	292/ 2,300 (12.70%)	1,274/ 2,300 (55.39%)	692/ 2,300 (30.09%)	42/ 2,300 (1.83%)

For the “Very Strongly” level of agreement with TG’s brand image, overall, 292 responses (12.70% of the full 2,300 responses) fell into this level. The “Strongly” level of agreement with the TG’s brand image received the majority of responses, 1,274 of

2,300 (55.39%). Regarding the “Weakly” level of agreement with the TG’s brand image, overall, 692 responses (30.09%) fell into this level. Concerning the “Very Weakly or Not At All” level of agreement with the TG’s brand image, the smallest number of responses, 42 of 2,300, (1.83%) was registered.

In summary, Table 3 clearly illustrates the 100 Thai cabin crew members’ overall strong agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s brand image: 68.09% of all responses agreed “Strongly” or “Very Strongly” with the 23 offered statements. Only 1.83% of the 2,300 possible responses indicated very weak or no agreement with the statements about the firm’s brand image.

Tables 4 to 11 present the findings with regard to Thai cabin crew members’ agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s brand image and divided into Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image and Keller’s seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

The final two columns on the right of these tables indicate the mean scores and the levels of agreement with each of the brand image statements. The mean scores

allow comparison of the levels of agreement among the various statements and groups of statements.

Table 4 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image (statements 1 to 6).

TABLE 4 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S DECLARED BRAND IMAGE

Statements	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
1	16	60	22	2	100	2.90	Strongly
2	9	64	24	3	100	2.79	Strongly
3	8	61	28	3	100	2.74	Strongly
4	39	47	12	2	100	3.23	Strongly
5	15	61	23	1	100	2.90	Strongly
6	16	57	23	4	100	2.85	Strongly
Total	103 (17.16%)	350 (58.33%)	132 (22.00%)	15 (2.50%)	600 (100%)	2.90	Strongly

The respondents agreed with all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image at the "Strongly" level (58.33% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.90).

Table 5 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension (statements 7 to 9).

TABLE 5 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S PERFORMANCE DIMENSION

Statements	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
7	19	49	27	5	100	2.82	Strongly
8	8	65	27	0	100	2.81	Strongly
9	10	49	40	1	100	2.68	Strongly
Total	37 (12.33%)	163 (54.33%)	94 (31.33%)	6 (2.00%)	300 (100%)	2.77	Strongly

The respondents also agreed with all three statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension at the "Strongly" level (54.33% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.77).

Table 6 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension (statements 10 to 15).

TABLE 6 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S FEATURES DIMENSION

Statements	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
10	39	53	7	1	100	3.30	Strongly
11	25	61	14	0	100	3.11	Strongly
12	24	63	13	0	100	3.11	Strongly
13	9	57	29	5	100	2.70	Strongly
14	17	64	19	0	100	2.98	Strongly
15	6	60	32	2	100	2.70	Strongly
Total	120 (20.00%)	358 (59.66%)	114 (19.00%)	8 (1.33%)	600 (100%)	2.98	Strongly

As shown in the previous tables, the respondents also agreed with all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension at the "Strongly" level (59.66% of the total number of responses and an overall mean score of 2.98).

Table 7 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension (statements 16 to 18).

TABLE 7 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S CONFORMANCE QUALITY DIMENSION

Statements	Very Strongly	Strongly	Weakly	Very Weakly or Not at All	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
16	5	48	45	2	100	2.56	Strongly
17	1	52	45	2	100	2.52	Strongly
18	1	42	55	2	100	2.42	Weakly
Total	7 (2.33%)	142 (47.33%)	145 (48.33%)	6 (2.0%)	300 (100%)	2.50	Strongly

In terms of Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension, the respondents agreed with only two of three statements; statement 16 and 17, at the "Strongly" level with mean scores of 2.56 and 2.52 respectively. However, statement 18, "TG products and services fulfill customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well being", received a mean score of 2.42, slightly into the "Weakly" level. However, the level of agreement with Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension overall was at the "Strongly" level with a mean score of 2.50.

Table 8 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension (statement 19).

TABLE 8 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S RELIABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
19	1	44	52	3	100	2.43	Weakly
Total	1 (1%)	44 (44%)	52 (52%)	3 (3%)	100 (100%)	2.43	Weakly

The respondents agreed with this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension at the "Weakly" level (52% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.43).

Table 9 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Durability Dimension (statement 20).

TABLE 9 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S DURABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
20	6	60	34	0	100	2.72	Strongly
Total	6 (6%)	60 (60%)	34 (34%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)	2.72	Strongly

The respondents agreed with this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Durability Dimension at the "Strongly" level (60% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.72).

Table 10 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension (statement 21).

TABLE 10 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S SERVICEABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
21	5	51	41	3	100	2.58	Strongly
Total	5 (5%)	51 (51%)	41 (41%)	3 (3%)	100 (100%)	2.58	Strongly

The respondents also agreed with this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension at the "Strongly" level (51% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.58).

Table 11 presents the findings on the levels of agreement of respondents with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension (statements 22 to 23).

TABLE 11 THE LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S STYLE AND DESIGN DIMENSION

Statements	Very Strongly (4)	Strongly (3)	Weakly (2)	Very Weakly or Not at All (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
22	8	42	50	0	100	2.58	Strongly
23	5	64	30	1	100	2.73	Strongly
Total	13 (6.50%)	106 (53.00%)	80 (40.00%)	1 (0.50%)	200 (100%)	2.65	Strongly

The respondents agreed with both statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension at the "Strongly" level (53% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean scores of 2.65).

Finally, Table 12 presents a recap of the findings on Thai cabin crew members' levels of agreement with the 23 statements on TG's declared brand image and each of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. The findings are presented in descending order of agreement.

TABLE 12 SUMMARY AND OVERALL AGREEMENT WITH THAI AIRWAYS
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE

Brand Image	$\bar{x}$	Level of Agreement
Keller's Features Dimension	2.98	Strongly
TG's Declared Brand Image	2.90	Strongly
Keller's Performance Dimension	2.77	Strongly
Keller's Durability Dimension	2.72	Strongly
Keller's Style and Design Dimension	2.65	Strongly
Keller's Serviceability Dimension	2.58	Strongly
Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension	2.50	Strongly
Keller's Reliability Dimension	2.43	Weakly
Total	2.69	Strongly

In summary, the 100 Thai cabin crew members surveyed strongly agreed with TG's declared brand image and six of seven of Keller's dimensions of customer perceived quality. The responses to statement 18 in Keller's conformance quality dimension and statement 19 in his reliability dimension were the only two statements that registered at the weak agreement level.

