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The critical success factors for a low cost airline carrier in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Low-cost carrier airlines such as Ryanair and EasyJet in Europe, and Southwest Airlines in the US, have largely changed the face of the civil aviation markets in their respective regions by providing an accessible form of air transport for the masses. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where current transport options are unsafe and slow, and distances vast, a massive market of potential passengers exists. Yet the region comes with significant challenges and obstacles not present in other parts of the world. By utilising a grounded theory approach, and identifying the factors that were critical to the success of the abovementioned airlines, inferences were drawn with the results of four separate exercises which were undertaken, which collected primary data relevant to the Sub-Saharan African low-cost market. The results obtained indicate that while certain low-cost carrier critical success factors are universal to all regions, Sub-Saharan Africa exhibits many unique characteristics which require any low-cost entrant to apply a unique, innovative approach in order to maximise the chance of success.