# THE IMPACT OF LOW-COST CARRIERS (LCCS) ON ARAB TOURISTS' PURCHASING DECISION TO TRAVEL TO EGYPT

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to investigate the marketing strategy of low-cost airlines (LCAs) and evaluate their influence on the purchasing decisions of the Arab tourism market to Egypt. It highlights several aspects related to the low-cost business model that are all interpreted according to their relationship to the purchasing decisions of Arab Tourism to Egypt. The mixed approach methodology was employed to conduct the study with mixed techniques. The quantitative method was represented in the questionnaire that targeted Arab travelers on LCCs, while the qualitative approach was represented in face-to-face and over-the-phone interviews conducted with the managers and employees of LCCs. The results showed and confirmed the impact of loyalty programs, promotions, and low-priced services of LCCs on the purchasing decision of Arab tourists to visit Egypt. They also demonstrated some challenges facing LCCs in Egypt, including high fuel prices and airport services, such as take-off and landing fees, aircraft waiting fees, and providing ground services for LCAs in some airports by national companies only.*

**KEYWORDS:** Low-cost carriers (LCCs); purchasing decision; Loyalty programs; Egypt, Arab tourists

## INTRODUCTION

The liberalization of the air travel market has created new opportunities for airlines, with the major consequence being the emergence of the low-cost carrier (LCC) sector, which has witnessed a significant increase in the number of LCC customers (Graham, 2013). Air transport is major tool for the growth of tourism. Air transport plays substantial role in tourism development to the extent that the carriage of tourists to destinations is often only possible by air. However, long distance between tourists generating countries and the increase in number of short holidays make air transportation necessary (Vellas, 2009).

The cost of air transportation has a direct impact on the cost of tourism products and services, as well as the consumer's choice of destination. The steady decrease in the cost of air travel is making this a more competitive choice of transportation for tourists (Pender & Baum, 2000) as a result low-cost carrier (LCC) have an influence on air travel growth to create more competitive environment for air travel. LCCs regarded as one of the most significant developments in air travel in this century, by changing the way that people travel not just only in terms of carriers, but also in terms of the mode of transportation and where they are traveling from. (Boniface & Cooper, 2009).

The number of Arab tourists visiting various nations throughout the world, including Australia, has increased in the twenty-first century. Despite the fact that the Arab world has several potential destinations which are rich with cultural monuments (archaeological, historical, and religious sites), beaches, and tourist resorts (Mustafa, 2010), an increasing number of Arab tourists prefer to visit foreign countries, particularly those in Europe and Asia (Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

The aim of this study, is to demonstrate the role of low-cost airlines in increasing the flow of Arab tourists to Egyptian tourist destinations through promotional offers of low prices, distinctive loyalty programs and their influence on the Arab tourist in the process of making a purchase decision to travel to Egypt, as well as to examine some of the obstacles and challenges of low-cost aviation in Egypt. Furthermore, determining what the Arab tourists prefer from tourist services in Egypt.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### AIR TRANSPORTATION INFLUENCE ON TOURISM INDUSTRY

Aviation is the main driver for tourism development, accounting for the majority of foreign tourist arrivals (Forsyth, 2006). It has always been the dominant mode for long-distance travel and international tourism, moving towards deregulation. The rise of the low-cost carrier (LCC) sector has also enhanced aviation's importance for short and medium-haul tourism trips. Thus, developments in aviation have major implications for many tourist markets (Dimitriou et al., 2011).

Moreover, air transportation has a direct employment impact on tourism, estimated at 19.6 million jobs in some sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, and visitor attractions (ATAG, 2020). According to World Air Transport Statistics (WATS) by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), 4.4 billion passengers flew in 2018 by air, representing a 6.9% increase from the previous year (IATA, 2021). According to ICAO, the total number of passengers on scheduled services increased to 4.5 billion in 2019 (ICAO, 2021).

Due to COVID-19, international tourism revenues decreased receipts by $1.3 trillion in 2020, compared to the $1.5 trillion generated in 2019, and industry revenues of $372 billion generated in 2020 compared to $838 billion generated in 2019. According to IATA, 65.9% of revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs, both international and domestic) decreased in 2020 compared to 2019 (IATA, 2021).

## DEFINITION AND TYPES OF LOW-COST CARRIERS (LCCS)

The rise of low-cost airlines and their low-price assurance schemes poses a significant threat to traditional full-service airlines that depend on superior services. Low-cost airlines have an impact on the civil aviation market by affecting the industry's price patterns. According to Traditional full-service airlines believe professionalism and superior service quality are predictors of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Forgas et al., 2010).

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, LCCs carried an expected 1.4 billion passengers in 2019, approximately 31% of the world's total scheduled passengers, representing a 5.3% growth when compared to the number of passengers carried by LCCs in 2018, around 1.5 times the rate of the world total average passenger growth (ICAO, 2019).

LCCs is one of the major business models of airline industry that is distinguished by special services and characteristics and types. There are no commonly agreed definitions of these companies as of yet. However, most definitions concentrate on the low-cost element as a point of differentiation from full-service companies (Holloway, 2008).