Part 3: Projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image.

Part 3 of the questionnaire used the same 23 statements as in Part 2. The 100 respondents were asked first to identify which statements about TG's brand image they believed they could or could not influence in the minds of customers. Then, they were asked how strongly they believed they were willing and able to project the elements of TG's brand image and values that they believe they could to influence.

The findings are presented in Tables 13 to 34 and form the basis for the answer to the second research question.

Table 13, below, presents the findings on which statements the respondents believed they could or could not influence in the minds of customers.

TABLE 13 STATEMENTS BELIEVED INFLUENCEABLE BY RESPONDENTS

Statements	Could Influence	Could Not Influence	Total
1	93	7	100
2	93	7	100
3	95	5	100
4	98	2	100
5	99	1	100
6	93	7	100
7	94	6	100
8	99	1	100
9	98	2	100
10	97	3	100
11	97	3	100
12	80	20	100
13	97	3	100
14	91	9	100
15	94	6	100
16	97	3	100
17	96	4	100
18	96	4	100
19	97	3	100
20	95	5	100
21	92	8	100
22	98	2	100
23	97	3	100
Total	2,186	114	2,300
	(95.04%)	(4.95%)	(100%)

Table 13 reveals that the vast majority of respondents believed they could influence all of the 23 statements about TG's brand image in the minds of customers.

Overall, 2,186 of 2,300 responses (95.04%) indicated that the cabin crew members believed they could influence customers vis-à-vis TG's brand image. However, a small but noticeable number of responses (114 of 2,300, 4.95%) indicated that respondents believed they could not influence customer beliefs.

In Part 3 of the questionnaire then asked the respondents to rank their willingness and their ability to project TG's brand image and values to customers.

The findings with regard to the willingness of the respondents to try to influence customers are presented in Tables 14 to 23.

Table 14 presents an overall view of how willing the respondents rated themselves to project TG's brand image and values to customers vis-à-vis the 23 statements concerning Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image. The four level scales are presented in numeric totals and percentages. To calculate the findings below, the 114 "Could Not Influence" responses have been eliminated leaving the 2,186 "Could Influence" responses as the base for calculation.

TABLE 14 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AND VALUES
TO CUSTOMERS

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)
1	20 (4.38%)	54 (4.47%)	17 (3.36%)	2 (11.76%)
2	8 (1.75%)	61 (5.04%)	24 (4.75%)	0 (0.00%)
3	15 (3.28%)	54 (4.47%)	23 (4.55%)	3 (17.64%)
4	30 (6.57%)	56 (4.63%)	12 (2.37%)	0 (0.00%)
5	26 (5.70%)	54 (4.47%)	18 (3.56%)	1 (5.88%)
6	20 (4.38%)	53 (4.38%)	20 (3.96%)	0 (0.00%)
7	23 (5.04%)	44 (3.64%)	27 (5.34%)	0 (0.00%)
8	25 (5.48%)	51 (4.22%)	23 (4.55%)	0 (0.00%)
9	21 (4.60%)	48 (3.97%)	29 (5.74%)	0 (0.00%)
10	39 (8.55%)	48 (3.97%)	10 (1.98%)	0 (0.00%)
11	32 (7.01%)	50 (4.13%)	15 (2.97%)	0 (0.00%)
12	21 (4.63%)	47 (3.89%)	12 (2.37%)	0 (0.00%)
13	20 (4.38%)	61 (5.04%)	13 (2.57%)	3 (17.64%)
14	20 (4.38%)	60 (4.96 %)	10 (1.98%)	1 (5.88%)
15	16 (3.50%)	63 (5.21%)	14 (2.77%)	1 (5.88%)
16	13 (2.85%)	55 (4.55 %)	28 (5.54%)	1 (5.88%)
17	12 (2.63%)	49 (4.05 %)	34 (6.73%)	1 (5.88%)
18	15 (3.28%)	45 (3.72%)	36 (7.12%)	0 (0.00%)
19	13 (2.85%)	42 (3.47%)	39 (7.72%)	3 (17.64%)
20	22 (4.82%)	48 (3.97%)	25 (4.95%)	0 (0.00%)
21	13 (2.85%)	46 (3.80%)	33 (6.53%)	0 (0.00%)
22	12 (2.63%)	60 (4.96%)	25 (4.95%)	1 (5.88%)
23	20 (4.38%)	59 (4.88%)	18 (3.56%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	456/2,186 (20.87%)	1,208/2,186 (55.26%)	505/2,186 (23.10%)	17/2,186 (0.77%)

Overall 456 of 2,186 responses (20.87%) fell into the “Very Willing” level. At the “Willing” level, the majority of responses, 1,208 of 2,186, (55.26%) were noted. Regarding the “Hesitant” level, 505 of 2,186 responses (23.10%) fell into this level. A very small number of responses, 17 of 2,186, (0.77%) fell into the “Unwilling” level.

In summary, Table 14 shows that the respondents were willing to project TG’s brand image and values to customers; 76.13% of the respondent responses were at the “Willing” and “Very Willing” levels; 23.10% of the responses were “Hesitant” and only 0.77% of the responses showed unwillingness.

Tables 15 to 22 present the findings on each of the levels of respondents’ willingness to try to influence customers vis-à-vis Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image and Keller’s seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

The final two columns on the right of these tables indicate the mean scores and the levels of willingness with each of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s brand image statements. The mean scores allow comparison of the levels of willingness of Thai cabin crew members to project TG’s brand image in terms of Thai

Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image and as seen through Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

Table 15 presents the findings on the levels of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image (statements 1 to 6).

TABLE 15 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S DECLARED BRAND IMAGE

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
1	20	54	17	2	93	2.98	Willing
2	8	61	24	0	93	2.82	Willing
3	15	54	23	3	95	2.85	Willing
4	30	56	12	0	98	3.18	Willing
5	26	54	18	1	99	3.06	Willing
6	20	53	20	0	93	3.00	Willing
Total	119 (20.84%)	332 (58.14%)	114 (19.96%)	6 (1.05%)	571 (100%)	2.98	Willing

The respondents were willing to project all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image at the "Willing" level (58.14% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.98).

Table 16 presents the findings on the levels of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension (statements 7 to 9).

