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Optimizing Oman Airline Performance: The Critical Role of Airline Infrastructure and Passenger Comfort

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Abstract

Oman has significantly invested in modernizing its aviation sector, notably through upgrades to Muscat International Airport and Oman Air's fleet, reflecting a strategic push for sustainable development. However, challenges remain, particularly the gap between rising passenger numbers and slower improvements in infrastructure efficiency and passenger services. The purpose of the study is to ascertain how airline infrastructure affects airline performance in Oman. Moreover, describe how passenger comfort affects Oman Airlines' performance. Furthermore, address the following query: How does Oman's airline infrastructure affect its operations? What potential effects might passenger comfort have on Oman's airlines' performance? The quantitative research approach with a positive paradigm is used in this study. Statistics obtained by administering surveys to travelers at Oman's airports using a five-point Likert scale. The sample method used is purposive and sample size was 162 respondents. The results demonstrate that infrastructure, passenger comfort, and airline performance are positively correlated. According to a regression study, these characteristics have a major impact on airline performance.

***Keywords*: Passenger, Airline, Aviation, Infrastructure, Performance.**

1. Introduction

Oman's tourism and business infrastructure are greatly enhanced by the country's aviation industry, which also contributes significantly to the country's economic growth. To make Oman a major hub for air travel, the Omani government understands how important it is to upgrade airport infrastructure and offer passengers first-rate services. Oman Air's fleet modernization and ongoing airport infrastructure development show the nation's dedication to offering passengers top-notch services. This reflects a strategic vision aimed at sustainable development in this crucial sector and helps to solidify Oman's expanding position on the global air transport map (CAA.,2019).

Major airport expansions have been made in Oman to boost capacity and improve services, particularly at Muscat International Airport. 2018 saw the opening of Muscat International Airport's new terminal, which has contemporary amenities to accommodate travelers' expanding needs. By updating its fleet and offering top-notch services, Oman Air is continuously striving to improve the traveler experience. The airline will get its first Boeing

787-9 Dreamliner in 2024. This aircraft will have a state-of-the-art design, be fuel-efficient, and have large windows and spacious cabins for better passenger comfort.

Infrastructure refers to the resources and instruments we use to plan and construct the communities, towns, and cities in which we live. Public parks, roads, water and electrical systems, tunnels, and bridges are all included in this. Because they improve everyone's quality of life and advance civilization, these resources are extremely vital. From organizational structures to physical facilities, airline infrastructure encompasses all the elements required to keep aircraft operating efficiently (Investopedia,2024). Harmonization of the many system components, including infrastructure, vehicles, and the operational framework, is required to establish a workable urban transportation system (Pak et al., 2024).

1.1 Problem statement

In Oman, the aviation industry is a major force behind tourism, economic expansion, and global connection. The government has made significant infrastructure investments over the last ten years, including modernizing Oman Air's aircraft and enlarging Muscat International Airport (Admin, 2022). Notwithstanding these initiatives, the industry continues to encounter difficulties. Particularly at secondary airports like Salalah and Sohar, which still lack contemporary amenities and sufficient staffing, there is a discernible disconnect between the quality of services and the sharp increase in passenger volume (CAA, 2023). According to Nair (2024), Although Oman is undergoing a digital transition, it still falls behind international norms in areas like integrated service platforms, real-time tracking, and smart check-in. Salam Air is frequently criticized for its strict standards and poor customer service, while Oman Air, despite its reputation for safety, finds it difficult to match the service levels of other Gulf carriers. Furthermore, Oman's viability as a regional transit center is diminished by its few direct airline alternatives and poor interaction with other transportation systems. Although there has been progress, particularly in the areas of fleet and infrastructure renovations, the sector's long-term viability depends on more advancements in sustainability, digital technology, and service quality. This study contributes by examining how infrastructure and service improvements affect airline performance and providing policymakers with practical suggestions to encourage sustainable expansion and improve Oman's standing in the world of aviation.

