

Exploring the impact of airport physical environment on passenger emotion and travel intention

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of various dimensions of the physical environment at airports, such as facility functionality, aesthetics, layout accessibility, and cleanliness, on passenger emotions and their travel intentions. Design/Methodology/Approach: The study was conducted at Haluoleo Airport in Kendari, Indonesia, involving 144 passengers who had used airline services more than twice. The survey was conducted between March and May 2024 with approval from airport authorities. The analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and AMOS software. The findings show that the physical environment at the airport significantly affects passenger emotions, which, in turn, impacts their travel intentions. This research highlights the importance of improvements in facility functionality, aesthetics, accessibility, and cleanliness to enhance the passenger experience, ultimately improving satisfaction and loyalty to the airport. Practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of airport management in maintaining and enhancing these factors to create a more enjoyable experience for passengers, which will positively impact their satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Emotion, Physical environment, Travel intention.

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1. Introduction

Transportation is an important and strategic sector for the development of a country [1], especially air transportation, which has rapidly developed in Indonesia. Amid this growth, airports have become crucial components in the air transportation network that connects passengers to global destinations, serving as service hubs providing various facilities for passengers and cargo [2]. Nowadays, the public prefers air transportation due to its speed, which saves time, resulting in an increase in the number of air passengers as the sector continues to grow [3, 4].

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The facilities available at airports, such as functionality, aesthetics, layout accessibility, and cleanliness, play an essential role in creating a positive experience for passengers [5]. Airports must ensure that all facilities are functioning properly to support the smooth flow of passengers and reduce the stress or anxiety often felt by passengers while at the airport [6]. Facility functionality includes the efficiency of key airport services such as check-in processes, security, and other comfort facilities that can enhance passenger satisfaction. When these facilities are functioning well, passengers feel more comfortable, safe, and satisfied with their airport experience [7, 8]. Facility aesthetics, which involve architectural design, decoration, and layout, have a significant impact on passengers' moods. An aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable environment can increase passengers' positive feelings, such as comfort and happiness, which in turn affects their overall satisfaction with the airport [9]. Layout accessibility refers to the ease of navigation and the organization of facilities. A well-structured layout can reduce confusion and improve comfort, helping passengers' perceptions of the quality of service provided. Proper cleanliness creates a comfortable and safe environment, which can influence the levels of anxiety and comfort experienced by passengers [11].

Although many studies have examined the impact of physical environment dimensions on passenger experiences, research that integrates all of these dimensions into a single holistic model remains limited, especially in the context of airports in Indonesia [12, 13]. Most studies focus on one or two dimensions, such as aesthetics or cleanliness, without exploring how the overall elements of the physical environment at airports simultaneously affect passenger emotions [5, 10, 13]. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationships between facility functionality, facility aesthetics, layout accessibility, and cleanliness on passenger emotions at Haluoleo Airport, and how these emotions influence passengers' travel intentions. Positive emotional experiences at airports can increase the likelihood of passengers returning to use the same airport in the future [14]. Therefore, this study focuses on a deeper understanding of how emotional experiences influenced by these physical factors can affect passengers' travel intentions at Haluoleo Airport. To address this research gap, the study will develop a model that integrates the four main dimensions of the airport's physical environment into a comprehensive framework. This study will analyze how facility functionality, facility aesthetics, layout accessibility, and cleanliness collectively impact passenger emotions at Haluoleo Airport. By developing this model, the research aims to provide a better understanding of how the physical environment can affect passengers' emotional experiences, which, in turn, can enhance their decision to return to use the airport services in the future.

This study will be conducted at Haluoleo Airport, located in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. This airport is one of the main airports serving both domestic and international flights, offering various facilities to support air travel, including waiting areas, check-in counters, and information services. In response to the increasing number of passengers, Haluoleo Airport continues to strive to improve the quality of its facilities to provide better experiences for passengers.