TABLE 16 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S PERFORMANCE DIMENSION

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
7	23	44	27	0	94	2.76	Willing
8	25	51	23	0	99	2.88	Willing
9	21	48	29	0	98	2.78	Willing
Total	69 (23.71%)	143 (49.14%)	79 (27.14%)	0 (0.00%)	291 (100%)	2.80	Willing

The respondents were willing to project all three statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension at the "Willing" level (49.14% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.80).

Table 17 presents the findings on the levels of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension (statements 10 to 15).

TABLE 17 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S FEATURES DIMENSION

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
10	39	48	10	0	97	3.29	Willing
11	32	50	15	0	97	3.17	Willing
12	21	47	12	0	80	3.11	Willing
13	20	61	13	3	97	3.01	Willing
14	20	60	10	1	91	3.08	Willing
15	16	63	14	1	94	3.00	Willing
Total	148 (26.61%)	329 (59.17%)	74 (13.30%)	5 (0.89%)	556 (100%)	3.11	Willing

As shown in the previous tables, the respondents also were willing to project all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension at the "Willing" level (59.17% of the total number of responses, and with an overall mean score of 3.11).

Table 18 presents the findings on the levels of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension (statements 16 to 18).

TABLE 18 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S CONFORMANCE QUALITY DIMENSION

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
16	13	55	28	1	97	2.82	Willing
17	12	49	34	1	96	2.75	Willing
18	15	45	36	0	96	2.78	Willing
Total	40 (13.84%)	149 (51.55%)	98 (33.91%)	2 (0.69%)	289 (100%)	2.78	Willing

In terms of Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension, the respondents were willing to project all three statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Willing" level (51.55% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.78).

Table 19 presents the findings on the level of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension (statement 19).

TABLE 19 THE LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S RELIABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
19	13	42	39	3	97	2.67	Willing
Total	13 (13.40%)	42 (43.29%)	39 (40.20%)	3 (3.09%)	97 (100%)	2.67	Willing

The respondents were willing to project this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Willing" level (43.29% of the total number of responses, and with a mean score of 2.67).

Table 20 presents the findings on the level of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Durability Dimension (statement 20).

TABLE 20 THE LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S DURABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
20	22	48	25	0	95	2.96	Willing
Total	22 (23.15%)	48 (50.52%)	25 (26.31%)	0 (0.00%)	95 (100%)	2.96	Willing

The respondents were willing to project this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Willing" level (50.52% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.96).

Table 21 presents the findings on the level of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension (statement 21).

TABLE 21 THE LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S SERVICEABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
21	13	46	33	0	92	2.78	Willing
Total	13 (14.13%)	46 (50.00%)	33 (35.86%)	0 (0.00%)	92 (100%)	2.78	Willing

The respondents also were willing to project this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Willing" level (50.00% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.78).

Table 22 presents the findings on the levels of willingness of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension (statements 22 to 23).

TABLE 22 THE LEVELS OF WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S STYLE AND DESIGN DIMENSION

Statements	Very Willing (4)	Willing (3)	Hesitant (2)	Unwilling (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
22	12	60	25	1	98	2.78	Willing
23	20	59	18	0	97	3.02	Willing
Total	32 (16.41%)	119 (61.02%)	43 (22.05%)	1 (0.51%)	195 (100%)	2.90	Willing

The respondents were willing to project both statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension at the "Willing" level (61.02% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.90).

Finally, Table 23 presents a recap of the findings on Thai cabin crew members' levels of willingness to project TG's declared brand image and each of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. The findings are presented in descending order of willingness.

TABLE 23 SUMMARY AND OVERALL WILLINGNESS TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE

Brand Image	$\bar{x}$	Level of Willingness
Keller's Features Dimension	3.11	Willing
TG's Declared Brand Image	2.98	Willing
Keller's Durability Dimension	2.96	Willing
Keller's Style and Design Dimension	2.90	Willing
Keller's Performance Dimension	2.80	Willing
Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension	2.78	Willing
Keller's Serviceability Dimension	2.78	Willing
Keller's Reliability Dimension	2.67	Willing
Total	2.87	Willing

In summary, the 100 Thai cabin crew members surveyed were willing to project TG's declared brand image and all dimensions of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

The findings with regard to the ability of the respondents to influence customers are presented in Table 24 to 33.

Table 24 presents an overview of how able the respondents rated themselves to project TG's brand image and values to customers vis-à-vis the 23 statements concerning Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image. The four level scales are presented in numeric totals and percentages. To calculate the findings

below, the 114 “Could Not Influence” responses have been eliminated leaving the 2,186

“Could Influence” responses as the base for calculation.

TABLE 24 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED’S BRAND IMAGE AND VALUES TO CUSTOMERS

Statements	Very Able (4)	Able (3)	Unsure of Ability (2)	Unable (1)
1	9 (2.86%)	69 (5.53%)	13 (2.21%)	2 (5.26%)
2	8 (2.54%)	60 (4.81%)	24 (4.08%)	0 (0.00%)
3	10 (3.18%)	58 (4.65%)	24 (4.08%)	3 (7.89%)
4	29 (9.23%)	54 (4.33%)	15 (2.55%)	0 (0.00%)
5	14 (4.45%)	68 (5.45%)	16 (2.72%)	1 (2.63%)
6	14 (4.45%)	56 (4.49%)	23 (3.91%)	0 (0.00%)
7	11 (3.50%)	51 (4.09%)	31 (5.28%)	1 (2.63%)
8	16 (5.09%)	57 (4.57%)	25 (4.25%)	1 (2.63%)
9	13 (4.14%)	52 (4.17%)	32 (5.45%)	1 (2.63%)
10	31 (9.87%)	56 (4.49%)	9 (1.53%)	1 (2.63%)
11	24 (7.64%)	58 (4.65%)	14 (2.38%)	1 (2.63%)
12	17 (5.41%)	47 (3.77%)	15 (2.55%)	1 (2.63%)
13	16 (5.09%)	60 (4.81%)	19 (3.23%)	2 (5.26%)
14	13 (4.14%)	54 (4.33%)	23 (3.91%)	1 (2.63%)
15	8 (2.54%)	56 (4.49%)	29 (6.64%)	1 (2.63%)
16	8 (2.54%)	50 (4.01%)	37 (6.30%)	2 (5.26%)
17	9 (2.86%)	44 (3.53%)	39 (6.64%)	4 (10.52%)
18	9 (2.86%)	48 (3.85%)	36 (6.13%)	3 (7.89%)
19	8 (2.54%)	44 (3.53%)	40 (6.81%)	5 (13.15%)
20	15 (4.77%)	49 (3.93%)	30 (5.11%)	1 (2.63%)
21	8 (2.54%)	46 (3.69%)	35 (5.96%)	3 (7.89%)
22	10 (3.18%)	53 (4.25%)	33 (5.62%)	2 (5.26%)
23	14 (4.45%)	56 (4.49%)	25 (4.25%)	2 (5.26%)
Total	314/2,186 (14.36%)	1,247/2,186 (57.04%)	587/2,186 (26.85%)	38/2,186 (1.73%)

Overall 314 of 2,186 responses (14.36%) fell into the “Very Able” level. The majority of responses, 1,247 of 2,186 (57.04%) fell into the “Able” level. Regarding the “Unsure of Ability” level, overall 587 of 2,186 responses (26.85%) fell into this level. A very small number of responses, 38 of 2,186, (1.73%) fell into the “Unable” level.

