Flyers' Gratification Towards Rajiv Gandhi International Airport

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Abstract

Air travel has become the most considered mode of transportation being preferred by people today owing to the convenience, comfort, reduced time of travel, and cheaper air fares. The facilities available with the airports have become a matter of concern for the air travellers. In the present paper, we reported the findings of the study conducted to assess the gratification levels of flyers about the facilities and services available at one of the busiest airports in India, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) located in Hyderabad. The questionnaire survey method comprising of 23 questions with a 5 - point Likert scale was adopted by us for the present study. The survey was conducted at the airport, and the questionnaires were collected from passengers who had travelled from different airports. The data obtained from the survey was analyzed using PAF method and CFA model. Five factors which represented 63.8% of the total variance of the original variables were extracted. The five factors are : Economize Time, Palpable Facilities, Cordial Services, Ease of Travelling, and Ambience of the Terminal, which formed the paramount framework of flyers' gratification. The results of the study revealed that flyers' satisfaction levels were based on both the services as well as facilities which were found to be highly correlated to each other.

Keywords: **flyers, gratification, RGIA, PAF method, CFA model**

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India is a country with a well - connected transportation system. People have travelled from one place to another by walking, using road transport, rail transport, water transport, and today, people use air travel for long and short distance travels. Owing to factors such as less time travel, cheaper air fare, and increase in comfort and convenience, people today are considering air travel to be a more safer and convenient mode of transport. In the current scenario, where people today are using air travel quite often, airports have become a point of attraction. Airports have been designed to satisfy the needs of travellers. Airlines play a vital role in service quality, and airports play a vital role in a country's development.

According to Lo (2012), out of the top 10 busiest airports, five are in North America. The study reported that the present airports are not ready to accommodate increasing demand of air traffic. Abdelaziz, Abdelfatah, and Ahmed (2010) created a self service application model for airline passengers to reduce the cost, time, and efforts of passengers using the conventional check in process. With the increase in flyers, the need to modify airports to fulfil the requirements of modern day travellers has become the need of the hour. Assessing the gratification or

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satisfaction levels of flyers can help improve the facilities provided in several airports. The present study has been conducted to understand the gratification levels of air travellers about Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is located strategically at the geographic centre of India. It was awarded the World's No.1 airport in airport service quality survey in 2017 in the 5 - 15 million passengers per annum category. The airport has one passenger terminal, one cargo terminal, and two runways. The airport also has the facilities of aviation training ; fuel farm ; a solar power plant ; and two maintenance, repair, and overhaul facilities. It is the sixth busiest airport in India in terms of passenger flow. RGIA served about 18.2 million passengers in the fiscal year 2017-2018. RGIA serves several users per day travelling from different parts of the world. The passenger traffic in the airport increases the need to provide world - class facilities to the users.

Customer satisfaction from a service or good is strongly related to service quality. It leads to organizational profitability. Customer service needs to be designed in such a way that it should enhance customer satisfaction (Sugant, 2004). There are two service qualities. One is technical quality that is the actual service received by a customer, and the other one is functional quality, which is the manner in which the service is provided. Service quality has two attributes - tangible and intangible, where intangible attributes are difficult to measure (Grönroos, 2001). Srivastava, Bhadra, Goli, and Kamisetty (2015) conducted a study on service quality. The authors of the study opined that in the present day, competitiveness is determined by the services provided by an organization. Two major factors play a key role : one is the customer who inquires about the product and who should be converted into a buyer, and the other factor is a customer who inquires about a product and should not be grabbed by competitors. These factors need to be taken care of.