The main objective of this research is to explore the impact of the airport physical environment on passenger emotion and travel intention. This study aims to provide deeper insights into how the quality of airport facilities affects passengers' emotional experiences and ultimately influences their decisions to travel. Additionally, this study will contribute to the development of user experience theory and consumer behavior and provide practical recommendations for airport managers on designing facilities that can improve the overall passenger experience.

2. Hypothesis Development

2.1. Facility Functionality on Emotion

Seating comfort is influenced by layout and the physical environment, and it serves as an important background for the service environment [15]. This refers to the level of physical comfort derived from the quality of seating [16]. In some cases, seating comfort is highlighted as a determining factor for users' affective perceptions [17]. Well-functioning facilities include aspects such as equipment operating smoothly, clear information systems, and easily accessible services [18]. When users, such as passengers at an airport, encounter well-functioning facilities, they tend to feel satisfied and pleased. Passengers can easily find information about their flights through timely and accurate information displays, which makes them feel calmer and more confident. Functional facilities can also help reduce boredom and anxiety that users may experience. Well-functioning facilities like ergonomic seating, good Wi-Fi connectivity, and a clean environment can make passengers feel more relaxed and at ease. Functional facilities create an environment that supports and facilitates users in carrying out their activities. This can enhance positive emotions such as excitement, calmness, and comfort, thereby enriching their experience at the airport. Ali and Amin [19] found that facility functionality significantly influences behavioral intentions. It is crucial for airport management to ensure that their facilities are well-functioning and meet the needs of users to create a satisfying experience and build a positive relationship with passengers. Therefore, the relationship between these variables is hypothesized as follows:

 H_{l} Facility functionality has a positive and significant impact on emotions.

2.2. Facility Aesthetics on Emotion

The aesthetics of facilities on emotion reflect the importance of visual and aesthetic aspects in creating a satisfying experience for users, including at airports [20]. Facility aesthetics encompass the building design, decoration, lighting, and other visual elements that can influence users' perceptions and emotions [5]. Well-designed and visually appealing facilities can enhance users' positive emotions, such as admiration, comfort, and excitement. When consumers feel comfortable and satisfied with the physical environment of a facility, it can enhance their positive emotions, such as happiness, comfort, and enjoyment. As a result, they may be more likely to return to use the service in the future and recommend it to others [21].

Facility aesthetics can also affect the level of boredom and anxiety experienced by users. Well-designed facilities can create a calm and comfortable environment, which can help reduce users' boredom and anxiety [22]. For example, a clean, organized waiting area with a soothing design can help create a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for passengers waiting for their flight. Moon and Han [23] found that facility aesthetics significantly affect behavioral intention. Facility aesthetics have an influence on users' emotions at airports. By designing visually attractive and pleasant facilities, airport managers can create positive and satisfying experiences for passengers, which in turn can improve the airport's image and strengthen the positive relationship with users. Therefore, the relationship between these variables is hypothesized as follows:

 H_{2} . Facility aesthetics have a positive and significant impact on emotion.

2.3. Layout Accessibility on Emotion

Emotion shows that ease of access and navigation in an environment can directly influence how individuals feel and respond to the situations they face [24]. At airports, a layout that is easy to understand and has good accessibility can provide a more comfortable experience with minimal boredom for passengers. A well-structured and easy-to-understand layout can help reduce confusion and anxiety that passengers may experience when looking for their way to gates, check-in counters, or other facilities at the airport [25]. Well-designed facilities with an intuitive layout can create a calmer and more organized experience for passengers, which in turn can enhance positive emotions such as comfort and satisfaction. Good accessibility can also increase passengers' sense of safety and self-control. When passengers feel they can easily navigate and access various facilities at the airport, they tend to feel more confident and comfortable during their journey. A user-friendly layout can also create a more enjoyable and refreshing experience for passengers [26]. For example, spacious, bright, and open layouts can create a pleasant and refreshing atmosphere for passengers, which can enhance positive emotions like excitement and satisfaction. Moon et al. [5] found that layout accessibility significantly affects emotion. A layout that is easy to access and understand at the airport has a significant impact on passengers' emotions. Therefore, the relationship between these variables is hypothesized as follows:

 $H_{3:}$ Layout accessibility has a positive and significant impact on emotions.

