

A STUDY ON OPERATIONS OF AIRPORT SERVICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI AIRPORT

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Abstract

Passenger satisfaction is a key performance indicator for airport operations. International airports located in different regions or countries by and large do not compete with one another. Passengers often do not have no choice between airports, regardless of price and quality levels of airport service. In other words, the airport industry is also changing rapidly. Today's air travelers have meaningful choices among airports and there is an increasing urgency among airport marketers to differentiate themselves by meeting the needs of customers better than the competition. To measure passenger perceptions of airport services quality to benchmark performance metrics directly from the "voice" of the customer, to identify opportunities for service and ground operation improvement and to avoid losing valuable passenger traffic. There many segments of airport users, from luxury to budget, and frequent business flyers to holiday travelers. Each may have different needs and the airport must find a way to meet those needs. The development of air transport has increased the demand for airport services and the need for more efficient processes of servicing aircraft, passengers or luggage. The main purpose of the study is to know about the air transportation, its services and the customer expectations then how to improve the airport service for who use the air transportation.

Keywords:

Airport, Lounges, Air India, Servicescape, Service Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Air transport is the fastest means of movement from one place to the other. It has reduced distances by minimising the travel time. It is very essential for a vast country like India, where distances are large and the terrain and climatic conditions are diverse. Air transport in India made a beginning in 1911 when airmail operation commenced over a little distance of 10 km between Allahabad and Naini. But its real development took place in post-Independent period. The Airport Authority of India is responsible for providing safe, efficient air traffic and aeronautical communication services in the Indian Air Space. The authority manages 125 airports. The air transport in India is managed by two corporations, Air India and Indian Airlines after nationalisation. Now many private companies have also started passenger services.

1.1 AIRPORT SERVICES

At the Chennai airport, passengers will find the services such: passenger feedback/suggestion forms, passenger baggage trolleys, comfortable seating chairs, telephone in security hold area, child care rooms, medical assistance, lost and found items, smoking rooms, toilets for ladies, gents and physically challenged persons in terminal, building, drinking water with disposable water glasses, ceremonial lounges, VIP lounges, CIP lounges,

meditation room, air-conditioning, elevators, passenger boarding bridges, car calling system and flight information displays.

2. FUNCTIONS OF AAI

The major functions of AAI includes design, development, operation and maintenance of international and domestic airports and civil enclaves. Control and management of the Indian airspace extending beyond the territorial limits of the country, as accepted by ICAO, construction, modification and management of passenger terminals, development and management of cargo terminals at international and domestic airports, Provision of passenger facilities and information system at the passenger terminals at airports.

2.1 MACRO VIEW OF THE INDUSTRY

Airport authority of India market report provides analysis for the international passenger traffic has been projected to grow at the rate of 6.0% initial five years (i.e. 2013-2014 to 2017-2018) and the rate of 7% for the next five years (i.e. 2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

The total passenger traffic has been forecasted to grow at the rate of 5.3%, and 9.2% for the periods 2013-2014 to 2017-2018 and 2018-19 to 2022-23 respectively. Where the airport passenger's growth was increased based on the forecast, the study provides a complete perspective on the airport authority of India evolution throughout the above-mentioned forecast period in terms of revenue.

The main functions of AAI inter-alia include construction, modification and management of passenger terminals, development and management of cargo terminals, development and maintenance of apron infrastructure including runways, parallel taxiways, apron etc., Provision of Communication, Navigation and Surveillance which includes provision of DVOR/DME, ILS, ATC radars, visual aids etc.

2.2 TYPES OF AIR TRANSPORTATION CARGO CARRIERS

As the name connotes, these carriers move air cargo and offer freight services, but do not offer passenger services. All-cargo carriers have less weight and dimension limitations due to the wide-body and containerized cargo aircrafts in their fleet which leave plenty of room for larger, heavier items, such as aerospace and automotive parts and materials.

This category also includes heavy-lift cargo freighters designed for project cargo. Since heavy-lift freighters are uncommon, their charter services are highly specialized and rarely operate on a scheduled basis.