**Table (1) Definitions of LCCs**

| Authors (by year of publication) | Definition |
|---|---|
| (Pender and Baum, 2000) | LCC is a scheduled carrier with significantly lower costs than mainstream airlines and so offer much lower average fares, with cost savings in distribution, service and aircraft utilization |
| (Najda, 2003) | Defines this model as: "An airline that operates a point-to-point network, pays employees below the industry average wage, and offers no frills service. |
| (krishan, 2005) | LCC is 'no frills airline' as: A service, as an airline flight, providing only the basics, with no additional amenities. |
| (Macario *et al.*, 2008) | The term Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) or Low Cost Airlines (LCA) can be referred to as "any carrier with low ticket prices and limited services regardless of their operating costs". |
| (Baker, 2014) | low-cost carrier or low-cost airline also known as a no-frills, discount or budget carrier, that offers generally low fares in exchange for eliminating many traditional on-board passenger services. |

However, types of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) can be illustrated through two main criteria as follows:

### LOW-COST CARRIERS (LCCS) TYPES BY BUSINESS MODEL

One of the most widely used classifications is that of Schlumberger and Weisskopf (2014), who categorized LCC companies into three more comprehensive categories on the basis of the applied business model:

(1)**The "Purist" model**, Ryan-air represents a low-cost structure based on the use of a single aircraft, the elimination of all the free services during the flight, the use of secondary airports, the direct sales, the electronic tickets, the short-haul flights from point to point in dense markets without interconnection or intermediate transportation, the simple network structure, the absence of long-haul flights, the single cabin layout, and the optimization in the usage of the fleet. Other companies implementing this model with some modifications include Easy-Jet, Spirit Airlines, Air-Asia, VivaAerobus (Mexico) and Peach Aviation (Japan).

(2)**The Southwest model** is less expensive but not as strict as the preceding one. In this case, the companies provide some additional services during the flight (e.g., water and soft drinks), do not charge fees for bags, have a more comfortable cabin layout, and do connecting flights. Airlines that have adopted this model include Air Arabia, Vueling, Nokair, Spicejet, and Gol Airlines.

(3)**The JetBlue model** differs greatly from the "Purist" model in that; it is based on the provision of several additional services as well as the use of specialized fleets and networks, including major airports. This model also uses nodes to provide indirect connections and more complex fare structures. The companies that have adopted this model include Virgin Australia, Jazeera, WestJet, and Jet star.

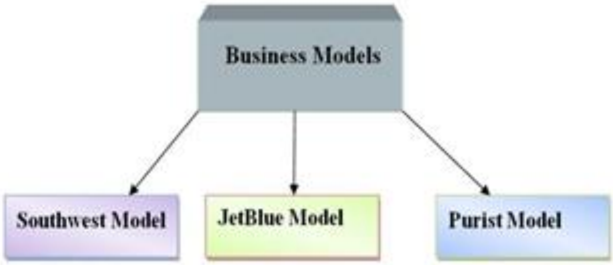



**Figure (1) Types of LCCs by business models**

## CONCEPTUAL CLASSIFICATION OF LCCS

LCCs have created a variety of changes to the general model described above in order to gain and maintain their competitive and cost advantages over traditional or so-called 'legacy' airlines. It should be noted that many of the features common to LCCs are adopted by 'legacy' airlines. It is possible to conceptually distinguish five basic categories of LCCs (Francis et al., 2006).

**(1)Southwest copies:** They reduce costs by operating point-to-point services, a single type of aircraft, and high aircraft utilization.

**(2)Subsidiaries:** They were launched as subsidiaries of long-established major airlines in order to compete and earn a share of the low fare sector, operate similarly to the airlines identified in the 'Southwest copies' category, and union agreements often restrict cost reductions.

**(3)Cost cutters**: They are long-established legacy airlines that are now trying to reduce their operating costs by simply avoiding all the frills they once did and offering low fares, one-way fares, and internet booking to compete for the low fares market but continue to a short and long-haul network to main airports.

(4) **Diversified charter carriers:** They are low-cost subsidiaries formed by charter airlines to operate low-cost scheduled services by using a single fleet type, high aircraft utilization, charging for food, one-way fares, and internet booking and reservation.

(5) **State subsidiaries competing on price:** They are directly funded by government ownership or subsidy, allowing them to provide low fares as part of a national strategy to encourage tourism or promote a certain airport as a hub for a region without the need to cover their long-run average costs.


**Figure (2) Conceptual classification of LCCs**

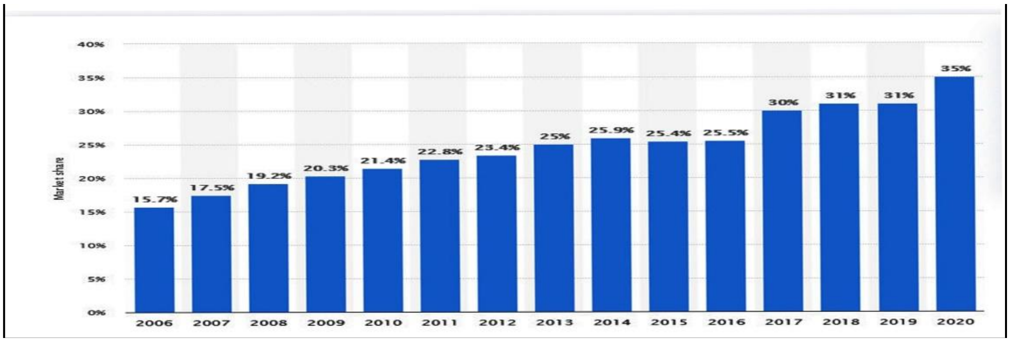
## FREQUENT FLYER PROGRAMS (FFPS)

American Airlines launched the first frequent flyer programme (FFP) in the US domestic market in 1981, witnessing the first impacts of ongoing liberalization. Following the paradigm of customer loyalty scheme known in other industries. Over the course of more than three decades, airlines have developed these programs into comprehensive structures with difficult market targeting, creating what overlaps the industry itself and leads to a new global business separated relatively from airline entities in future (De Boer & Gudmundsson, 2012).