2.4. Cleanliness on Emotion

At airports, well-maintained cleanliness creates a comfortable and pleasant environment for passengers, which in turn can positively affect their emotions [5]. Maintained cleanliness creates an overall positive and pleasant impression for passengers [10]. When passengers see clean and well-maintained areas of the airport, they are more likely to feel comfortable, safe, and satisfied with their surroundings. This can enhance positive emotions such as comfort, satisfaction, and relief. Wellmaintained cleanliness can also help reduce boredom and anxiety that passengers may experience. A clean and organized environment can create a calm and orderly atmosphere, which can reduce passengers' boredom and anxiety during their journey. This can result in positive emotions such as calmness, relaxation, and comfort. Ali and Amin [19] found that cleanliness has a significant effect on emotions. Maintaining cleanliness has a significant impact on passengers' emotions at the airport [24]. By ensuring that the cleanliness of the environment is well-maintained, airport managers can create a pleasant, safe, and professional environment for passengers, which ultimately enhances their travel experience and promotes a positive relationship with the airport. Therefore, the relationship between these variables is hypothesized as follows:

 $H_{4:}$ Cleanliness has a positive and significant impact on emotions.

2.5. Emotion on Travel Intention

Emotions can affect how someone evaluates and responds to travel situations, the destinations offered, and the expected experiences. Emotion plays a significant role in shaping a person's intention or desire to travel [27]. When a person feels positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, excitement, or curiosity about a destination or travel experience, they are more likely to have a strong intention to travel [28]. These positive emotions can trigger a high motivation to explore new places, experience new things, and create valuable memories. Conversely, negative emotions, such as anxiety, worry, or discomfort about travel, can hinder a person's intention to travel [5]. Negative emotions can arise from various factors, such as concerns about safety, uncertainty about comfort during travel, or worries about logistical issues. Emotion significantly affects travel intention. In the context of travel intention, it is important for travel service providers to understand how emotions can influence customer decisions and intentions [27]. By focusing on factors that trigger positive emotions and reducing negative emotions, travel service providers can increase customers' interest and intention to travel while also creating a satisfying and memorable travel experience. Therefore, the relationship between these variables is hypothesized as follows:

 $H_{5:}$ Emotion has a positive and significant impact on travel intentions.

3. Methodology

The type of research used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), applied using AMOS software to analyze the relationships between constructs. This study involves passengers traveling from Haluoleo Airport in Kendari City, Indonesia. The sample selection criteria include passengers who have used airline services more than twice, as they have experience using services from various airlines and are able to evaluate their performance. In addition, participants must be 18 years of age or older. The questionnaire distribution was conducted directly in the airport area with the permission of the airport authorities. The survey was carried out from March 2024 to May 2024, and 144 responses were received, resulting in a valid sample size for further data analysis.

The questionnaire was designed to measure various constructs related to passenger experience at Haluoleo Airport. The constructs measured include Facility Functionality (FF), which covers seating adequacy, internet connectivity, and electronic

services; Facility Aesthetics (FA), which evaluates the appeal of architecture, background music, and lighting; Layout Accessibility (LA), which assesses the clarity of signage at the airport and ease of access to destinations; Cleanliness (C), which includes the maintenance and cleanliness of waiting areas, toilets, corridors, and other facilities; Emotion (E), which measures passengers' emotional responses such as happiness and satisfaction at the airport; and Travel Intention (TI), which measures passengers' tendency to travel by air in the future and their preference for using Haluoleo Airport. The questionnaire items for these constructs were sourced from previous research by [5, 9, 13, 29].