In summary, Table 24 shows that the respondents believed they were able to project TG’s brand image and values to customers; 71.40% of the respondent responses were at the “Able” and “Very Able” levels; 26.85% of the respondents were “Unsure of Ability” and only 1.73% of the responses indicated that the respondents felt they were “Unable” to influence customers.

Tables 25 to 32 present the findings on each of the levels of respondent ability to influence customers vis-à-vis Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image and Keller’s seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

The final two columns on the right of these tables indicate the mean scores and the levels of ability with each of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s brand image statements. The mean scores allow comparison of the levels of ability of Thai cabin crew members to project TG’s brand image in terms of Thai Airways

International Public Company Limited's declared brand image and as seen through Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

Table 25 presents the findings on the levels of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image (statements 1 to 6).

TABLE 25 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S DECLARED BRAND IMAGE

Statements	Very Able (4)	Able (3)	Unsure of Ability (2)	Unable (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
1	9	69	13	2	93	2.91	Able
2	8	60	24	0	93	2.80	Able
3	10	58	24	3	95	2.78	Able
4	29	54	15	0	98	3.14	Able
5	14	68	16	1	99	2.95	Able
6	14	56	23	0	93	2.90	Able
Total	84 (14.71%)	365 (63.92%)	115 (20.14%)	6 (1.05%)	571 (100%)	2.91	Able

The respondents indicated that they were able to project all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image at the "Able" level (63.92% of the total number of responses, and with an overall mean score of 2.91).

Table 26 presents the findings on the levels of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension (statements 7 to 9).

TABLE 26 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S PERFORMANCE DIMENSION

Statements	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
7	11	51	31	1	94	2.76	Able
8	16	57	25	1	99	2.88	Able
9	13	52	32	1	98	2.78	Able
Total	40 (13.74%)	160 (54.98%)	88 (30.24%)	3 (1.03%)	291 (100%)	2.80	Able

The respondents were able to project all three statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Performance Dimension at the "Able" level (54.98% of the total number of responses, and mean score of 2.80).

Table 27 presents the findings on the levels of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Features Dimension (statements 10 to 15).

TABLE 27 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S FEATURES DIMENSION

Statements	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
10	31	56	9	1	97	3.20	Able
11	24	58	14	1	97	3.08	Able
12	17	47	15	1	80	3.00	Able
13	16	60	19	2	97	2.92	Able
14	13	54	23	1	91	2.86	Able
15	8	56	29	1	94	2.75	Able
Total	109	331	109	7	556	2.96	Able
	(19.60%)	(59.53%)	(19.60%)	(1.25%)	(100%)		

As shown in the previous tables, the respondents also reported that they were able to project all six statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's features dimension at the "Able" level (59.53% of the total number of responses, and with an overall mean score of 2.96).

Table 28 presents the findings on the levels of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension (statements 16 to 18).

TABLE 28 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S CONFORMANCE QUALITY DIMENSION

Statements	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
16	8	50	37	2	97	2.65	Able
17	9	44	39	4	96	2.60	Able
18	9	48	36	3	96	2.64	Able
Total	26	142	112	9	289	2.63	Able
	(8.99%)	(49.13%)	(38.75%)	(3.11%)	(100%)		

In terms of this dimension, the respondents were able to project all three statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Able" level (49.13% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.63).

Table 29 presents the findings on the level of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Reliability Dimension (statement 19).

TABLE 29 THE LEVEL OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S RELIABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
19	8	44	40	5	97	2.59	Able
Total	8 (8.24%)	44 (45.36%)	40 (41.23%)	5 (5.15%)	97 (100%)	2.59	Able

The respondents also reported they were able to project this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image at the "Able" level (45.36% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.59).

Table 30 presents the findings on the level of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Durability Dimension (statement 20).

TABLE 30 THE LEVEL OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S DURABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
20	15	49	30	1	95	2.82	Able
Total	15 (15.78%)	49 (51.57%)	30 (31.57%)	1 (1.05%)	95 (100%)	2.82	Able

The respondents were able to project this statement about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Durability Dimension at the "Able" level (51.57% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.82).

Table 31 presents the findings on the level of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Serviceability Dimension (statement 21).

TABLE 31 THE LEVEL OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S SERVICEABILITY DIMENSION

Statement	Very Able (4)	Able (3)	Unsure of Ability (2)	Unable (1)	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
21	8	46	35	3	92	2.64	Able
Total	8 (8.69%)	46 (50%)	35 (38.04%)	3 (3.26%)	92 (100%)	2.64	Able

The respondents were able to project this statement at the "Able" level (50.00% of the total number of responses, and a mean score of 2.64).

Table 32 presents the findings on the levels of ability of respondents to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension (statements 22 to 23).

TABLE 32 THE LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE AS SEEN THROUGH KELLER'S STYLE AND DESIGN DIMENSION

Statements	Very Able	Able	Unsure of Ability	Unable	Total Responses	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
22	10	53	33	2	98	2.72	Able
23	14	56	25	2	97	2.84	Able
Total	24	109	58	4	195	2.78	Able
	(12.30%)	(55.89%)	(29.74%)	(2.05%)	(100%)		

The respondents felt they were able to project both statements about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image as seen through Keller's Style and Design Dimension at the "Able" level (55.89% of the total number of responses, and an overall mean score of 2.78).

Finally, Table 33 presents a recap of the findings on Thai cabin crew members' felt levels of ability to project TG's declared brand image and each of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality. The findings are presented in descending order of ability.

