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Service Rendered by Indigo Airlines - Passengers Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive aviation industry, customer satisfaction plays a vital role in determining an airlines success and market leadership. This study focuses on Indigo airlines, India's leading low-cost carrier, to examine the relationship between service quality and passenger satisfaction. Key service factors such as affordability, punctuality, digital experience, in-flight comfort, customer service, and safety were analyzed using responses from passengers through structured questionnaire. The research identifies strengths and areas for improvement by evaluating passengers perceptions and statistical tools. The findings emphasize the importance of operational efficiency, consistent service quality, and customer-centric strategies in maintaining brand loyalty and market dominance. The report concludes with practical recommendations for enhancing the overall passengers experience and sustaining competitive advantage in the dynamic airline sector.

Keywords: Indigo airlines, Customer satisfaction, Service quality, Low cost carrier, Passenger perception, Customer service, Aviation industry, Market leadership, Operational efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The aviation sector in India is one of the fastest-growing industries and plays a vital role in the nation's economic development. With its vast geography and expanding population, aviation serves as a key driver of connectivity, commerce, and tourism. India is currently the third-largest aviation market in the world, following the United States and China. The sector took off with its first commercial flight in 1911 and witnessed significant transformation when it was opened to private players in the 1990s, leading to enhanced competition and service quality. Today, leading airlines such as Indigo, Vistara, Air India, and Spice-jet dominate the market. The Indian aviation industry contributes substantially to GDP and job creation, employing thousands in roles such as pilots, cabin crew, engineers, and airport staff. It also supports ancillary industries like logistics, catering, and tourism. Technological innovation and sustainability are becoming key focus areas, with AI-driven systems enhancing operational efficiency and digital tools improving the passenger experience. Indigo Airlines, the market leader, has played a pivotal role in shaping Indian air travel through its extensive network, cost-effective operations, and customer-centric approach. Understanding passenger perceptions of Indigo's service quality is essential for evaluating customer satisfaction, identifying areas for improvement, and maintaining market leadership in an increasingly competitive landscape.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse passenger's perception towards services offered by Indigo airlines.
- To evaluate the key factors influencing passenger's preferences in choosing Indigo airlines.
- To assess the likelihood of passenger's loyalty on Indigo airlines.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anudeep Arora, Anuj Trehan, Simran Aggarwal, Gaurav Sharma (2015) in their study on "research and analysis of Indian Airline Industry with prices and Services as the main criteria" says that the Indian aviation sector, which is essential to economic expansion, has grown more transparent and welcoming to foreign investment. Its growth is driven by a number of factors, including globalization, government policy, low-cost carriers, FDI, and rising earnings. With airline brand equity being shaped by pricing and service quality, the industry appears to have a bright future. The importance of service quality in ensuring airline survival in the face of fierce competition is highlighted in this literature. It's important to consider how customers see flights and services like baggage facilities. Both the economy and travelers are impacted by fare fluctuations and service modifications. Anubhav Singh (2016) in his study on "a study of current scenario of aviation sector in India" says that India's aviation business has changed since the deregulation of airlines in 1994 due to the rise of private airlines, the quantity of aircraft, and the need for maintenance. Major maintenance is delegated to independent MROs under the low-cost carrier model, opening up commercial prospects. The need for MRO will increase as aircraft age, and airlines will favour local

