



Article

# The Role of Aviation in Tourism Industry

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the relationship between aviation and tourism, highlighting the interconnectedness of these sectors and their impact on tourist experiences. While both fields are extensively studied, gaps remain in understanding their complex interactions. The study aims to investigate the components of aviation and tourism systems through a theoretical framework and statistical analysis. Data from IATA, UNWTO, and Uzbekistan's national statistical organizations are utilized to analyze trends and relationships. The findings provide insights for government agencies on how to manage and enhance the synergy between aviation and tourism, offering both theoretical and practical implications for industry development.

**Keywords:** Wide-body jets, Scheduled and non-scheduled services, Commercial transportation, Airport terminal facilities, Low-cost carriers.

## 1. Introduction

The advancements of transport have turned into important facilitators for tourism growth globally. The two industries-aviation and tourism are inexorably linked to each other: tourism heavily relies on aviation to bring in tourists, and aviation relies on tourism industry to enhance demand and fill the capacity. Some countries, like Indonesia rely on airline industry to attract travelers, having a wide range of inaccessible destinations. In the nineteenth century, tourism developed immensely due to the emergence of rail transportation, it remarkably expanded after inventing automobiles and later jet engines in the twentieth century. Tourism and transport are inexorably connected, as tourism grows, demand to the transport sector increases simultaneously.[1] In the 1970s, wide jet bodies started to be widely used for commercial transportation and it was a huge phenomenon in international tourism. In this period, tourists preferred to have long-haul holidays, air travel became more convenient, affordable and safer for leisure tourism. The airline industry consists of a wide variety of competing firms offering similar products. [2]

### Literature review

In modern era, tour operators heavily rely on the services of regular and non-regular airlines to ensure smooth, safe and reliable tour experience. Through organizing an efficient management in airline industry, large volume of tourists are enabled to process in effective and efficient manner. The invention of low-cost carriers has had a significant impact on tourism growth in the twentieth century. [3] There are several benefits of the air transport:

- 1) The aircraft can take a flight despite natural barriers such as oceans, deserts, jungles, mountains;

**Citation:** Yuldosheva Latofat Tolibovna. The Role of Aviation in Tourism Industry. Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance 2024, 5(6), 342-350.

Received: 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024

Revised: 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

Accepted: 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024

Published: 21<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024



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- 2) High speeds
- 3) High load factors

Air transport also has certain disadvantages:

- 1) It is relatively expensive;
- 2) It has negative environmental impacts, due to the air traffic it may not be sustainable;
- 3) Air transport is vulnerable to the terrorism, pandemic situations and etc. [4]
- 4) Low cost carriers use several strategies to operate their departments effectively:
- 5) They organize flights at off-peak times;
- 6) They negotiate with less congested airports in order to reduce landing charges and achieving quick turnarounds;
- 7) Basic in-flight services can be offered.(catering service is not included);
- 8) They operate density at higher level;
- 9) They use only single kind of aircraft to reduce the cost of maintenance and equipment, because ground handling operations can be operated easily.[5]

Tourists have had opportunity to fly with less fare, this has become facilitator for growth of the number of tourists. [6] The airport terminal is the place in which passengers are handled and the quality of in-flight cabin services such as punctuality of operations, frequency of services, comfortable seats, more leg rooms, in-flight entertainment facilities can influence the satisfaction level of tourists. However, the significance of terminal facilities in tourist experience are under researched. [7] In 1970 and 1980s the revolution in airport design emerged and retailing opportunities for people were created, as a result of this, the non-aviation revenue for airports increased significantly. [8]

Airports operate well-developed systems on which a lot of tourist interactions occur. Post-modern amalgam of airport facilities can encourage tourists to spend money with the careful management measures, design layouts and unique architecture to achieve the customer expectations. Managing airport operational tasks is a hot debate. Airports feature a wide range of tasks and the majority of them are time-bound. Customers search for quality services and facilities. Operations related to passengers, cargo and ground handling have to be operated smoothly to achieve the high level of customer satisfaction. The turnaround time duration of aircraft has to be controlled. [9]

Customer demands and desires are widely significant with regard to the airline product. It is possible to identify needs for different consumer segments. For example, business travelers prefer punctuality, while the leisure passengers may appreciate reduced prices.[10] The airlines' operating long-haul routes face several challenges with regard to departure and arrival slot times. Because long-time tourists spend a lot of time on the aircraft, another crucial offering for them is an adequate on-board service. Several functional roles of airports are given below:

- 1) Airports can provide the basic infrastructure;
- 2) Airports ensure integration between surface transport and air transport;
- 3) One of the main facilitators for economic development;
- 4) Place which offer a wide range of job opportunities;
- 5) A point of entry for a tourist visiting a country;
- 6) Place for booking tourist services such as accommodation, food and beverage, venues for business events;
- 7) Information services;
- 8) Location on which tour projects are organized while tourists arrive;
- 9) A place for making new friends which improves social interaction.