Donnelly, Wisniewski, Dalrymple, and Curry (1995) explained in an article that service quality gets transformed time and again, but customer expectation is transaction specific - it is the reaction to a service and it is more of emotion, perception, and short term measure. Ching (2014) conducted a survey at Hong Kong International Airport by defining some known service quality factors to find the perceived level of satisfaction of air travellers to know whether overall quality perceived would affect the future air travellers and the author found that there was a significant difference in demographic factors in rating importance. According to Athma and Lakshmi (2006), the satisfaction level displayed by the air travellers who used the airport facilities was an important factor in rating the airport. Several researchers have conducted studies to assess the service quality of airports and the satisfaction levels of the air travellers who are using their services.

Fodness and Murray (2007) designed a conceptual model for service quality, which investigated the expectations of air travellers. Air travellers judged service quality by the expected level with the perceived performance. The satisfaction level of air travellers of Hong Kong International Airport was studied by taking 14 factors into consideration. The study was conducted to check if there was any gap in the expectations and the actual received service (Ching & Lau, 2016). Jin - Woo and Jung (2010) found that the service quality would definitely increase the satisfaction levels of transfer passengers at Incheon International Airport. Subas Chandra and Rajashekhar (2014) conducted a survey in Hyderabad on the service quality of the airline industry. The study attempted to fill the gaps and gave suggestions to improve the service quality of the airline industry. Brooker (2010) examined noise levels of airports. The author identified that noise damage varied with airports, and it is because of heterogeneity in local topography. The perception of air travellers is important because it may help in building the image or damaging the image of the airport or airline services. So, measuring the service quality of all the attributes becomes an important concern (Gupta, Venkaiah, & Ammani, 2016).

The customer's experience in an airport can be attributed to security checks as well. Yoo (2009) found that civil aviation, police force, airport operator, aircraft operators were responsible for the security of aviation activities in airports like baggage screening and passenger security screening. The Korean Government demanded that security of screening of all passengers should be done by airport operators. Feng (2003) analyzed the aviation structure of UK, USA, Canada, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand and found that only USA was using homeland security after the 9/11 attack. The remaining countries were using their respective country's security forces.

The ambience and cleanliness of airports also affect air traveller's gratification levels. Bitner (1992) conveyed that airport environment, cleanliness, and facilities influenced the customers. The ambience of the airport and information like cancellation or flight delay has to be communicated in advance. Bogicevic (2014) conducted a survey on the factors influencing customers' satisfaction, enjoyment, and anxiety. Scent was said to create a positive influence on the customers, which helped in spreading positive word of mouth. Improper air conditioning or lighting conditions led to a negative impression. Way finding, good air, and good lighting helped in reducing stress of the air travellers during their stay. Design also played a vital role in influencing the customers.

Every traveller has a different measure to assess the service quality of an airport. To provide world class facilities to travellers, airports need to conduct timely surveys and cater to the changing needs of their users. In the present study, we have assessed the gratification levels of the air travellers with reference to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Hyderabad.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the customer service and satisfaction levels of customers at RGIA.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction about facilities at RGIA.

Hypotheses

- **H_1**: Customers are satisfied with services of RGIA.
- **H_2**: Customers are satisfied with facilities of RGIA.

Methodology

(1) Questionnaire Design : The survey method was adopted to conduct the study. Based on the review of literature and our understanding of the concept, a structured questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consisted of four demographic questions (see Table 1) and 23 questions related to the core essence of the study. The 5 - point Likert scale with the anchors being *"highly satisfied"* and *"highly dissatisfied"* was used for framing the questions