2.3 COMMERCIAL AIRPLANES

These are the common ways in which people travel through the air, the commercial planes provide a fast means of transportation compared to other modes of transport such as road transport, rail transport, and water transport. Airplanes are capable of carrying hundreds of people from one location to another at a time; the seating is sometimes divided into two or four classes. For instance, most domestic flights usually have two classes which are: first class and economy class. While international flights may have up to four classes such as first class, club class, business class, premium economy and economy class.

2.4 CONCEIVABLE CRISES AND RISKS AT AIRPORTS

The many and varied crises that could occur at an airport can broadly be divided as follows:

2.5 NATURAL DISASTERS

In addition to meteorological phenomena such as typhoons, heavy rain, heavy snow and thunderstorms, this category also includes earthquakes, tsunami and volcanic eruptions. The meteorological phenomena can be predicted in advance and we normally have the time to make preparations. Their effects being temporary, we may say typhoons represent a crisis that we can deal with adequately based on our past experience. Some earthquakes on the other hand may be foreseen, but the time of occurrence and the extent/scope of impact are difficult to be estimated in advance. The important point here is how to minimize the damage and how to promptly restore the normal operation of the airport, while taking into consideration the secondary damage such as general panic and harmful rumours, as well as shortages of supplies and looting, etc.

2.6 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

An aircraft accident is a serious crisis that should not happen. A disproportionately high number of accidents take place prior to landing or soon after take-off. This, in turn, means a high proportion of aircraft accidents occur around airports. Such accidents cannot be foreseen but it is essential that we give consideration to the measures to save human lives, to prevent the ripple effect from the accident, and to maintain airport operations.

2.7 DISEASE CONTROL

With aircraft frequently crisscrossing the world, (pathogenic) viruses are spread at a rapid rate. Particularly at airports which are gateways to other nations, we not only need to deal with infected passengers entering the country but also with the spread of infection to airport employees. Pandemics cannot be forecast but we can specify with some accuracy when influenza breaks out and, therefore, we should be prepared every year.

2.8 TERRORISM, HIJACKING AND WARS

The airport security environment has changed dramatically since the terrorist attacks of September 11. Given the expectation that terrorist attacks may continue to target airports and airlines, we need to deal with this issue.

2.9 MALFUNCTIONS OR DAMAGE TO KEY AIRPORT EQUIPMENT

In recent years, airports have introduced state-of-the-art equipment such as in-line screening and IT systems, which have dramatically boosted user convenience. At the same time, however, if a malfunction affects the use of such equipment, an airport can be thrown into a major turmoil. Preventative maintenance is important, as is the preparation of proper troubleshooting manuals to deal with incidents, or the installation of a backup system so that there is no ill effect on operations.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A company can sustain in future and also improving the operation, they need customer satisfaction and also to attract newer customer. So, the organization to achieve passenger satisfaction requires a simple or complex process. The professional researchers identified that the importance of the actual passenger needs (passenger centric).

The review comprised two phases. The first phase focused on airport performance according to a wider perspective. Therefore, the following keyword combinations were used: airport + performance, airport + measurement, and airport + management. The second phase aimed to identify the several aspects related to airport performance. Thus, compound keywords with the terms "airport" and "performance" along with terms referring to the several aspects previously identified in the first phase have been used, such as: efficiency, productivity, benchmarking, financial, finance, economic, service quality, level of service, satisfaction, customers, safety, security, operational, operation, competition, competitiveness, environmental, noise, pollution, and social.

Servqual is a method which was first found by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1985. During development has occurred renewal methods from 1985 to 1994. This method is used to allow the airport operator to identify passenger's perceptions and expectations quickly against the services have been contributed. Servqual also has benefits to analyse the gap. The service quality provided to users is so hard to measure it, but Zeithaml et al. [8] formulated the dimensions of service quality to be used as a measuring tool to assess a service, namely: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles.

