

THE POWER OF AIRPORT BRANDING IN SHAPING TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE: PASSENGER COMMITMENT PERSPECTIVE

Al-Amin Abdel-Hameed ABOUSEADA 

Social Studies Department, College of Arts, King Faisal University, Al Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, e-mail: aabouseada@kfu.edu.sa

Thowayeb H. HASSAN* 

Social Studies Department, College of Arts, King Faisal University, Al Ahsa, Saudi Arabia; Tourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt, e-mail: thassan@kfu.edu.sa

Mahmoud I. SALEH 

Graduate School of Management, Saint Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg, Russia; Tourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt, e-mail: st084542@gsom.spbu.ru

Salaheldeen H. RADWAN 

Tourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt, e-mail: salah.helal@fth.helwan.edu.eg

Citation: Abouseada, A.I.A.A.H., Hassan, T.H., Saleh, M.I., & Radwan, S.H. (2023). THE POWER OF AIRPORT BRANDING IN SHAPING TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE: PASSENGER COMMITMENT PERSPECTIVE. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 47(2), 440–449. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.47210-1042>

Abstract: To providing an empirical investigation into how affective, continuance, and normative commitment could build airport branding. A quantitative content analysis was conducted by analyzing 400 passengers' reviews of Cairo International Airport from the following platforms (Skytrax, Tripadvisor, traveller, and flight report). Affective and continuance commitment are likely to build a strong brand rather than normative commitment. Passengers' negative experiences with airports make them feel less emotionally attached, resulting in lower levels of affective and continuance commitments. Terminal problems can decrease affective and continuance commitment among passengers. The study identified factors that affect all three types of commitments (affective, continuance, and normative) at international airports, providing significant theoretical contributions and managerial implications.

Key words: airport branding, commitment theory, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, passenger behavior

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a vital role in countries' economic growth. Therefore, it has become fundamental for tourism sectors to attract the largest possible number of tourists to gain high revenues (Cărbunar et al., 2022; Song et al., 2014; Tsai, 2016). The airport is considered one of the essential tourism sectors (Monterrubio et al., 2020). Airports play a crucial role in helping tourists to move among different countries (Datta et al., 2018; Martín-Cejas, 2006). Airports help to form tourist impressions about the image of the country in which they are located; if this impression is positive (vs. negative), it will increase the positive word of mouth (vs. negative) about the host destination (Zhang et al., 2009).

Thus, revenues will be increased (vs. decreased), and the airport will attract more visitors (Fasone et al., 2016). Consequently, airport marketers have always thought about converting the airport into a tourism brand (e.g., Dubai and Changi international airports) (Jacobs and Hall, 2007; Kotsi et al., 2018; Lohmann et al., 2009). So, visitors can do many tourism activities (e.g., shopping, dining at international restaurants, experiencing new tourism activities, rallying for business meetings, etc.) (Kotsi et al., 2018). This will increase revenues (Fasone et al., 2016), and airports tend to attract more service providers (e.g., tourism stakeholders) and service recipients (e.g., passengers) (Akamavi et al., 2015) to increase revenues, as well as ensure positive passengers' behavioral outcomes (Castro and Lohmann, 2014).

Therefore, tourism and aviation management scholars studied the determinants that affect passengers' behaviors toward airport branding. For instance, tourism and aviation studies argued that many factors could affect passengers' perceptions of the airport to be branded, for example, incentive reward programs (Wu and Tsui, 2020), tourists' time pressure at airports, size of the corridors between terminals, services' areas at the airports, and services qualities (Castro and Lohmann, 2014; Figueiredo and Castro, 2019; Halpern and Regmi, 2011; Paternoster, 2008) which also influence the passengers' behaviors (Lin and Chen, 2013), and airport staff efficiency (Antwi et al., 2020). However, no study investigates how passengers' commitments to airports, from a commitment theory types perspective (affective, continuance, normative), could shape airport branding. A commitment theory describes the promise that drives individuals to follow a particular course of action, have a strong feeling toward something, or adopt a point of view of a specific entity (Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia, 2015; Wei et al., 2016).

* Corresponding author

Commitment theory has three main types that could shape individuals' behavioral outcomes to build brands: Affective commitment is crucial for building a strong brand image because it is based on the individual's emotions and fond perception that the service providers offer value and meet their demands (Claffey and Brady, 2019; Prada et al., 2017). A strong brand can also be developed through normative commitment based on the consumers' sense of duty to utilize the services provided (Jaros, 2017). Finally, strong branding can also be influenced by continuance commitment, based on the consumers' perception of being "locked in" to utilizing specific services due to convenience or cost-switching considerations (Fullerton, 2014).

However, no study has investigated how passengers -as consumers- view these kinds of commitment when it comes to airport branding – as a service provider-; most studies have instead concentrated on studying the commitment from the employees' viewpoints in human resource studies. This study broads the previous research in commitment theory and airport branding by showing that additional study is required to determine how passengers perceive these kinds of commitment (normative, continuance, and affective) and how they might be utilized to develop compelling airport branding.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Airport branding

Airports play a crucial role in forming the first and last impression for visitors about countries (Martín-Cejas, 2006) because airports are the ambassador for the countries' image (Martín-Cejas, 2006). Passengers compare their actual experiences at the airport with the destination image. Then, Positive (vs. negative) impressions have significant impacts on increasing positive word of mouth (vs. negative) (Zhang et al., 2009) and increasing revenues (Fasone et al., 2016). Thus, airport managers consider expanding airport services to include visits to practice more tourism activities, not only to travel through the airport (Kotsi et al., 2018). For instance, in Dubai and Singapore international airports (Lohmann et al., 2009), passengers can do many tourist activities (e.g., shopping, day-use vacation, etc.). Consequently, this will increase revenues (Fasone et al., 2016), and the number of service providers (e.g., tourism stakeholders) and service recipients (e.g., airport visitors) will be increased (Akamavi et al., 2015). Accordingly, to attract more visitors to airports and expand airport services, tourism managers modified the airport visions to achieve this goal (Castro and Lohmann, 2014).