As LCCs are in a state of constant change, the swing of FFPs issue towards LCCs is strongly emphasized by observed hybridization between airline business models (Klophaus, Conrady & Fichert, 2012). As a result, it is only reasonable for LCCs to invest and continue developing their FFPs. They can improve LCCs's competitiveness, profitability, and better positioned to retain customers (De Wit & Zuidberg, 2012).

## LOW COST CARRIER MARKET AROUND THE WORLD AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The liberalization of the air industry market has provided new chances for airlines. The main impact has been the emergence of the LCC sector with significant increases rates in the number of LCC customers (Graham, 2013). Although LCCs first appeared in the USA in 1971. This model has quickly expanded practically everywhere (Doganis, 2010). According to Statista, LCAs rapidly expanded their share in the global air travel market in 2017, taking 30% of the total seat capacity in the world, compared to 2019, when they accounted for 31%. In 2020, they accounted for 35% of the total seat capacity in the world, as shown in figure 3.




**Source: Statista, 2021**

**Figure (3) Low cost carrier market - global capacity share 2007-2020**

LCCs effects tourism development in smaller cities and less famous destinations in several ways. Majority of them are directly related to LCCs' business strategy. To reduce costs, low-fare airlines fly to secondary and regional airports with lower landing fees and taxes and less congestion, which assures them a low turnaround time (Olipra, 2012). Moreover, LCCs have become critical for supplying national and continental air flight services (Dobruszkes, 2013), and have emerged as a serious competitor to traditional airlines in the Middle East (The Economist, 2013).

In the Middle East the market share of LCAs in January 2019 was 18%, rising to 23.9% in March 2022, with a change rate of 5% (Grant, 2022). According to the CAPA Fleet Database, the Middle East LCC fleet growth has accelerated by nearly 50% over the past five years (CAPA, 2019).

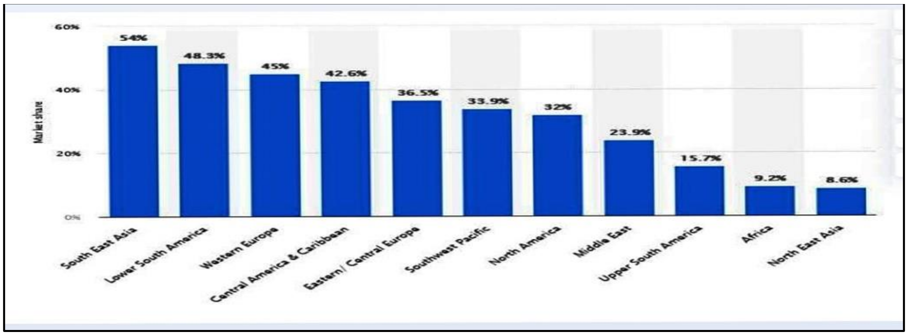



**Figure (4) Market share of low cost carriers worldwide in March 2022, by region**
**Source: Statista, 2022**

## (LCCS) INFLUENCE ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM MOVEMENT

Because of their low-cost strategies and diverse income sources, low-cost carriers (LCCs) are constantly attractive to passengers in developing countries (Snyder & Tai, 2012). LCCs contribute to the diversification and reduce the seasonality of tourism products, which in turn can improve the competitiveness of destinations, enhance regional attractiveness (European Union Committee of the Regions, 2004), reduce seasonality in passenger demand (Donzelli, 2010), and improve the reposition and diversification of mature coastal destinations main products (Farmaki & Papatheodorou, 2015).

LCCs have been able to deal with route density issues by creating new demand and attracting customers from other forms of transportation and FSCs by offering lower fares (De Wit and Zuidberg, 2012). They have undoubtedly influenced how people travel, the geography of air services and competition between airlines, cities, and regions (Dobruszkes, 2013). LCCs have revolutionized the medium-haul market, by offering lower-cost air travel (Vidovic et al., 2013). They have significantly increased their share of the global air travel market over the last decade. In 2020, LCCs accounted for 35% of the world's total seat capacity (Statista, 2020).

## THE ROLE OF LCC IN INFLUENCING ARAB TOURISTS' PURCHASING DECISION FOR EGYPT

### ADOPTING THE MARKETING MIX STRATEGY

The marketing mix is described as a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools– product, price, place, and promotion– that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). LCAs are important for the development of tourism and in influencing a radical expansion of potential destinations. LCCs apply the marketing mix method to influence purchase decisions of tourists (Graham & Shaw, 2008; Davison & Ryley, 2010).

LCCs applied the current marketing mix by focusing on delivering services at a low cost to its customers compared to that of full-service carriers. To keep the cost low, LCC distinguishes itself from full-service carriers by providing different types of services not only in terms of price but also other deliverables, such as the product or services itself, distribution channel, and promotional strategies.

## THE PURCHASING DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN AIRLINE BUSINESS

Purchasing decision-making refers to the factors that motivate customers to purchase and consume certain products or services. customer purchase decision-making is described as people's purchasing behavior or the acts when it involves buying a certain product or service (Hammond & James, 2008). Figure 5 depicts the purchase decision-making in airlines which begins with the desire to travel from (a to b). Then, passengers gather the information about the airlines in order to decide whether or not travel with them and examine the services provided by the airlines, such as fewer stops and low fares. Next, they decide to purchase the flight and compare the expectations with the airlines. After that, the passengers decide to travel with the same airline again and be loyal to this airline or not travel with it again.