The authors in [11] evaluated airport service quality in four dimensions: check-in, immigration process, customs inspection and overall, from perceptions of passengers. The study developed questionnaire addressing expectation and perception and answered by sample of passengers at International Airport of Kaohsiung in Taiwan. The result from questionnaire indicated the gap between expectations and perceptions, and dimension got negative value mean perceptions are lower than expectation and improvement need to be carried out.

The authors in [10] posit that customers are co-creators of the service in that they participate in the production and delivery of service and, therefore, have an influence on service quality. The aforementioned seems even more valid in the self-service technology (SST) environment, namely, in the airport customer service encounters where passengers have an even greater role to play as 'co-creators' with much more influence on how the service is delivered by participating in self-service check-in, self-

boarding and self-rebooking processes. The self-service or on-line platforms make the negative effect of the 'inseparability of service' more problematic in delivering a high level of service quality.

The concept of service quality is still a significant research topic in tourism and hospitality sector. In the air travel sector, service quality has been examined independently in airport service settings and in-flight service settings [9].

Airport management has typically measured objective airport service quality in order to identify service gaps that pose threats to the airport's overall performance, obtained through various measurement systems known as benchmarking [7].

The authors in [6] evaluated servicescape attributes in relation to passengers' emotional states and behavioural intentions. The study results stated that airport functionality, aesthetic, and safety elicit a traveler's positive emotions, tightly connected to their behavioural intentions. On the other side, ambient conditions generate passengers' negative emotions, but they do not affect behavioural intentions. Moreover, social servicescape at the airport was found to affect travelers both positively and negatively, proposing a major importance of human factor.

3.1 PROBLEM FOCUSED ON THE RESEARCH

The problem undertaken for the study purpose is improving airport service and providing service more than customer expectations. For this purpose, preferential status of consumer is analysed on what basis the consumer prefers in airport service and identify how much the customer was satisfied. Airports play a considerable role in economic development, and most important cargo they move is people. Airports are much more than places to catch planes, attend an in-transit business meeting, or do some duty-free shopping; they are among the largest investments a city and region make. Airports play some important role in economic development, so we consider the customer expectations and to fill the customer expectations.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our resulting model of airport service quality expectations is composed of three primary dimensions: servicescape, interaction and services. Similar hierarchical structures for perceived service quality in other settings have been reported [1] [2]. The authors in [3] offer a plausible explanation:

There are three concepts to measure the airport service quality.

- Servicescape
- Service personnel
- Services

4.1 CONCEPT 1: SERVICESCAPE

The servicescape has a significant influence on overall service encounter quality perceptions. The servicescape includes all the objective factors controllable by the service provider that facilitate customer actions during the service encounter and enhance their overall service quality perception. Research has documented the influence of the physical environment on service quality perceptions in restaurants [4], retail stores [5], and a variety of other service businesses [5]. Because airports require

passengers' physical presence and often a significant time commitment, the physical environment of the airport can influence perceptions of the overall quality of the service encounter.

The basic servicescape construct includes three key elements: spatial layout and functionality, ambient conditions and signs/symbols. Spatial layout and functionality refer not only to the arrangement and relationships of machinery, equipment and furnishings, but also to the ability of these to facilitate performance and the accomplishment of service customer goals.

4.2 CONCEPT 2: SERVICE PROVIDERS

The most widely known and discussed means used to measure consumer perceptions of service interaction quality is SERVQUAL, a multi-attribute scale commonly comprised of five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Although the intended scope of SERVQUAL extends beyond service customer provider interactions, three of the dimensions explicitly focus on the relational aspects of service quality (responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and the remaining two (tangibles and reliability) touch upon customer contact personnel issues as well. SERVQUAL has been applied and tested in a number of empirical studies involving services with elaborate servicescapes, including hotels, restaurants, health clinics, hospitals, banks and airlines.

Despite the lack of a previous application of SERVQUAL to airports, perceptions of service quality for other services with elaborate servicescapes and for airport environments are likely to share some common dimensions in the area of service interactions and similar influences on service quality perceptions.