1.2 Research Objectives

- To ascertain how airline infrastructure affects Oman's airlines performance.
- To elucidate how passenger comfort affects Oman's airlines performance.

1.3 Research Questions

- How does airline infrastructure affect Oman's airlines performance?
- What impact might passenger comfort have on Oman's airlines performance?

2. Related Work

2.1 Introduction

To gain a clearer picture of how improvements in airline infrastructure and passenger services affect the performance and customer satisfaction of Oman's aviation industry, this literature review will examine the latest developments in the field. As essential hubs in the global transportation system, airports connect communities, promote economic growth, and ease the flow of people, products, and services. In 2019, the total number of travelers registered hit a startling 4,490 million prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (ICAO, 2021) and is predicted to increase by up to 103% by 2024 (IATA, 2022). Furthermore, the aviation sector and its activities contributed about USD 2.7 trillion to the global GDP in 2018 (ICAO, 2018).

2.2 Airlines performance

Airline is an air transport service. Enhancing passenger satisfaction, loyalty, and retention through high-quality services is the main goal of air transport service quality. Establishing the connection between the long-term objectives of service and airline enterprises, such as increased profitability and efficiency, has received little attention (Zhang et al., 2023c).

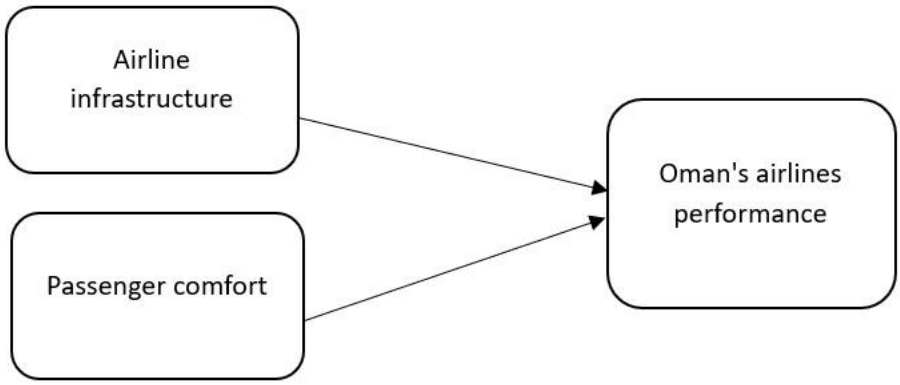

Figure 1 : conceptual framework

2.3 The influence of airline infrastructure

In the context of airport infrastructure impacts both the local and national economies. Thus, direct, indirect, and induced impacts add up to the overall economic impact (Baker et al., 2015).

For instance, employment and revenue produced by the airport are considered direct effects (Song & Suh, 2022), Both indirect and induced effects are characterized by a rise in demand for goods and services as well as higher expenditure by tourists and visitors in the area. Quality of life, community development, and social well-being are all included in "The role of airports as a driver of productivity growth and then as an attractor of new firms" (Bai & Wu, 2022), (Monterrubio et al., 2020). According to Doerr et al. (2020), airport infrastructure serves as a gateway for the growth of the tourism industry.

The impact of airport infrastructure on the environment. Pollution and mitigation strategies when airports are located close to residential areas, and the health effects of particulate matter on nearby residents when airport infrastructure is upgraded. nonetheless, lowering emissions through "green initiatives" and "green logistics" (Sokolova et al., 2022).

Given the robust rise in tourism predicted for the world through 2030, substantial investment will be needed to meet demand for lodging, transportation, and other tourism-related services and infrastructure while improving social, economic, and environmental results. With six additional airports planned and the majority projected to be operational by 2028–2029, the CAA has been enthusiastic about the potential for growth in the Sultanate of Oman's aviation industry, according to Civil Aviation Authority Chairman Naif al Abri (Nair, 2024).

Near home, Oman has effectively planned long-term key infrastructure, such as the port of Duqm, which connects and streamlines operations outside of the Arab world and is positioned strategically in the ocean. From just 5,000 residents in 2008, Duqm's population is expected to grow to 100,000 this year. An incredible jump made possible by the exceptional capacity to plan, create, and manage the structure (Virgilli, 2020).