TABLE 33 SUMMARY AND OVERALL ABILITY TO PROJECT THAI AIRWAYS
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED'S BRAND IMAGE

Brand Image	$\bar{x}$	Level of Ability
Keller's Features Dimension	2.96	Able
TG's Declared Brand Image	2.91	Able
Keller's Durability Dimension	2.82	Able
Keller's Performance Dimension	2.80	Able
Keller's Style and Design Dimension	2.78	Able
Keller's Serviceability Dimension	2.64	Able
Keller's Conformance Quality Dimension	2.63	Able
Keller's Reliability Dimension	2.59	Able
Total	2.76	Able

In summary, the 100 Thai cabin crew members surveyed believed they were able to project TG's declared brand image and all dimensions of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality.

Table 34, below, presents a comparison of the mean scores showing the respondents' willingness and the ability to project TG's brand image and values to customers.

TABLE 34 THE COMPARISONS OF THE MEAN SCORES FOR WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY

Statements	Willingness	Ability	Differences
1	2.98	2.91	0.06
2	2.82	2.80	0.02
3	2.85	2.78	0.07
4	3.18	3.14	0.04
5	3.06	2.95	0.11
6	3.00	2.90	0.10
7	2.95	2.76	0.19
8	3.02	2.88	0.14
9	2.91	2.78	0.13
10	3.29	3.20	0.08
11	3.17	3.08	0.08
12	3.11	3.00	0.11
13	3.01	2.92	0.08
14	3.08	2.86	0.22
15	3.00	2.75	0.25
16	2.82	2.65	0.17
17	2.75	2.60	0.15
18	2.78	2.64	0.14
19	2.67	2.59	0.08
20	2.96	2.82	0.14
21	2.78	2.64	0.14
22	2.84	2.72	0.12
23	3.02	2.84	0.18
Total	2.95	2.83	0.12

The differences between the mean scores for “Willingness” and “Ability” are all between 0.02 to 0.25. In each case, the “Willingness” score is slightly higher than the

“Ability” score. This implies that there tends to be a high degree of correlation between the willingness and ability of the respondents to influence customers’ beliefs about TG’s brand image.

Table 35 shows the correlation between the “Willingness” and “Ability” of the respondents to influence TG customers. The data gathered were analyzed by using the Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient or Pearson’s correlation (r) was applied as the measurement tool.

TABLE 35 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY

		willingness	ability
Willingness	Pearson Correlation	1	.947 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	.523	.540
	Covariance	.024	.025
	N	23	23
Ability	Pearson Correlation	.947 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	.540	.621
	Covariance	.025	.028
	N	23	23

Table 35 reveals that there was a positive linear relationship between the “Willingness” and the “Ability” variables. Willingness had a perfect correlation with ability, and ability had a high correlation with willingness.

In brief, the respondents identified their level of agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image at the “Strongly” level. In terms of TG’s brand image as seen through Keller’s seven dimensions of customer perceived quality, the respondents agreed with six of the seven dimensions at the “Strongly” level. Only respondent agreement was at the “Weakly” level regarding Keller’s Reliability Dimension.

Concerning the projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s brand image as described by the 23 statements included in the study, 95.04% of the 2,300 responses received from the respondents indicated that they believed they could influence customers’ beliefs about TG’s brand image. Further, large majorities of respondents were “Willing” or “Very Willing” and “Able” or “Very Able” to project TG brand image to customers.

Conclusions, discussions, limitations of the study and recommendations for further study are presented in Chapter 5.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In view of the crisis raging in the worldwide airline industry since 2008, and recognizing that strong branding is one effective strategy to insure corporate survival in difficult times, this study was undertaken to determine the views of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Thai cabin crew with regard to their agreement with TG's declared brand image, and their willingness and ability to project that image to customers. As TG's Thai cabin crew are the frontline service providers seen by customers, they become an integral part of TG's brand image. It is therefore critical that TG's Thai cabin crew are strongly committed to the firm and its survival.

In conclusion to this study, this chapter presents the answers to the two research questions. This is followed by discussion, comments on the limitations of the study and recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

The answer to the research questions are presented below in conclusion to this study.

Research Question 1

“How strongly do Thai cabin crew agree with the brand image of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited?”

The respondents in this study strongly agreed with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's brand image. Of the 2,300 responses received concerning the 23 statements about TG's brand image, 1,566 (68.09%) were at the “Very Strongly” or “Strongly” levels of agreement. Mean scores for levels of agreement with the statements concerning Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's declared brand image and six of Keller's seven dimensions of customer perceived quality ranged from 2.50 to 2.98; all in the “Strongly” level. Only statement 19 in Keller's Reliability Dimension caused that dimension to be ranked at the “Weakly” level of agreement.

Research Question 2

“How willing and able are Thai cabin crew to project Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image to customers?”

The answer to the second question proceeds in three steps: first, did the respondents believe they could or could not influence customers’ beliefs about Thai Airways International Public Company Limited’s declared brand image and Keller’s seven dimensions of customer perceived quality as represented by the 23 statements in the questionnaire? If the respondents believed they could influence customer’s beliefs about TG’s brand image; then second; how willing were they to do it? and third how able were they to do it?

First, of the 2,300 responses to the 23 statements in the questionnaire, 2,186 (95.04%) indicated that the Thai cabin crew respondents believed they could influence all aspects of customers’ beliefs about TG’s brand image.

Second, 76.13% of responses to the statements concerning willingness were at the “Willing” and “Very Willing” levels. Only 0.77% were at the “Unwilling” level.

Willingness was expressed toward all statements of TG's declared brand image and all seven of Keller's dimensions of customer perceived quality.

Finally, 71.40% of responses to the statements concerning cabin crew ability to influence customers' beliefs about TG's brand image were at the "Able" and "Very Able" levels. Only 1.73% were at the "Unable" level. Ability to project TG's brand image was expressed toward all statements of TG's declared brand image and all seven of Keller's dimensions of customer perceived quality.

It should be noted that the willingness variable had a perfect correlation with the ability variable and ability had a high correlation with willingness.

The answers to the two research questions can be summarized as follows: the Thai cabin crew responded that they strongly agree with TG's brand image; they believed they could project that image to customers, thus influencing them favorably; and they were "Willing" to "Very Willing" and "Able" to "Very Able" to do it.

This is a very positive outcome for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.

Discussion

As noted in Chapter 1, airlines have faced difficult operating conditions since 2008, and those that have survived must continue to improve their competitiveness. Branding is one way to increase a firm's chances of success and a strong brand image leads to long-term growth, higher profits and increased asset value.