Three distinct factors that underlie consumer perceptions of their interactions with service providers: attitudes, behaviour and expertise of the service provider. Without exception, the service provider interaction themes generated by the qualitative sequence of studies referred to one of these three factors.

- Passengers' perceptions of the attitudes of service providers influence their airport quality perceptions.
- Passengers' perceptions of airport service quality are influenced by their expectations of employee behaviour.
- Expectations of employees' expertise influence passengers' perceptions of airport service quality

4.3 CONCEPT 3: SERVICES

Servicescape theory addresses this in terms of spatial layout and functionality. SERVQUAL focuses on time spent waiting. Neither servicescape nor SERVQUAL, however, address larger issues of how the customer's time is allocated or invested. Because the airport experience demands a significant time commitment and for many passengers' time is the ultimate scarce resource. The extent to which the airport facilitates or frustrates their use of time can have a significant influence on perceptions of the overall quality of the service encounter. Research shows that once a passenger has entered the terminal his or her average wait can exceed one hour [6]. Factors such as flight delays and cancellations due to security, breakdowns and weather, can prolong time spent at the airport.

The objectives of the study

- To study about principle of air transportation and its service
- To study customer perception about the airport service
- To identify the factors that influence to implement airport service
- To suggest to implement the ground operation based on the customer expectation
- To analyses the satisfaction level of consumers.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis for the current study is given below:

- H₁: There is a significant difference between the demographic profile of respondent and the overall satisfaction
- H₂: There is relation between the major Airport factors and the Overall satisfaction.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Survey research is a quantitative and qualitative method with two important characteristics. First, the variables of interest are measured using self-reports. In essence, survey researchers ask their participants (who are often called respondents in survey research) to report directly on their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Second, considerable attention is paid to the issue of sampling. In particular, survey researchers have a strong preference for large random samples because they provide the most accurate estimates of what is true in the population. The sample was selected of them who are the customer/visitors of Airport, Chennai. It was collected through personal visits to persons, by formal and informal talks through filing up the questionnaire prepared. The data used for this study are of both primary and secondary nature. By using SPSS tool for One-way ANOVA analysis and MS-Excel for Correlation analysis.

5.2 GARRET RANKING

Garrett's ranking technique was used to rank the preference indicated by the respondents on different factors. As per this method, respondents have been asked to assign the rank for all factors and the outcomes of such ranking have been converted into score value with the help of the following formula:

$$\text{Percent position} = 100 (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

where, R_{ij} is the Rank given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents
 N_j is the number of variables ranked by j^{th} respondents

With the help of Garrett's Table, the percent position estimated is converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of each individual are added and then total value of scores and mean values of score is calculated. The factors having highest mean value is considered to be the most important factor.

Table.1. Air Trip of the Respondents

Air trip	No of Respondents	% of the Respondents
Business	23	22.1
Leisure's	42	39.4
Others	40	38.5

Total	105	100
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The air trip of the respondents is where the respondents are using what purpose of the travelling, 23 (22.1%) of them were using business purpose, 42 (39.4%) of them were using leisure's purpose and 40 (38.5%) of them were using other purpose.

Table.2. Travelling Class of the Respondents

Travelling class	No of Respondents	% of the Respondents
First class	16	15.2
Business/Upper class	20	19
Economy/Tourist	69	65.7
Total	105	100

The airport provides three different class of travelling, where the respondents are 16 (15.2%) of them are first class travelers, 20 (19%) of them are business/ upper class travelers, and 69 (65.7%) of them are economic/tourist class travelers.

