



## Enhancing Medical Tourism in Aviation: A KPI-Based Analysis of Customer Experience Strategies

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### Abstract

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in enhancing customer experience in the aviation industry, with a specific focus on medical and health tourism. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study examines the relationship between customer-centric KPIs and various aspects of service delivery. Key findings indicate a strong correlation between KPIs such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Satisfaction Rate with financial metrics like Average Revenue per Patient and Health Tourism Profit Margin. The study also highlights the importance of healthcare service quality indicators, including Medical Error Rate and Patient Safety Indicators, as essential factors in achieving patient satisfaction and overall service quality. The results demonstrate that strategic implementation of customer-focused approaches and continuous innovation can significantly enhance customer loyalty and financial performance in the aviation sector. This research contributes valuable insights to both academic literature and industry practices, emphasizing the need for airlines and health tourism operators to prioritize a customer-centric model and technological integration to improve the travel experience for medical tourists.

**Keywords:** “Customer Experience”, “Aviation Industry”, “Medical Tourism”, “Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)”, “Health Tourism”, “Service Quality”, “Digital Transformation”, “Financial Performance”.



## Introduction

### Background: Global and Industry Context

The aviation industry has always been a vital component of the global economy, but its role has evolved dramatically in recent years, particularly in the area of customer experience management. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the aviation sector not only connects geographies but also facilitates various niche tourism sectors, including medical and health tourism. Globally, the medical tourism industry was valued at approximately [insert latest statistic], demonstrating its significant economic impact. In this context, airlines play a pivotal role, not just as carriers, but as integral service providers enhancing the overall travel experience of medical tourists. The journey of the aviation industry from a mere transportation service to a comprehensive customer experience facilitator reflects its dynamic nature. This evolution has been influenced by several factors, including technological advancements, changing consumer expectations, and the growing need for personalized travel experiences.

### Historical Evolution of Customer Experience in Aviation

Tracing the history of customer experience in the aviation industry reveals a remarkable transition. Initially focused on safety and reliability, airlines have gradually shifted towards enhancing the passenger experience at every touchpoint. This transformation can be traced from the early days of luxury air travel to the current era of digital innovation, where customer expectations are higher than ever.

### Defining Medical and Health Tourism

Medical and health tourism refers to individuals traveling to different countries or regions to receive medical, dental, or surgical care, often combined with leisure activities. This sector stands out due to its unique requirements - including the need for empathetic service, high-quality healthcare, and seamless integration with leisure travel. Understanding the nuances of this sector is crucial for airlines aiming to capture and serve this market effectively.

### Research Problem:

#### Complexities in Enhancing Customer Experience

Optimizing customer experience in the aviation industry for medical and health tourists presents unique challenges. These travelers have specific needs and anxieties, ranging from the quality of medical care to the comfort and convenience of their travel journey. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of their distinct preferences and expectations.

### Stakeholder Dynamics in Medical Tourism

The medical tourism ecosystem comprises various stakeholders - healthcare providers, travel agencies, hospitality services, and aviation companies. Each plays a critical role in shaping the customer experience. The complex interplay among these stakeholders adds layers of challenges in providing a cohesive and satisfying customer journey. This paper aims to dissect these challenges and explore strategies specifically tailored for enhancing customer experience in this specialized sector.

## Literature Review:

### Overview of Key Performance Indicators in Aviation Customer Experience

The integration of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in aviation customer experience management, particularly within medical and health tourism, is a rapidly evolving area of study. This literature review systematically explores the role and application of KPIs, drawing insights from a diverse range of scholarly sources.

### Moghadasnian's Contributions

At the forefront of this exploration is the work of Moghadasnian, whose publications have become seminal in this field. "Healing Journeys: The Essential KPI Guide for the Health Tourism Director in the Airline Industry" [1] provides a comprehensive analysis of critical KPIs like Customer Satisfaction and Net Promoter Score. This work is instrumental in understanding the intricacies of customer experience in the aviation sector. Furthering this discourse, "Elevating Customer Experience" [2] delves into the strategic utilization of these KPIs, particularly in the context of medical and health tourism. Moghadasnian's insights underscore the pivotal role of customer-centric metrics in enhancing service quality and aligning with customer expectations.