H1: The infrastructure of airlines has a beneficial effect on Oman is airline.

2.4 Passenger comfort

The components of the cabin's interior provide the experience of passenger comfort. When these characteristics affect the body and evoke subjective impressions, passengers feel a certain amount of comfort. It is shown that passengers' judgments of comfort are a complex construct that encompasses perceptual (such as proxemics) and semantic (such as association) elements in addition to psychological (such as peace of mind) and physical (such as physical welfare) features. Through its various features, the seat was proven to play a vital role in influencing comfort (Elbanhawi et al., 2015).

Customer satisfaction in the airline business is a complex concept that has received significant attention in academic research. Customer satisfaction in the airline industry is influenced by a number of factors, including convenience, safety, cost, and service quality. The unique economic and cultural context has an enormous impact on the expectations and opinions of consumers. For instance, passengers may have higher expectations for the civility and attentiveness of airline employees due to Thai culture's strong emphasis on hospitality and service (Wongcharoenkul & Suntrayuth, 2023).

According to research, higher levels of perceived service quality led to customers to feel mor comfortable (Aksoy et al., 2020). The timeliness of check-in and boarding procedures, in-flight amenities, and seating comfort are crucial factors that affect customer satisfaction in Bangkok's airline industry (Kim et al., 2021).
Plans to license a new low-cost airline in Oman have been revealed by the Oman Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). By diversifying the market, this action seeks to provide passengers with more options and affordable prices. The ultramodern airports in Oman, renowned for their outstanding passenger experiences, are prepared to manage the growing volume of air travel. It is predicted that the launch of a new low-cost airline will increase travel, encourage competition, and benefit the national economy. The nation is home to award-winning, cutting-edge airports that are renowned for their outstanding passenger experiences and contemporary amenities. Because of their sophisticated infrastructure and effective management, these airports are well-suited to manage the rising volume of air travel that Oman has been experiencing (Mendoza, 2024).

H2: There is a positive impact of passenger comfort on Oman is airline performance.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology

The methodological and general assumptions of this study were based on the positivism paradigm. According to Bryman and Bell (2015) a researcher who adheres to positivism seeks to conduct their work in an impartial and objective manner. Because the current study used a quantitative research approach to examine the knowledge-based view and transaction cost theory, it was classified under the positivist paradigm. The primary data of this study was collected with the help of a questionnaire. A model of interrelationship was developed in which partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to confirm the relationship modelling PLS-SEM combines regression-based analysis with principal components analysis to estimate the parameters of a set of equations in a structural equation model. (Belhadi et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2017). PLS-SEM enjoys widespread popularity in a wide range of disciplines, such as supply chain management (Kaufmann & GA Eckler, 2015), accounting (Lee et al., 2011; Nitzl & Chin, 2017), group and organization management (Sosik et al., 2009. PLS-SEM's ability to estimate extremely complicated models with several constructs and indicator variables is one of the primary factors contributing to its appeal, particularly when analysis aims to make predictions. Furthermore, PLS-SEM generally allows for much more flexibility in terms of data requirements and the specification of correlations between constructs and indicator variables (Sarstedt et al., 2012).

3.2 Population, sampling, and sampling technique

The target population of the society was all passengers using the airlines in Oman, including tourists, businesspeople, and citizens. Understanding the characteristics of these passengers helps in naming their needs and expectations from aviation services. A sample was taken from a group of passengers traveling through Oman airports during a certain period. It is important that the sample is representative of the total population to ensure that the results obtained accurately reflect the reality of the passenger experience. The sample was taken randomly to ensure that there is no bias, or a stratified sample, where passengers are divided into dissimilar categories (such as age groups or type of travel) and a sample is selected from each category.