The components of on-board service, namely, seating, catering, inflight entertainment will ultimately influence the tourist experience of the airline product. Many airlines provide their staff with special courses in order to improve the verbal

communications and non-verbal interactions of cabin crew during customer service. The service of front-line and back office staff in airlines can ultimately affect the tourist satisfaction level. The total quality policy of the tourist product is aimed to each sub-sector and the quality of airline product delivery is one of the biggest concern of tourism management.[11]Corporate travel agents, retail travel agents, tour operators, online agents, event managers and others are the customers of airlines who can make decisions of buying airline seats on behalf of tourists. [12]

## 2. Materials and Methods

The methodology of this article is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of both primary and secondary data sources to explore the interrelationship between the aviation and tourism sectors. Statistical data from key international organizations such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and Uzbekistan's national statistical agencies were utilized to evaluate the impact of aviation on tourism. The study employed quantitative methods, focusing on data collection, tabulation, and statistical analysis to identify patterns and trends in both industries. Historical data on aviation advancements, tourism flows, and the economic contributions of these sectors were gathered to provide a robust foundation for the study. Furthermore, the research draws on a wide range of literature reviews to investigate the theoretical perspectives of aviation's role in enhancing tourism experiences.

The paper also incorporates an empirical analysis of the aviation sector in Uzbekistan, examining government policies, infrastructural developments, and market trends through available reports and statistical data. Key indicators such as the number of international visitors, the growth of airline passengers, and the economic benefits generated through aviation were analyzed to support the research findings. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how aviation influences tourism development, not only in Uzbekistan but also on a global scale. The insights gained from this analysis provide practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders in the tourism and aviation industries, ensuring the effective management of both sectors to maximize their mutual benefits.

## 3. Results and Discussion

UNWTO reported that the highest number of tourists used air and land transport vehicles for travel purposes: in 2016 air transport was used by international tourists at 55 %, while 45% of them used surface transportation. [13]"An airline industry which consists of a vast network of routes that connect cities in different parts of a country/world, and over the network a large number of airlines carry passengers and cargo on scheduled services." Air transport has transformed the geographical aspects of distances: remote areas have become accessible to travelers. The development of civil aviation has brought tremendous changes in the nature of international tourism.

Aviation connectivity among countries has established a foundation for tourism markets and value chains, approximately 1.5 billion tourists traveled by air in the pre-pandemic period generating 900 billion dollars in global GDP a year. Aviation supports 15 UN Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030. ICAO Secretary General Dr. Liu noted that through accelerating aviation innovations in digital technologies, unmanned aircrafts, Artificial Intelligence, critical efficiencies and improved the sector's capabilities can be attained to generate economic growth, create employment opportunities and facilitate global trade and tourism.

Dr. Liu stated that the tourism and aviation industries need to accelerate innovations in digital projects, unmanned aerial vehicles and AI to drive tourism facilities and create new job opportunities to isolated regions, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.[14]

Another key role of aviation in tourism is that it strengthens economic growth. The aviation sector generated more employment opportunities, contributes to local economy, creating a considerable source of revenue through taxes, fees and other charges. Tourism and aviation generates 10,4% of the global GDP, two sectors employ 120 million jobs on a global scale according to the information of International Air Transport Association (IATA). The nature of consumerism has considerably altered, people no longer rely on the advices of travel agencies, they have a huge source of information via the net.

Individuals can find easily the most convenient flights at any time through using the internet without the help of tour operators, which is called as a dynamic package. In recent years, the airline industry has really started to capitalize on this. Airlines are now ensuring support by advertising the additional components, they promote suitable hotels, transfer services, tours and excursions. These offerings can be placed during the booking process via website, and also e-mail marketing can be used by airline managers. The airline can make a commission by advertising and directing the business to the third party companies, which pay a fee to the airline. Over half (51%) of consumers are planning on using air transport in 2023, aircraft is being the most popular mode of travel transportation behind the car and other modes.

Approximately 60% of Gen Z and millennials are planning to make flight in the next 10 months in 2023. After air travel was considerably decreased in 2020 and 2021, the demand for air travel rose in 2022, because borders opened again and travelers wanted to travel. In 2023, the demand for air travel is expected to continue rising, which requires to develop new marketing strategies taking consideration into consumers needs and expectations. After the COVID-19, the return of international and business travel is expected to have a positive impact on air travel with the higher proportion of long-haul flights, while a third of travelers are planning on a business travel. [16]

The international Air Transport Association forecasts that in 2021, the number of travelers were 49% of 2019 levels, which is expected to improve to 94% in 2023, 103% in 2024 and 111% in 2025. The overall passenger numbers will reach 4.0 billion in 2024, even exceeding pre-COVID-19 levels. The process of recovery in travel passenger numbers was not altered by the Omicron version. People want to travel. Moreover, the International Air transport Association (IATA) has published a long-term forecast of recovery in passenger demand after economic recession due to COVID-19 effects, which highlights that there is going to be a considerable increase in the number of passengers globally.