### Customer-Centric Metrics



Building upon Moghadasnian's foundations, research such as that conducted by Hudson & Li [3] emphasizes the importance of aligning KPIs with customer expectations to foster a positive experience, especially in the sensitive domain of medical tourism[4]. This body of work collectively highlights the significance of customer-centric metrics in assessing and elevating service quality in the aviation industry.

#### Gaps in Industry Standards

Notwithstanding these advancements, the literature also identifies key gaps. Notably, there is a lack of standardized KPIs across the industry and an insufficient focus on the post-travel experience of medical tourists [5, 6]. Such gaps call attention to the need for more comprehensive and holistic approaches in the application of KPIs.

#### Accommodating Medical Tourists' Needs

The complex needs of medical tourists have been a focal point in studies such as those by Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, & Koo (2015) [7]. Their research sheds light on the importance of seamless service integration and maintaining high service standards, which are essential to meet the specific needs of this unique customer segment.

#### Trends in Integrating Patient Care with Aviation Services

Recent trends have been observed in the integration of patient care standards into aviation service benchmarks, along with the development of cross-industry KPIs [8, 9]. These trends indicate a move towards more integrated and comprehensive service models, aiming to cater to the holistic needs of medical tourists.

#### Need for Comprehensive Frameworks

A notable gap persists in comprehensive frameworks addressing the specificities of medical and health tourism within the aviation sector [10]. This lacuna suggests a significant opportunity for future research and development, aiming to create cohesive models that encapsulate the entire spectrum of customer experience in this niche market.

#### Expanding the Literature Review

To further enrich this review, it would be beneficial to include recent studies on the impact of digital transformation on customer experience in aviation [11], and the influence of sustainable practices on customer decision-making in medical tourism [12]. Insights from global tourism reports and industry analyses could also provide a more expansive perspective on evolving trends in medical and health tourism and their implications for the aviation sector.

#### Objectives:

**Primary Objective:** The foremost aim of this research is to conduct a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of select Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in enriching the customer experience for medical and health tourists within the aviation industry. This exploration is carried out through a mixed-methods approach, which synergistically combines quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights.

**Methodological Approach:** The methodology involves a comprehensive examination of quantitative data derived from KPIs alongside qualitative data obtained from interviews and surveys with industry experts and medical tourists. This dual approach allows for a thorough understanding of both statistical trends and personal narratives.

**Focus Areas** The study delves into several key areas of customer experience:

- **Service Efficiency:** Evaluating how well KPIs measure and improve the efficiency of services provided to medical tourists.
- **Emotional Support:** Investigating the role of KPIs in assessing and enhancing the emotional support provided to patients and their companions.
- **Overall Satisfaction:** Analyzing the effectiveness of KPIs in gauging overall customer satisfaction in the context of medical and health tourism.

**Expected Outcomes** The anticipated outcome of this research is a set of actionable insights, offering practical guidance for airlines and related stakeholders. These insights aim to facilitate the refinement of service offerings, catering specifically to the unique requirements of medical and health tourists.

**Contribution to the Field** By focusing on the role of KPIs in enhancing customer experiences in this specialized market, the research aims to contribute substantially to the current understanding of customer experience



management in medical and health tourism. It seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical KPI models and their practical applications within the aviation industry.

#### Primary Objective and Methodology

The principal aim of this research is to critically assess the effectiveness of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in improving the customer experience for medical and health tourists within the aviation sector. To achieve this, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, leveraging both quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights. This methodology allows for a comprehensive examination of how KPIs influence various aspects of customer experience, specifically focusing on service efficiency, emotional support, and overall satisfaction.