3.3 Data collection method

The questionnaire was first developed in English and then translated into Arabic for the benefit of the respondents. The present study used a five-point Likert scale consisting of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. The invention of the Likert scale is attributed to Likert (1932), who described this technique for assessing attitudes.

4. Result Discussion

4.1 Description of Sample

The sample included 162 participants, with a nearly unequal gender distribution (38.5% male and 61.5% female). In terms of age group, most participants (46.6%) were between 21 and 25 years old, followed by those between 26 and 30 years old (30.4%), and finally those over 30 years old (23%).

Table 1: Demographics of Sample

Variable	Items	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender	Male	62	38.5%
	Female	99	61.5%
Age	21-25	75	46.6%
	26-30	49	30.4%
	Above 30	37	23%

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are a set of techniques used to summarize and describe the basic features of a dataset. These statistics help to organize and simplify substantial amounts of data, providing a clearer understanding of their characteristics.

Airline Infrastructure

On the scale, the mean score of 21.76100629 shows that participants generally believe that airline infrastructure has a significant impact on the variables studied, such as meeting passenger needs, enhancing safety and security, efficiency, and economic growth. The mean score writes down a moderate to high belief that infrastructure has an impact.

Furthermore, with a standard deviation (SD) of 9.903561286, the responses show considerable variation, reflecting the diversity of experiences and perceptions among participants. This variation suggests that while some individuals or organizations view airline infrastructure as having a significant impact, others view its impact as less significant.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Airline Infrastructure

No.	Question	Mean	SD
1	Do you believe your experience of flying depends on the quality of anonymous	2.836478	1.272266
2	In addition to the standard network amenities, are you required to have it at the	3.09434	1.495954
3	Are the screening and security procedures at airports modern, in your opinion?	3.100629	1.497656
4	Do local airports have equipment and maintenance problems?	2.91195	1.294505
5	Do you believe that flight safety is correlated with aircraft quality?	3.534591	1.570213
6	Is it easy to get to and convenient for you to park at the airport?	3.081761	1.466799
7	Is there a need for additional funding to upgrade air navigation systems?	3.201258	1.306168
Total		**21.76101**	9.903561

Passenger Comfort

On the scale, the mean score of 27.18868 indicates that participants generally believe that passenger comfort has a significant impact on the variables studied, such as economic growth, excellent traveler ratings, and repeat bookings. The mean score shows a widespread belief in the perceived impact of marketing activities. Furthermore,

with a standard deviation (SD) of 12.12982, the responses show moderate variation, reflecting a range of perspectives among participants. While many view passenger comfort as an influential factor, others may view its impact as less significant, contributing to the spread of responses around the mean.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Passenger Comfort

No.	Item (Question)	Mean	SD
1	Is there room for improvement in the security screening and check-in process, in	3.075472	1.329067
2	Were the seats on your Oman Air flight comfortable?	3.113208	1.368641
3	Was there enough legroom in your seat for you to sit comfortably?	2.893082	1.314915
4	Was the temperature in the cabin comfortable while flying?	2.930818	
5	During the flight, was the aircraft's noise level acceptable?	2.968553	
6	During your flight, were the cabin crew members cordial and helpful?	3.232704	
7	Were the meals and drinks provided on board of adequate quality?	2.924528	1.407697
8	Did you find the onboard entertainment varied and appropriate?	2.949686	1.344462
9	Are the airline's scheduled arrival and departure times met?	3.100629	1.378841
	Total	**27.18868**	**12.12982**

Oman Air performance

On the measurement scale, the mean score of 28.18239 indicates that participants generally view Oman Air's performance as a key factor in the areas studied, such as operational efficiency, competitiveness, and providing the best services. The mean score writes down a widespread belief in the importance of Oman Air's impact on the organization's success. Furthermore, with a standard deviation (SD) of 11.8485, the responses exhibit a moderate degree of variability. This variability confirms that although many participants agree on the average perception, there are notable differences in how the impact of airline performance is perceived across contexts.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Oman Air's performance

