

## PRELIMINARY STUDY OF SERVICE QUALITY AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN AN AIRPORT: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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This study was about the service quality perception and its relation to purchase intention in the airport industry. The main purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the service quality perception in Airports by investigating the relationships of service quality in terms of creating purchase intentions. The study, however, included the perceptions of both international passengers and domestic concerning the current service levels.

This study analyzes whether passengers may stay longer in the airport, recommend the airport to other people or pay higher tax if they are satisfied with the service offers by airport. This means that an assessment the ability of service quality to explain the variation in repeat purchase intention including interaction among variables.

The results of this study show that despite service quality explain purchase intention relatively low, some findings relating that issues have been revealed.

**Keyword:** Perceptions, International Passenger, Domestic Passenger, Service Quality, Purchase Intentions

### INTRODUCTION

In the transportation industry, airports are established to service and facilitate aircraft, cargo and passengers. In addition to that, airports are required to fulfill three main tasks. They are flight safety; flight security; and airport comfort-ability. In any situation, the three main tasks should become the top priority, notwithstanding the economically unprofitable condition of an airport, in which it is unable to cover its operating cost. This has become the commitment

of the airport which shall always be upheld. However, some airports are business organization; their shareholders demand that they make profits. This means that it is an onerous situation for company that manages an airport since an airport has to provide some services not only on flight safety and flight security but also on a consumers' interest basis.

In Indonesia, airports are central to 'create and promote Indonesia by - being a significant Indonesia transportation hub for the benefit of Indonesia and environs; striving to maximize return on shareholder's funds and company assets; and striving for excellence in the services which it provides'.

The ever increasing importance of service organization to the world economy actually has been recognized by marketing academics by exponential development in services and marketing research. Within the air transport businesses, a prominent research stream has involved the measurement of service quality. They realize that the inability of airports and their customers to grasp a clear metric or establish a clear standard for performance has only fueled consumer discontent. They concluded that it is necessary for airports to continuously construct their service quality. This need has become even more crucial with the spread of notion that service quality will lead to purchase intention.

### **Problem Statement**

Past research on service quality in airports have been conducted by several institution or individuals. They either conducted research on service quality issues specific to their airport or others; and various transportation and travel industry groups may issue consumer-pollled rankings of airport facilities. In addition to that, qualitative effort to examine airport quality has also been conducted by several organizations such as International Air Transportation Association (IATA) among others that uses the research to monitor airport service quality annually. Others researchers and airports have also explored service quality issues in airport (Doganis, 1991; Brink and Maddison, 1975; Feldman & Shields, 1998; Lemer, 1992; Rowland, 1994; Seneviratne & Martel, 1994; Tretheway, 1998). However, Dawna, Blaise, and Seth (2000) say that these works are more concern to airport operators and little reference of characteristics and factors that comprise quality in airport facilities and operations. Despite these efforts considered incomplete they have provided a base on which to construct a comprehensive study of airport quality.

Another problem is on the service quality measurement and its contribution to the company performance. Unlike manufactured goods quality, airport service quality is an elusive and distinctive construct. It can be defined from several perspectives, including: the ability to satisfy the needs and expectations of the customer (Bergman and Klefsjo, 1994); and the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy given needs (Evans & Lindsay, 1996). This means that the researchers have to concern more on airports' user perspective on the airport service quality provided and its linkage to the purchase intention.

As there is very few of research if none have been done in the airport industries, the main purpose of this study is to respond to Zeithaml (2000) an author who has been investigating service quality, profitability, and the economic worth of customers for years concluded that much research remains to be done to validate this early evidence of service quality measurement and integrated body of knowledge about how to perform the measurement, with specific emphasis on the contribution made by service quality to repeat purchase intentions in the airport businesses, specifically is their terminal services.

In Indonesia, this need has become even more important especially with the spread of globalization. As Indonesia is surrounded by countries that have very high standards of international airports such as Singapore with its Changi Airport and Malaysia with its KLIA Airport. In addition to increased international competition, the increasing awareness of the service quality in the airport has also imposed pressures to airport operators in Indonesia to improve towards certain quality standards.

### **Objective**

The study overall objective of this study is to explore the relationship between service quality and the repeat purchase intention in the airport businesses. The specific objectives are: To investigate any Service Quality-Purchase Intentions concerns raised by passengers so that remedies may be incorporated into airport policy.

### **Justification of the Research**

There are many empirical studies conducted towards gaining an understanding of service quality, quality systems and quality measurement; and many studies have attempted to relate the importance and relationship of service quality to purchase intention. However, in airport industries, very limited number if none of service quality studies really look into the relationship between service quality and purchase intention. Yet, in recent years, the importance of developing service quality measurement has become priority for many airport authorities (Dawna, Blaise and Seth, 2000).

This study aims to provide evidence of the importance of measuring service quality and its relation to the purchase intention in airports. Further, it intends to generate new knowledge of service quality in the airports by investigating the important issues of its service quality. Potential findings resulting from this study should contribute towards understanding the service quality-purchase intention relationship in Indonesian airports.

This study provides theoretical contribution to the service quality literature as well as contribution to quality management of airports. The conceptual based model on airport data makes a valuable contribution to the effort to establish service quality measurement in airports by incorporating prediction purchase intention. The findings are also expected to enhance and deepen the understanding of issues relating to service quality in airports. Finally, this research contributes to the literature on quality management by providing airport perspective on the subject.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Global market changes, so does competition. Domestic market steadily becomes part of global market. The supply comes from all places in the world. It is believed that this condition requires quality product to win the customers and market. Buzzle and Gale (1987) conclude that focus on quality leads to betterment such as quality is profitable.

However, the discussion of the nature of perceived product quality can become very difficult to understand as it involves identifying of what a firm should provide in the industry. Therefore it is an imperative for a company to identify such needs early in the product/service development cycle.