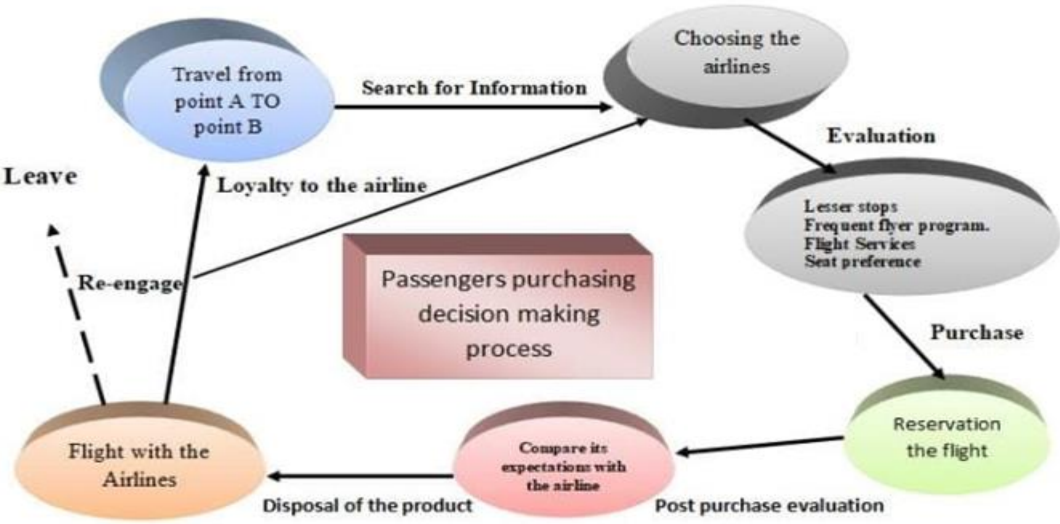



**Figure (5) Purchasing decision making process in airline**

### LCCs services in the Arab world

Airlines contributed in increasing tourist flows to Arab countries, particularly after the emergence of LCCs and the promoting for their services to these Arab destinations at low prices. As a result, the relationship between tourist destinations and LCCs has become more obvious for airline managers who realized that this link has actually driven air travel demand. The rise of the tourism industry as a whole and the development of LCCs in the Gulf region (including Saudi Arabia) have been quite a recent phenomenon. The delay of LCC development in the region was caused by strict aviation rules imposed by the Gulf States' governments (Morrison & Mason, 2016; Wald, 2013).

According to the Centre for Aviation (CAPA), LCCs are driving development in the Middle East aviation market, with a 9.3% increase in seat capacity in 2019. LCCs' share of total seat capacity across the Middle East jumped from 14.9% in 2018 to 16.5% in 2019, with a larger share of the region's airline passengers opting to fly with low-cost airlines (CAPA, 2019).

### D-LCCs services in Egypt

LCCs promote Egypt as a unique and distinctive tourist destination in the Arab markets by using their own distribution channels, such as their websites or social media, conferences, and tourism festivals in some Arab countries, for instance (Arab Travel Market) in Dubai.

Many low-cost carriers LCAs in the Arab tourism markets, such as Air Arabia, Al Jazeera, Fly-nas, and Fly Dubai, offer services, activities, and tourist attractions in the Egyptian tourist destinations through their websites and mobile applications. They also promote them to travel agencies through LCAs sales officials and the prices of their services in order to influence the purchasing decision to buy tickets and services. They can book visas to travel Egypt. Some airline offers exceptional flights to Egyptian tourist destinations During the summer. For instance, Flynas provides direct flights from Riyadh to Hurghada, as confirmed by Flynas officials during the personal interviews (Air Arabia, Flynas, and Fly Dubai, 2021).

The first thing the traveller looks for is the place of accommodation he stays in the tourist destination. LCC provides many different accommodations in the destination and their prices, as well as the customer can choose from among those accommodations. It also offers the option of hiring a car, provided by LCCs on their website. However, you can create your own package by selecting flight dates, hotels, transfers, and tours; you can get a discount when you book a flight Plus hotel. All this was demonstrated by LCA officials during the personal interview (Air Arabia, Flynas & Flyegypt, 2021).

Several LCCs, like Air Arabia, Nile Air, and Air Cairo, play a significant role in linking the Egyptian tourist destinations by offering low cost domestic flights between the Egyptian tourist destinations. For ease of movement between tourist destinations, these trips are promoted to the travel agencies through their sales managers, by providing booking international and domestic tour groups, and renting the plane to travel agencies to sell it to tourists, or booking the trip through the website or the mobile application to benefit from all the services available on the website. All of these details were all confirmed during interviews with LCA officials (Air Arabia, Nile Air, and Air Cairo, 2021).

### FACTORS INFLUENCING ARAB TOURISM MOVEMENT TO EGYPT

The Arab tourists look for destinations that provide various types of water entertainment resorts or wilderness opportunities for their families to enjoy. Importantly, Arabs usually travel with their families, preferring to rent private cars rather than public transportation and staying at hotels equipped with interconnected rooms and/or suites or apartments. Shopping, on the other hand, is possibly the most popular and desired tourist activity among Arabs (Franceschini et al., 2006).

The Arab market is one of the most important exporting markets for Egyptian tourism destination, as it ranked second after the European market. In 2017, the number of tourist arrivals from the Arab states amounted to 2.47 million compared to 1.96 million in the previous year. In 2020, the number of tourist arrivals from the Arab states amounted to around 920 thousand, compared to 3.17 million in the previous year. This huge drop can be attributed to travel limitations imposed by coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. (Statista, 2020).

### LOW PRICES OF TOURISM SERVICES IN EGYPT

One main reason for Arab tourists to visit the Egyptian destination is the low prices of tourist and hospitality services in Egypt compared to regional destinations (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013).