Therefore, researchers have studied the determinants that affect changing the airport to a multi-Service tourism Center as a brand to attract numerous passengers, making them travel through the airport as transit or visit the host country itself. For instance, Wu and Tsui (2020) studied the impact of incentive reward programs to attract more visitors to the airports; the results revealed that tourists prefer to interact with airports with substantial incentive reward programs. Additionally, Lin and Chen (2013) have found that tourists' time pressure at the airport and the type of services and airport facilities affect attracting more passengers and passengers' behavioral outcomes. These airport services improvement campaigns were to build an airport branding strategy (Paternoster, 2008). The airport brand explains the airport label's/products/ service's essential beliefs, mission, and identity (Figueiredo and Castro, 2019). It serves as the cornerstone of an effective strategy and aids in setting an airport apart from competitors (Castro and Lohmann, 2014). Establishing airport brands for services could gain many advantages by effectively communicating the airports' beliefs and mission to passengers; it can help to establish an emotional connection with them (Paternoster, 2008). Airport brands help develop recognizable services to make passengers remember when deciding what to buy/use. It can also boost sales by giving customers a unique and memorable experience and creating customer loyalty (Castro and Lohmann, 2014; Halpern and Regmi, 2011). In this vein, given the importance of branding "services," we argue that branding airports will increase airports' positive reputation and revenues. However, the commitment of passengers and how commitment types could affect shaping airport destination branding is still vague.

2. Passengers' commitment

According to the Behavioral Commitment Theory, when consumers feel emotional toward service providers, they are more likely to attach to these service providers (Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia, 2015; Wei et al., 2016). According to this theory, consumers' emotional attachments to products or services determine how strongly they interact with them and make it easy to predict consumers' behaviors (Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia, 2015; Lee et al., 2016).

The Behavioral Commitment Theory has also been used to explain why consumers stick with certain services regardless providers are more cost-effective. In this study, we examined how passengers' Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment, as postulated by Commitment Theory, can enable the building of an Airport Brand (Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia, 2015; Lee et al., 2016; Wei et al., 2016) (Figure 1).

2.1. Affective commitment

The foundation of affective commitment is consumers' emotional connection to a good or service (Claffey and Brady, 2019). Emotionally committed consumers are more inclined to stick with a product or service even if it is not the most cost-effective (Johnson et al., 2008). The term "affective commitment" refers to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of consumers who are actively attached to a specific business (Evanschitzky et al., 2006). Understanding that affective commitment strongly affects consumers and the service providers as a whole entity (Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004). Affective commitment needs a certain amount of trust in the service provider's quality because trust creates a connection based on respect and understanding between the consumers and the service provider (Johnson et al., 2008). Service providers are more likely to gain from consumers' affective commitment if consumers trust them (Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004). In the aviation industry, especially the airports, we can predict the passengers' affective commitment in a terminal environment when passengers contribute to the success and enjoyment of their journey. When passengers at airports have an affective commitment, they will take the initiative to suggest changes or

report issues, ensuring that their trip arrangements run smoothly and effectively. Given that positive emotions shape affective commitment (Claffey and Brady, 2019), passengers shape positive emotions when they are pleased about that airport's qualities in a personalized way. Personalizing airport services to specific types of passengers is critical to ensure that all passengers have positive emotions (Figueiredo and Castro, 2019). Also, passengers could have when they have positive memories of the airport services (Claffey and Brady, 2019). Convenience and emotion can be combined to promote such commitment since passengers may be pulled to an airport by comfort, nostalgia, or anticipation. For example, they may have grown up using that airport for inbound and outbound flights or have fond memories of it with their friends or family (Halpern and Regmi, 2011). This is because the fond memories of certain services increase the probability of using them (Johnson et al., 2008). Thus, this emotional attachment due to the strong affective commitment (Lee et al., 2016) drives passengers at airports to demonstrate their familiarity with the layout, adhere to rules and directions, or kindly request assistance, when necessary (Batouei et al., 2020), leading to building strong airport branding.

2.2. Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment is determined by how much consumers believe it would cost to switch services (Chu and Li, 2010) because they believe switching would be expensive or inconvenient (Xiang et al., 2018). The idea of continuance commitment is crucial in the service sector, especially for businesses that depend heavily on passengers, like airports (Raju, 2017). This kind of commitment is when passengers use certain airports because they don't have an alternative airport that provides the same services. In the case of airports, customers may be willing to travel with a particular airport because of its convenient location, links to other airports, an array of commercial amenities, and high service quality compared to other airports (Castro and Lohmann, 2014; Figueiredo and Castro, 2019).

Moreover, the service quality at airports is considered the critical feature that shapes positive passenger behaviors (Halpern and Regmi, 2011; Paternoster, 2008), leading to continuance commitment and reducing the switching behavior to other airports. The availability of services and overall experience at the airport positively influences passengers (Halpern and Regmi, 2011). When the services at airports are consistent and reliable, it increases the likelihood of passengers continuing to use the same airport instead of switching to a different one. The simplified security screening process, Easy check-in, helpful staff, and various services such as amenities, shopping, and dining options influence the continuance commitment to an airport because of the quality of current and future services (Batouei et al., 2020; Bezerra and Gomes, 2020).