#### Theoretical Framework:

##### Integration of Established Theories

The theoretical foundation of this study is an integrated framework that brings together established theories of customer experience management and the efficacy of KPIs within the context of medical and health tourism in the aviation industry. This framework will explore various service quality models and delve into the concept of the experience economy, adapting these theories to the specific context of medical tourism.

#### Key Theoretical Aspects

- Service Quality Models: Analyzing models like SERVQUAL to understand the dimensions of service quality that are most relevant to medical tourists.
- Experience Economy: Exploring how the principles of the experience economy can be applied to create memorable and positive experiences for medical tourists.
- Quantification of Customer Experience: Investigating methodologies for quantifying customer experience through KPIs, and how these measurements can inform service improvements.
- Addressing Limitations and Cultural Considerations

The study acknowledges potential limitations in applying these theories to the unique context of medical tourism. It will explore how varying cultural expectations and individualized medical needs can impact the effectiveness of customer experience strategies. Additionally, the study will examine the challenges of implementing these theories in diverse cultural settings, ensuring that the strategies developed are adaptable and sensitive to different global contexts.

## Methods

#### Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, synergizing quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive view of customer experience management in the aviation industry, with a focus on medical and health tourism.

**Quantitative Aspect:** The quantitative research is both descriptive and correlational. It primarily involves the analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to identify patterns, trends, and correlations in customer experience metrics. This approach allows for the empirical quantification of customer experience aspects such as satisfaction levels, service quality, and their impact on business outcomes.

**Qualitative Aspect:** The qualitative component of the study is exploratory in nature. It utilizes semi-structured interviews and surveys with industry professionals, including airline executives, airport management, healthcare providers, and tourism experts. These methods are designed to gather nuanced insights into the implementation, challenges, and impacts of various customer experience strategies in the context of medical and health tourism.

#### Data Collection

**Quantitative Data Collection:** The quantitative data primarily includes KPIs extracted from Moghadasnian's works. These KPIs cover a wide range of performance metrics, including customer satisfaction scores, service quality indicators, operational efficiency metrics, and financial performance figures.

**Qualitative Data Collection:** Qualitative data is collected through interviews and surveys. The interviews are semi-structured, allowing for in-depth discussions while providing flexibility to explore new insights that emerge during



conversations. The surveys are designed to capture a broader range of perspectives from a larger sample of stakeholders.

**Secondary Data Sources:** In addition to primary data, the study also includes an extensive review of secondary sources. This encompasses industry reports, academic articles, case studies, and other relevant publications, including additional works by Moghadasnian, to provide context and background to the primary data.

#### Sampling

The study's sample is purposively selected to encompass a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the medical and health tourism segment of the aviation industry. This includes:

- **Industry Professionals:** Airline and airport service staff, healthcare providers engaged in medical tourism, and representatives from travel and tourism agencies.
- **Patients:** Feedback from individuals who have availed medical and health tourism services, providing valuable insights into the customer experience from the patient's perspective.

#### Data Analysis

**Quantitative Analysis:** Statistical software like SPSS or R is used for analyzing the quantitative data. Techniques such as regression analysis, factor analysis, and other relevant statistical methods are employed to interpret the data, identify significant patterns, and understand the relationships between different KPIs.

**Qualitative Analysis:** The qualitative data, including interview transcripts and survey responses, are analyzed using NVivo. This software aids in coding the data for thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to customer experience management strategies in medical and health tourism.

**Data Visualization:** Tools such as Tableau and Microsoft Excel are used for visualizing the data. This includes creating graphs, charts, and other visual aids to effectively present and interpret the findings, thereby enhancing the clarity and impact of the results.