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The passengers who participated in this study consisted of 144 individuals with various demographic characteristics. The majority of the respondents were male (80.56%), with the largest age groups being 26-34 years and 27-34 years (31.25%). Most respondents had completed their education at the undergraduate level (42.36%) and were employed in private-sector jobs (38.89%), followed by entrepreneurs (25%) and civil servants (26.39%). In terms of income, the majority of respondents had a monthly income between 10 and 15 million IDR (44.44%). This distribution provides a representative overview of the demographic background of passengers using services at Haluoleo Airport.

Table 1.

Variables	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Facility Functionality	FF1	0.490	0.91	0.77
	FF2	0.970		
	FF3	0.863		
	FF4	0.902		
Facility Aesthetics	FA1	0.998	0.95	0.84
	FA2	0.961		
	FA3	0.939		
	FA4	0.748		
Layout Accessibility	LA1	0.968		0.68
	LA2	0.987	0.89	
	LA3	0.957		
Cleanliness	C1	0.728		0.94
	C2	0.985	0.98	
	C3	0.971		
	C4	0.870		
Emotion	E1	0.893	0.94	0.8
	E2	0.858		
	E3	0.874		
Passenger Satisfaction	PS1	0.869	0.87	0.7
	PS2	0.895		
	PS3	0.737		
Travel Intention	TI1	0.960	0.94	0.85
	TI2	0.923		
	TI3	0.875		

Scale items and evaluation of the measurement model.

The table presents the results of a factor analysis assessing variables related to passenger experiences in airport environments. Facility Functionality includes four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.49 to 0.97, a Composite Reliability (CR) of 0.91, and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.77. Facility Aesthetics has four items with factor loadings between 0.75 and 1.00, a CR of 0.95, and an AVE of 0.84. Layout Accessibility consists of three items with factor loadings from 0.96 to 0.99, a CR of 0.89, and an AVE of 0.68. Cleanliness includes four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.73 to 0.99, a CR of 0.98, and an AVE of 0.94. Emotion is measured through three items with factor loadings between 0.86 and 0.89, a CR of 0.94, and an AVE of 0.80. Passenger Satisfaction includes three items with factor loadings from 0.74 to 0.90, a CR of 0.87, and an AVE of 0.70. Travel Intention encompasses three items with factor loadings between 0.88 and 0.96, a CR of 0.94, and an AVE of 0.85. Overall, all variables demonstrate strong reliability, with CR values exceeding 0.8, and valid constructs, as indicated by AVE values above 0.5, ensuring good convergent validity across the model.

4.2. Structural Equation Modeling

To obtain the model and verify the research hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed in this study using AMOS [30]. By simulating the relationships between several independent and dependent theoretical constructs simultaneously, SEM allows researchers to investigate interconnected models in a single, systematic, and comprehensive analysis [31]. We employed data analysis utilizing 5,000 bootstrapping iterations with AMOS, revealing both direct and indirect effects. Evaluation of the Goodness of Fit Indices criteria for the overall model concludes that the model used has a

good fit with the data. The Chi-Square value of 240.976 is categorized as good, while the Probability value of 0.313 also indicates a good fit as it is greater than 0.05. An RMSEA of less than 0.08, specifically 0.017, also indicates a good fit. The GFI and AGFI indices, at 0.884 and 0.849 respectively, are categorized as fairly good, although slightly below the cutoff value of 0.90. Meanwhile, CMIN/DF of 1.043, as well as TLI and CFI indices of 0.997, indicate a good fit as they meet or exceed the specified cutoff values, as shown in [30].

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Table 2. Direct Effect.