Moreover, positioning and repositioning airport locations and services among their peers can lead to continuance commitment rather than switching behavior (Bezerra and Gomes, 2020). By providing convenient airport access, passengers are more likely to use a particular airport instead of switching it (Bogicevic et al., 2013). Offering various services such as restaurants, shops, and other amenities can create an enjoyable experience that encourages passengers to return (Bezerra and Gomes, 2015; Bogicevic et al., 2013). Furthermore, by strategically positioning airports in areas with high demand for air travel among their peers, airports can increase their customer base and create a sense of loyalty among passengers (Bezerra and Gomes, 2015; Bogicevic et al., 2013). By creating a convenient and enjoyable environment for passengers, airports can ensure that passengers remain committed to their services rather than switching to another provider, leading to avoiding adverse behavioral outcomes, which is one reason for building strong brands.

From the previous arguments of passenger affective commitment and continuance commitment, we argue that passenger-affective commitment has many benefits over passengers' continuance commitment (Raju, 2017). Affective commitment is based on an emotional attachment to the service providers (Chu and Li, 2010; Fullerton, 2005), which can lead to increased loyalty and a greater willingness to recommend airports to others. In addition, passengers with an Affective commitment are more likely to be willing to pay a premium for their flights and more likely to take advantage of the additional services offered by airports. However, the continuance commitment of passengers also has advantages. It can help eliminate switching behavior (Chu and Li, 2010; Xiang et al., 2018) by providing passengers with incentives such as loyalty programs and discounts for frequent flyers. It can also help airports build relationships with their passengers by providing them with personalized services and experiences (Batouei et al., 2020; Bezerra and Gomes, 2015, 2020; Bogicevic et al., 2013). And therefore, both of these types of affective and continuance commitment could build strong airport branding.

2.3. Normative commitment

The foundation of normative commitment is consumers' sense of responsibility or obligation to specific services (Jaros, 2017). Regardless of the service's worth, consumers with normative commitment are more likely to use it because they feel obligated (Lariviere et al., 2014). Consumers who exhibit normative commitment will act in a way they think is necessary to meet the expectations of their social context (Bergman, 2006). This commitment goes beyond polite behavior; it is a drive to behave in a way that benefits the consumers and the service providers in a particular environment, like an organization (Fullerton, 2014; Lariviere et al., 2014). It can be observed in airports when passengers try to follow service rules such as schedules, luggage allowances, and social distance if passengers are obliged to travel through certain airports for political, health, or price reasons. Normative commitment can have negative impacts on passengers at airports.

For example, if a passenger is committed to a particular airport, they may be less likely to seek alternatives for better deals or services (Bezerra and Gomes, 2020). In contrast, if the airport is not providing quality services, the passengers may be stuck in a contract and unable to switch providers without incurring additional costs (Batouei et al., 2020). This can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction with the airport, resulting in a negative passenger experience (Bezerra and Gomes, 2020; Lariviere et al., 2014) and less likely to recommend the airport as a strong brand. From the previous argument about the three commitment types (normative, continuance, and affective). The argument has shown that passengers with higher levels of affective and continuance commitment are more likely to build attachment airports than normative ones. Affective and

continuance commitment are two critical factors that can be used to construct strong airport branding. Affective commitment is the emotional attachment a passenger has to an airport, while continuance commitment is the perceived cost of switching to another airport (Xiang et al., 2018). Thus, affective and continuance commitment leverages positive individuals' positive behavioral outcomes (Claffey and Brady, 2019; Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2008; Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004), given that positive behavioral outcomes help establish brands. Therefore, this research will investigate the factors that can build affective and continuance commitment to building strong airport branding. It examines how airports can create a positive passenger experience by providing good customer service, offering amenities, and creating a pleasant atmosphere.

Additionally, it will explore how airports can reduce the perceived cost of switching to another airport that remains a continuance commitment and avoids normative one. By understanding these factors, airports can create an environment where passengers feel emotionally attached and perceive low costs associated with switching (Fullerton, 2014; Jaros, 2017; Lariviere et al., 2014), leading to an increase in the probability of recommending airports as a strong brand.

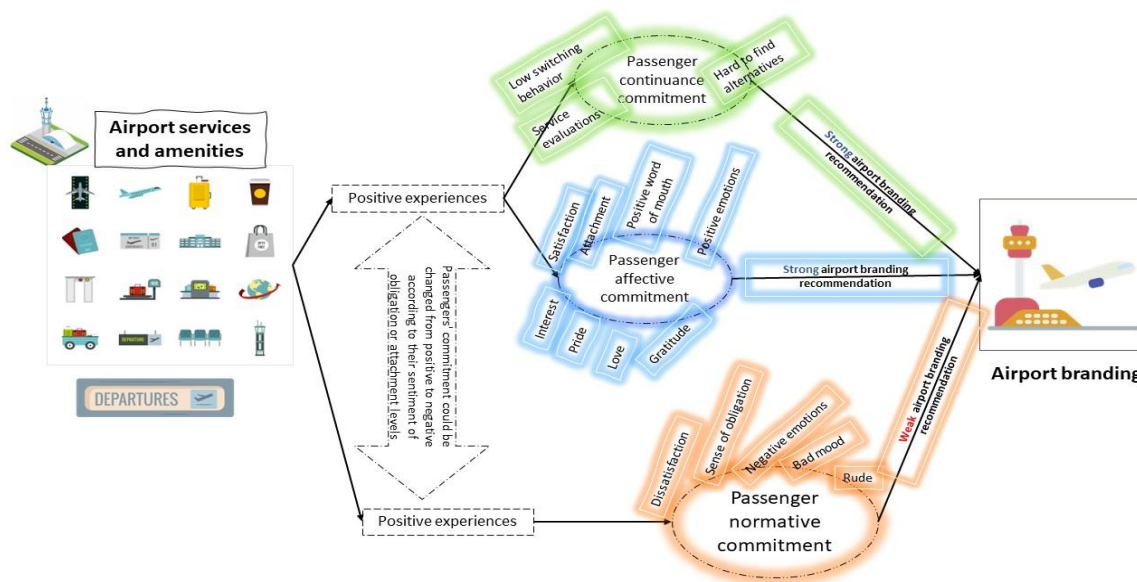


Figure 1. The theoretical framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. The study context