facilities to save money on fuel and ferrying. Deregulation also benefited the aviation charter industry, which serves affluent business people who, because of operational and regulatory complexity, would rather hire planes than buy them. Business travelers choose private jet travel because it provides luxury, privacy, and time savings. *Priyank Kumar Singh (2021)* in her study on “service quality in airline industry in India” says that Airlines need to know what customers want and how they feel about their services in order to remain profitable and competitive. It is insufficient to merely satisfy clients because even contented travelers may look for alternative possibilities. Today's airlines prioritize creating enduring bonds with their customers by offering outstanding experiences that encourage loyalty. This is made even more important by issues like shifting demand, growing expenses, and economic downturns. Although retention is influenced by customer satisfaction, genuine customer loyalty results from stronger bonds and continuously going above and beyond. *Sandeep Walia, Dharminder Sharma, Amit Mathur (2021)* in their study on “The impact of service quality on passenger satisfaction and loyalty in the Indian aviation industry” says that in order to maximize passenger pleasure, the aviation industry has recently focused on the ongoing need and significance of improving service quality. Actually, because the airline industry is dynamic and customer-focused, there is always room for innovation in the way services are provided. Airline efficiency is largely dependent on customer loyalty, satisfaction, and service quality. *Suresh V, Deepika D (2023)* in their study on “quality services and passengers satisfaction in Indigo domestic airlines” says that the objective is to enhance the quality of services offered by Indigo Domestic Airlines, boost passenger satisfaction, and get important information into areas where Indigo Airlines may improve its offerings to keep customers.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, Primary data has been used to collect data from passengers. The study was conducted where 100 passengers who have travelled in indigo airlines were studied.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While competition in the airline industry remains intense, with various carriers striving to attract customers through pricing strategies, service offerings, and brand differentiation, Indigo continues to maintain its competitive edge. However, it is crucial to assess whether its market leadership is solely driven by operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness or if passenger satisfaction significantly influences its continued preference. Understanding the perceptions of passengers regarding service quality, including punctuality, in-flight experience, customer service, and overall satisfaction, is essential to determine if Indigo's success aligns with consumer expectations. This study aims to analyze the relationship between Indigo Airlines' market position and passenger satisfaction levels. It seeks to identify key service factors influencing customer loyalty, evaluate areas for improvement, and explore how Indigo sustains its leadership despite competition. The findings will contribute to understanding the airline's competitive advantage and offer insights for future strategic improvements in the aviation sector.

RESEARCH GAP

The study of service quality and passengers satisfaction in the airline industry particularly for indigo airlines reveals several under-explored areas. There is limited exploration of how evolving passenger expectations, digital innovations, and operational consistency influence satisfaction in a low-cost carrier model. Moreover, the alignment between perceived value and actual service delivery, especially in terms of punctuality, in-flight experience, and support services, remains inadequately examined. There is also a scarcity of comparative analyses between Indigo and other leading domestic or international carriers, which could offer deeper insights into market positioning and customer loyalty. Additionally, passenger perceptions of sustainability initiatives, post-flight services (like refunds, baggage handling, and customer support), and accessibility for differently-abled or elderly travelers have not been comprehensively studied. Furthermore, the role of digital tools (e.g., AI chat bots, e- check-in, mobile apps) in shaping customer experience and trust is a growing dimension that warrants more focused investigation in the context of Indigo's service delivery model.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

Statistical tools such as Weighted mean, Chi-square test, Garret ranking is used for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

SERVICE QUALITY OF INDIGO AIRLINES

FACTORS	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	TOTAL	WEIGHTED MEAN	SD
Meal services provided	8	6	14	16	56	100	1.94	1.293
Experienced flight delays or cancellations	6	8	13	51	22	100	2.25	1.077
Maintenance and safety measures of the airline	4	18	44	31	3	100	2.89	0.875
Digital services such as in-flight WI-FI etc.,	63	25	10	2	0	100	4.49	0.759
Focus on sustainable practices	36	45	18	1	0	100	4.16	0.748

Source: Primary data

*Note: SA-Strongly Agree(5), A-Agree(4), N-Neutral(3), DA-Disagree(2), SDA-Strongly Disagree(1).

The highest mean 4.49 indicates strong demand for digital services by the passengers followed by sustainability practices of 4.16 with broad agreement. Confidence in safety measures 2.89 is neutral suggesting neither strong trust nor major concerns, while flight delays due to maintenance issue 2.25 show moderate concern. Meal services have the lowest mean 1.94 reflecting strong dissatisfaction. The standard deviation values reveal greater variability in opinions on meal services 1.293 and flight delays 1.077, implying diverse passenger experiences. In contrast, digital services 0.759 and sustainability practices 0.748 have lower deviations, reflecting strong consensus. This suggests that Indigo airlines should prioritize meal service improvements, maintain reliability, and invest in digital and sustainable initiatives to enhance passenger satisfaction.