### Perceived and the Multi Dimensions of Service Quality

The discussion of the nature of perceived product quality can become very obscure as it involves measuring consumers' expectations of what a firm should provide in the industry and what consumers' perceptions are in respect of this service provision. The perception of quality, however, has changed from time to time as the quality concept has been sometimes conflicting.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) began a research process to investigate service quality based on consumers' expectations and perceptions. The idea was unidimensional scales but was seen as unsatisfactory for measuring service quality given its multidimensional nature and consequently multidimensional scales were developed. Based on their research, they proposed for the very first time that service quality expectation components and classification have five variables: tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; assurance and empathy. It was ten dimensions then they reduced to five. It came through numerous qualitative studies. They evolved a set of five dimensions that have been consistently ranked by customers to be most important for service quality, regardless of service industry.

### Expectations and Service Gap

An organization provides a quality service to its customers when the organization either meets or exceeds customers' expectations. Many companies make the fundamental mistake of assuming that they know what their customers expect and through that lose customers. Conventional wisdom says that it is five times more expensive to win a new customer, than it is to keep an old customer. Therefore it is essential that an organization spends time and energy to find out what its customers really want. Also, people will experience services in different ways and each customer has a particular perception of the service provided. Therefore, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction results from experiencing a service quality encounter and comparing that encounter with what was expected (Oliver, 1980). The satisfaction is based on customers' perception on service offered. This means that perceived service quality can be defined as the customer's judgment about the superiority or excellence of a product while perceived value is the customer's overall assessment of the utility



of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988). Consumers' perception is subjective value towards services. Consumers' expectation is "Something that consumers think a firm should provide but not necessarily expect that it does have it" (East, 1997). Consumers may agree that a service should have features but may not personally attach much importance to them.

### **Service Quality and Company Performance**

Although the literature is replete with research on service quality, Zeithaml (2000) an author that has been investigating service quality and profitability many years suggests that in the past, expenditures on quality have not been explicitly linked to profits because costs and savings were the only variables on which information was available. More recently, evidence about the profit consequences of service quality stemming from other sources has been found. Research on the direct relationship between service quality and profits has shown both positive effects in a limited number of studies and no effects in other studies. By no means has this stream of research been exhausted. To large extent, these findings may be due to the difficulties involved in isolating the 'real' contribution that quality makes to the profitability. A myriad of other factors also influence profitability and as a result, the link between superior service quality and higher profitability considered as a given.

At the aggregate level, a growing body of evidence is emerging about the relationship between service quality and profitability. Academically, this research stream began with the Profit Impact of Marketing Strategies (PIMS) cross-sectional company database that enabled researchers to investigate relationships among strategy variables (Buzzell and Gale, 1987).

### **Quality in Airport Industries**

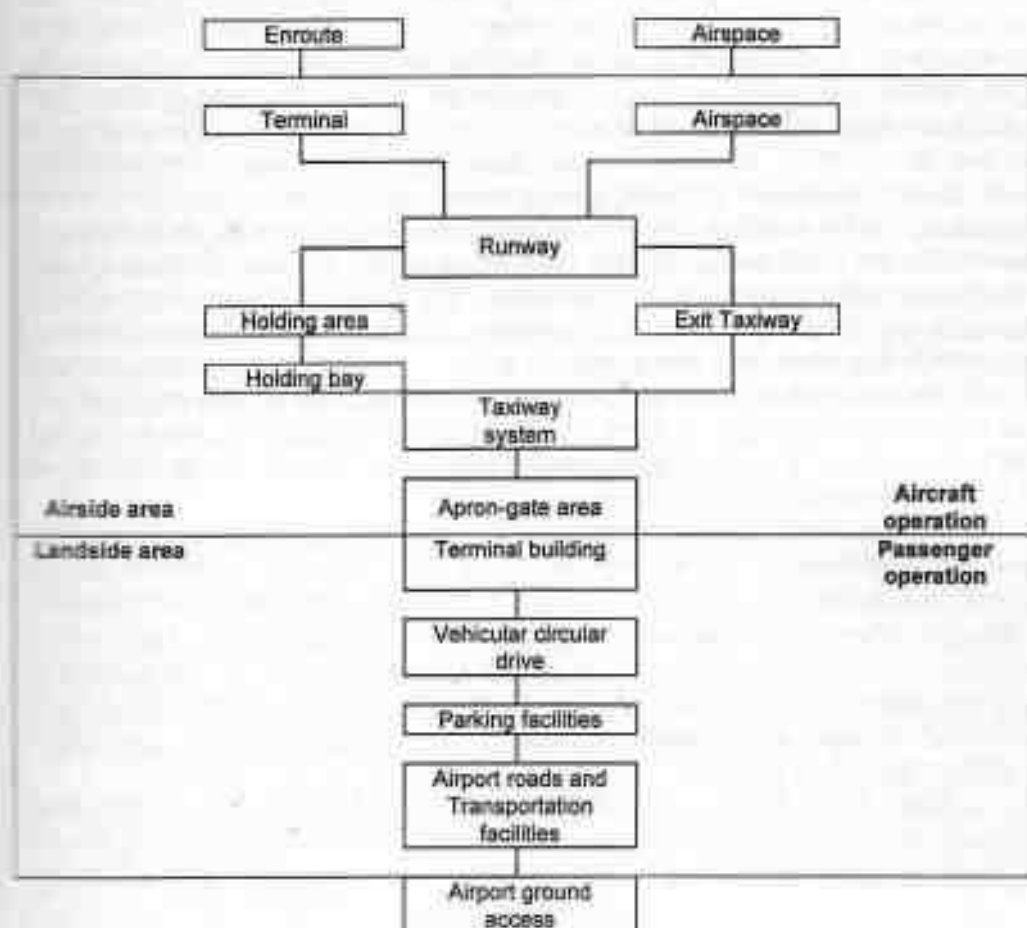
Airports are established to service and facilitate aircraft, cargo and passengers. Airports are business organizations; their stakeholders demand that they make profits. Nevertheless, it is an onerous situation for a company that manages an airport since airports have to provide some services on a public interests basis. Sometimes this means that an airport may have to provide loss-making services.