We employed content analysis of passengers' reviews from passengers who used Cairo international airport (CAI) in Egypt to travel. With more than 16 million annual passengers, Cairo International Airport is Egypt's most significant airport (Cairo International Airport, 2021). This airport, 15 kilometers northeast of Cairo, is EgyptAir's central hub and a global entry point to Africa and the Middle East. In addition to domestic flights within Egypt, Cairo International Airport accepts passengers from several other countries, including the United States, Europe, and Asia. The Egyptian-inspired architecture, luxurious carpets, and couches in the terminal lobbies give the airport a distinctively Egyptian feel. The Cairo International Airport has three spacious terminals. Even though Terminal 1 is the oldest, all three offer various services. Each terminal has duty-free stores, gift shops, ATMs, dining options, cafes, and rest facilities (Ahmed, 2017). Numerous eateries also provide traditional Egyptian cuisine and unique menu items.

An official tour company that takes visitors on a tour of Cairo is also available at the airport. Numerous services and facilities created to offer convenience and safety are present at the airport to ensure that it meets all of the needs of its visitors (Cairo International Airport, 2021). All passengers have access to a medical facility, lost-and-found business facilities, and a prayer area. The airport contains a library, numerous murals, and works of art all over the terminal. The airport offers convenient access to Wi-Fi, allowing passengers to access the internet easily. The Cairo International Airport is making a lot of effort to accommodate its patrons. For instance, it recently unveiled a brand-new terminal designed especially for low-cost airlines and promises to receive fresh, cutting-edge renovations soon. The airport will continue to enhance its standing as one of the major airports in the area (Abou ElGheit and Nageh, 2018).

2. Content analyses procedures

We employed quantitative content analysis to investigate passenger reviews of Cairo International Airport. According to Vitouladiti (Vitouladiti, 2014), quantitative content analysis is an efficient method to classify and organize review texts by mining them using a quantitative analytical approach. Content analysis is efficient when the content is significant, so it could be more appropriate to increase the results obtained from the individual reviews. Also, it helps to find the richness of the text with careful interpretation of the texts (Vitouladiti, 2014). Content Analysis is efficient for our research scope because it can help us to observe and evaluate the notions behind individuals' emotions toward the services they reviewed (Camprubí and Coromina, 2016). We conducted the content analysis and coding in four stages.

First, we downloaded 400 passengers' reviews from the following platforms (Skytrax, Tripadvisor, traveller, and flight report). We selected these reviews on these platforms because there is a scarcity of reviews about Cairo International

Airports on other platforms. Also, these platforms, especially Skytrax and flight reports, are specialized in the aviation industry, which increases credibility in content research operations (Lincoln et al., 1985).

Second, we employed the Voyant Tool software to extract data from the review texts. This enabled us to create more comprehensive visualizations, identify the most used terms, uncover themes, and take advantage of a range of visualization features provided by Voyant Tools as a web-based platform for reading and analyzing digital texts (Miller, 2018).

Third, we followed (Stepchenkova et al., 2008) recommendation to find the best approach to prepare data by identifying the potential frequent terminology results which reflect commitment types according to the study literature; emotion words are mainly for the affective commitment, the services-related terms are primarily the continuance commitment, and the words that attributed to bad feeling are attributed mainly to normative commitment (Figure 2). To achieve the content analysis reliability and validity and keywords assumptions, we observed the Creswell’s (Creswell, 2002) suggestions to ensure the validity of the content analysis. We checked the potential keyword results with experts who have worked previously in such analysis in tourism destinations. By utilizing these keyword descriptors, we can ascertain passengers' evaluations of the airport based on their commitment type and the ensuing sentiment of these reflections with the potential results. For instance, if the potential results contain any keywords of the affective commitment, it will enable us to locate discrepancies in the airport and improve the airport to maintain Affective commitment with passengers and build a strong airport brand image; the same for other commitment types (continuance and normative) according to the current study literature arguments.

Fourth, we improved text mining procedures by increasing the interjudge reliability of the analysis (Camprubí and Coromina, 2016), meaning that we drew text mining operations many times with different experts and procedures to achieve reliability. Then, we provide three themes to analyze the study results: 1) Passengers' significant concerns toward the airport, 2) the correlation between passengers' concerns and related amenities, and 3) tracking passenger behavior across different concerns levels.