5.3 ONE-WAY ANOVA

- H₀: There is no significant difference between the demographic profile of respondent and the overall satisfaction
- H₁: There is significant difference between the demographic profile of the respondent and the overall satisfaction

Table.3. One way ANOVA between the demographic profile and the Overall satisfaction

		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between groups	7.008	3	2.336	4.628	0.004
	Within Groups	51.483	102	0.505		
	Total	58.491	105			
Gender	Between groups	1.582	1	1.582	2.892	0.092
	Within Groups	56.908	104	0.547		
	Total	58.491	105			
Educational	Between groups	1.904	1	1.904	3.500	0.064
Qualification	Within Groups	56.586	104	0.544		
	Total	58.491	105			
Occupation	Between groups	3.558	3	1.186	2.202	0.092
	Within Groups	54.932	102	0.539		
	Total	58.491	105			
Air trip	Between groups	4.560	2	2.280	4.355	0.015
	Within	53.931	103	0.524		

	Groups					
	Total	58.491	105			

Source: Primary Data

The ANOVA table in Table.3 gives an idea about whether the groups are significant different or not. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. Since the significance value of the Age and the Air trip is less than 0.05 i.e. 0.004 and 0.015 respectively, except the gender, education, and occupation. H_0 is rejected because of the main factor of the Air trip is less than the level of significant value 0.005 i.e. 0.015, so therefore the H_1 is accepted.

One-way ANOVA on airport factors vs. overall satisfaction

- H_0 : There is no relationship between the major Airport factors and the Overall Satisfactions.
- H_1 : There is relationship between the major Airport Factors and the Overall Satisfactions.

Table.4. One-way ANOVA table between the Airport factors and Overall satisfaction

		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Airport	Between groups	1.755	2	0.877	3.414	0.037
Access	Within Groups	26.207	103	0.257		
	Total	27.962	105			
Airport	Between groups	6.607	3	2.202	10.518	0.000
Facilities	Within Groups	21.356	102	0.209		
	Total	27.962	105			
Restaurant	Between groups	2.774	3	0.925	3.745	0.013
Facilities	Within Groups	25.188	102	0.247		
	Total	27.962	105			
Airport	Between groups	4.223	3	1.408	6.049	0.001
Environment	Within Groups	23.739	102	0.233		
	Total	27.962	105			

Source: Primary Data

The ANOVA results from Table.4 shows the analysis between Airport factors and the Overall satisfaction from the airport, the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. Since the significant value of the ANOVA table is less than 0.05 so, the Airport factor is relation to the Overall Satisfaction.

H_0 is rejected, there is relation between the Airport factors and the Overall satisfaction. Therefore, H_1 is accepted.

5.4 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation between “Overall satisfaction from airport” and “Airport factors” is less than 0.005 which depicts that there is a significant positive association between the two statements. Therefore, the result of the data shows that five airport factors do affect the travelers’ overall satisfaction, and there is significant positive association between these factors.

Table.5. Correlation Analysis

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1					
2	0.4292	1				
3	0.5472	0.5031	1			
4	0.7442	0.4517	0.5317	1		
5	0.5193	0.3233	0.4602	0.6548	1	
6	0.2939	0.3683	0.3253	0.3412	0.3929	1

Source: Primary Data

Table.6. Airport Factors

Sl. No	Factors
1	Airport access
2	Airport service and facilities
3	Airport restaurant and dining
4	Courtesy and helpfulness of inspection staff
5	Airport Environment
6	The overall satisfaction at the airport

The correlation between “overall satisfaction from the airport” and “Airport Factors” is less than 0.005 which depicts that there is a significant positive association between the two statements. Therefore, the result of the data shows that five airport factors do affect the travelers’ overall satisfaction, and there is significant positive association between these factors.

5.5 GARRET RANKING

To find out most important effect which influences the respondent Garret Ranking technique was used as per this method the respondent has been asked to assign the rank for the effects and outcome of such ranking has been converted into scores with the help of the formula. After this method based on the result, we suggest to implement the ground operation, improve the service quality level and providing more training to the staff, how to approach the customers.

5.6 RANKS OF THE SERVICE QUALITY OF AIRPORT

The Table.7 shows the ranking of the different effects of Chennai airport given by the respondents. The Garret Ranks are calculated by using Garret Ranking formula. It is based on the Garret Ranks, that the Garret values are calculated. The Garret tables and scores of the effects of surrogate advertisement is

multiplied with the recorded values in the table and finally by adding each row, the total Garret scores are obtained.

