

EVALUATION OF USER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN AN AIRPORT LOUNGE BASED ON GOOGLE REVIEWS: KEY FACTORS BEHIND POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS

Muhammad Yunus¹⁾, Muhammad Nur Abdi²⁾

¹⁾Management Study Program, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

²⁾ Management Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding author: yunusmoham@gmail.com

Abstract

Airport lounges are exclusive areas that offer additional facilities such as food and beverages, rest areas, internet access, and special services for passengers. Their presence plays a vital role in creating a more comfortable and premium air travel experience. This study aims to evaluate user satisfaction and loyalty toward airport lounges and identify the factors influencing positive and negative perceptions through digital reviews on Google Review. The research focuses on the Plaza Premium Lounge (Domestic Gate) at Kualanamu International Airport, Medan. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, using primary data consisting of 109 Google Review comments collected between January and February 2025. The analysis is based on sentiment (positive, negative, and neutral) and review themes, including food and beverages, service, comfort, facilities, and cleanliness. Results indicate that 84.4% of the reviews were positive, with dominant themes related to food & beverage (F&B), comfort, and service quality. Supporting data from a Google Form survey of 10 users show that the majority of respondents read digital reviews before using the lounge and consider them important in their decision-making process. Negative reviews also significantly impact user hesitation in choosing the service. The findings affirm that digital reviews play a crucial role in shaping service image and influencing potential users' decisions. Therefore, lounge operators are advised to continuously improve service quality and manage digital reputation proactively and sustainably to retain customer loyalty.

Keywords: airport lounge, customer satisfaction, google review, digital reviews, customer loyalty

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly competitive air transport industry, service quality is an important element in creating customer satisfaction and loyalty. One of the facilities that are in the spotlight in supporting passenger comfort is the airport lounge. Airport lounges are exclusive areas that provide additional services such as food and beverages, rest rooms, internet access, and more personalised customer service. The presence of a lounge not only improves passenger comfort, but also contributes to the image and reputation of the airline and airport manager.

Optimal service should start from understanding customer needs and end with achieving satisfaction and forming positive perceptions of service quality (Tjiptono & Diana, 2022). In the context of airport lounges, this means not only providing adequate physical facilities, but also creating a pleasant atmosphere and service interactions. Hospitality is a friendly impression caused by someone that can be felt by others, hospitality is usually found in companies that provide in the field of goods or services (Kanda & Lianawati, 2024). The role of marketing today is not only to deliver products or services to the hands of consumers, but also how these products or services can provide satisfaction to customers (Arman Syah, 2021).

Lounge facilities are an important part of supporting passenger comfort while at the airport. The development of lounge facilities at the airport is an improvement in the facilities in the departure waiting room, which serves to make passengers comfortable while waiting for the flight (Raden & Nawang, 2024). Waiting room facilities simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on passenger satisfaction at the airport, so that the more complete and comfortable the facilities available, the higher the level of passenger satisfaction (Aldino & Kartika, 2022). Comfort facilities are facilities that can help facilitate passengers in carrying out activities while at the airport by providing a sense of security and comfort (Hairun & Awan, 2022).

In addition to physical aspects, service quality is also influenced by non-physical dimensions such as staff interaction, service speed, and empathy. Service quality comprises five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Arief, 2011). In the service industry particularly in lounge services empathy is a crucial element in meeting customer expectations. In today's increasingly competitive

business environment, service providers are expected not only to deliver services swiftly and accurately, but also to demonstrate friendliness and empathy in their interactions (Hermawan, 2019). Both hospitality and service are essential in the tourism industry. Therefore, it is important to ensure the provision of friendly service that enhances the guest experience and influences customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nathalia & Kristiana, 2019).

To deliver satisfying service, customer service staff must possess the ability to quickly understand and analyze the problems faced by customers. Speed and accuracy in providing information contribute to creating a positive and memorable customer experience (Delina & Gede, 2023). Hospitality services that adopt a soft skills approach emphasize an individual's ability to understand themselves (intrapersonal) and position themselves appropriately in social interactions (interpersonal). This is reflected through one's attitude and behavior, enabling them to develop mental resilience and build strong relationships with others or guests they serve, thereby fostering personal growth within their professional roles (Hamsiati, 2020).