Frontline employees, those who serve customers directly, are the keys to success in service-oriented firms like TG. At TG, experienced Thai cabin crew are critical to the success of the company, because they play very important roles in creating positive experiences for customers and cementing the company's brand image in their minds. According to Allen and Wilburn (2002), frontline service employees accomplish this by sharing their beliefs and accepting their company's goals and values; by showing their willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of their company; and by communicating their strong desire to maintain membership in their company with customers.

This study was undertaken under the operating conditions and in the perspective noted above. The conclusions drawn from this study support the work by Allen and Wilburn (2002). TG Thai cabin crew members strongly agreed with TG's

declared brand image demonstrating their shared belief in the company's goals and values. Further, they believed they could project the image and values of the company to their customers and were willing and able to do so. These strong beliefs of TG's most valuable frontline service employees offer Thai Airways International Public Company Limited a competitive advantage.

These findings corroborate of Siriweij (2006), who found that a crossection of employees at Thai Airways International Public Company Limited had similarly positive perceptions of the corporate identity of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited at the time of that study. The two studies differ in that this study focuses uniquely on Thai cabin crew.

While the overall conclusions of this study are highly positive, several minor weaknesses should not be overlooked by Thai Airways International Public Company Limited. Examples are noted below.

Thai cabin crew agreed only "Weakly" with statement 18, "TG products and services fulfill customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well being". TG officers should interview a numbers of cabin crew members to better understand why this statement received weak agreement. Critical thinking techniques

should be employed. Possibly cabin crew felt the term “highest” was exaggerated, or the term “well being” was too vague, or other cabin crew members might have believed they could not know what customers’ real expectations were. Once Thai Airways International Public Company Limited understands the reason for the weak agreement level, they should take the appropriate corrective action, possibly clarification of the image statement itself. Corrective action is important as statement 18 falls within Keller’s Conformance Quality Dimension.

Thai cabin crew also agreed only “Weakly” with statement 19, “TG delivers the same unique, superior products and services to customers on every flight”. Respondents may have had a low level of agreement with this statement for similar reasons as in statement 18, or they may have felt that some other TG department was responsible and not reliable in the delivery of its products to all flight, or cabin crew members may have felt that they, themselves, were not always capable of delivering the same quality of service on every flight. Statement 19 falls within Keller’s Reliability Dimension and should be evaluated carefully.

Thai cabin crew believed overwhelmingly that they could influence customers with regard to the statements in the questionnaire. However, 20% of respondents said

they could not influence customers with regard to statement 12, “TG offers a wide variety of destinations”, and nine believed they could not influence statement 14, “TG offers convenient flight schedules”. Of course, literally speaking, cabin crew do not choose flight destinations or set flight schedules, but do they not see that their positive influence on customers will help to develop customer loyalty and more return flight customers demanding more flights more often to more destinations? TG officers should explore this in more detail.

Finally, while there was a high level of correlation between willingness and ability to influence customers’ beliefs about TG’s brand image with regard to each of the 23 questions, the respondents’ levels of willingness were slightly higher than their levels of ability in all cases. TG officers should insure that there is sufficient information and training for cabin crew members so that willingness to influence customers is matched by ability to influence them.

While the findings of this study are very positive for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, attention to the details noted above will further improve the brand image and performance of the firm.

One final note on related research should be made. By and large, research done in the domain of brand image tends to be done from the outside looking in, i.e. how a company or product is perceived by consumers or various external publics. This research proceeded from the perspective of the frontline service providers within a service oriented firm; their inside perspective on the firm's declared brand image was sought as well as their commitment to the success of the brand image strategy. No relevant independent research from this perspective was found.

Limitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

1. The sample group in this study was limited to only 100 respondents, or 2% of TG's total Thai cabin crew. Consequently, the results may not be representative of the views of all of TG's cabin crew.
2. The sample group in this study also was limited to TG's Thai cabin crew who had at least five years experience working as cabin crew for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited. The results may not be

representative of the views of cabin crew who had less than five years experience working with TG.

3. Non-Thai cabin crew were not included in the study. Their influence on customers' view of TG brand image is not reflected in this study.
4. The study focused only on one group of TG frontline employees: cabin crew. It should be noted that the findings cannot be assumed to apply broadly to all of TG's other frontline employees such as pilots, information officers or various other types of ground staff.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the limitations and the findings, the following further studies are recommended.

1. Further studies of TG's brand image with larger samples of TG employees should be made in order to have broader and more reliable results.

2. A comparative study of frontline service employee commitment and airline brand strength should be conducted between airlines to determine the correlations between these two variables.
3. Studies on frontline service employee commitment and corporate brand strength should be conducted in other industries in which service employees become a part of the corporate brand image.