The airport is a complex transportation organization serving aircraft, passengers, and cargo. It is customary to classify the components of an airport into two major categories: airside facilities and landside facilities (Wells, 1996). Airside facilities, sometimes called airfield or aeronautical activities, are those on which aircraft operations are carried out. Basically, they are the runways where aircraft take off and land, the taxiways used for movement between the runway and the terminal, and the apron and gate areas where passengers embark or disembark and where aircrafts are parked. Lastly is the tower that is meant for airspace management and operation to provide air traffic control service to ensure a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of aircraft movements within the airport's Flight Information Region (FIR) in cooperation with the International

Civil Aviation Organization. As the airport does control the airspace, it is also required to provide Search and Rescue to aircraft in distress within the airport FIR.

Landside facilities are the part of the airport serving passengers, including land surface transportation, usually referred to as terminals. The primary objective of the terminal area is to achieve passenger convenience. However, an airport company needs to consider the balance between passenger convenience, facility investment, operating efficiency and aesthetics. Basically, airports have to provide facilities and services such as airport information assistance, lost and found services, money changing counters, postal and telecommunications services. In the public area, there is usually an airbus service, airport information assistance, banks, lost and found service, money changing counters, postal and telecommunication services unaccompanied baggage and left baggage service, ticket counters, baggage handling, and restaurants.

**Figure 1**  
**Airport Components**



## Airport Service Quality Measurement

The largest qualitative effort to examine airport quality is the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) Airline Monitor that conducts an annual, cross-sectional poll of international frequent flyers on issues ranging from airport signposting to washroom conditions (Adam-Smith, 1997, 1998). In addition to that Dawna et al. (2000) has summarized specific quality-related aspects of airport design such as walking distance, orientation, capacity levels, and lounge seating (Brink and Maddison, 1975; Feldman and Shields, 1998; Lemer, 1992; Rowland, 1994; Seneviratne and Martel, 1994; Tretheway, 1996). All of this research has taken a passenger perspective. Other work has attempted to compare airport operations from a financial performance perspective (Mackenzie-Williams, 1998). This work is clearly of more concern to airport operators and owners.

These efforts, while incomplete in and of themselves, have provided a base on which to construct a comprehensive index of airport quality. Many believe that such an index is needed for a number of reasons (Dawna et al., 2000). From an airport's point of view, the lack of a comprehensive index has limited its ability to benchmark the operation of its own airport. This in turn has hampered airport efforts to obtain funding for infrastructure improvements from private and governmental sources. From a customer point of view, airports have often been seen as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. This is due to the fact that airports have traditionally been perceived as natural monopolies. Even if one found the parking arrangements poor, the terminal facilities confusing, the food and retail concessions limited and expensive, or the ground transportation facilities congested, the consumer has felt forced to accept the situation by airlines and airport authorities. The inability of airports and their customers to grasp a clear metric or establish a clear standard for performance has only fueled consumer discontent. In addition, with the renewed awareness of both regional and national competition between airports, airport management has become increasingly in need of a normalized measure of airport quality and performance. A comprehensive index should address the needs and issues of all consumers and stakeholders.

Recent quantitative research by Dawna et al. (2000) has focused on developing indexes of airport services in US. Their research addresses efforts to design a quantitative index of characteristics and factors that comprise quality in airport facilities and operations from the perspective of all airport service customers including airlines, airport tenants, airport service operators, and consumers of airline and air cargo operations. Their research was also to get airport directors and consultants views on factors that most affect the quality of airport operation.

Dawna et al. (2000), however, provides framework that can be enhanced through the use of additional items that are specific to certain context. Based on this assertion service quality in airport would be investigated in the future.

## FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSITION OF SERVICE QUALITY- PURCHASE INTENTION IN AIRPORTS

This study proposes to investigate Service Quality-Purchase Intention in airport industries. A conceptual framework is proposed in figure 2. The figure depicts the Service Quality-Purchase Intention chain. The model shows the underlying process through which service quality and purchase intention in a sequential path.

**Figure 2**  
**Service Quality – Purchase Intention Proposition**



This provides a framework for empirically testing the links between service quality and purchase intention, the hypotheses underpin this, is:

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between the level of Service Quality and Purchase Intention

This question considered is the direct impact of Service Quality to Purchase Intention (H1). This analysis is going to be conducted due to service quality is believed to be a promising system to achieve a strategic weapon to build profits in every business organization.

The more compelling question was actually the effect of purchase intention on purchase behavior. Many authors have said that the relationship between customers purchase intentions and purchase behavior will be one of the difficulty to document because to do so would mean matching the data from customers before purchase with purchase data (Zeithaml, 2000). Despite post purchase data can be collected through warranty cards or other means, but try to apply this in the airport environment might be problematic.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design was developed in qualitative research method.

### The Study Preparation Phase

The study preparation phase consisted of information investigation about service quality perception in the airports. The information gathered in the literature reviews were carefully reviewed to develop the topics to be investigated in the research which is consisted of focus groups.

Selected sample of people working in the area is called for, however, it should be considered that it is a waste time to interview those who have little competence or experience. Thus, the information gathering process started with the selection of head of Airport, managers of five local Airlines, managers of five Concessionaires and some Passengers.



## The Qualitative Research

It is expected that this phase of case study produced richer explanations and illustrative examples that generated insight. Therefore, this research adopted in-depth interviews as the research instrument. It involved asking open ended-questions, listening to and recording the answers, and then following up with relevant questions. The studies followed the general interview guide approach. The guide consisted of a list of questions and issues that were adapted from the literature review. It helped keep the interaction focused and promoted systematic data collection. The first part is consisted service quality attributes that should be provided in the airport. Next section is containing the three measures of repeat purchase: come earlier to the airport; the willingness to recommend the airport to others and paying airport tax higher.