However, understanding consumer behavior is not an easy task. Studying consumer behavior is particularly challenging because the answers often lie within the consumers themselves, are difficult to predict, and may change over time (Nur & Wahyu, 2021). This indicates that customer preferences and expectations are dynamic. As Daffy (2019) notes, *"All things change, especially customers. Today's customers are not the same as yesterday's. Even loyal customers are likely to be different in their view and expectations of service."* Maintaining service quality is not only about retaining existing customers but also about attracting new ones, often through recommendations from previous satisfied customers (Budhiartha & Wibowo, 2025). Therefore, business actors must be capable of recognizing change and adapting to the continuously evolving needs of customers.

In the digital era, customer expectations of service are increasingly influenced by online user reviews. One of the most commonly used platforms for evaluating service quality is Google Review. Digital reviews have become a primary source of information that significantly affects the decision-making process of potential users. These publicly written comments not only reflect the quality of service from the perspective of previous users but also shape the initial perception of new users.

Studies that utilize digital reviews as primary data in evaluating airport lounge services are still relatively underexplored. Yet, these reviews contain valuable insights that can be used by service providers to improve service quality. Therefore, this study focuses on content analysis of user reviews on Google Review for the Plaza Premium Lounge (Domestic Gate) at Kualanamu International Airport, Medan. The aim of this research is to explore sentiment patterns, evaluate factors contributing to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and examine how digital reviews contribute to shaping the service image in the eyes of prospective users.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach enriched with simple quantitative data. The aim is to evaluate user satisfaction and loyalty toward airport lounge services, as well as to understand the role of digital reviews in shaping service image. The research analyzes the content of publicly available user reviews, which are then interpreted to draw conclusions relevant to the research questions.

Primary data in this study were obtained from user reviews on the Google Review platform related to the Plaza Premium Lounge (Domestic Gate) at Kualanamu International Airport, Medan. The collected reviews span the period from January to February 2025 and are analyzed based on the content of the comments. Each review was categorized by sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral) and by main themes such as food and beverages (F&B), service, comfort, facilities, and cleanliness.

Secondary data were collected through an online survey distributed via Google Forms to 10 respondents who had previously used airport lounge services. This survey aimed to gather insights into user perceptions of digital reviews and how these reviews influence their decision-making when choosing a lounge. Respondents provided answers to several questions concerning the importance of online reviews, the impact of negative comments, and the service image shaped by praise directed at specific aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study utilizes primary data obtained from the Google Review platform concerning airport lounge services. The data were collected manually through a process of searching and recording user comments related to lounge experiences at various airports during the period of January to February 2025. A total of 109 reviews were collected. Each comment was analyzed based on its narrative content, sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral), and the primary themes mentioned in the review, which include: Food and Beverages (F&B), Service, Cleanliness, Facilities, and Comfort.

Table 1 Sentiment Distribution of the 109 Reviews

Sentiment Type	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	92	84.4%
Negative	7	6.4%
Neutral	10	9.1%

The analysis categorized user comments into key themes to identify factors influencing satisfaction and perceptions of airport lounge services. These reviews served as the primary data source for addressing the research questions, especially regarding user experience and public perception.

Table 2 Thematic Distribution and Sentiment Breakdown of Reviews

Theme	Frequency	Positive Sentiment	Negative Sentiment	Neutral Sentiment
F&B	76	67	2	7
Service	54	50	3	1
Cleanliness	41	40	0	1
Facilities	40	33	3	4
Comfort	53	52	0	1

Analysis of Factors Influencing Positive and Negative Evaluations

An analysis of 109 airport lounge reviews from Google Review (January–February 2025) found that 92 reviews (84.4%) were positive, 7 (6.4%) were negative, and 10 (9.1%) were neutral, reflecting generally favorable user perceptions. The main themes discussed were food and beverages (F&B) with 76 mentions, service (54), comfort (53), cleanliness (41), and facilities (40).