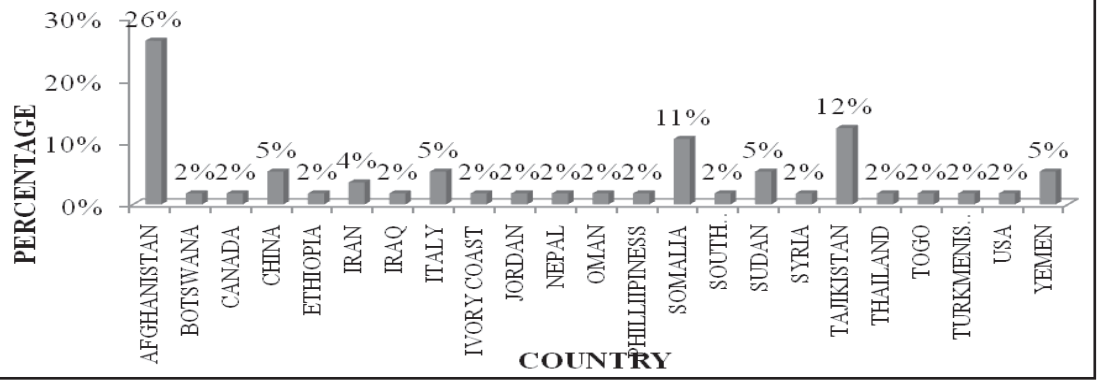
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Description		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	97	56.6
	Female	76	43.9
Age	30-35	26	15.2
(in years)	36-40	41	23.6
	41-45	54	31.2
	46-50	32	18.4
	51 and above	23	13.2
Profession	Government	42	24.2
	Private	50	28.9
	Businessmen	81	46.8
Qualification	Graduation	45	26.0
	Post Graduation	106	61.2
	Ph.D.	22	12.7

Table 2. Scale Construction

Questionnaire	Items	Alpha
Flyers' Gratification		
Services	15 Items	0.72
Facilities	7 Items	0.76

Figure 1. Respondents from Countries who Participated in the Survey Other Than India



in the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked by calculating the Cronbach's coefficient alpha value. This value depicts the reliability of a single uni-dimensional latent construct. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the overall scale for this study was calculated to be 0.891. A Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of 0.60 is suggested as a threshold for the Cronbach's alpha reliability and acceptability (Pallant, 2013). This confirmed the validity and reliability of the current study.

Two variables - customer satisfaction with services of RGIA and customer satisfaction with facilities of RGIA were considered. The alpha values were calculated separately for both the variables to check for the reliability of the study. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha values for services and facilities of RGIA are found to be 0.72 and 0.76, respectively (see Table 2). This further validated the study.

(2) Respondents and Research Approach : In this cross - sectional study, people from India and 23 other countries were requested to participate in the study. Respondents were contacted and requested to fill the questionnaire about flyers' gratification towards RGIA. Female and male respondents were included in the study. The random sampling technique was used for collecting the data. Respondents were included in this study only if they were willing to respond. In total, more than 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 173 of the total respondents accepted to participate in the study. The response rate for the study is calculated to be 86%, which is sufficient to conduct further analysis. The respondents who participated in the survey, excluding India, were from 23 countries (see Figure 1). The field work of the study was conducted during March - May 2018.

(3) Content Validity : In any research, content validity plays a vital role. To make certain the content validity of the questionnaire, it was made sure that the questionnaire consisted of simple, understandable, and clear language. For the respondents who had a problem with the language, the questions were orally translated into the local language, and then their responses were recorded. Before the survey, respondents were given clear instructions on how to fill the questionnaire. The anonymity of the respondents was ensured. The survey was conducted keeping in view the ethical considerations.

Data Analysis and Results

(1) KMO and Bartlett's Test : The KMO and Bartlett's test was conducted for evaluating the sampling adequacy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sphericity is a sphericity check. It may be a measure of sampling adequacy that is suggested to examine the case to variables' quantitative relation for the analysis. In most educational studies and businesses, KMO and Bartlett's test plays a crucial role for accepting the adequacy of the sample, where KMO ranges from 0 to 1, and the global accepted index is 0.6. The Bartlett's test of sphericity must be less than 0.05 (Peri, 2012). The KMO and Bartlett's test shows the reliability and validity. Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin measure of sampling

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.806
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	994.678
	Df	253
	Sig.	.000