### ACCESSIBILITY TO EGYPT

Egypt is characterized by its unique geographical location. It is the heart of the ancient world that mediates the three continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Its unique location has attracted the attention of many tourists worldwide and travelers for thousands of years. It overlooks two strategic seas, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. It links them by the Suez Canal, which is regarded as the most important international navigation path. Thus, tourists from the three continents have no difficulties reaching it by land, sea, or air (Ghada, 2018).

### SAME CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND RELIGION

The Arab culture consists of two main components: the Arabic language and Islam. Therefore, some scholars insist on calling it the Arab-Islamic culture (Abodeeb, 2014). In the Arab world, most traditions and customs, whether in dress, eating, or social relations, emerge from the Islamic religion (Hidayat et al., 2019).

### THE DIVERSITY OF TOURISM PRODUCTS THAT ATTRACT ARAB TOURISM TO EGYPT

In Egypt, there are many activities and tourism products that attract Arab tourism, including, Religious tourism, where there are many significant and historical mosques, such as Al-Sayeda Zeinab Mosque, El-Hussein Mosque...etc where some members of the royal family were also buried (Gaballa, 2012). Another type of tourism in Egypt is Shopping tourism; a previous study showed having shopping centers in Egypt as the main preference of activities of Arabs when visiting Egypt (Nancy & Omar, 2016). Egypt has a wide variety of shops, from the popular bazaars like thousands of stores across the country, the most famous bazaar in Egypt is the Khan El Khalili Market in Al Hussein District in Cairo (ABUELENAIN,2017). Recreational tourism is also a represent an important type of tourism in Egypt, because it attracts a large number of tourists from all over the world, It is the most preferred among Arab tourists whose main purpose for holidays is entertainment and enjoyment (Abodeeb, 2014).

Egypt has also the Medical tourism which offers patients quick and convenient medical services at fewer costs and, sometimes, at better quality than what they would receive in their home countries (Yu and Ko, 2012). However, most patients taking medical trips in Egypt are from neighboring Arab countries, such as Libya, Sudan, Yemen, and some African countries (Helmy, 2011). In Egypt we cannot ignore the Adventure tourism which has spread greatly among Arab youth in general and the

Gulf in particular. Egypt is one of the best destinations in the region for adventure tourism, The types and places of adventures in Egypt and their role in tourist attractions are represented in the experiences of discovering underwater caves in the Red Sea, swimming in a shark cage in Hurghada, diving in a crocodile cage in Lake Nasser, water skiing in the northern coast, kayaking in shallow water, and fishing in Lake Bardawil (Soutalomma, 2019).

### VARIETY OF MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Egypt has various means of transportation that helps tourists to visit. Thus, the transport sector has paramount importance in the national economy due to Egypt's prominent geographic location in the middle of international transport routes and its proximity to major markets in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Thus, Egypt has a wide range of international airports and ports that help in the movement and attraction of international tourism.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aims to answer the following questions in order to fulfill its' overall goal:

**Q1**: Does LCCs pricing marketing and promotional strategies affect Arab tourists' purchasing decision and choice to travel to the Egyptian destinations?
**Q2**: Is there any effect of Arab tourists' demographic characteristics (age categories, gender, marital status, education), and their opinions concerning their choice to the Egyptian destination and the effect of LCCs pricing and promotional offers on their Decision to travel to Egypt?
**Q3**: What are the challenges facing LCCs operation in Egypt?

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the research is identifying and assessing the role of low-cost airlines in increasing the flow of Arab tourism to Egyptian tourist destinations. Furthermore, the research is conducted to answer research questions and explore the factors that effects purchasing decisions of Arab tourists to Egypt. As well as investigating the obstacles and challenges facing LCCs in the Egyptian destination This assessment based on some data gathered to reach more accurate data as possible, so it would be collected through mixed quantitative and qualitative tools as follows: -

1- The quantitative tool is the questionnaire which is distributed for low-cost carriers (LCCs) passengers. The questionnaire was designed depending on the literature (Chen et al., 2008; Abodeeb et al., 2015 ; Abdelhady et al., 2018; Pakdil & Aydın, 2007; Ali & Howaidee, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014; Nancy & Omar, 2016; Caraiani et al., 2017; Briez et al. 2022 , and Tan & Wu, 2016). And was developed according to the reviewers' comments and observations. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections. First section is about personal data (Nationality, Gender, Age, Marital status and Education). The second section, contains of 3 components such as Separate questions "Multiple answers" (5 items), Motives of the process of making the decision to travel to Egypt (9 items), the impact of low-cost airlines and their services on the Arab tourist in choosing Egypt as a tourist destination (7 items).

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{\varepsilon^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384.16$$

Applying these values to Steven K. Thompson formula reveals that the appropriate sample size for this research is 384 participants but the researcher distributed 440 questionnaires to Arab tourists. After analysis, there were 44 questionnaires not valid for analysis; the valid is (396) with the respondent rate of 90%.
The questionnaire was distributed to Arab tourists at Luxor International Airport and Cairo International Airport. The questionnaire forms were also distributed by e-mail during the period between March 2022 and June 2022. The sample number was 396 tourists.

2- Interviews were conducted with 15 managers and employees of LCCs, where distributed both direct (face-to-face) interviews as well as indirect interviews over the telephone. In this research, the respondents consisted of managers and employees of low-cost airlines (LCCs).

Finally, Face validity: The scale was reviewed by two academic reviewers. Regarding Reliability: The results showed that the alpha coefficient was 0.79 Therefore, these results were considered reliable.

## DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers used both descriptive and inferential statistics to test and determine the effect of LCCs' pricing and promotional offers on purchasing decision of Arab tourists to the Egyptian destinations**.** Mean scores, standard deviations are calculated for all factors in the research. The one-way ANOVA test (sig.0.05) was used to analyze the differences between respondents age, education level, gender and marital statuses concerning the factors affecting their decision to travel to Egypt, and the role of LCCs in influencing their decision to travel to Egyptian destinations. and the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test (sig 0.05) was used to determine the sources of differences as well. The collected data were analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS v 20).

## DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

### FACTORS AFFECTING ARAB TOURISTS' DECISION TO TRAVEL TO EGYPT

**Table (1) Mean and Std. Deviation of the motives influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt**

| Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Travel experience usually determines my travel intentions than any other factor | 4.00 | 0.88 | 1 |
| The brand and image of Egypt as a tourist destination affect my decision to visit Egypt more than any other destination. | 3.86 | 0.89 | 3 |
| Prices of tourist services in Egypt affect my choice of it as a tourist destination. | 3.89 | 0.88 | 2 |
| Destination accessibility of Egypt as a tourist destination motivates me to travel more than any other factor. | 3.73 | 1.01 | 6 |
| The variety and cost of means of transportation in Egypt is a major factor in my choice of Egypt as a tourist destination. | 3.70 | 0.99 | 9 |
| I prefer more to travel to local or regional destination than international ones minimise travel costs. | 3.71 | 0.90 | 8 |
| The availability of low-cost means of transportation to Egypt motivates me strongly to travel to Egypt | 3.75 | 0.94 | 5 |
| Tourist activities and attractions in Egypt are among the most important factors that affect my decision to spend the holiday in Egypt. | 3.73 | 0.99 | 7 |
| The cost of a holiday to Egypt is the most important factor that influences my choice of Egypt as a tourist destination than other. | 3.80 | 0.86 | 4 |
| **Total** | **3.**80 | **0.569** | |

The total mean of the motives influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt was (3.80) with a standard deviation of (0.569), which indicated a high degree of agreement for all the motives of the process of making the decision to travel to Egypt phrases which means that this variable has a high level.

### THE IMPACT OF LOW-COST CARRIERS AND THEIR SERVICES ON ARAB TOURISTS' DECISION TO TRAVEL TO EGYPT

**Table (2) Mean and Std. Deviation of the factors of the effect of low-cost carriers and their services on Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt**

| Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I prefer to travel by low-cost airline during any holiday travel to Egypt. | 4.22 | 0.91 | 1 |
| LCCs offer reasonable services that encourage me to use their flight during travel to Egypt. | 4.04 | 0.92 | 2 |
| Low-cost airlines services and offers to Egypt are more satisfactory for me than any other airline. | 3.99 | 1.01 | 5 |
| Low-cost airlines offer distinguished loyalty programs that encourage me to travel on its flights to Egypt during my vacation. | 3.94 | 1.06 | 6 |
| The availability of low-cost airlines flights to Egypt is a strong motive for me to choose to travel it. | 3.91 | 1.07 | 7 |
| Promotional offers for low-cost flights to Egypt distinguish them from any other airline and encourage me to use their flights. | 4.01 | 1.02 | 4 |
| The ticket prices of low-cost airlines affect my travel decision to Egypt. | 4.02 | 1.08 | 3 |
| **Total** | **4.02** | **0.721** | |

The total mean of the impact of low-cost carriers and their services on the Arab tourist in choosing Egypt as a tourist destination was (4.02) with a standard deviation of (0.721), which indicated a high degree of agreement for all the impact of low-cost airlines and their services on the Arab tourist in choosing Egypt as a tourist destination phrases, which means that this variable has a high level. According to the above results, it can be found that low-cost carriers and their services have a positive impact on the Arab tourist in choosing Egypt as a tourist destination.

Furthermore, from the above results, it can be found that "Promotional offers for low-cost flights to Egypt have an impact on the purchase decision of Arab tourists" with a mean (4.01) and std. Deviation of (1.02). Likewise, "Low-cost airlines offer distinguished loyalty programs to Egypt have an impact on the purchase decision of Arab tourists" with a mean (3.94) and std. Deviation of (1.06).

On the other hand, from the above results, it can be found that ticket prices of low-cost airlines have an impact on the decision of Arab tourists to travel to Egypt" with a mean (4.01) and std. Deviation of (1.08).

Finally, from the above results, it can be found that "Low-cost airlines services and offers to Egypt are more satisfactory for Arab tourists" with a mean (3.99) and std. Deviation of (1.01). Thus, the first question of the research questions was answered.

## INFERENTIAL STATISTIC

### Differences between respondent's age, education level, gender and marital statuses concerning the factors affecting their decision to travel to Egypt

**Table (2): Differences between age categories concerning the decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Age Categories | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | Sig. |
| Decision to travel to Egypt | Between Groups | 1.700 | 3 | .567 | 1.759 | .154 |
| | Within Groups | 126.253 | 392 | .322 | | |
| | Total | 127.953 | 395 | | | |

Table (2) illustrated the one-way ANOVA test to analyze the differences between age categories with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt. The results showed that the significance level was more than 0.05. This means that there were no statistically significant differences between age categories with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (3): Differences between Marital statuses concerning the Decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Marital status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | **F** | **Sig.** |
| Decision to travel to Egypt | Between Groups | 9.991 | 3 | 3.330 | 11.067 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 117.962 | 392 | .301 | | |
| | Total | 127.953 | 395 | | | |

Table (3) illustrated the one-way ANOVA test to analyze the differences between marital statuses with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt. The results showed that the significance level was less than 0.05. This means that there were statistically significant differences between marital statuses with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt.