## The Sampling Design and Population

Due to the qualitative nature of inquiry and the respondents have a very limited time, this stage utilizes purposeful convenience sampling. Jakarta Airport as the biggest airport in Indonesia is chosen for the research. The airport was assumed to represent other less developed airports in Indonesia. Therefore, the population of the study is the passengers of the airport. Hence, although the findings will not be generalized to any particular population, the implications from the findings could be theoretically extrapolated to organizations with similar characteristics, in other sites/locations, and further verified through future empirical research.

This qualitative research focuses in depth, on relatively small samples. Hence, this research does not focus on establishing representativeness since the overall intended sample size is small with no statistical generalization intended. In addition to the extensive nature employed in interviewing each particular participants that is chosen, due to the time-constraint and availability of resources, it was impractical to focus on building on a large sample size. However, based on the rule of thumb used earlier in this study the sample size was 20 respondents.

## Data Generation and Interview Protocol

The interviews began with small talk by introducing the researcher and the purpose of the study. Once the conversation moved beyond to five minutes, the communication became easy.

As semi-structured interviews were conducted, the researcher had prepared an interviewing scheme to ensure that the conversations did not get off track too far, too often, although this was uneasy situation. Passengers have very limited time to take part therefore the timing, exact wording and time allocated to each question were upon the researcher's discretion.

Due to the semi-structured approach of the interview process, the interviews tried to follow the sequenced of questions determined in advance.

But the questions sometimes asked depend on the flow of the conversation. However, using probes the researcher was able to elicit as much information as possible. They offered to tell more than what the research was interested in.

### **Data Collection**

The actual interviews were conducted for 2 weeks in March 2006. The interviews were conducted in a natural setting. The targeted respondents were passengers in the boarding lounge of Jakarta Airport. The passenger in the boarding lounge was chosen since they are in the best position to answer the interview questions as they are expected to have gone through all the airport facilities. They represent the highest level of respondents within the airport and would not present problems of involuntary error due to lack of information.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis involves the process of data verbatim (Sudman and Slair, 1998). Data analysis consisted of examining and categorizing or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the propositions of the study. It means that the analysis search for general respondent's statements about service quality perceived in the airport and its relationship to the purchase intentions. The each question in the section one represented service quality attributes. While the questions in the section two represented purchase intentions. Hence, service quality attributes can be displayed in a hypothetical model that indicates its relationship to purchase intentions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The discussion begins with a brief explanation of service quality attributes in the airport. The service quality attributes constitutes a set of service quality items that are considered significant to be provided by airport operators. In this study, it was revealed in that there were 40 service quality items found (see Appendix A).

Since there are evidences of the association of service quality toward purchase intention among many industries, the study was aimed at discovering the relation of Service Quality-Purchase Intentions. In addition to that, the study was also aimed at discovering other factors that have a significant impact on purchase intentions. Hence, the aim of this part of the study was to find out whether the service quality could be viewed as the major influence on the purchase intention in the airport.

### **The Key Attributes of Service Quality**

Each respondent was asked to qualify services currently offered at Jakarta airport, within of the Service Quality-Purchase Intention concept. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the quality of services

should be provided at Jakarta Airport. This provides an indication of how well the airport performs various services. The information was portrayed in this way to show not only the overall level of agreement, but also the strength of agreement. These results could be used as an indication of the levels of excellence achieved.

As a result, the key attributes were found to exist. These attributes from the prodding of the researcher based on guide list (see Appendix A).

The service items are clearly critical service elements in the airport. However, qualitative evidence from respondents suggests the existence of negative feeling about some services. Most respondents put stressed on the attributes of "Prices" that they perceived too high. Details of comments made by respondents ( $n=20$ ) about "Prices" are shown in Appendix B.

The second most important services available are "Provide a pleasant and relax environment". The issue of this service includes a smoke free environment and a children's play area. It is noted that as people fly more, they become more adamant about the importance of such as service. It should be noted that users think that a smoke free environments is important.

While a children's play area rate about equal with each other. As expected, these facilities are more important to females aged between 20 and 40 years and least important to business fliers. A children's play area is regarded highly by leisure-fliers and meeters and greeters.

### **Overall Impression of Service Quality**

As well as respondents being asked to assess individual services, they were also asked to assess their overall impression of the airport. Here, most of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the overall impression of Jakarta airport was favorable. Despite variations in service performance, the favorable overall impression that people have should be encouraging for Jakarta Airport. The airport is noted as being of a good domestic standard.

At a glance, "excellence" has been achieved with cleanliness, signage, friendly staff, seating and baggage claim; while, the service relating to food, toilet and prices are areas for improvement.

In line with previous result obtained from survey, prices are highly regarded for improvement by respondents. The improvement was considered crucial for passengers not limited only to prices but other areas.

### **An Overview of the Structural Service Quality-Purchase Intentions**

Unavailable alternatives do not allow airport's consumers easily to switch service providers. It is very much different with consumers visiting to a restaurant. Despite in the case of alternatives are available or switching cost/barriers are very low, consumers still remain loyal if they perceived the service being provided are exceeding their expectation. This means that consumers will re-visit to a restaurant or advise others to visit it. In this study, therefore, respondents were requested to answer some open ended questions on their

intentions to 're-visit earlier to airport in the near future'; 'recommended airport to others to visit'; and 'paying higher airport tax' to seek some answers of Service Quality-Purchase Intention relationship in the airport industry.

### **Come Earlier to Airport**

Respondents were queried about their reactions to the provision of coming earlier to the airport for the near future. They were asked their likely behavior if they had an opportunity to come to Jakarta airport again for a flight.

The reaction to the concept of coming earlier to the airport is overwhelmingly neutral. Here, most of respondent indicated that they come to the airport as required by airlines or based on their habitual visit. This means that better service quality would not influence them to come earlier to airport. Apart from that, there were very few respondents willing to come earlier to airport due to avoid or anticipate traffic jam.