Table 4. Factor Analysis

Total Variance Explained						
Component	**Initial Eigen values**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**Percentage of Variance**	**Cumulative Percentage**	**Total**	**Percentage of Variance**	**Cumulative Percentage**
1	6.63	28.83	28.83	6.63	28.83	28.832
2	1.64	7.11	35.94	1.64	14.16	42.992
3	1.62	7.052	42.992	1.62	5.713	48.705
4	1.31	5.713	48.705	1.31	5.093	53.798
5	1.17	5.093	53.798	1.11	10.06	63.804
6	1.15	5.006	58.804			
7	1.1	4.787	63.591			
8	0.95	4.108	67.699			
9	0.92	4.019	71.718			
10	0.88	3.813	75.531			
11	0.73	3.166	78.697			
12	0.65	2.842	81.539			
13	0.61	2.63	84.169			
14	0.56	2.448	86.617			
15	0.49	2.129	88.746			
16	0.44	1.899	90.646			
17	0.42	1.807	92.453			
18	0.36	1.547	94.001			
19	0.33	1.435	95.436			
20	0.32	1.376	96.812			
21	0.29	1.238	98.05			
22	0.26	1.142	99.192			
23	0.19	0.808	100			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Figure 2. Scree Plot

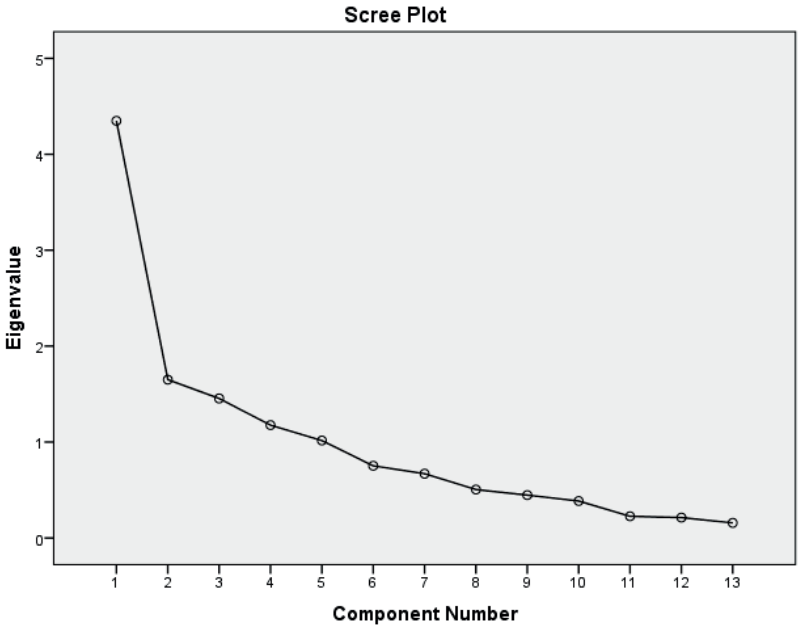


Table 5. PCA Analysis - Rotated Component Matrix

Component Matrix[a]					
	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
Services					
S1 : Availability of baggage carts/ trolleys	**.621**				
S2 : Courtesy of check- in staff	**.705**				
S3 : Thoroughness of security inspection		**.684**			
S4 : Flight information screens			**.725**		
S5 : Distance inside the terminal			**.615**		
S6 : Helpfulness of airport staff			**.658**		
S7 : Internet / Wi-Fi Access			**.682**		
S8 : Helpfulness of security staff			**.656**		
S9 : Cleanliness of terminal					**.712**
S10 : Ambience of airport					**.603**
S11 : Waiting time at check-in	**.836**				
S12 : Passport/ ID inspection	**.634**				
S13 : Cleanliness of restrooms					**.799**
S14 : Satisfaction with baggage delivery	**.728**				
S15 : Overall satisfaction		**.745**			
Facilities					
F1 : Parking facilities		**.611**			
F2 : Ease of finding way through the airport				**.689**	
F3 : Eateries in the airport		**.639**			
F4 : Shopping facilities				**.781**	
F5 : Availability of ATMs				**.633**	
F6 : Money changers		**.641**			
F7 : Rest rooms					**.742**
F8 : Comfort waiting				**.601**	