Regarding F&B, 67 of 76 comments were positive, praising menu variety and food quality, while 2 were negative, mainly about limited vegetarian options. Service received 50 positive reviews out of 54, with compliments on staff friendliness and professionalism; 3 negative comments cited unfriendly attitudes and lack of staff knowledge. Cleanliness was praised in 40 of 41 reviews, highlighting well-maintained areas. Facilities had 33 positive, 3 negative, and 4 neutral comments, with issues raised about limited credit card partnerships, accessibility, and absence of a prayer room. Comfort was overwhelmingly positive, with 52 of 53 reviews expressing satisfaction.

Overall, service, comfort, and cleanliness generated the most consistent positive sentiment, while facilities and F&B showed more mixed feedback and were the main sources of negative comments, though these were few in number. These insights suggest the importance of maintaining quality core services and improving physical facilities to enhance user satisfaction.

Relationship Between Google Review Ratings and User Satisfaction Perceptions of Airport Lounges

Based on the analysis of 109 collected reviews, there is a strong correlation between review sentiment and users' satisfaction perceptions of airport lounges. The reviews were categorized into three main sentiment groups: positive (84.4%), negative (6.4%), and neutral (9.1%). Although numerical ratings were not available in the data, sentiment analysis of the comments provides clear insights into the level of user satisfaction with the services received at the airport lounges.

Positive Reviews and User Satisfaction Perceptions

Most reviews (92 of 109) expressed positive sentiment, indicating high user satisfaction with the lounge services. Positive feedback frequently highlighted friendly service, cleanliness, and comfort. For instance, one user noted, *"The location is clean, comfortable, the food is delicious, and the service is good,"* illustrating that non-physical aspects like service and comfort strongly influence satisfaction. Many positive comments underlined the lounge's relaxing atmosphere, with remarks such as, *"The place is really comfortable especially if you need to have a meeting or working,"* showing how physical comfort contributes significantly to positive user perceptions.

Negative Reviews and User Dissatisfaction

Negative reviews, which accounted for 7 out of 109 (6.4%), reflect user dissatisfaction primarily related to service quality, facilities, and food and beverages (F&B). For example, one negative comment stated,

“The menu could use more protein options, please provide a lift for wheelchair users, and increase food variety,” indicating that dissatisfaction often stems from physical aspects of the lounge that directly impact user experience.



Figure 1

User satisfaction survey of airport lounge guests

Additionally, service was criticized in some negative reviews, such as, *“The person at the front who swiped the card was very rude, no smile at all.”* Thus, negative sentiment is generally associated with dissatisfaction regarding factors affecting both the physical comfort and emotional experience of lounge visitors.

Neutral Reviews and Specific Perceptions

In addition to positive and negative reviews, there were 10 neutral reviews (9.1%) that expressed moderate satisfaction while also offering constructive criticism and suggestions for lounge improvements. For example, one review stated, *“Good and clean, permission to add a prayer room would be appreciated for performing prayers, thank you,”* indicating that users felt reasonably satisfied but did not have standout experiences to warrant higher praise.

Relationship Between Sentiment and Satisfaction

Based on this analysis, positive sentiment in reviews directly reflects high satisfaction with lounge services, particularly regarding service, comfort, and cleanliness. Conversely, negative sentiment indicates dissatisfaction with certain physical aspects such as facilities and food and beverages. Neutral reviews typically express moderate satisfaction but highlight areas needing improvement.

Overall, there is a clear relationship between Google review ratings and user satisfaction perceptions. Positive reviews demonstrate high satisfaction with service, comfort, and cleanliness, while negative reviews focus on dissatisfaction with facilities, service, and F&B. Therefore, lounge management should prioritize improving facilities and service quality to reduce negative sentiment and enhance user satisfaction.

Differences in Perceptions Between Users with Positive and Negative Sentiments Regarding Airport Lounge Aspects

Based on the analysis of 109 user reviews of airport lounges, there is a clear difference in perceptions between users expressing positive and negative sentiments toward specific aspects of the lounge. These aspects include service, comfort, facilities, food and beverages (F&B), and cleanliness.