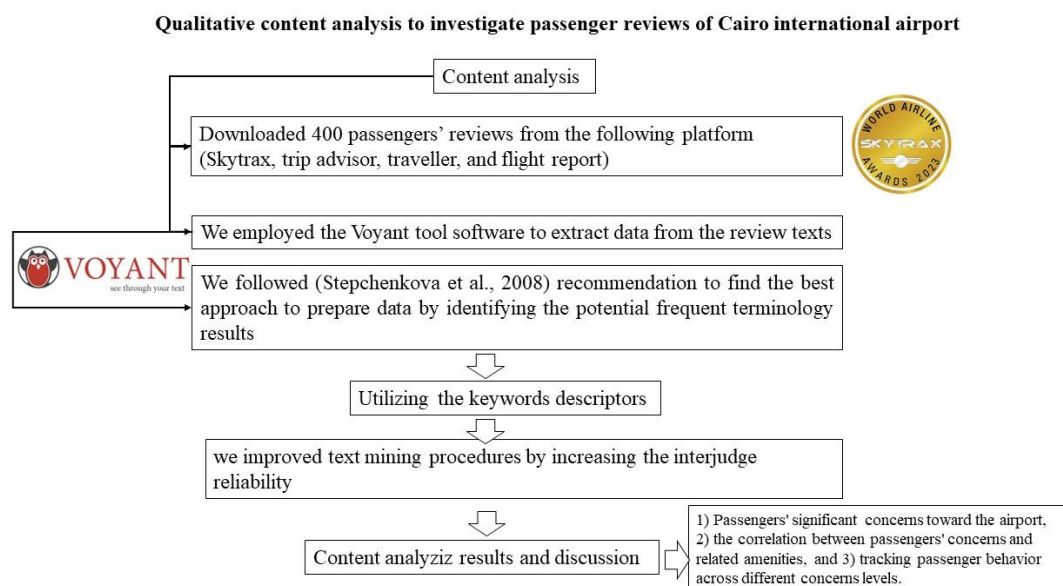


Figure 2. The methodology framework

CONTENT ANALYSES RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Passengers' big Concerns toward the airport

The content analysis results show that most passengers who have reviewed their experiences with airports had negative experiences due to terminal services’ quality, security tips, passports and check areas, WIFI, staff, boarding, and luggage (Figure 3). According to the commitment theory, this has led to strong negative emotions, leading to lower continuance commitment. Passengers also show negative emotions such as rude, worse, bad, and other negative feelings, leading to lower affective commitment according to the commitment theory (Xiang et al., 2018).

The commitment theory is a psychological theory that states that people are more likely to remain committed to service providers if they feel loyal or attached to them. As mentioned in the literature, The theory suggests that there are three types of commitment: what is based on emotional attachment is the affective commitment (Claffey and Brady, 2019), what is based on a sense of obligation is the normative commitment, and what is based on the cost of leaving is the continuance commitment (Chu and Li, 2010; Fullerton, 2005; Raju, 2017).

The content analysis results suggest that passengers’ negative experiences with airports make them feel less emotionally attached, resulting in lower levels of affective and continuance commitments. Furthermore, these negative experiences also lead passengers to perceive leaving an airport as less costly than staying with it (Batouei et al., 2020), resulting in lower levels of continuance commitment, according to the theory. Also, it increases the feeling of being obliged to remain, negatively impacting their emotions and increasing their feelings of normative commitment (Raju, 2017).

Therefore, according to the study arguments, passengers with normative commitment are less likely to recommend the airport as a brand. The results of this content analysis suggest that airports need to improve their services for passengers to

The previous three themes of passengers' reviews revealed that most passengers' reviews were negative. The main concerns covered were the service provided by the Cairo International Airport's physical environment. This finding indicates that the overall customer sentiment towards the airport is not favorable, which may affect customer behavioral outcomes. Our results contradict Raju's (Raju, 2017) findings that consumers in continuance commitment are less likely to build brands like affective commitment. We found that low affective and continuance commitment to the airport leads passengers not to have an emotional attachment to the airport and their likelihood of continuing to use it. In comparison, normative commitment involves a passenger's sense of obligation toward the airport, which is higher than expected in the Cairo international airport. This suggests that passengers' commitment to the airport is mainly driven by a sense of obligation and not by any emotional attachment to the airport or any likelihood of using it in the future.

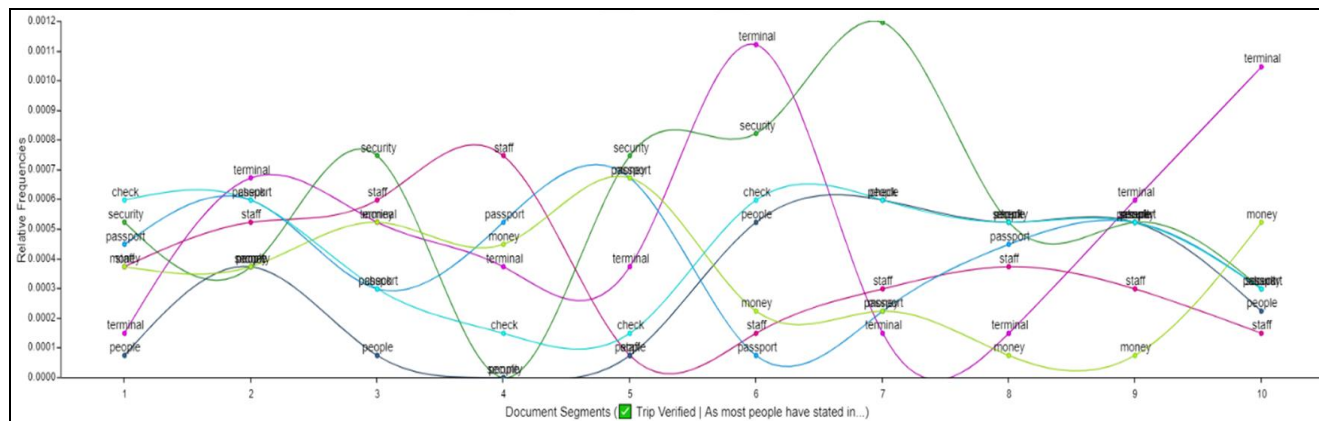


Figure 6. The linear terminology forecast

Therefore, we argue that airport branding couldn't be built without fixing these issues because the decline in affective and continuance commitment (Xiang et al., 2018), coupled with the increase in normative commitment, can damage the service providers' reputations (Bergman, 2006; Fullerton, 2014; Jaros, 2017; Lariviere et al., 2014), which here will damage airport's branding. The decline in affective commitment lowers the passengers' emotional attachment (Claffey and Brady, 2019) to the airport, which reduces the likelihood that the customer will spread positive word-of-mouth about the airport. While the increase in normative commitment increases the passengers' sense of obligation (Bergman, 2006; Fullerton, 2014; Jaros, 2017; Lariviere et al., 2014) toward the airport, this sense of obligation eliminates emotional attachment, decreasing the probability of recommending airport as a strong brand.