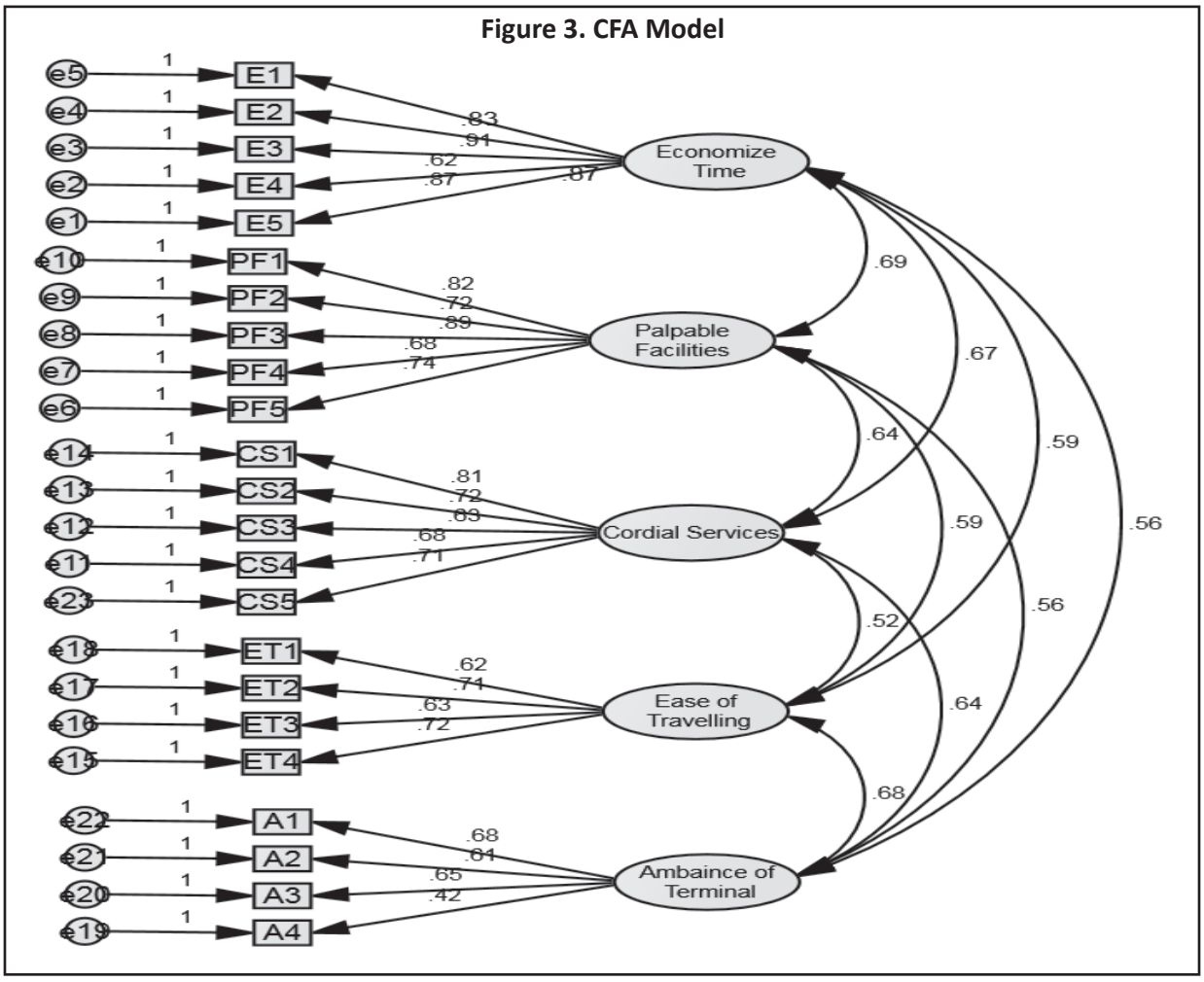
Extraction Method : Principal Axis Factoring
Rotation Method : Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

adequacy is found to be 0.806 and Bartlett's test of sphericity is found to be 0.000 (Table 3). This makes the sample of this study adequate for factor analysis. Hence, the instrument is recommended for further study.