However, one or two airport users indicated that they would be happy to come earlier if service in airport especially if the prices are about the same as in downtown. This is likely to assert that "Prices" were very high in the airport.

In general, however, the tendency is for respondents to be neutral regarding their behavior of coming earlier to the airport. These results were un-expected because as service quality rise, it did not affect the passengers to stay longer in the airport. One comment from a respondent was:

"A realistic fact for coming earlier is preferable if I had special thing to do in airport before boarding such as meeting with somebody or something else..."

### **Recommend Others to Visit Airport**

A set of questions was devoted to asking questions about the willingness of the passengers to recommend others to visit Jakarta airport. An initial indication of some respondent was gained by asking respondents to indicate their positive feeling about Jakarta airport. After that, respondents were asked about the likelihood of them telling others to visit Jakarta airport.

As might be expected, the majority of those who perceived Jakarta airport had good services indicated that they would be very happy to talk about the airport with others.

Given the large number of respondents who had positive feeling about the airport, it is not too surprising to find that a high proportion of respondent are likely to recommend others to visit Jakarta airport, as indicated with the following examples:

"I have not visited the airport for a while. Now the airport has a pleasant atmosphere, I have to tell my wife about it..."

## Paying Higher Airport Tax

An assessment of respondents' reactions to the provision of airport tax was conducted. They were asked their likely behavior if the airport tax is increased. This charge would be applied as an increased to the existing airport tax which is approximately US\$ 10 for International passengers and US\$ 3 for domestic passengers. It is likely that passengers had mixed opinion regarding the airport tax incurred in the airport. The tendency is for respondents to have mixed propositions regarding their behavior toward airport tax increased. It is of primary concern that in charging scenarios there is a greater level of rejection of an increase in airport tax despite service quality improved.

This study further investigate those respondents who had "an opinion" on Jakarta airport had good facilities were asked to indicate their likely behavior towards an increase on airport tax.

Apart from that, from the finding of this study at least there were four main opinions of group. Below, the table 1 is a list of the groups. For each the group the relevant excerpts given by respondents in describing these specific points. This, therefore, introduce the qualitative findings of service quality-airport tax relationship.

**TABLE 1.**  
**Groups of Airport Tax Payers**

Group	Excerpts
<p><b>Unaware group.</b> Some passengers were not aware if they would be charged of using airport for their flight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airport tax should be absorbed in ticketing or explained prior to booking</li> <li>• Airport tax should surely be paid at the same as the ticket"</li> <li>• airport tax should be advertised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agree airport tax increase.</b> This group is respondents that positively agree to an increase of airport tax if the service quality also improved. This kind of respondents is very much expected since the airport management should put a lot of effort in terms of maximizing service quality in the airport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As long as it is used wisely especially for service improvement</li> <li>• improvement in services and facilities</li> <li>• I believe it has been worth it all, to have an airport to be proud of</li> <li>• I do not mind to pay such amount of airport tax, when I know it is helping to pay for a good facility"</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disagree airport tax increase.</b> The respondent who disagree to an increase of the airport tax as they perceived that the charge is already high enough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional charge should be made</li> <li>• I resent to pay higher airport tax</li> <li>• The actual amount I have taxed is worth it</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disagree airport tax incurred.</b> The last possible group is respondents who disagree not only to an increase to the airport tax but also to the existence airport tax itself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I strongly disagree with airport tax</li> <li>• Whenever possible I avoid Jakarta airport because of the airport tax</li> </ul>



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### Main Highlights and Vital Reflections

As qualitative research strategy is to capture the multiple realities existing within Service Quality-Purchase Intention phenomenon, and producing richer explanations and illustrative examples that generated insight. This study has produced many different insights about the ways in which Service Quality-Purchase Intention can be extracted from the qualitative findings presented in this part. Nevertheless, there are key deductions that are worth noting. In highlighting these deductions we will offer some reflections to answer the questions posed earlier in the introduction mainly on the question of:

"Is it true that service quality will bring a better company's performance?"

Against the backdrop of this question, some key deductions are presented in the following discussions.

#### The Overall Characteristic of Quality Management within Airport

Reflecting on the qualitative data, one should not neglect what can be the most obvious finding of all, which is the fact that to a certain degree, quality management is being perceived important by a number respondent in the airport industry.

What is also important to note about the phenomenon of service quality within these industry is that it (quality management) exists. To re-sample some the statements made by the respondents –

"The service quality (is a) good idea but ....."

"I do not mind paying higher.....for service improvement..."

"A vast improvement in services and facilities over the years. I fully support the airport tax"

"I do not mind to pay such amount of airport tax....for a good facility"

Supported by examples of this small yet rather revealing sample of qualitative insights, some specific things can be said about the service quality context of airport which is pertinent to purchase intention.

The *first* is that one gets a sense that Service Quality-Purchase Intention are indeed operating within a complex if not challenging in the airport situational. However, they seem unlikely to play a balancing act of managing different variable elements and different forces that require their attention. The fact that many of them practice a Service Quality-Purchase Intention model where they are at the center may even magnify this reality. Therefore, inquiry Service Quality-Purchase Intention management of airport needs to be contextualized within this complexity of situation.

Based on the overall descriptions of the Service Quality-Purchase Intention in airport, one also gets a sense that, although airports have tried their

progressive efforts to improve their quality, many passengers remain 'neutral' to purchase intention. This is the *second* point.

However, the service quality management should still be understood from this light. This position may well play pivotal role. In fact, many of their efforts to institute and implement better quality are in response to the demands of their customers and common practice in the airport industry which often influence the policy makers.

Hence, although the aim of this research is not necessarily to map-out the contextual or external factor and dynamics affecting this Service Quality-Purchase Intention, it is crucial that one has a grasp of what these realities are in understanding the phenomenon in the airports. Perhaps with such an understanding, it then makes sense that while preoccupied with other pressing matters, service quality and purchase intention is still true only in the theory.