No.	Items (Questions)	Mean	SD
1.	Is there a professional and passenger-friendly approach to handling	3.081761	
2.	Does the airline offer current, accurate flight information?	3.08805	1.347213
3.	Are the processes for checking in and boarding quick and easy?	3.169811	1.378899
4.	Does the performance of the cabin crew demonstrate excellent service	3.188679	1.336772
5.	When a customer complaint, does the airline respond to them?	3	1.227326
6.	Did you find the aircraft's cleanliness and maintenance qualities	3.320755	1.308786
7.	Are you comfortable flying with this airline?	3.106918	1.380658
8.	Does the airline offer effective baggage handling that is free from	3.163522	1.267282
9.	In your opinion, does the airline effectively balance cost and quality	3.062893082	1.343929316
Total		**28.18239**	**11.84859**

4.3 Correlation

This correlation shows a strong and influential relationship, indicating that airline infrastructure and passenger comfort have a significant impact on airline performance.

Table 5: Correlation

	Airline performance	Airline infrastructure	Passenger comfort
Passenger comfort		1	1
Airline infrastructure		1	*0.142988*
Airline performance		*0.071605*	*0.113346*

4.4 Regression

Regression is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It seeks to model the relationship between these variables by fitting a linear equation to observed data.

Table 6: Regression Test

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	R^2
Intercept	23.40094037	3.119549468	7.501384611	4.38853E-12	0.015980238
Passenger comfort	**0.109900797**	0.083517933	1.315894595	**0.190127588**	
airline infrastructure	**0.07756532**	0.109707923	0.707016575	**0.480604243**	

Based on regression analysis, The passenger comfort coefficient and airline infrastructure are statistically significant (P value < 0.05), indicating a positive relationship with the dependent variable. This means that increased passenger comfort and improving airline infrastructure associated with better outcomes Oman airline performance.

Based on the regression analysis, the results of the hypothesis testing were as follows:

Passenger comfort: The regression analysis strongly supports the first hypothesis. The coefficient of improvement in passenger comfort is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant positive impact on airline performance.

Airline infrastructure: The coefficient of improvement for the infrastructure variable is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that it has a significant and noticeable impact on airline performance.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This study emphasizes how crucial it is to improve passenger comfort and invest in airline infrastructure to maximize Omani airlines' performance. The results unequivocally show that enhancements in these areas result in greater customer happiness, improved operational efficiency, and heightened competition in the global aviation industry.

Omani Airlines should prioritize a number of doable actions to meet these objectives, including infrastructure upgrades, It is crucial to make ongoing investments in updating airport infrastructure, such as innovative security systems, effective check-in procedures, and cozy waiting rooms. One principal factor that determines consumer happiness and loyalty is passenger comfort. Offering roomy seats, first-rate in-flight amenities, and dependable entertainment selections should be airlines' top priorities. Passengers have responded favorably to Oman Air's launch of the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, which features roomy seats, bigger windows, and innovative in-flight entertainment systems. Traveling is made even more enjoyable by offering excellent meals and professional cabin staff service. In a market that is highly competitive, these initiatives are crucial for drawing in and keeping passengers. Omani airlines can greatly improve their performance, draw in more travelers, and solidify their status as the region's top aviation hub by concentrating on five doable actions. This strategy promotes wider economic growth and development in addition to being in line with Oman's national vision.

The report concludes by restating the importance of passenger comfort and airline infrastructure in maximizing Omani airlines' performance. Omani airlines may improve their competitiveness, draw in more customers, and experience long-term growth in the international aviation market by concentrating on five critical areas. Realizing Oman's goal of being a premier aviation hub requires constant investment in technical advancements, sustainable practices, passenger comfort improvements, and infrastructural renovations.

5.2 Discussion

The results of the research highlight how important passenger comfort and airline infrastructure are to Omani airlines' bottom lines. The significance of ongoing investment and strategic advancements in these areas is underscored by the strong association shown between these parameters and airline performance.