(2) Factor Analysis : The 23 questions relating to facilities and services at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport were factor analyzed using principal axis factoring with varimax rotation. As evident from the scree plot, which levels off to the analysis and a linear decreasing pattern, five major factors were elicited (see Figure 2). Each factor contains greater than 0.05 factor loadings. These five extracted factors explain a total accumulated variance of 63.80% for facilities and services at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The first factor explains 28.83% of the variance followed by the second factor which describes a variance of 14.16%. The third factor elucidates a variance of 5.71%. The fourth factor explains a variance of 5.09% and the fifth factor elucidates a variance of 10.06% (see Table 4).

(3) Principal Axis Factoring Analysis : Principal axis factoring was performed with varimax with Kaiser normalization. Five factors were extracted. Five factors which represent 63.8% of the total variance of the original variables were extracted, which is acceptable for factor analysis. The five factors represent the two dimensions (see Table 5) covered under facilities and services available at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. Three factors elicited from services available at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport are labelled as Economize Time, Cordial

Figure 3. CFA Model



Services, and Ambience of the Terminal. Two factors explain the facilities available at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport labelled as Palpable Facilities and Ease of Travelling.

The first principal component factor is Economize Time, which explains the flyers' waiting time at check-in, courtesy of check-in staff, passport/ID inspection, satisfaction with baggage delivery, and availability of baggage carts/ trolleys. The cumulative variance found by this factor is 28.83%. The second principal component factor is labeled as Palpable Facilities, which includes thoroughness of security inspection, eateries in the airport, money changers, parking facilities, and overall satisfaction. The second factor explains 42.99% of the variance. The third principal component factor is labeled as Cordial Services to Flyers, which explains about flight information screens, distance inside the terminal, and helpfulness of airport staff, Internet /wifi access, and helpfulness of the security staff. The explained cumulative variance by this factor is 48.70%. The fourth principal component factor is labelled as Ease of Travelling, which includes variables like ease of finding way through the airport, shopping facilities, availability of ATMs, and comfortable waiting area. The cumulative variance explained by this factor is 53.7%. The last principal axis factor is labelled as Ambience of the Terminal, which explains about opinions about rest rooms, cleanliness of rest rooms, cleanliness of terminal, and ambience of the airport. The last factor's cumulative variance is 63.8%.

(4) Measurement Model – Confirmatory Factor Analysis : Byrne's (2012) CFA model explains the relationship between measurable variables and latent variables. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis was performed by using five loaded factors, that is, Economize Time, Palpable Facilities, Cordial Services, Ease of Travelling, and Ambience of the Terminal with the loaded 23 items.

Model fit indices are a combination of chi-square test, standardized root mean square residual, comparative fit index, and the root mean square of approximation. The final measurement model is the CFA model (see Figure 3).

The confirmatory factor analysis indices (Table 7) show that the data is fit for the measurement model. The CMIN/*df* value of 1.472 is less than 2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and CFI value is also greater than 0.9. This indicates extraordinary model fit. The RMSEA value of 0.027 is lower than the threshold of 0.07 and SRMR value is also less than the value of 0.08. All these values indicate that the taken data is fit for the measurement model.

Discussion

This study determines the effect of the five-factor model (Table 6). The outcome of the study reveals that the five factors are highly correlated. The factor analysis results in a 23 item scale which loads on five factors.