Our study elucidates novel insights for airport policymakers, which suggest paying due attention to the factors that may diminish affective and continuance commitment to form a well-established brand. It is further advocated to reduce normative burden while augmenting passengers' positive behavioral results concerning airport branding. The following section will introduce our study's managerial and theoretical implications.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This article provided insights into how different types of commitment can affect airport brands from the commitment theory perspective. Through a content analysis of passenger reviews, we identified novel factors that could negatively impact the commitment types, particularly affective and continuance commitment, which is likely to build airport branding. We also discussed the factors that can contribute to normative commitment at airports, which should be eliminated because it leads to decreased airport brand building. Eventually, this research highlights the importance of understanding the effect of different commitment types on airport brands and offers recommendations on maximizing passenger affective and continuance commitment and mitigating the normative commitment to building strong brands. The content analysis findings found crucial theoretical and managerial implications for tourism, aviation scholars, and policymakers.

1. Theoretical contribution

Theoretically, the current study is the first to examine airport branding from the standpoint of three different types of commitment theory (continuance, affective, and normative), making it a significant theoretical contribution to the literature on airport developments and passengers' behavioral outcomes. The study adds to the existing literature on factors that shape airport branding (e.g., (Figueiredo and Castro, 2019; Gitto and Mancuso, 2019; Halpern and Graham, 2021; Nghiêm-Phú and Suter, 2018)) by shedding light that affective and continuance commitment is more likely to build destination branding than normative commitment. The study also presents service quality amenities (staff, terminals, security, gates, shops, boarding, etc.), airport positioning, and repositioning that help airports grow through passengers' affective and continuance commitment instead of normative to travel through the airports. This study offers thorough insights into how passengers build their affective and continuance commitment to using airports and how normative commitment is not a big deal in building airport brands. Thus, it contributes to the theory of consumer commitment (Krishen et al., 2023; Maduku et al., 2023; Wong, 2023). Our findings go beyond the significance of their results for marketers and airport management in terms of how they might leverage these revelations to develop more successful tactics for fostering passengers' affective and continuance commitment rather than normative commitment.

2. Managerial implication

Managerially, our study has several crucial managerial implications for Cairo International airport managers to build a strong airport brand; according to the study findings, affective and continuance commitment are more likely to create airport branding than normative commitment. Airport quality, positioning, repositioning, innovation, and service personalization can achieve this purpose. Therefore, Cairo international airport managers must consider the airport's service quality, market positioning, how that positioning changes over time, and how effectively balanced communication is employed to reach passengers. As any successful brand must prioritize quality, thus Cairo International airport must work to give passengers a high-quality experience.

To address these issues, airports must improve their amenities and services. This includes providing better customer service by training staff on handling difficult situations, improving security procedures so that passports are checked quickly and efficiently, and ensuring that check-in areas are not overcrowded. Additionally, airports should strive to create a pleasant atmosphere for passengers by providing comfortable seating and free Wi-Fi or charging stations. Cairo international airport managers can provide stroller rentals, diaper-changing stations, and family-friendly restaurants for families traveling with young children. By personalizing airport services to specific types of passengers, airports can ensure that all passengers have affective/continuance commitment. Positioning in Cairo International airport is also crucial because airports need to distinguish themselves from their competitors and compete in the market.

Repositioning is also required because Cairo International airport needs to be flexible enough to react to shifting consumer demands and fashion trends over time. This could include providing friendly staff members willing to help passengers with queries and ensuring that all staff members always treat passengers respectfully, leading to more affective or continuance commitment.

To foster passengers' commitment through positioning the airport facilities according to our results, Cairo International airport needs to be able to deliver its message to passengers in an effective manner. According to our results, Cairo International Airport managers' authorities must address these issues head-on to improve passenger effectiveness and continuance. Long wait times at security checks can be reduced by introducing more efficient processes or increasing staffing levels during peak times. Poor customer service from staff members can be addressed by providing better training and ensuring that all staff members are held accountable for their actions.

Dirty facilities can be improved by increasing cleaning standards and regularly cleaning all areas. Finally, high prices for goods in shops can be addressed by introducing more competitive pricing structures or offering discounts on certain items. By applying the previous managerial recommendations, Cairo International airport managers can build a strong brand that will draw more passengers and foster their commitment, especially passengers' affective and continuance, rather than a normative commitment to building a strong brand.

Research limitations and future directions

This research study has several limitations. First, the study is limited to the context of Cairo International Airport and may not apply to other airports. The study relies on content analysis of passengers' reviews, which may not represent all passengers' experiences and opinions. Therefore, we suggest future research study other airports with more reviews. Second, the study does not consider other factors that may influence passenger commitment, such as airport airlines' catering services at airports which can affect airport branding. Thus, future research should focus on these factors.