SERVICES OF INDIGO AIRLINES

FACTORS	E	G	N	P	VP	TOTAL	WEIGHTED MEAN	SD
Cleanliness and condition	19	64	16	1	0	100	4.00	0.636
Seat and leg room comfort- ability	8	46	34	12	0	100	3.50	0.810
Safety measures in handling the baggage	10	43	27	17	3	100	3.40	0.985
Clarity & timeliness of the flight announcements, information provided	18	49	27	6	0	100	3.79	0.808
Friendliness and helpfulness of the cabin crew members	39	56	5	0	0	100	4.34	0.572

Source: Primary data

*Note: E- Excellent(5), G- Good(4), N- Neutral(3), P - Poor(4), VP - Very Poor(1)

The highest rated factor is friendliness and helpfulness of cabin crew members mean 4.34 and SD 0.572, indicating strong positive feedback. Cleanliness and condition follow with a mean

4.00 and SD 0.636, reflecting good satisfaction. Clarity and timeliness of announcements received a mean of 3.79 and SD 0.808, suggesting moderate approval. Seat and leg room comfort scored lower mean 3.50 and SD 0.810 highlighting some dissatisfaction. The lowest rated factor is safety measures in baggage handling mean 3.40 and SD 0.985, showing concerns among passengers.

TESTING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND SATISFACTION LEVEL OF PASSENGERS - CHI SQUARE

FACTORS	VALUE	DF	CHI-SQUARE VALUE (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided))
Age*Punctuality	5.949a	6	0.429
Age*Check-in process	5.405a	6	0.493
Age*Help desk	9.693a	12	0.643
Age*Convenience and reliability	4.235 ^a	9	0.895
Age*Environmental efforts	14.075 ^a	12	0.296
Age*After flight service	8.782a	12	0.721

Source: Primary data

Null hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between age and the satisfaction factors.

Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is a significant association between age and the satisfaction factors.

The Table 4.9 shows that the calculated p-values are greater than the significance level 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is established that there is no statistically significant association between age and the factors such as punctuality, check-in process, help desk, convenience and reliability, environmental efforts, and after flight service of Indigo airlines. Since the null hypothesis is accepted, it is concluded that these factors are not dependent on the age of passengers. Hence, passengers of different age groups have similar opinion about these factors when travelling with indigo airlines.

TESTING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND SATISFACTION LEVEL OF PASSENGERS - CHI SQUARE

FACTORS	VALUE	DF	CHI-SQUARE VALUE (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided))
Occupation*punctuality	18.103 ^a	20	.581
Occupation*check in process	11.628a	20	.928
Occupation*help desk	58.485 ^a	40	.030
Occupation*convenience	13.246a	30	.996
Occupation*environmental efforts	29.023a	40	.901
Occupation*after flight service	64.335a	40	.009

Source: Primary data

Null hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between occupation and the factors. Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is a significant association between occupation and the factors.

The Table 4.10 shows that the calculated p-value for punctuality (0.581), check-in process (0.928), convenience (0.996), and environmental efforts (0.901) are all greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted and it is established that there is no statistically significant association between occupation and these factors of indigo airlines. Hence, it is concluded that these factors are not dependent on the occupation of the passengers.

The calculated p-value for help desk (0.030) and after flight service (0.009) are lesser than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and it is established that there is a statistically significant association between occupation and help desk and after flight service of indigo airlines. Hence, it is concluded that these factors are dependent on the occupation of the passengers.

CALCULATION OF PERCENT POSITIONS AND GARRET VALUES

FACTORS	RANKS GIVEN BY THE RESPONDENTS					TOTAL	AVERAGE	RANK
	5	4	3	2	1			
Cleanliness and condition of the aircraft interiors	475	2560	800	61	0	3896	38.96	4
Seat and legroom comfort-ability	200	1840	1700	732	0	4472	44.72	2
Safety measures in handling baggage	250	1720	1350	1037	225	4582	45.82	1
Clarity and timeliness of flight announcements	450	1960	1350	366	0	4126	41.26	3
Friendliness and helpfulness of cabin crew members	975	2240	250	0	0	3465	34.65	5

Source: Primary data

*Note: (5=excellent, 4=good, 3=average, 2=poor, 1=very poor)

The highest ranked factor is safety measures in handling baggage with an average score of