**Table (4): LSD between Marital statuses concerning the decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | | (I) Marital status | (J) Marital status | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision to travel to Egypt | **LSD** | Married | Single | 0.98 |
| | | | Widower | 0.992 |
| | | | Divorced | 0.000 |

The LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was calculated to determine the sources of differences. Table (4) showed that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents were Married, Single, and widower (Sig. > .05), while, there were statistically significant differences between married respondents and divorced respondents (Sig. = .000) These differences were in favor of Single (Mean = 3.84), Married (Mean = 3.83), and widower (Mean = 3.8) against Divorced respondents (Mean = 3.18) (see table 5). Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (5): Means of Marital status concerning the Decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | Married | Single | Widower | Divorced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision to travel to Egypt | **3.83** | **3.84** | **3.8** | **3.18** |

**Table (6): Differences between education levels concerning the Decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Education levels | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | Sig. |
| Decision to travel to Egypt | Between Groups | 6.527 | 3 | 2.176 | 7.023 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 121.426 | 392 | .310 | | |
| | Total | 127.953 | 395 | | | |

Table (6) illustrated the results showed that the significance level was less than 0.05. This means that there were statistically significant differences between education levels with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt.

**Table (7): LSD between Education levels concerning the decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | | (I) Education levels | (J) Education levels | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision to travel to Egypt | LSD | Intermediate Qualification | Bachelor Degree | 0.93 |
| | | | Postgraduate Studies | 0.012 |
| | | | None | 0.000 |

The LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was calculated to determine the sources of differences. Table (8) showed that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents were intermediate qualification and bachelor degree (Sig. > 0.05), while, there were statistically significant differences between intermediate qualification and other education levels (Sig. < 0.05), These differences were in favor of intermediate qualification (Mean = 3.857) and bachelor degree (Mean = 3.851) against None qualification (Mean = 3.398) and Postgraduate Studies (Mean = 3.597) (see table 8). Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (8): Means of Education levels concerning the Decision to travel to Egypt**

| Variable | Intermediate | Bachelor | Postgraduate | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision to travel to Egypt | 3.857 | 3.851 | 3.597 | 3.398 |

**Table (9): Differences between males and females concerning the Decision to travel to Egypt**

| The Variable | Group | Mean | SD | T-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | T | Sig. |
| Decision to travel to Egypt | Males | 3.83 | .56 | 1.87 | .062 |
| | Females | 3.71 | .57 | | |

From the results shown in table (9), independent samples T test used to determine the differences between the two groups, it was noticeable that the Sig. value was more than (0.05), this means that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females with respect to the decision to travel to Egypt. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Differences between respondent's age, education level, gender and marital statuses concerning the role of LCCs in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

**Table (10): Differences between age categories concerning the role of LCCs in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Age Categories | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | Sig. |
| Role of LCC | Between Groups | 3.829 | 3 | 1.276 | 2.482 | .061 |
| | Within Groups | 201.601 | 392 | .514 | | |
| | Total | 205.430 | 395 | | | |

Table (10) illustrated the one-way ANOVA test to analyze the differences between age categories with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt. The results showed that the significance level was more than 0.05. This means that there were no statistically significant differences between age categories with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (11): Differences between respondents' marital status concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Marital status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | Sig. |
| The role of LCC | Between Groups | 8.840 | 3 | 2.947 | 5.876 | .001 |
| | Within Groups | 196.590 | 392 | .502 | | |
| | Total | 205.430 | 395 | | | |

Table (11) illustrated the one-way ANOVA test to analyze the differences between marital statuses with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations. The results showed that the significance level was less than 0.05. This means that there were statistically significant differences between marital statuses with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (12): LSD between Marital statuses concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | | (I) Marital status | (J) Marital status | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role of LCC | LSD | Married | Single | 0.551 |
| | | | Widower | 0.724 |
| | | | Divorced | 0.000 |

The LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was calculated to determine the sources of differences. Table (13) showed that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents were Married, Single, and widower (Sig. > 0.05), while, there were statistically significant differences between married respondents and divorced respondents (Sig. = .000). These differences were in favor of Single (Mean = 4.09), Widower (Mean = 4.08), and Married (Mean = 4.04) against Divorced respondents (Mean = 3.45) (see table 12).

**Table (13): Means of Marital status concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | Married | Single | Widower | Divorced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Role of LCC** | 4.04 | 4.09 | 4.08 | 3.45 |

**Table (14): Differences between Education levels concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | Education levels | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | Sig. |
| Role of LCC | Between Groups | 6.917 | 3 | 2.306 | 4.553 | .004 |
| | Within Groups | 198.513 | 392 | .506 | | |
| | Total | 205.430 | 395 | | | |

Table (14) illustrated the one-way ANOVA test to analyze the differences between education levels with respect to the role of LCC. The results showed that the significance level was less than 0.05. This means that there were statistically significant differences between education levels with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered.

**Table (15): LSD between Education levels concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | | (I) Education levels | (J) Education levels | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role of LCC | LSD | Intermediate Qualification | Bachelor Degree | 0.676 |
| | | | Postgraduate Studies | 0.198 |
| | | | None | 0.000 |

The LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was calculated to determine the sources of differences. Table (15) showed that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents were intermediate qualification, bachelor degree, and postgraduate studies (Sig. > 0.05), while, there was statistically significant differences between intermediate qualification and None education level (Sig. = 0.000), These differences were in favor of bachelor degree (Mean = 4.08) , intermediate qualification (Mean = 4.05), and Postgraduate (Mean = 3.877) against None qualification (Mean = 3.55) (see table 16).