The first principal component/factor extracted is Economize Time. This factor comprises of five items regarding the gratification levels of flyers about the services provided by Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, especially waiting time at check-in counters, satisfaction with baggage delivery, courtesy of check-in staff, passport/ID inspection, and availability of baggage carts. The correlation values of 0.836, 0.705, 0.634, 0.728, and 0.621 are found for the responses given by flyers under the considered component - Economize Time. The highest correlation value of 0.836 under the first component is obtained for waiting time at check- in. Most of the air travellers opined that they were satisfied with the waiting at check- in counters on weekdays, but faced problems with long queues at the check-in counters on weekends. This is the first important aspect which the travellers were concerned about. This was also considered as the greatest shortfall of RGIA.

The correlation value of 0.728 is related to satisfaction with baggage delivery. The correlation value of 0.705 shows that the air travellers were happy with the courtesy of the check-in staff ; 0.634 and 0.621 correlation values are attributed to passport or ID inspection and availability of baggage carts or trolleys. On the whole, the air travellers opined that lesser waiting time at check-in counters, courtesy of check-in staff, quicker passport or ID inspection, availability of baggage carts, and faster baggage delivery can economize the time of the air travellers at

Table 6. Summary and Labelling the Factors

Component Matrix[a]					
Factor Name	**Factor Loading**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
F1 : Economize Time					
Waiting time at check-in	**.836**				
Courtesy of check-in staff	**.705**				
Passport/ ID inspection	**.634**				
Satisfaction with baggage delivery	**.728**				
Availability of baggage carts/ trolleys	**.621**				
F2 : Palpable Facilities					
Thoroughness of security inspection		**.684**			
Eateries in the airport		**.639**			
Money changers		**.641**			
Parking facilities		**.611**			
Overall satisfaction		**.745**			
F3 : Cordial Services					
Flight information screens			**.725**		
Distance inside the terminal			**.615**		
Helpfulness of airport staff			**.658**		
Helpfulness of security staff			**.656**		
Internet / Wi-Fi access			**.682**		
F4 : Ease of Travelling					
Ease of finding way through the airport				**.689**	
Shopping facilities				**.781**	
Availability of ATMs				**.633**	
Comfort of waiting				**.601**	
F5 : Ambience of the Terminal					
Restrooms					**.742**
Cleanliness of restrooms					**.799**
Cleanliness of terminal					**.750**
Ambience of airport					**.603**

Table 7. CFA Model Indices

Indices	**Final Measurement Model**
$X^2(df)$	5.024
CMIN/*df*	1.472
CFI	0.901
RMSEA (*p* - close)	0.027
SRMR	0.054

Note. *** Significant at 0.000.

RGIA. A similar study conducted by Namukasa (2013) noted that flyers' gratification differed from person to person as some were more interested in on - board facilities, and some were interested in off - board facilities.

The second component/factor extracted is Palpable Facilities. The factor includes five items, which explain about the effect of palpable facilities such as thoroughness of security inspection, eateries in the airport, money changers, parking facilities, and overall satisfaction with the gratification levels of flyers at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The correlation values of 0.745, 0.684, 0.641, 0.639, and 0.611 are found for the responses given by the participants of the study. The highest correlation value of 0.745 under the second variable is the overall satisfaction. The correlation values of 0.684, 0.641, and 0.639 demonstrate the satisfaction levels of the air travellers with respect to thoroughness of security inspection, money changers, and eateries in Rajiv Gandhi International airport. The correlation value of 0.611 corresponds to parking facilities. The air traveller's satisfaction levels were dependent on the usable facilities available at RGIA. The air travellers displayed an opinion that the overall satisfaction levels of using facilities at RGIA airport were dependent on the thoroughness of security inspection, easy availability of eateries at reasonable and affordable prices, more number of money changers, and convenient parking facilities for the users. A study conducted by Clemes, Gan, Kao, and Choong (2008) noted that safety and security at an airport were the highest concerns of the flyers.