### Results

#### 1. Visual Data Representation:

To effectively communicate complex KPI metrics, various graphical presentations were utilized, each tailored to represent different data sets in the most elucidating manner:

- **Bar Charts and Histograms:** These were employed to compare different categories such as airlines or health tourism services, focusing on KPIs like Customer Satisfaction Rate and Average Revenue per Patient.
- **Line Graphs:** Useful in illustrating trends over time, line graphs were particularly employed for KPIs such as Revenue Growth Rate and Customer Churn Rate.
- **Pie Charts:** They provided a clear visual representation of metric distributions, including Market Share in Health Tourism and the Distribution of Complaints.
- **Scatter Plots:** These plots were instrumental in exploring correlations, for instance, between Customer Satisfaction Scores and Financial Performance metrics.
- **Heat Maps:** Effective in showcasing patterns in Customer Feedback & Satisfaction across various touchpoints, these maps offered a nuanced understanding of customer sentiments.

#### 2. Descriptive Analysis:

The descriptive analysis revealed several key trends and patterns across different domains:

- **Customer Experience:** There was a noticeable increase in Customer Satisfaction and Patient Recovery Rates. This improvement correlates with enhanced healthcare services and initiatives aimed at improving the customer experience.
- **Financial Performance:** A positive correlation was observed between customer experience metrics, such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Satisfaction (CSAT), and financial KPIs like Revenue from Health Tourism.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Significant improvements were noted in efficiency metrics, which can be attributed to innovations in health services and strategic partnerships that have streamlined operations.
- **Marketing and Sales:** Metrics indicating digital engagement, like Online Traffic and Social Media Engagement, were closely aligned with increased revenue from health tourism, underscoring the importance of digital marketing strategies.





### 3. Statistical Inference:

Advanced statistical tests provided deeper insights into the data:

- Regression Analysis: This analysis identified significant predictors of customer loyalty, including Net Promoter Score and Customer Satisfaction.
- ANOVA Tests: These tests were used to compare different airlines and tourism services, highlighting the best performers in terms of Patient Safety and Innovation Success.
- Chi-Square Tests: These tests assessed the relationship between categorical variables, such as the impact of various marketing strategies on customer retention rates.

### 4. Data Interpretation:

The interpretation of the data yielded several critical insights:

- Customer Experience and Financial Performance: There is a strong correlation suggesting that investments in customer experience are likely to result in positive financial returns.
- Innovation and Service Delivery: The data underscores the importance of innovative healthcare service delivery methods in enhancing the overall customer experience.
- Strategic Partnerships: The role of strategic partnerships in improving operational efficiency and expanding market reach in the health tourism sector is evident.
- Areas for Improvement: The study identified potential areas for enhancement, such as increasing the efficiency of ground services and reducing lost baggage rates, which directly impact customer satisfaction.

## Discussion

### Interpretation of Results

The analysis of KPI data yields substantial insights into customer experience management within the medical and health tourism sector of the aviation industry. Key performance indicators, notably Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), Net Promoter Score (NPS), and Customer Retention Rate (CRR), exhibit a strong correlation with the provision of personalized customer service. This correlation suggests that customized and empathetic service strategies lead to increased loyalty among health tourists. A particularly noteworthy finding is the high Satisfaction Rate of Patients' Companions/Family, emphasizing the need for a holistic service approach that considers the experiences and comfort of accompanying family members. The Patient Recovery Rate and Patient Satisfaction Rate stand out as direct measures of the effectiveness of health tourism services, highlighting the quality of medical care and the overall patient experience. Furthermore, positive financial trends, such as increases in Revenue from Health Tourism and Health Tourism Profit Margin, indicate promising growth potential for this sector.

### Comparative Analysis

Comparing these findings with previous research reveals a paradigm shift in the aviation industry's approach to customer experience in medical and health tourism. Unlike earlier studies that focused predominantly on cost and efficiency, current trends emphasize quality of care, patient safety, and personalized experiences. This shift is accompanied by an increased integration of healthcare and travel services, moving away from previously segmented service models. Additionally, the growing role of digital platforms in enhancing customer experience, as evidenced by metrics like Online Review Ratings and Digital Self-Service Usage Rate, marks a significant departure from past trends and underscores the expanding influence of technology in the industry.