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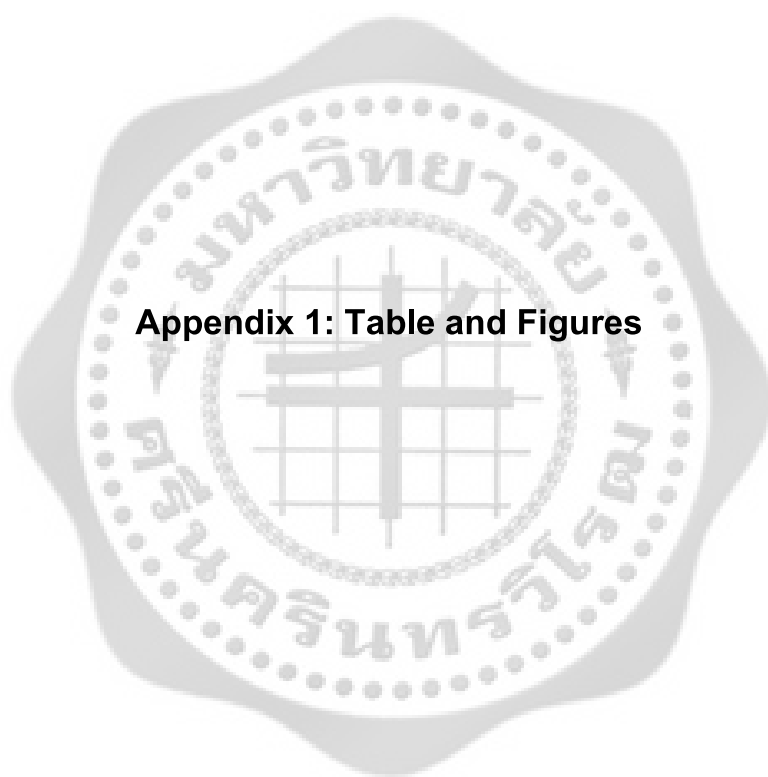
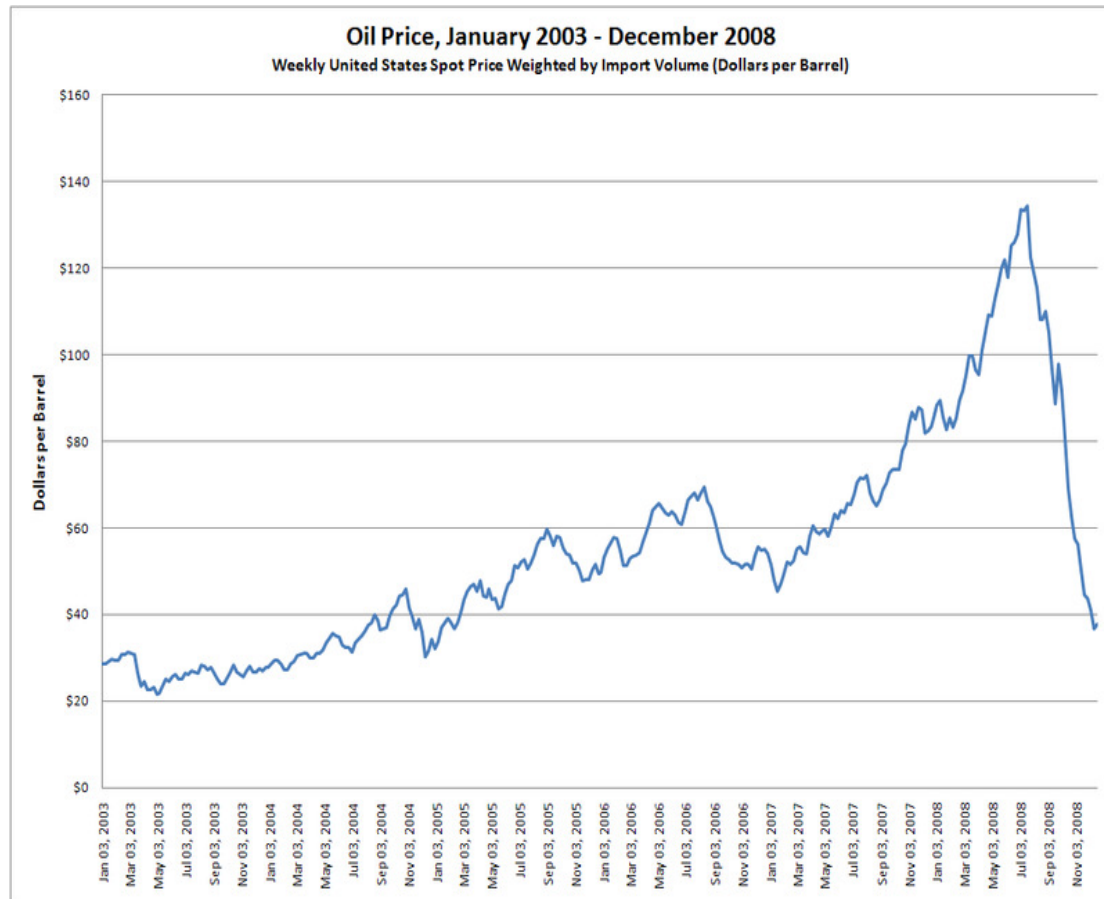


Table 1: Summary of TG's operating results for fiscal year 2008

<i>Units: million baht</i>	2008	2007	% Change
Total operating revenue	200,118	196,909	+ 1.6%
Operating expenses	206,780	186,675	+ 10.8%
Gain (Loss) from the operation	(6,662)	10,234	-165.1%
Loss on foreign currency exchange	(4,471)	(652)	-585.7%
Damage arising from Antitrust and Competition Law	(4,290)	-	-
Impairment losses of Airbus A340-500	(4,426)	-	-
Profit (Loss) before finance cost and income tax	(18,114)	11,265	-260.8%
Profit (Loss) before tax	(23,600)	6,338	-472.3%
Net profit (Loss)	(21,379)	4,368	-589.4%
Net profit (Loss) per share (Baht)	(12.58)	2.57	-15.5
EBITDA	13,619	28,477	-52.2%

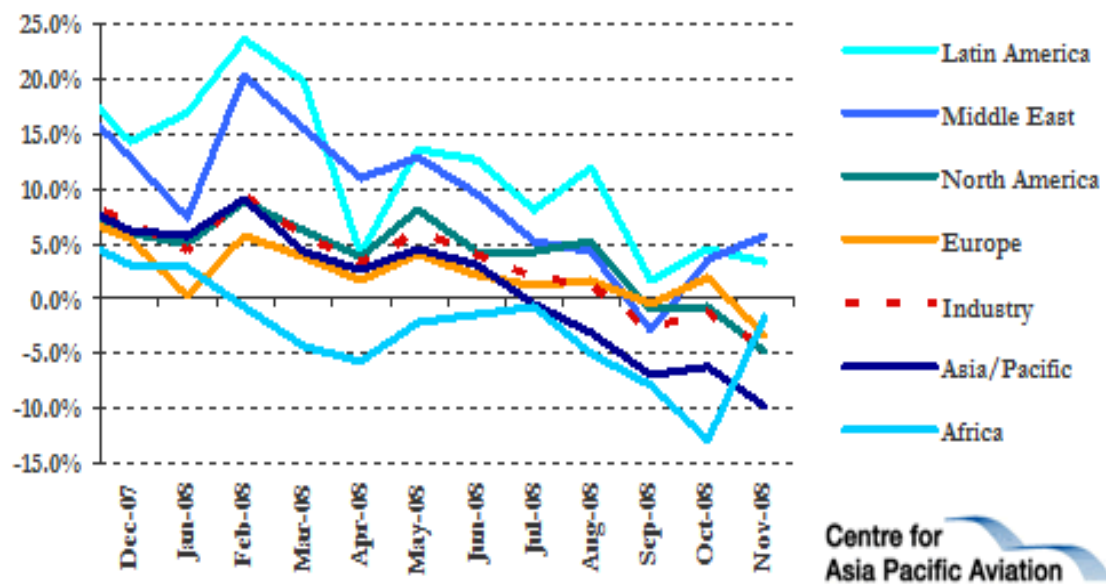
Sauce: Annual report 2008 (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2009)

FIGURE 1: Crude oil prices 2003-2008



Source: 2000s energy crisis, (2009).