Third, the study does not consider how commitment types affect airport branding but do not consider how airport branding affects customer perceptions of an airport's value proposition or how it can be used to create a competitive advantage, and how airport branding affects customer behavior in terms of purchase decisions or loyalty program participation. Therefore, future research should consider all these assumptions to improve airport branding. Regardless of these limitations, our study findings decrease the gap in the literature to build airport branding by providing solutions to increase passenger affective and continuance commitment toward airports.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.A.A. and T.H.H.; methodology, A.A.A. and S.H.R.; software, M.I.S. and S.H.R.; validation, T.H.H. and M.I.S.; formal analysis, M.I.S. and A.A.A.; investigation, M.I.S. and A.A.A.; data curation, S.H.R. and A.A.A.; writing—original draft preparation, T.H.H. and M.I.S.; writing—review and editing, A.A.A. and S.H.R.; visualization, M.I.S. and S.H.R.; supervision, S.H.R. and T.H.H.; project administration, T.H.H. and A.A.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia (Grant No.3372), through its KFU Research Summer initiative. The researchers are supported by a full Ph.D. scholarship under the joint executive program between the Arab Republic of Egypt and Saint Petersburg State University for the third author (M.I.S) number EGY-0026/20.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study may be obtained on request from the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments: This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia (Grant No.2176), through its KFU Research Summer

initiative. The researchers are supported by a full Ph.D. scholarship under the joint executive program between the Arab Republic of Egypt and Saint Petersburg State University for the third author (M.I.S).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Abou ElGheit, N., & Nageh, M. (2018). Assessing Non-Aeronautical Activities at Cairo International Airport. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 2(1), 137-160. <https://doi.org/10.21608/ijthm.2018.29025>
- Ahmed, H. (2017). Analyzing the Airport Passenger Experience: The Case of Cairo International Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Studies*, 8(2), 27-53. doi:10.38008/jats.v8i2.31
- Akamavi, R., Mohamed, E., Pellmann, K., & Xu, Y.. (2015). Key Determinants of Passenger Loyalty in the Low-Cost Airline Business. *Tourism Management*, 46, 528-545. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.010>
- Antwi, C., Fan, C., Nataliia, I., Aboagye, M., Xu, H., & Azamela, J. (2020). Do Airport Staff Helpfulness and Communication Generate Behavioral Loyalty in Transfer Passengers? A Conditional Mediation Analysis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 54, 102002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102002>
- Batouei, A., Iranmanesh, M., Mustafa, H., Nikbin, D., & Ping, T. (2020). Components of Airport Experience and Their Roles in Eliciting Passengers' Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 37, 100585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2020.100585>
- Bergman, M. (2006). The Relationship between Affective and Normative Commitment: Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(5), 645-663. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.372>
- Bezerra, G., & Gomes, C. (2015). The Effects of Service Quality Dimensions and Passenger Characteristics on Passenger's Overall Satisfaction with an Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 44-45, 77-81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2015.03.001>
- Bezerra, G., & Gomes, C. (2020). Antecedents and Consequences of Passenger Satisfaction with the Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 83, 101766. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2020.101766>
- Bogicevic, V., Yang, W., Bilgihan, A., & Bujisic, M. (2013). Airport Service Quality Drivers of Passenger Satisfaction. *Tourism Review*, 68(4), 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-09-2013-0047>
- Cairo International Airport. (2021). Airport Information. <https://www.cairo-airport.com/en-us/Airport/Airport-Information>
- Camprubí, Raquel, & Coromina, Lluís. (2016). Content Analysis in Tourism Research. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 18, 134-140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2016.03.002>
- Cărbunar, M., Mintaş, O., Sabău, N., Borza, I., Stanciu, A., Peres, A., & Vidican, T. (2022). Effectiveness of Measures to Reduce the Influence of Global Climate Change on Tomato Cultivation in Solariums—Case Study: Crişurilor Plain, Bihor, Romania. *Agriculture*, 12(5), 634.
- Castro, R., & Lohmann, G. (2014). Airport Branding: Content Analysis of Vision Statements. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 10, 4-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2014.01.001>
- Chu, K., & Li, C. (2010). The Study of the Effects of Identity-Related Judgment, Affective Identification and Continuance Commitment on Wom Behavior. *Quality & Quantity*, 46(1), 221-236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-010-9355-3>
- Claffey, E., & Brady, M. (2019). An Empirical Study of the Impact of Consumer Emotional Engagement and Affective Commitment in Firm-Hosted Virtual Communities. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(11-12), 1047-1079. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257x.2019.1601125>
- Creswell, J. (2002). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative* (Vol. 7): Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Curras-Perez, R., & Sanchez-Garcia, I. (2015). Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Commitment in Traditional and Low-Cost Airlines. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33(6), 899-911. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1075458>
- Datta, B., Sajjani, M., & Thomas, J. (2018). The Decision Making of Business Travellers in Selecting Online Travel Portals for Travel Booking: An Empirical Study of Delhi National Capital Region, India. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 22(2), 339-346.
- Evanschitzky, H., Iyer, G., Plassmann, H., Niessing, J., & Meffert, H.. (2006). The Relative Strength of Affective Commitment in Securing Loyalty in Service Relationships. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(12), 1207-1213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.08.005>
- Fasone, V., Kofler, L., & Scuderi, R. (2016). Business Performance of Airports: Non-Aviation Revenues and Their Determinants. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 53, 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2015.12.012>
- Figueiredo, T., & Castro, R. (2019). Passengers Perceptions of Airport Branding Strategies: The Case of Tom Jobim International Airport – Riogaleão, Brazil. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 74, 13-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2018.09.010>
- Fullerton, G. (2005). How Commitment Both Enables and Undermines Marketing Relationships. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(11/12), 1372-1388. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560510623307>
- Fullerton, G. (2014). The Moderating Effect of Normative Commitment on the Service Quality-Customer Retention Relationship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 48(3/4), 657-673. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ejm-06-2011-0333>
- Gitto, S., & Mancuso, P. (2019). Brand Perceptions of Airports Using Social Networks. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 75, 153-163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2019.01.010>
- Halpern, N., & Graham, A. (2021). Airport Digital Marketing. In *Airport Marketing* (pp. 293-342): Routledge.
- Halpern, N., & Regmi, U. (2011). What's in a Name? Analysis of Airport Brand Names and Slogans. *Journal of Airport Management*, 6(1), 63-79.
- Jacobs, W., & Hall, P. (2007). What Conditions Supply Chain Strategies of Ports? The Case of Dubai. *GeoJournal*, 68(4), 327-342. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-007-9092-x>
- Jaros, S. (2017). A Critique of Normative Commitment in Management Research. *Management Research Review*, 40(5), 517-537. <https://doi.org/10.1108/mrr-08-2016-0200>
- Johnson, M., Sivadas, E., & Garbarino, E. (2008). Customer Satisfaction, Perceived Risk and Affective Commitment: An Investigation of Directions of Influence. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 22(5), 353-362. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040810889120>
- Kotsi, F., Pike, S., & Gottlieb, U. (2018). Consumer-Based Brand Equity (Cbbe) in the Context of an International Stopover Destination: Perceptions of Dubai in France and Australia. *Tourism Management*, 69, 297-306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.06.019>
- Krishen, A., Berezan, O., Agarwal, S., & Kachen, S. (2023). Affective Commitment Recipes for Wine Clubs: Value Goes Beyond the Vine. *Journal of Business Research*, 157, 113464. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113464>
- Lariviere, B., Keiningham, T., Cooil, B., Aksoy, L., & Malthouse, E. (2014). A Longitudinal Examination of Customer Commitment and Loyalty. *Journal of Service Management*, 25(1), 75-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/josm-01-2013-0025>