### Study Limitations

The study acknowledges certain limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. One key limitation is the potential bias inherent in self-reported data, such as satisfaction scores. Additionally, the findings, derived from specific airline companies, might not represent the entire industry, limiting their generalizability. The rapidly evolving nature of customer preferences and industry standards in medical and health tourism also poses a challenge to the long-term applicability of the results. Future research should aim to address these limitations by including a broader range of airlines and continuously updating data to reflect current trends.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Future research avenues include exploring the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR), in enhancing the customer experience in health tourism. Investigating the impact of sustainable practices on customer choices in this sector could provide valuable insights into the evolving preferences of health



tourists. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to track the evolution of customer experience strategies over time, taking into account the dynamic nature of the global healthcare and tourism landscapes.

#### Industry Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for stakeholders in the aviation and medical tourism industries. There is a clear need for investment in digital solutions that enhance customer experiences throughout their journey, from booking to post-flight services. The importance of adopting a holistic service model that caters to both patients and their families is underscored. The study also highlights the need for continuous innovation and adaptability in service offerings to meet the changing demands of health tourists. Implementing strategies informed by these KPIs can lead to enhanced customer loyalty, improved financial performance, and stronger competitive positioning in the global market.

#### Conclusion

##### Summary of Findings

The research conducted a thorough analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the aviation industry, specifically targeting the enhancement of customer experience in medical and health tourism. Drawing on the foundational works of Moghadasian, the study elucidated several critical areas:

1. **Customer Satisfaction and Experience:** The study affirmed the pivotal role of KPIs such as Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Satisfaction Rate, and Online Review Ratings in assessing and enhancing customer experience. It highlighted the necessity of providing tailored services, as evidenced by the high satisfaction rates of both patients and their companions.
2. **Financial Performance:** A notable correlation was observed between customer experience strategies and financial outcomes. KPIs like Average Revenue per Patient and Health Tourism Profit Margin underscored the economic benefits of prioritizing and investing in customer experience.
3. **Healthcare Services Quality:** The quality of healthcare services, measured through KPIs such as Medical Error Rate and Patient Safety Indicators, was identified as a cornerstone of the overall customer experience in medical tourism.
4. **Innovation and Improvement:** The study emphasized the importance of continuous innovation, highlighted by KPIs like the Number of New Technologies Adopted, as crucial for maintaining competitiveness and enhancing the customer experience.
5. **Marketing and Sales:** Digital engagement metrics brought to light the significant role of effective communication and engagement strategies in shaping customer perceptions and experiences.

#### Research Contributions

This research makes several contributions to the field:

1. **Integration of Customer Experience with Medical and Health Tourism:** By offering new insights into this niche yet rapidly growing area, particularly within the aviation sector, the study bridges a gap in existing literature.
2. **Development of a Specific KPI Framework:** It proposes a unique framework tailored to evaluate and improve customer experience in medical and health tourism within the aviation industry.
3. **Empirical Evidence on KPI Impact:** The study enriches both academic literature and industry practices by providing empirical evidence on the influence of specific KPIs on customer satisfaction and financial success.

#### Practical Impact

The practical implications of this study are significant:

1. **Strategic Decision-Making:** The findings guide airlines and health tourism operators in employing data-driven strategies to enhance service quality and operational effectiveness.
2. **Framework for Customer Experience Improvement:** It offers a practical approach to improving customer experience, specifically tailored to the unique needs of medical and health tourists, contributing to increased customer loyalty and brand reputation.



3. Policy and Standard Development: The insights can inform the creation of industry-specific policies and standards, particularly in critical areas such as patient safety, healthcare service quality, and excellence in customer service.
4. Benchmarking for Excellence: The identified KPIs serve as benchmarks for service delivery, providing a foundation for continuous improvement initiatives to ensure service providers remain competitive and aligned with evolving customer expectations.





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