### **The Existence of the Service Quality-Purchase Intention Structures**

There are many challenges that airport face in term of increasing their performance. Their customers (passengers) do have limited options and information about the airport they visit, especially for international travelers. However, airport managers are increasingly acknowledging the need for creating service quality in order to counter some of performance pressure that airport brings to bear. As direct reaction to these, airports are dedicating vast amounts of resources to increase their service quality.

By making these efforts, airports hope to increase large financial gains. However, in order for airport to reap their benefits of a repeat purchase intentions base, airports need to develop a very good perspective on Service Quality-Purchase Intention in airport which is insufficient published academic research available.

This study found that there are evidences of minimal or somewhat limited extent of formalization for Service Quality-Purchase Intention model as shown by the following excerpts that indicates this scenario:

"...Now the airport has a pleasant atmospheres, I have to tell my wife about it..."

"...and Airport tax should not a problem..."

"When arriving from overseas it is great to come back to an airport we can be proud of.

"I was only there to see a friend off but was most impressed with the facilities provided".

"Jakarta airport is an asset to the area and as a local I am proud of it and to have the use of it and will support any reasonable charge...."

However, through investigations on the qualitative survey, this study has made a better understanding of Service Quality-Purchase Intention in the airport industry. The relationship between Service Quality is quite intuitive. As a result many researchers have generally taken this relationship for granted.

By advancing our knowledge of an assumed relationship between service quality and purchase intention, this study has revealed that despite service quality is considered very important in the airport, it is not automatically result in better performance vis a vis purchase intention.

Results from the questionnaire and qualitative responses indicated that the acceptability of three purchase intentions: come earlier to airport; recommend airport to others; and paying airport tax higher, varied. Recommend airport to others received a positive reception. The other two did not generate the same positive reaction as recommend airport to others, especially Come earlier to airport. While paying airport tax higher was having mixed reactions. Some of them agree and some do not.

The study into concept of service quality and purchase intention has shown that it could fulfill some consumers' requirements. However, confusion over Come earlier to airport and Paying airport tax higher would need to be addressed for it to succeed. The very neutral attitudes held about Come earlier to airports mean that it is unlikely that passengers could be easily influenced in the near future to visit airport earlier as airlines or traffic have bigger influence on them.

The problem with Paying airport tax higher is different and is related to the respondents' lack of familiarity with the species. Many of them require more information about the airport tax. Familiarity issues could be addressed through in airport displays, leaflets, travel agents etc. to make people aware of airport tax incurred in the airport.

Apart from that, this chapter has tried to provide an in-depth analysis of qualitative inputs from the respondents, and has critically discussed the characteristics of service quality and purchase intention in the airport.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has addressed the issues that are important in the management of services in the airport industry, especially in Indonesia. The research was based on the perceptions of passengers of Jakarta airport. Other types of service organizations might have produced similar or different findings. The failure of service quality to affect purchase intentions in this study should be concerns for further study. Perhaps passengers do not always want the best quality service of an airport. The findings may raise further question, however, this study has addressed the most important concerns of service quality and purchase intention in the airport industry.

Regarding to that, this study, therefore, has some implications. At least this study has two implications, those are: research and academic implications; and managerial implications.

**Research Implications** - Despite, this study should be seen as a preliminary attempt to present a new direction for service-quality research especially in the airport industry, the findings of this study offer some contribution in the sense that it may build some new understanding in the area of study.



Apart from that, the moderately low correlation service quality-purchase intentions may become the challenges for the theorists to uncover other factors influencing purchase intentions instead of service quality alone.

**Managerial Implications** - The first and the most obvious implication for airport managers is if airport managers plan to develop measures for service quality, they should focus on a fulfillment-oriented approach. This means that they should develop service-quality constructs that will capture results that meet their requirements of their passengers, those that may increase purchase intentions. Second, airport managers should research their customer before choosing the items to form the basis of their service-quality instruments. Such a study would enable them to limit the scope of items that are included in their service-quality instrument to those most relevant to their passengers. In gathering such data, airport managers should cover both outcomes and the impact of dominant service interactions on their passengers.

In addition, airport managers could improve their service quality by targeting different aspects of the fulfillment-oriented construct. Management will influence service quality by ensuring that the process of defining the mutually results is effectively carried out. The failure of service quality to affect purchase intentions in this study should be concerns for further study. Perhaps passengers do not always want the best quality service of an airport. Instead they might be more influenced by flight schedule or punctuality of airlines.

### **Limitations**

As with any other study, this study should have some limitations. Firstly, this study focuses on the evaluation of service quality and assumes that both the service providers and passengers agreed on service attributes being studied. Moreover, the constructs and the measures proposed here require further testing before making any conclusive statements about the construct.

Secondly, the sample and the number of airports may not have been the ideal way of depicting airport service quality attributes. Despite of that, this study had tried the only possible alternative for developing service attributes that were perceived mandatory provided in the airports. It is possible that the attributes were too unlike real to elicit, although the effort was made when developing the attributes.

### **Future Research**

There are some opportunities for future researches in this study area aimed at understanding more fully the nature of service, its impact on purchase intention. Replication of this study using different airport setting and/or different methodology will extend generalizability of present study. Since that as Leone and Schultz (1980) note that "there are no universal generalization" and that "replication is the key to generalization"



## Conclusions

This study has actually looked at a number of issues in service quality and purchase intention. In that, this study yielded some very important findings. One of the finding is that there was a very low correlation between Service Quality and Purchase Intention. The results of the study may reveal that purchase intentions were very much influenced by other factors such as aircraft schedules. This was taken due to the facts of this study that there was low correlation between Service Quality and Purchase Intentions.

Another one is that this study has one remaining question to be answered that is essential for airport managerial issue. The results of the study suggest that service quality has no significant impact on purchase intentions, thus airport management may need to find over strategy centering solely on purchase intentions. This means that passengers may not need the highest service quality but better price or other factors that really affecting purchase intentions.