FIGURE 2: IATA international passenger traffic growth (% change year-on-year):
December 2007 to November 2008



Source: Global aviation industry now shrinking by all measures, (2009).

Figure 3: Brand identities of Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd.



Source: Journey to the World of Beauty (Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, 2008).



Appendix 2: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is specially designed for use as part of a Master's Degree research project at Srinakharinwirot University. Please fill in each item of the questionnaire based on your own experience. All information you provide will be kept ***strictly confidential*** and used only for this study.

แบบสอบถามนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ผู้จัดทำใคร่ขอความร่วมมือจากท่าน ในการตอบแบบสอบถามทุกข้อตามความเป็นจริง ความคิดเห็นของท่านจะเป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งที่จะทำให้งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้สำเร็จตามวัตถุประสงค์ ผู้วิจัยจะเก็บข้อมูลที่ได้รับเป็นความลับและใช้เพียงเพื่อการศึกษาวิจัยเท่านั้น และขอขอบคุณทุกท่านอย่างสูงที่ได้ให้ความร่วมมือเป็นอย่างดี

Part 1: Status and Professional Experience

Directions: Please affirm the following statements by putting “X” in each ().

โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย “X” ลงใน () ที่ตรงกับท่าน

- () I am a Thai citizen.
- () I have 5 years experience (or more) working as a cabin crew member for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.

Part 2: Agreement with Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image

Directions: Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements about TG's brand image by marking "X" in the appropriate box.

ท่านมีทัศนคติต่อภาพลักษณ์ของบริษัท การบินไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) ในระดับใด กรุณาระบุ

โดยทำ เครื่องหมาย "X" ลงใน ที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

4 = Very Strongly 3 = Strongly 2 = Weakly 1 = Very Weakly or Not At All

ITEM	4	3	2	1
1. TG's brand image is modern.				
2. TG's brand image is innovative.				
3. TG's brand image is progressive.				
4. TG's brand image is a celebration of everything that makes Thailand unique.				
5. TG's corporate philosophy is accurately reflected in the phrase, "World Class, High Trust and a Thai Touch".				
6. TG's corporate vision is accurately reflected in the phrase, "To be the First Choice Carrier, with Touches of Thai".				
7. TG is a world-class airline.				
8. TG is highly trusted by its customers.				
9. TG has a very high level of performance.				
10. TG reflects Thai traditions and culture.				
11. TG provides warm hospitable service on the ground and in the air.				
12. TG offers a wide variety of destinations.				
13. TG offers safe service.				
14. TG offers convenient flight schedules.				
15. TG operates on time.				
16. TG products and services meet specifications.				
17. TG products and services are free of defects.				
18. TG products and services fulfill customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well being.				
19. TG delivers the same unique, superior products and services to customers on every flight.				
20. TG will continue to deliver unique and superior products and services to customers long into the future.				
21. TG delivers world class products and services even when malfunctions or mishaps occur.				
22. TG style and design give customers the feeling of quality.				
23. TG's style and design characteristics reflect its brand image as a modern, innovative and progressive airline that is representative of Thai culture and traditions.				

Comments:.....

Part 3: Projection of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited's Brand Image

Directions: **FIRST**, go down the list of 23 statements about TG's brand image and put an "X" in each box in the first column on the left that you believe you **CANNOT INFLUENCE** in customers' minds.

1). กรุณาระบุโดยทำเครื่องหมาย "X" ลงใน ด้านซ้ายสุดเฉพาะข้อที่ท่านคิดว่า ไม่สามารถ ใจ
ผู้โดยสารได้

THEN go down the next two sets of columns. For the statements about TG's brand image that you believe you **CAN INFLUENCE** in customers' minds, put an "X" in the boxes that best describe your opinion about how willing and able you are to project TG's brand image and values to customers.

2). สำหรับข้อที่ท่านคิดว่า สามารถ ใจผู้โดยสารได้ กรุณาระบุโดยทำเครื่องหมาย "X" ลงใน ของ
สองคอลัมน์ที่เหลือซึ่งตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

The strength of your responses should be rates on the following scales:

4 = Very Willing

3 = Willing

2 = Hesitant

1 = Unwilling

4 = Very Able

3 = Able

2 = Unsure of Ability

1 = Unable

An example is given below:

	CANNOT INFLUENCE	CAN INFLUENCE							
		4 = Very Willing	3 = Willing	2 = Hesitant	1 = Unwilling	4 = Very Able	3 = Able	2 = Unsure of Ability	1 = Unable
Item A		X					X		
Item B	X								
Item C				X				X	

	CANNOT INFLUENCE	CAN INFLUENCE							
		4 = Very Willing	3 = Willing	2 = Hesitant	1 = Unwilling	4 = Very Able	3 = Able	2 = Unsure of Ability	1 = Unable
1. TG's brand image is modern.									
2. TG's brand image is innovative.									
3. TG's brand image is progressive.									
4. TG's brand image is a celebration of everything that makes Thailand unique.									
5. TG's corporate philosophy is accurately reflected in the phrase, "World Class, High Trust and a Thai Touch".									
6. TG's corporate vision is accurately reflected in the phrase, "To be the First Choice Carrier, with Touches of Thai".									
7. TG is a world-class airline.									
8. TG is highly trusted by its customers.									
9. TG has a very high level of performance.									
10. TG reflects Thai traditions and culture.									
11. TG provides warm hospitable service on the ground and in the air.									
12. TG offers a wide variety of destinations.									
13. TG offers safe service.									
14. TG offers convenient flight schedules.									
15. TG operates on time.									
16. TG products and services meet specifications.									
17. TG products and services are free of defects.									
18. TG products and services fulfill customers' highest expectations in terms of comfort, service and well being.									
19. TG delivers the same unique, superior products and services to customers on every flight.									
20. TG will continue to deliver unique and superior products and services to customers long into the future.									
21. TG delivers world class products and services even when malfunctions or mishaps occur.									
22. TG style and design give customers the feeling of quality.									
23. TG's style and design characteristics reflect its brand image as a modern, innovative and progressive airline that is representative of Thai culture and traditions.									

Comments:.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to fill in this questionnaire.



Appendix 3: Approval Letter



VITAE

Name: Ms. Mullika Koosmithi

Date of Birth: September 3, 1973

Place of Birth: Bangkok

Address: 8/69 Soi Ladprao 8, Ladprao Rd., Chatuchak, Bangkok

10900

Education Background:

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1995	Bachelor of Arts (Art History), Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University
1990	High School Certificate, Kasetsart University Laboratory School