- Lee, S., Chua, B., & Han, H. (2016). Role of Service Encounter and Physical Environment Performances, Novelty, Satisfaction, and Affective Commitment in Generating Cruise Passenger Loyalty. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(2), 131-146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2016.1182039>
- Lin, Y., & Chen, C. (2013). Passengers' Shopping Motivations and Commercial Activities at Airports – the Moderating Effects of Time Pressure and Impulse Buying Tendency. *Tourism Management*, 36, 426-434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.09.017>
- Lincoln, Y., Guba, E., & Pilotta, J. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 9(4), 438-439. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Lohmann, G., Albers, S., Koch, B., & Pavlovich, K. (2009). From Hub to Tourist Destination – an Explorative Study of Singapore and Dubai's Aviation-Based Transformation. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 15(5), 205-211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2008.07.004>
- Maduku, D., Mpiganjira, M., Rana, N., Thusi, P., Ledikwe, A., & Mkhize, N. (2023). Assessing Customer Passion, Commitment, and Word-of-Mouth Intentions in Digital Assistant Usage: The Moderating Role of Technology Anxiety. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 71, 103208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103208>
- Martín-Cejas, R. (2006). Tourism Service Quality Begins at the Airport. *Tourism Management*, 27(5), 874-877.
- Miller, A. (2018). Text Mining Digital Humanities Projects: Assessing Content Analysis Capabilities of Voyant Tools. *Journal of Web Librarianship*, 12(3), 169-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19322909.2018.1479673>
- Monterrubio, C., Andriotis, K., & Rodríguez-Muñoz, G. (2020). Residents' Perceptions of Airport Construction Impacts: A Negativity Bias Approach. *Tourism Management*, 77, 103983. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.103983>
- Nghiêm-Phú, B., & Suter, J. (2018). Airport Image: An Exploratory Study of Mccarran International Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 67, 72-84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2017.11.011>
- Paternoster, J. (2008). Excellent Airport Customer Service Meets Successful Branding Strategy. *Journal of Airport Management*, 2(3), 218-226.
- Pimentel, R., & Reynolds, K. (2004). A Model for Consumer Devotion: Affective Commitment with Proactive Sustaining Behaviors. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 2004, 1.
- Prada, M., Popescu, D., Bungau, C., Pancu, R., & Bungau, C. (2017). Parametric Studies on European 20-20-20 Energy Policy Targets in University Environment. *Journal of environmental protection and ecology*, 18(3), 1146-1157.
- Raju, S. (2017). Positive and Negative Effects of Affective and Continuance Brand Commitment in a Service Context. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 9(2), 133-148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jibr-07-2016-0066>
- Song, H., Lee, C., Park, J., Hwang, Y., & Reisinger, Y. (2014). The Influence of Tourist Experience on Perceived Value and Satisfaction with Temple Stays: The Experience Economy Theory. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(4), 401-415. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2014.898606>
- Stepchenkova, S., Kirilenko, A., & Morrison, A. (2008). Facilitating Content Analysis in Tourism Research. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(4), 454-469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287508326509>
- Tsai, C. (2016). Memorable Tourist Experiences and Place Attachment When Consuming Local Food. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(6), 536-548. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2070>
- Vituladiti, O. (2014). Content Analysis as a Research Tool for Marketing, Management and Development Strategies in Tourism. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 9, 278-287. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671\(14\)00029-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671(14)00029-x)
- Wei, W., Torres, E., & Hua, N. (2016). Improving Consumer Commitment through the Integration of Self-Service Technologies: A Transcendent Consumer Experience Perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 59, 105-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.09.004>
- Wong, A. (2023). Understanding Consumer Brand Love, Brand Commitment, and Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2023.2173937>
- Wu, H., & Tsui, K. (2020). Does a Reward Program Affect Customers' Behavioural Intention of Visiting the Airport? A Case Study of Singapore Changi Airport. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 82, 101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2019.101742>
- Xiang, L., Zheng, X., Zhang, K., & Lee, M. O. (2018). Understanding Consumers' Continuance Intention to Contribute Online Reviews. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 118(1), 22-40. <https://doi.org/10.1108/imds-09-2016-0395>
- Zhang, X., Song, H., & Huang, G. (2009). Tourism Supply Chain Management: A New Research Agenda. *Tourism Management*, 30(3), 345-358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.12.010>