The entire travel experience can be improved by utilizing technology developments. For example, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in customer service has increased response times and customer satisfaction. AI-powered chatbots are used to handle passenger complaints and inquiries. Self-service luggage drops systems have also simplified the check-in procedure, cutting down on airport traffic and waiting times. The significance of implementing sustainable practices in the aviation sector is also emphasized by the study. By implementing waste reduction initiatives on flights and using sustainable aviation fuels, for instance, Oman Air has not only lessened its environmental impact but also attracted eco-aware passengers. These procedures improve the airline's competitiveness and reputation in addition to lowering long-term costs.

Considering the encouraging results, the report notes a number of difficulties, such as the high upfront expenditure on infrastructure improvements and the requirement for ongoing innovation to stay up with emerging technologies. But these difficulties also offer chances for development and advancement. Partnerships with technology companies, for instance, can assist airlines in implementing innovative technologies at a reduced cost. Furthermore, some of the financial strains connected to green efforts might be reduced by government assistance and incentives for sustainable practices.

5.3 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of airline infrastructure and passenger comfort on the performance of Omani airlines, there are several limitations that we faced. such as, the data collection was conducted over a specific period, which may not account for seasonal variations in passenger preferences and behaviors. Limited time that leads to Limited Scope of Variables. While the study focuses on infrastructure and passenger comfort, other factors such as airline pricing strategies, marketing efforts, and external economic conditions were not considered. Future research could explore these additional variables to provide a more holistic view of airline performance.

5.4 Implications

To improve Omani airlines' performance, the study's findings emphasize the significance of consistently investing in both passenger comfort and airline infrastructure. From the standpoint of knowledge, it is evident that improved strategic planning and more informed decision-making can result from comprehending and utilizing insights into the needs and expectations of passengers. Airlines may improve customer happiness and loyalty by adjusting their services to better suit the demands of passengers by collecting and utilizing data from passenger feedback and operational performance.

When considering the cost of infrastructure and passenger comfort, the research indicates that although these expenditures may be high initially, they eventually pay off. Enhancing passenger services and upgrading airport infrastructure can reduce operational inefficiencies and increase overall productivity. Additionally, by drawing in more passengers, these improvements may increase income and profits. Additionally, by improving productivity and lessening their negative effects on the environment, sustainable practices and technology can save money over time, even though they may be expensive at first.

The competitiveness and performance of Omani airlines can be greatly improved by concentrating on enhancing infrastructure and passenger comfort, supported by a firm grasp of knowledge and cost theories. In addition to being in line with Oman's goal of being a premier aviation center, this strategy promotes overall economic expansion and advancement.

Our study can benefit multiple industries and has wide-ranging ramifications. Oman might become a more appealing travel destination for tourists if airlines operate better and passengers are more comfortable. Economic growth and higher tourism revenue may result from this. By identifying regions with significant development and return potential, the outcomes of the study can help direct investment decisions in the aviation and tourism

industries. By incorporating the findings into their curricula, universities and training facilities can assist inform the upcoming generation of aviation professionals on growing trends and best practices.
The study offers policymakers evidence-based suggestions for bolstering the aviation industry through sustainable practices and infrastructure improvements. This might help establish Oman as a major aviation hub and boost the country's economy.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

This study has the potential to open new avenues for investigation. For example, a thorough evaluation of how investments in new infrastructure, like smart airports, affect passenger experience and operational efficiency could be added to the study's scope. Longitudinal studies are another way to monitor how passenger preferences and behavior evolve over time and modify comfort measures accordingly. To improve Omani airlines' performance going forward, these extra measures will contribute to our growing comprehension of the intricate interplay between infrastructure and passenger experience.
Even with the encouraging results, there are a number of areas that could use more investigation. These include examining how technological advancements like artificial intelligence and self-service systems affect passenger comfort; comparing the expectations of different age groups and nationalities regarding infrastructure quality and travel comfort; comparing Omani airlines to regional or international carriers to find best practices; and examining how environmental sustainability affects airport development and airline services, especially in light of the growing emphasis on green aviation initiatives.

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