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**APPENDIX A:  
QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES**

**Section A. Service Quality Attributes**

Do you agree to some or any of these statements?

1. The airport should has modern-looking equipment
2. The airport physical facilities should be visually appealing
3. The airport employees should be neat-appearing
4. Materials associated with the service (such as neon signs or sign boxes) should be visually appealing at airport
5. Seating available should be enough
6. There should be adequate space for visitor observation
7. Displays for flight schedules should be easy to find
8. Direction movement within terminal building should be easily seen
9. The lounges should be spacious
10. There should be enough ticketing counters
11. Shops should be carefully design to allow freedom of movement
12. Public address system should be heard clearly
13. There should be enough the variety of shops
14. There should be enough check in counters
15. The seating should be comfortable and adequately provided
16. TV lounges should be available and convenient
17. Airport should have adequate trolleys
18. Business centre should be adequate for business traveller
19. Space should be available for people to move freely
20. Restrooms should be convenient
21. Baggage lockers should be available and convenient
22. An airport should provide a pleasant and relax environment
23. When the airport promises to do something, it should do so
24. When you have a problem, the airport should show a sincere interest in solving it
25. The airport should perform the service right in the very first time
26. Employees of the airport should give you prompt service
27. Employees of the airport should be willing to help you
28. Employees of the airport should be never too busy to respond your requests
29. The behaviour of employees of the airport should instil confidence in customers
30. You should feel safe secure at the airport
31. Employees of the airport should be consistently courteous with you

32. Employees of the airport should have the knowledge to answer your questions
  33. The airport should give you individual attention
  34. The airport should have operating hours convenient to all its customers
  35. The airport should have employees to give you personal attention
  36. The airport should have best interest at heart
  37. Employees of the airport should understand your specific needs
  38. Prices should be competitive
  39. There should be wide selection of foods and beverages
  40. Foods and beverages' quality should be satisfactory.
- 
- Q2. Please clarify, why?
  - Q3. What are the chances that you come to this airport earlier for your next visit to this airport? Explain, why?
  - Q4. What is the possibility you recommend this airport to others? Why?
  - Q5. What is the possibility you are paying airport tax higher? Why?

Thank you for your participation.

## APPENDIX B: USER RESPONSES TO OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS (VERBATIM)

### Positive Comments

My friend and I visit every Sunday as we enjoy watching planes coming and leaving lunch together.

Excellent facilities well laid-out.

It is much better than it used to be.

I find the facilities very commendable.

I think Jakarta airport is now excellent.

When arriving from overseas it is great to come back to an airport we can be proud of.

World class, high standard.

An excellent facility.

I was only there to see a friend off but was most impressed with the facilities provided.

Airbridge needed for wheelchairs and elderly only.

Coffee lounge much approved – no worries about departure tax

Best airport I've been in. Especially good for viewing the flights arriving and departing.

Airport I've been in has such good viewing.

Airport is an asset to the city.

Haven't visited since all the alterations had been made and was very favorable impressed.

Also parking seemed easier than when I was a regular user 8 years ago.

Congratulations on the improvements over the last few years and the departure tax taking.

Cost away from the rate payer. User pays in this instance.

Even though Bandung Airport closer, I prefer to use Jakarta because it's more comfortable with better connections.

I think the new terminal is a great improvement.

The airport has a huge improvement.

I personally find that with the terminal and facilities, I am thoroughly pleased, the design is very good particularly with elderly and handicapped in whom I specialize.

I really enjoy going to the airport where the service and the ambience combine for a delightful atmosphere. Congratulations.

No, it's a really good improvement go on.

I found the airport building excellent. All services were of a high standard. I would just wonder if car park would be big enough for the future.

Jakarta airport is a great credit to us.

Jakarta airport would be the nicest airport I have been in the last 12 months. The facilities were very good.

I have been to the airport many times and find the recent upgrading a tremendous.

Improvement, an asset to Jakarta and a pleasant place for travellers. I would like this airport to reach internationally recognized.

Very modern and well-kept with a very pleasant atmosphere.

Clean, tidy and well planned.

The upgrading work to date has made Jakarta a far more pleasant and functional Place.

Comfortable pleasant surroundings. Good facilities (shops, toilets, children's playground, Etc).

Friendly atmosphere, clean and tidy. Nice to be able to see planes arrive and depart.

New airport facility is pleasant and provides an efficient service.

I like the changes they've made-its made a real difference.

Jakarta airport is an asset to the area and as a local I am proud of it and to have the use of it and will support any reasonable charge as long as well informed.

Much better than before.

New big improvement on the last time.

Very impressed with the airport.

Much better than other (domestic) airport.

Service compares favourable with other airports. Jakarta airport is a lot better than it used to be.

It seems quite adequate for the city it serves.

Absolutely unrecognizable from my ardent days 20 years ago! Dead elegant!

The viewing lounge upstairs is great.

Significantly improved especially in the terminal.

I have seen a great improvement in the last 12 months.

Service compares favourable with other airports Jakarta airport is a lot better. Than it used to be.

I have found Jakarta airport quite good, not too far out of the city.

As a mother of two young children I have greatly appreciated the child care room and Children's play area.

It seems quite adequate for the city it services.



As a parent of two young children, I greatly appreciated the child care room and children's play area.

Clean and comfortable-good viewing area in a sunny spot. Easy to find way around.

Left Jakarta 12 years ago. Used to be so open and hot thrilled with present.

I found my short visit to Jakarta airport to be comfortable and a pleasurable experience.

The service has improved over the last 3 years.

Coming along very nice.

It certainly is an improvement on what it used to be like.

I was impressed by the cleanliness and ethnical-modern interior.

The airport facilities have improved greatly.

I think the new airport building has been well-designed and tastefully decorated. No

Criticism.

Love the new airport- most attractive!

Slightly congested around ticket counters at peak times.

#### **Negative Comments**

The prices are an insult.

Prices should be much lower.

Price is too high if you want to buy for just a bottle of mineral water.