Table.7. Ranks given by the respondents

Effects	Ranks given by respondents				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Parking facilities	9	67	29	0	0
Waiting time in check-in	9	29	46	21	0
Business lounge	13	60	28	4	0
Cleanliness	18	27	45	15	0
Staff interaction	19	53	33	0	0

Source: Primary Data

Table.8. Calculated value and garret value

Percent Position	Calculated Value	Garret Value
100(1-0.5)/5	10	75
100(2-0.5)/5	30	60
100(3-0.5)/5	50	50
100(4-0.5)/5	70	40
100(5-0.5)/5	90	24

Source: Primary Data

Table.9. Garret Ranking

Effects	Rank given by the respondents					Total	%	Rank
	I	II	III	IV	V			
Parking facilities	675	4020	1450	0	0	6145.0	61.450	2
Waiting time in check-in	675	1740	2300	829.5	0	5544.5	55.445	5
Business lounge	975	3600	1400	158	0	6133.0	61.330	3
Cleanliness	1350	1620	2250	592.5	0	5812.5	58.125	4
Staff interaction	1425	3180	1650	0	0	6255.0	62.550	1

Source: Primary Data

The ranks obtained help us to identify that staff interaction got the rank I followed by Parking facilities - II, Business lounge - III, Cleanliness - IV, and Waiting time in check in - V.

6. FINDINGS

From the percentage analysis, it was found that people between age 18-35 were mostly used the Chennai airport were traveler or visitors. Majority of the airport users are male and Majority of people who have completed under graduation or is pursuing under graduation to use the Chennai airport. Most of the Chennai airport users are employed and also, they used both business and leisure purpose. By using One-way ANOVA it was found that the demographic profile of the respondents i.e. age,

gender, educational qualification, occupation and air trip had an effect on the overall satisfaction. The airport factors had effect on the overall satisfaction. By using the correlation Analysis, it was found that an effect of change in airport factors will affect the other factors positively and vice versa. By using the Garret Ranking, the effect of airport facilities is ranked identify that staff interaction got the rank I followed by parking facilities - II, business lounge - III, cleanliness - IV, and waiting time in check in - V.

Table.10. Support strategies that must fulfilled in customer expectations

Attributes Quality	Support strategies to airport management
Punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement standard operating system • Employee discipline • Passengers complaint service (contact centre)
Information of schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information must be complete and clearly visible to passengers • There is a help button to passengers
Luggage area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a luggage area that qualified comfortably • Easy to take and put into luggage area • Sufficient luggage capacity
Comfortable seat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comfortable seat which offers better seats and great leg room • Choose a comfortable seat configuration
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement safety operation • Employee discipline • Adjustment speed of the fleet • Provide safety information and procedure to passengers
Free of charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It must be free to passengers overall

Source: Primary Data

7. CONCLUSION

This study conducted questionnaire survey on Chennai Airport passengers and the visitors to investigate their perceptions of service quality at the airport and to indicate service that need improvement based on the result. Airport service quality with value, transfer passenger satisfaction, airport image, and transfer passenger behaviour. The analysis shows that airport service quality is found to have a direct or an indirect effect on value, satisfaction, airport image, and passenger behaviour. Failure to provide quality services to transfer passengers may damage the level of satisfaction, value perceptions, and the formation of airport image and cause negative impact on transfer passenger behaviour.

Where the respondents were most satisfied in Parking facilities, availability of banks/ATM/money exchange, waiting time at passport inspection, Shopping Facilities, Business lounges and communication through SMS or Call to the customer. In the contrast, they were least satisfied with availability of baggage, waiting time in check-in queue/line, cleanliness of airport terminal. The survey revealed that the respondent was less satisfied with the cleanliness of restrooms, variety and price of the

food and beverage service at the airport and were least satisfied with the airport's speed of compliant handling.

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