Table 3 Comparison of Airport Lounge User Perceptions Based on Positive and Negative Sentiments

Aspect	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
Service	“All staff friendly and good.”	“The person at the front who swiped the card was very rude, no smile at all.”
Comfort	“Comfortable place, good location with a view of the aircraft exhibition.”	– None –
Facilities	“The room is spacious with complete and clean facilities. Comfortable place and a wide food selection. Thank you and keep it up.”	“Please increase cooperation with local banks.” “The table is too small.”
F&B	“Variety of drinks and pleasant Indonesian cuisine selection. I was surprised by mushroom soup and croutons that tasted delightful!”	“Not many vegan options available.”

Cleanliness	“The lounge is clean and comfortable.”	– None –
-------------	--	----------

User perceptions indicate that non-physical factors such as service and comfort play a significant role in shaping emotional satisfaction and the overall perception of service quality. Meanwhile, physical factors including facilities, food and beverages (F&B), and cleanliness contribute to a concrete direct experience and influence rational perceptions of service value. Therefore, lounge management must maintain a balance between physical and non-physical aspects, prioritizing the improvement of service quality and consistent maintenance of facilities to create an optimal user experience.

User Perceptions of the Role of Physical and Non-Physical Factors in Influencing Satisfaction with Airport Lounges

Based on the analysis of user reviews, satisfaction with airport lounges is influenced by two primary categories of factors: physical and non-physical. Physical factors encompass facilities, food and beverages (F&B), and cleanliness. The majority of positive reviews highlight that well-equipped facilities, diverse food and beverage options, and consistent cleanliness significantly contribute to overall user satisfaction. Conversely, negative sentiments in this category typically pertain to limitations in facility availability and insufficient food variety.

Non-physical factors consist of service quality and comfort. Staff service emerges as the most frequently mentioned aspect in both positive and negative sentiments, indicating its central role in shaping user experience. Meanwhile, lounge comfort is predominantly perceived positively, with no negative feedback identified regarding this aspect.

The Role of Digital Reviews in Shaping the Image of Airport Lounge Services Among Potential Users

To explore the role of digital reviews in shaping the public image of airport lounge services, the researcher conducted a survey with 10 lounge users using Google Forms. The aim was to understand how digital reviews particularly Google Reviews affect users' decisions and perceptions before using the lounge. The survey included the following questions:

- Have you ever read Google Reviews before using an airport lounge?
- How important are online reviews in your decision to choose a lounge?
- Do negative reviews make you avoid certain lounges?
- What kind of image do you imagine from a lounge that receives frequent praise for “*friendly service*”?

The survey results revealed that:

- 100% of respondents read Google Reviews before using a lounge.
- 100% consider online reviews important in their decision-making process.
- 90% avoid lounges with negative reviews.
- Reviews highlighting “*friendly service*” shaped expectations of human-centered, proactive, and high-quality service.

These findings reinforce the conclusion that digital reviews play a strategic role in shaping the image of airport lounge services in the minds of potential users. They not only influence initial decision-making but also create specific expectations, especially regarding non-physical aspects such as staff service. Therefore, lounge operators must pay close attention to the perceptions formed through online reviews, as they not only reflect past user experiences but also shape future decisions and brand image.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. High User Satisfaction Reflected in Positive Reviews
A majority (84.4%) of the reviews reflected positive sentiment, showing high satisfaction with lounge services—especially in staff service, comfort, and F&B quality.
2. Key Drivers of User Sentiment
F&B contributed most to positive sentiment due to its variety and quality. Service, though often praised, was also the top issue in negative feedback, mainly related to staff behavior. Facilities received mixed reviews due to accessibility and partnership limitations.
3. Perceptual Differences Based on Sentiment
Positive users appreciated comfort, friendly service, and food options. Negative comments focused on service quality and facility limitations. Comfort and cleanliness received no complaints.
4. Balancing Physical and Non-Physical Aspects
Non-physical factors shape emotional satisfaction and loyalty, while physical aspects create concrete experiences. Both are essential for a consistently positive user experience.