Path	Estimate	P value	Decision
Facility Functionality \rightarrow Emotion	0.266	0.010	Significant
Facility Aesthetics \rightarrow Emotion	0.182	0.019	Significant
Layout Accessibility \rightarrow Emotion	0.277	0.010	Significant
Cleanliness \rightarrow Emotion	0.269	0.010	Significant
Emotion \rightarrow Travel Intention	0.185	0.030	Significant

The analysis results show that several physical environmental factors at the airport have a significant impact on passenger emotions and their travel intentions. First, facility functionality (0.266, p = 0.010) was found to have a significant positive effect on passenger emotions, meaning that improvements in facility functionality at the airport are likely to enhance passengers' positive feelings. Similarly, facility aesthetics (0.182, p = 0.019) also significantly affect emotions, indicating that improvements in the appearance and visual design of the facilities can boost passengers' moods. Furthermore, layout accessibility (0.277, p = 0.010) has a significant impact on passenger emotions, with more accessible layouts making passengers feel more comfortable. Cleanliness (0.269, p = 0.010) also has a significant relationship with passenger emotions, where a clean environment at the airport contributes to positive feelings. Additionally, these positive emotions have an effect on travel intention (0.185, p = 0.030), with positive feelings experienced at the airport increasing the likelihood of passengers continuing their travel plans. All of the relationships found in this analysis show p-values indicating statistical significance, which strengthens the understanding that physical environmental factors at the airport significantly affect passenger emotions and travel intentions.

5. Discussion

The analysis results show that various physical environmental factors at the airport have a significant impact on passenger emotions and their travel intentions. The first factor, facility functionality, was found to have a positive effect on passenger emotions. Passengers feel more satisfied and comfortable when the airport facilities function well, such as having clear and easily accessible information systems and smoothly operating equipment (Wilms et al. [18]). This is consistent with Bitner's [15] findings, which emphasize the importance of physical comfort as part of the service environment that can influence user emotions. Well-functioning facilities help create a pleasant experience and reduce passenger anxiety, as also noted by Ali and Amin [19], who found that facility functionality significantly influences users' behavioral intentions.

Facility aesthetics at the airport also affect passenger emotions. Visual design elements, such as attractive lighting and aesthetic architecture, can enhance positive feelings such as excitement and admiration among passengers [5]. Beautiful design can create a pleasant atmosphere that supports the overall passenger experience. Research by Ryu and Jang [32] shows that facility aesthetics can enhance passengers' behavioral intentions, reinforcing this finding. In addition, layout accessibility at the airport also plays a role in improving passenger emotions. A layout that is easy to understand and allows for smooth navigation can reduce confusion and anxiety, as well as increase comfort during the time spent at the airport [25, 33].

Cleanliness also has a positive impact on passenger emotions. A clean environment creates a sense of comfort and safety, which in turn enhances passenger satisfaction (Bogicevic et al. [10]). Ali and Amin [19] state that well-maintained cleanliness at the airport contributes significantly to passengers' positive feelings, such as comfort and calm. Finally, the positive emotions generated by a good physical environment directly affect travel intention. Passengers who experience positive emotions are more likely to have a stronger intention to continue their journey or choose a specific destination [27]. Positive emotions, such as excitement and enthusiasm, strengthen the desire to explore further, while negative emotions can hinder this intention [5].

6. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study reveals that physical environmental factors at Haluoleo Airport, such as facility functionality, aesthetics, layout accessibility, and cleanliness, have a significant impact on passenger emotions, which in turn affects their travel intentions. These findings suggest that airport managers need to pay attention to the quality of facilities and spatial design in order to create a pleasant experience for passengers, which can enhance satisfaction and strengthen their loyalty to the airport. The practical implications are that airport management can improve passenger comfort by enhancing the functionality, aesthetics, accessibility, and cleanliness of facilities. This study also contributes theoretically by supporting the understanding of the impact of physical factors on passenger emotions and travel intentions. However, this study has limitations, including a small sample size and a cross-sectional design. Therefore, further research with a larger sample, longitudinal design, and the use of Multigroup Analysis in AMOS to identify differences based on respondent demographics, such as gender, education, and age, could provide a more holistic insight into passenger experiences at the airport.

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