

Airport Environment and its influence on Traveller Emotions, Perceived Quality and Revisit

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Background and Hypotheses

With global airport passengers in 2022 amounting to approximately 1.7 billion (ACI, 2022), it is not surprising that airport environments have attracted significant academic attention. Considerable research demonstrates the evolutionary pathway of passengers seeking new experiences to fulfil new needs and emerging expectations (Das et al., 2021) while research on servicescapes have advanced our understanding on what drives satisfaction. Interestingly, numerous airport servicescapes focused their investigation on physical dimensions (i.e Tubillejas-Andrés et al., 2020) yet human interactions, and their link to perceived quality, received relatively less attention.

The present paper positions itself on three main pillars. Firstly, it investigates, in a combined fashion, the impact of physical and social interactions on travellers' perceived quality. Secondly, it focuses on evoked emotions through the airport servicescape and their procedural positioning in the experience journey of the traveller. Thirdly, it investigates how satisfaction (and lack of it) manifest in airport revisit and WoM by travellers. Through these pillars, managerial implications emerge providing avenues of certain servicescape improvements in order to evoke desired emotions while demonstrating their effect on favourable revisit and WoM intentions. Theoretically, the paper delineates the importance of emotions, perceived quality and socio-physical servicescape dimensions in the travellers' airport experience.

The proposed conceptual model synchronises previously identified constructs namely: Physical-related and Human-related factors (Bitner, 1992), Perceived Quality (Siu et al., 2012), Emotions (Tubillejas-Andrés et al., 2020), Satisfaction (Yerimou et al., 2022), Revisit and WoM (Batouei et al., 2020). Following an inductive approach to set the flow of effects, the hypotheses of the conceptual model are formulated as follows:

H1: There is a positive effect of Physical-related factors on Perceived Quality.

H2: There is a positive effect of Human-related factors on Perceived Quality.

H3: Physical-related factors have a positive influence on Emotions.

H4: Human-related factors have a positive influence on Emotions.

H5: Perceived quality positively affects Emotions.

H6: Perceived quality has a positive effect on Satisfaction.

H7: Emotions have a positive effect on Satisfaction.

H8: Satisfaction positively influences the Airport's Revisit intentions.

H9: Satisfaction positively influences WOM intentions.

Method and Contributions

An empirical survey-based investigation was followed to test the conceptual model with travellers of an international airport. The instrument engaged with scales from extant literature for each construct. After preliminary tests, Structural Equation Modelling was employed. Initial results demonstrate that certain environmental stimuli, such as temperature, are perceived as more important to travellers than others, while constructs like colour schemes and decoration significantly influence satisfaction.

From a managerial perspective, findings allows airport authorities to strategise accordingly in order to yield desired traveller emotions for satisfaction reinforcement. Furthermore, the connection between the constructs mentioned above allow proposed strategies for servicescape designs at the airports. From a theoretical perspective, the model expands our current knowledge by linking the airport's human-related environment with perceived quality, emotions, satisfactions and intentions.

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