The third principal factor is Cordial Services. Factor three contains five items, which include cordial services like flight information, screen distance inside the terminal, helpfulness of airport staff, helpfulness of security staff, and Internet/wi-fi access. The highest correlation value is 0.725, which explains the gratification levels of flyers with respect to the flight information screens. The next correlation value of 0.682 explains about Internet/wifi access. The correlation value of 0.658 shows that helpfulness of airport staff is highly appreciable ; 0.656 correlation value explains about the helpfulness of the security staff. Hence, the flyers felt that cordial services play a vital role in gratification. From the study, it is evident that air travellers require continuous assistance and would be satisfied if the walking distance within the airport is reduced. A previous research also reported that the friendliness of security staff and airport staff would boost the gratification levels of the flyers (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Zimmermann, 2011). Providing high level of safety as well as quality services provided by an airport has an impact on the satisfaction levels of the travellers (Güres, Demirer, Aldemir, Tayfur, & Arslan, 2011). Internet/wi-fi access is another important feature, which can help the users book cabs or be connected with people even during long stays at the airport. The first-time air travellers found it annoying to find their way to the terminal to board their flights. The availability of information on the screens about the arrival and departure of flights, help from the airport and security staff, and the availability of free shuttle vehicles between airport terminals to all flyers, which are now available only to the senior citizens or differently - abled persons, can help the individuals reach their terminal faster.

The fourth principal factor is ease of travelling extracted from four items drawn from facilities provided by the airport. The correlation values under this factor are 0.781, 0.689, 0.633, and 0.601. These values explain the air traveller's gratification towards the shopping facilities, ease of finding their way through airport at RGIA, availability of ATMs, and comfort of waiting.

The fifth principal factor is the ambience of the terminal and consists of four items like restrooms, cleanliness of restrooms, terminal cleanliness, and ambience, which have a strong impact on the satisfaction levels of flyers at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The highest correlation value of 0.799 is for cleanliness of restrooms. The correlation values of 0.750, 0.742, and 0.603 are attributed to the user's opinion about the cleanliness of a terminal, restrooms, and ambience of the airport. Han and Hwang (2014) opined in their paper that ambience of the airport terminal also played a pivotal role in flyers' gratification. In their empirical study, they also reported that the overall satisfaction acted as a major dimension towards gratification of the flyers.

The five factors are highly correlated to each other. Therefore, H_1 and H_2 are accepted for the study.

Conclusion

The present study has revealed the opinions of flyers about gratification towards services and facilities provided by Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. This is one of the busiest airports in the world. The opinions collected from air travellers of different countries who used the services and facilitites of RGIA reveal that the flyers were satisfied with most of the services and facilities. Their responses revealed that their satisfaction levels were based on both the services as well as the facilities which are highly correlated to each other. The respondents felt that RGIA is maintaining international standards. However, they were of the opinion that increasing the number of check-in counters or security check counters during weekends can reduce the waiting time at the airport. Providing more facilities like money changers and eateries with food items at reasonable prices would be more appreciable and will add to the satisfaction of the flyers.

Managerial Implications

The present study focuses on the gratification levels of flyers. Security of air travellers is of utmost importance for the gratification of flyers with respect to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The airlines should inform the flyers about safety and security drives continuously to provide a safe flying environment to boost the flyers' confidence. The airport should run campaigns that focus on encouraging the flyers to follow security check-ins. However, the study has shown that the services and facilities at RGIA play a crucial role in the service quality of the airport.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

There are few limitations of the study. First, this study is a descriptive based study. The study relies on primary as well as secondary data. The casual relationship of the variables of the study is limited. The present study is confined to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport only. The current study is confined to respondents from different countries who travelled from RGIA of India.

A similar kind of the study can be conducted with Indira Gandhi International Airport, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Chennai International Airport, and Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport. A comparative study can be conducted with similar airports. A country-wise study can also be conducted.

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