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ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS



AIRLINE SERVICE QUALITY THROUGH BUSINESS TRAVELLERS' LENS

The escalating competition in the airline industry necessitates prioritising quality service and customer value. To achieve customer satisfaction, airlines must meet customer expectations across all service quality attributes. Despite this, studies reveal mixed results in understanding the expectations and perceptions of a particular passenger segment: business travellers.

In this study [Dr Nadine Itani](#) and [Dr Frankie O'Connell](#) evaluate airline service quality for business travellers by using Kano model and importance-satisfaction analysis, to identify priority service attributes and provide insights on resource allocation strategies.

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Editor: Dr Isabel Rodriguez | isabel.rodriguez@surrey.ac.uk



DO BUSINESS TRAVELLERS HOLD DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF AIRLINE SERVICE QUALITY?

Dr Nadine Itani & Dr John F. O'Connell

A conceptual framework is developed, dividing business travellers into four Clusters based on the flight length (short vs. long haul) and the cabin class (economy vs. business cabin). To understand passengers' preferences and satisfaction levels, the Kano model is applied to evaluate fourteen Airline Service Quality Attributes (SQAs). Findings reveal only five SQAs have adequate allocation: on-time-performance, the availability of a frequent flyer programme, convenient flight schedules, and two cabin crew related aspects – friendliness and professionalism of flight attendants. Interviews with Airline managers from British Airways, easyJet, Etihad Airways, and Edelweiss Air reflected different classification of the SQAs. The provision of in-flight Wi-Fi was classified as an attractive feature by airline managers unlike the other three passengers' clusters.

Additionally, airline managers allocated seat comfort in the 'possible overkill' quadrant, meaning that Airline's effort is over-utilised due to the attribute's comparatively high performance and low importance to business travellers. Whereas most business travellers across clusters placed seat comfort in the 'concentrate here' quadrant, reflecting their perceptions as very important. These underlining inconsistencies in perceptions of SQAs between Airline management and business travellers, capture the areas where service quality needs to be improved, and the necessity of allocating resources in alignment with customer expectations.

To achieve service excellence, Airlines are encouraged to realign resources with business travellers' expectations.

Lippitt, P., Itani, N., O'Connell, J. F., Warnock-Smith, D., & Efthymiou, M. (2023). Investigating Airline Service Quality from a Business Traveller Perspective through the Integration of the Kano Model and Importance–Satisfaction Analysis. *Sustainability*, Link: bit.ly/42T4rQs