5. Strategic Role of Digital Reviews

All survey respondents read Google Reviews before visiting a lounge, and 90% avoid lounges with negative reviews. Mentions of “friendly service” build strong expectations, confirming that digital reviews significantly shape service image and influence user decisions.

Suggestions :

1. For Airport Lounge Management

Improving staff service quality is essential, as it significantly impacts user satisfaction. Basic facilities such as elevators for guests with disabilities, as well as more high-protein and vegan food options, should be prioritized. Regular evaluations of service quality are recommended to meet evolving user expectations.

2. For Marketing and Digital Management

Management should actively monitor and respond to digital reviews—especially negative ones—to maintain a positive service image. Effective digital platform management is also important to ensure that recent and relevant reviews are easily accessible to potential users.

REFERENCES

- Tjiptono, F., & Diana, A. (2022). *Management and strategic approaches to customer satisfaction*. ANDI.
- Mandasari, N. F. A., & Adha, W. M. (2021). *Interactive purchasing decisions in B2C and B2B contexts*. Deepublish.
- Syah, A. (2021). *Marketing management and customer satisfaction*. Widiana Bhakti Persada.
- Daffy, C. (2019). *Creating customer loyalty*. Kogan Page.
- Hermawan, H. (2019). *Introduction to hospitality management*. Nasya Expanding Management.
- Akib, R. M. I., Fachri, M., & Kalbuana, N. (2024). Optimization of non-aeronautical airport revenue: Advertising business strategies and lounge facility development. *Journal of Mister*, 5(1), 25–34.
- Noverio, A., & Nieamah, K. F. (2022). The influence of waiting room facilities on passenger satisfaction at Tebelian Airport, Sintang, West Kalimantan. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 4(2), 66–75.
- Nissa, H., & Awan. (2022). The influence of comfort facilities on passenger satisfaction at Supadio International Airport, Pontianak. *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Aviation Science*, 3(1), 55–63.
- Arief, M. (2011). Public service quality at Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport Makassar (A case study of passenger service). *Academica Journal*, 2(1), 10–18.
- Gitasiswhara, Abdullah, T., & Karina, F. D. (2016). The effect of service recovery on passenger satisfaction at Husein Sastranegara Airport. *Tourism and Hospitality Essentials Journal*, 6(2), 40–49.
- Purwandari, D. P., & Wijaya, G. C. (2023). The role of customer service in enhancing consumer satisfaction at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. *E-DIMAS: Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, 14(1), 50–59.
- Kanda, S., Lianawati, R., & Satria, A. S. (2024). The impact of hospitality on consumer satisfaction at Jonas Photo. *Journal of Business and Hospitality*, 3(1), 88–97.
- Nathalia, T. C., & Kristiana, Y. (2019). Understanding the concept of hospitality among tourism actors in Berau Regency. *Jurnal Khasanah Ilmu*, 5(2), 77–85.
- Budhiartha, I. N., & Wibowo, A. E. (2025). Differences in perceptions of service quality at Harbour Bay Simple Restaurant. *Journal of Hospitality and Culinary Studies*, 2(1), 12–21.
- Hamsiati. (2020). The influence of hospitality and employee soft skills approach on improving hotel service quality in Makassar and Pare-Pare, South Sulawesi. *Jurnal Kepariwisata: Destinasi, Hospitalitas dan Perjalanan*, 1(1), 30–38.

AUTHORS' BIBLIOGRAPHY

Muhammad Yunus

Medan, May 28th, 1997

Yunus is currently a student at Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia, majoring in Management. His research focuses on digital consumer behavior and service quality evaluation in the hospitality and aviation sectors, particularly in the context of the airport lounge at Kualanamu International Airport.

His main research interests include tourism development, customer experience in service industries, and the dynamics of the airline and airport service sectors.

Muhammad Nur Abdi

Ujung Pandang, January 7th, 1986

Muhammad Nur Abdi is a lecturer at Universitas Terbuka and Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia. He teaches in the Management program and is actively engaged in research across various financial and managerial fields.

His research interests include management, financial management, Islamic financial management, banking, village finance, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).