I am enjoying being in the airport, the thing is I have to pay a lot of extra for a cup of tea. Need a smoke free environment.

Flights to connect overseas especially Europe and US are awful.

Some design was poorly implemented i.e. self claim area and reporting areas are together.

A child could've done better, and pick up and set down area should be better controlled.

Some cars are there for ages.

It has always disturbed me that the quality and quantity of service at this airport has always been little or non-existent. For 5 years I flew continuously out of this airport.

There should be friendly service, food, and drink available for all of the hours there are flights using the airport.

No one smiles and it feels like a cold welcome.

I feel it provides a functional service (in-offensive) but does not represent an attractive part of entry to a city on the edge of potential.

I think the architecture of the airport does not fit the city. It makes me frown every time I Drive up.

Have used the freight dept a few times over years, staff friendly but usually very slow serve.

### **General Suggestions**

The airport should keep on improving. Customers change tastes easily. You must renew your commitment towards the customers and find out how to package your services differently.

The children's play area could perhaps have a few more things and the area around it.

Should be smoke free.

Would be really good to have a post Office here, several times I've needed one.

I think there should be separate toilets for staff and customers.

It seems not very much thought has yet gone into loading by more versatile air bridges.

To suit operations at regional centres we don't have to ape major airports, not to fail by saying we are too small loading disabled and elderly needs attention.

Baggage conveyor belt needs to be larger-more space around it for passengers to collect their baggage.

### **Come Earlier to Airport**

I was late for check-in due to the traffic, for next I have to spare some time....

The longer you stay the more unnecessary cost you spend.

I am enjoying being in the airport, the thing is I have to pay a lot of extra for a cup of tea.

A realistic fact for coming earlier is preferable if I had special thing to do in airport before boarding such as meeting with somebody or something else.

It doesn't have a television lounge and by having more shops could promote Jakarta more there's a lot of wasted space within the boarding lounge and not much room for tour coaches outside the building. This also can be an option to spend more time in the airport.

### **Comments on Recommend Others to Visit Airport**

I find personally that the service and facilities improved time by time. I am thoroughly pleased. I really enjoy going to the airport where the service and ambience combine for a delightful atmosphere.

I visit almost every Sunday as I enjoy watching planes coming and going and having lunch. In fact, I am very often accompanied by some friends as I asked them to come.

I have not visited the airport for a while. Now the airport has a pleasant atmosphere, I have to tell my wife about it.

- How the airport should now promoted.
- While I appreciate the upgrading facilities I would strongly support anybody contact this airport to see such "improvements" such as designs, interiors....
- Indonesians should be proud to have this airport. I should tell my friend about it.
- The airport is extortions and the worst possible PR exercise.
- Don't mind telling others as long as it maintain its performance.
- Recommend this airport is no problem.
- A vast improvement in service and facilities over the last 2 years I fully support the promotion of this airport.
- Whenever possible I mention about Jakarta airport because of its facilities. I believe you gain same impression.
- Jakarta Airport is commendable!
- Don't think there should be any problem to promote this airport. The airport is a credit to.
- Jakarta, don't spoil it!

#### Comments on the Departure Tax:

- The \$3 charge should be absorbed in ticketing or explained prior to booking. For cash flow reasons not because it's too much. It doesn't seem "user friendly" or visitors-seem a mean place!
- Departure tax would be more convenient if paid for at the check in counters.
- As flying out of Jakarta is known by airlines to incur \$3 departure tax, it should surely be paid at the same time as the ticket.
- The departure tax should be included in the cost of the ticket or at least we should be made aware of this when checking in.
- Although, there has been many complaints about the departure tax I believe it has been worth it all, to now have a terminal to be proud of.
- I disagree with the departure tax, but the new airport terminal is comparable now to Terminals in other centres, therefore, the actual amount I've been taxed is worth it.
- I don't mind paying departure tax etc when I know it is helping to pay for a good facility.
- The \$3 departure tax is a rip-off. The improvements are an asset that would generate income anyway!
- Other than the \$3 to board no complaints.
- The airport looks very nice but I resent having to pay departure tax.
- Abandon departure tax.
- Abolishment of departure tax \$3.
- When does the airport plan to drop the fee?
- Strongly disagree with departure fee.
- It's time to drop the tax.

I think your departure tax scheme is a waste of time and an imposition please charge the airlines, they may pass it on but is easier.

Tax is rude!

I disagree strongly with having to pay any amount of money over and above my airfare.

Which should cover my rights about leaving an airport without the extra charge! Ludicrous!

I personally begrudge paying \$3 departure from Jakarta airport.

Dislike the \$3 departure tax idea.

I think the \$3 departure tax should be abolished!

Do not continue to charge a departure tax.

I disagree strongly with the \$3 surcharge.

The departure tax was not advertised and I only knew about it because it came up in Conversation.

I object to the departure fee being maintained for reasons of principle, the precedent it sets, and the additional inconvenience it caused.

The departure tax is a hassle although I've used Jakarta a few times I still don't.

Know why it is required.

\$3 tax is unacceptable I see the airlines as the airport users, not myself.

There shouldn't be a departure tax.

I disagree with the need for a departure tax it is another job to do prior to departure.

Wouldn't it be better to levy the airlines on per head basis who could recoup the cost from fares.

Don't agree with the airport duty at all.

The \$3 departure tax is an irritating anomaly-to suggest a charge for using an airbridge.

Compounds that the whole approach reflects in a negative way on the attitude of local authorities toward someone who brings business into the region.

Don't approve of the departure tax but accept that the airport may need to do this for extra Revenue (one wonders for how long) but charging for parking as well is too much.

I was unaware of the departure tax until the mention of it on the systems I filled in this form.

I strongly disagree with the departure tax.

Get rid of departure tax- totally unacceptable.

The \$3 departure tax really peeves me off!

The car parking charge is an insult, the departure tax should be reduced now that the airport is completed.

Strongly resent paying \$3 departure tax.