**Table (16): Means of Education levels concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| Variable | Intermediate | Bachelor | Postgraduate | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role of LCC | 4.05 | 4.08 | 3.877 | 3.55 |

**Table (17): Differences between males and females concerning the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations**

| The Variable | Group | Mean | SD | T-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | T | Sig. |
| Role of LCC | Males | 4.05 | .73 | 1.171 | 0.242 |
| | Females | 3.91 | .76 | | |

From the results shown in table (17), independent samples T test used to determine the differences between the two groups, it was noticeable that the Sig. value was more than (0.05); this means that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females with respect to the role of LCC in influencing Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egyptian destinations. Thus, the second question of the research questions was answered. The previous results indicated that there is a significant effect of the role of LCC on the decision to travel to Egypt. Therefore, the first question of the research questions was answered as well.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEWS

Structured interviews were made with a group of sales managers, commercial managers, ground services shift supervisors, station managers and managers of low-cost airlines that are located in Cairo and Luxor governorates. The collected data was transcribed and set for analysis; content analysis technique was adopted to analyze the collected data. These interviews concluded the following results:

**Table (18) LCCs polices to influence purchasing decision of Arab tourists to Egypt, and the challenges facing their operations**

| Responses | Freq. | % | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What is the marketing policy of low-cost airlines to influence Purchasing Decisions of Arab Tourism?** | | | |
| Offering family and Students travel promotions, especially on our websites and the mobile app. | 9 | 33.33 | 4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| offering premium loyalty programs that give travelers opportunities to earn points and replace them with free tickets and sometimes free weight. | 13 | 86,67 | 2 |
| Higher quality services, whether ground services at the airport or on board, which help us gain the loyalty of passengers and repeat the purchase process again | 10 | 66.67 | 3 |
| Offering low ticket Prices to travel agencies for groups booking for to encourage them to decide to book through low-cost airlines | 15 | 100 | 1 |
| Exceptional trips are operated during season periods to Egyptian tourist destinations. Travelers can also book hotels and rent cars through our website. | 4 | 26.67 | 5 |
| **The challenges or obstacles which face low-cost aviation in Egypt?** | | | |
| High fuel prices are one of the biggest challenges of low-cost Airlines | 15 | 100 | 1 |
| Hard competition from full-service airlines | 8 | 53.33 | 5 |
| Providing ground services at some airports by national companies only | 7 | 46.67 | 6 |
| High landing and take-off and waiting and lodging fees (long-term aircraft waiting places) | 12 | 80 | 3 |
| The Egyptian airports do not have low-cost terminals or lounges for low-cost aviation services, which help reduce low-cost airline operating services and reduce travel costs. | 13 | 86.67 | 2 |
| Low-cost flights are carried out from the main airports in Egypt | 9 | 60 | 4 |

Table (18) illustrates that low ticket prices comes in the first rank as a promotional policy for LCCs that influences Arab tourists' decision to travel to Egypt, followed by premium loyalty programs, Higher quality services, family and Students travel promotions, and exceptional trips to Egypt and the possibility to book hotels and rent cars through LCCs websites. Table (18) also clarified that High fuel prices came in the first rank as a challenge facing the proper operation of LCCs in Egypt, followed by the absence of low cost terminals in the Egyptian airports, high landing, take-off, waiting and lodging fees, full services airlines hard competition, and ground services provided by national companies only. Thus, the third question of the research questions was answered.

## Conclusion

### The study concluded that

1. Arab tourists prefer to travel to a local or regional destination than international ones to minimize travel costs. As well they prefer to travel by low-cost airline during any holiday travel to Egypt.
2. LCCs offer reasonable services that encourage Arab tourists to use their flights during their travel to Egypt. However, ticket prices of low-cost airlines affect Arab tourists' travel decisions to Egypt.
3. Promotional offers of low-cost flights to Egypt distinguish them from any other airline and encourage Arab tourists to use their flights. Furthermore, Low-cost airline services and offers to Egypt are more satisfactory for Arab tourists than any other airline.
4. LCCs offer distinguished loyalty programs that encourage Arab tourists to travel on their flights to Egypt. Furthermore, the availability of low-cost airline flights to Egypt is a strong motive for Arab tourists to choose it.
5. Concerning the marketing policy of low-cost airlines to influence Arab tourists' purchase decisions, the study concluded that: offering family and Students travel promotions; premium loyalty programs that give travelers opportunities to earn points and replace them with free tickets and sometimes free weight; Upgrading the quality of services, whether ground services at the airport or on board; Offering low ticket Prices to travel agencies when booking for groups and Exceptional trips operated during season periods to Egyptian tourist destinations, are the most effective policies.
6. Regarding the challenges or obstacles which face low-cost aviation in Egypt, the results confirmed that High fuel prices are one of the biggest challenges facing LCCs; hard competition from full-service airlines; providing ground services at some airports by national companies only, and high landing and take-off and waiting and lodging fees.
7. The Egyptian airports do not have low-cost terminals or lounges for low-cost aviation services, and Low-cost flights are carried out from the main airports in Egypt.

## Recommendations

1- Egyptian civil aviation authority should allow LCCs to offer more services for their clients to increase their role in attracting Arab tourists to Egyptian destinations

**2-** Landing, take-off and lodging fees for LCCs should be reduced to make them able to lessen their operational costs and offer promotional offers to their Arab clients to encourage them to travel to Egypt.

**3-** LCCs operating in Egypt must work on developing their services quality to attract Arab tourists to travel through their flights to Egypt.

**4-** Egyptian travel agencies should co-operate with LCCs operating in Egypt to offer attractive packages for Arab tourists to motivate them to choose the Egyptian destinations on their holidays.

**5-** LCCs should widen their promotional offers for Arab tourists to motivate them to travel to Egypt.

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