45.82. This indicates that passengers place the greatest importance on secure baggage handling. Seat and legroom comfort-ability followed with an average score of 44.72, showing that comfortable seating plays a significant role in passengers' satisfaction. Clarity and timeliness of flight announcements were ranked third with 41.26, emphasizing the importance of effective communication in ensuring a smooth travel experience. Cleanliness and condition of the aircraft ranked fourth with an average score of 38.96, reflecting the necessity of maintaining hygiene and a pleasant cabin environment. Friendliness and helpfulness of cabin crew members received the lowest ranking with an average score of 34.65, suggesting that while passengers appreciate good customer service, they prioritize safety, comfort and communication more. Thus, the indigo airlines should focus on enhancing baggage security, improving seat comfort, and ensuring effective communication while maintaining high cleanliness standards and providing excellent customer service.

FINDINGS

- Out of 5 factors, the need for additional digital services such as in-flight WIFI, enhanced entertainment options have the highest weighted mean of 4.49 followed by weighted mean of 4.16 for Indigo airlines should focus on sustainable practices.
- Out of 5 factors, friendliness and helpfulness of the cabin crew members have the highest weighted mean of 4.34 followed by weighted mean of 4.00 for cleanliness and condition of the Indigo aircraft.
- The calculated p values are greater than the significance level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is established that there is no significant association between age and the factors.
- The calculated p value for punctuality, check-in process, convenience, and environmental efforts are greater than the significance level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is established that there is no significant association between occupation and these factors.

The p value for help desk and after flight service are lesser than the significance level

0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is established that there is a significant association between occupation and these factors.

- The Garret ranking analysis reveals that highest ranked factor is safety measures in handling baggage with an average score of 45.82 followed by seat and legroom comfort 44.72 and clarity of flight announcements 41.26, suggesting that indigo airlines should enhance safety measures in handling baggage, seating comfort and communication. Cleanliness and aircraft condition ranked fourth 38.96 while friendliness of cabin crew members received the lowest ranking 34.65, suggesting passengers prioritize other aspects over crew interaction.

SUGGESTIONS

- Although Indigo is renowned for its timeliness, it can improve its competitive edge by further streamlining turnaround times and cutting down on delays. Disruptions can be reduced by utilizing AI-driven scheduling and AI-driven service enhancements.
- Improving seat comfort, legroom, and cabin ambiance should be prioritized based on passenger feedback, while adding ergonomic seating, adjustable headrests, and better cabin lighting can significantly enhance the in-flight experience.
- Business and frequent travelers can be drawn in by offering a more affordable premium economy class with more legroom, priority services, and an increased baggage allowance.
- The indigo airlines can focus on increasing digital entertainment features like Wi-Fi or streaming services can significantly enhance passenger satisfaction. Enhancing customer service through digital innovations and personalized greetings from the crew, upgraded meal and snack options, personalized experiences can further boost passenger satisfaction and loyalty.
- Incorporating sustainable practices such as reducing carbon emissions and adopting eco-friendly initiatives, will align with global environmental standards and appeal to environmentally conscious travelers.
- Additionally, expanding its domestic and international route network will help capture new markets and increase revenue streams. By addressing these areas, Indigo Airlines can solidify its position as a market leader, drive operational efficiencies, and deliver exceptional value to its passengers and stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The Indian aviation industry is striving for growth and innovation while tackling challenges like cybersquatting concerns, supply chain disruptions, and a shortage of skilled professionals. Airlines such as Indigo are being urged to strengthen their digital infrastructure and adopt sustainable practices due to rising environmental regulations. Supply chain issues have delayed aircraft deliveries, leading to increased operating costs and ageing fleets. Indigo, known for its cost-effectiveness and timely services, must now focus on enhancing passenger experience to maintain its market leadership. This includes improving seat comfort, in-flight amenities, and personalized services. Transparent pricing and efficient baggage handling can also boost passenger trust and satisfaction. The adoption of digital tools like AI-driven customer support, loyalty programs, and seamless booking systems is essential. Expanding direct routes, launching a premium economy class, and building partnerships with hotels and travel firms can unlock new revenue streams. Additionally, eco-friendly flights and corporate social responsibility initiatives can enhance Indigo's brand image. Balancing affordability, service quality, and sustainability will be key to ensuring long-term success in the competitive aviation market.

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