According to this forecast, by 2030 traveler numbers are predicted to have grown to 5.6 billion. Tourists are considered to be the major market of airlines. Among tourists, leisure travelers make the travel decisions by themselves. tour operators or wholesalers make travel arrangements for their clients, they purchase the tour product, finally consumed by tourists, as they select airlines considering internal and external factors. Tour operators normally use charter flights to organize tour package.

First of all, tour operators make contracts with principals such as airlines, surface transport companies, hoteliers. Pre-arranged tours are carefully designed and developed in a professional way. Tour operators have also responsibility of providing the quality of the suppliers' products included in their packages. However, the components of tour package, like airline product are consumed at different locations far away the location of tour operator, which can be a challenging task for tour operators to ensure the quality of tourist product. The facilities of airport are integrated with a wide range of airport functions.

Table 1. The estimation of employment in aviation sector globally

Airport functions	The number of jobs	The percentage out of total employment
Airlines	472 000	28 %
Ground handling operations	241 000	14 %
Food and beverage	130 000 jobs	8%
Retail and in-terminal jobs	107 jobs	6%
Airport security and passenger screening	106 jobs	6%
Airport ground transport	79 000 jobs	5%
Customs, immigration and government jobs	90 000 jobs	5%
Airport and air traffic control	238 000 jobs	14%
Mechanical and repairs services	102 400 jobs	6%

Source: Boeing, IATA and ATAG 2018

The air industry professionals (49%) have decided to provide huge amount of sustainability information to consumers than tourism professionals (29%). By offering carbon offsets and incorporating sustainable practices into the promotion tools of airline companies, more conscious travelers can be better attracted to travel by air.[17] The most important thing for travelers in the process of booking travel ticket is the price, low pricing will be the top thing for consumers value. Several manufacturers have been developing new types of aircraft in different aviation segments. Asia-Pacific has become a considerable hub for the airline industry in recent years. China is the largest market in this sector having the increased rate in domestic air passenger traffic. Approximately 6.7 million jobs around the world were in the tourism industry directly benefited by the money spent by tourists travelling by air.

In Uzbekistan, in 2022 the automobile transportation has the largest share( 51%), the second highest portion belongs to air transportation, at 14,2%, in comparison to the percentage of railway transport (11,4%).[18]The public sector of Uzbekistan has played a significant role in the development of the airline industry in the country since the early 1990s after gaining independence. The aviation sector has been a premium sector for the government, as it gives the potential benefits to boost economic conditions, tourism, and improve collaboration with other countries. To monitor and promote the airline industry, the government has adopted several laws, rules, and regulations in recent years.

One of the main regulatory agencies is the Uzbekistan Civil Aviation Authority (UCAA), which is responsible for regulating and overseeing civil aviation activities. The UCAA ensures compliance and adherence to international aviation standards, regulations, and best practices. For developing the airline industry, the government has provided various incentive programs to airline operators, namely, tax incentives and attractive investments. The government has also invested in the constructions and expansion of

airports, including the expansion of new terminals.[19] Despite the government's efforts, there have been some challenges in the development of the airline industry, including issues related to infrastructure, security, and safety. However, the government continues to work towards further developing and improving the aviation sector to promote economic growth, tourism, and connectivity.

Table 2. Top ten airports in 2023 based on customer satisfaction at the Skytrax World Airport Awards

Top ten airports	Initiatives and best competitive advantages
Singapore Changi Airport	Sophisticated architecture, ten-storey lifestyle hub, virtual reality airport, the best retail and dining options
Qatar Hamad Airport	Significant terminal complex,
Japan Tokyo Haneda International Airport	Internet kiosk, lost-found offices, the museum
South Korea Incheon International Airport	High level of service quality, scenic vistas created by the West Sea.
France Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport	For arts-lovers Espace Museum, shuttle buses at each terminal, duty-free shops and VAT refund.
Turkey Istanbul Airport	Art galleries, duty-free shops, relaxation opportunity in different lounges, go sightseeing in Istanbul.
Germany Munich Airport	Shopping facilities, good mobility.
Switzerland Zurich Airport	Car rental companies with best prices, the viewing terrace, a park and walking routes.



Japan Tokyo Narita Airport	Capsule Hotel, postal services, airline lounges, shuttle buses between terminals, cellular phone rentals.
Madrid Barajas Airport	Fast track services, VIP Lounges, financial services, airport parking facilities.

Source: Customer Satisfactory Survey in 2023 at the Skytrax World Airport Awards

Aviation sector includes a wide variety of stakeholders and their significant contribution to the wider tourism economy. For instance, aviation transports approximately 4 billion people a year, 40 % of them are international tourists, generating US \$ 2.7 trillion in economic activity.[20]

#### 4. Conclusion

The continued growth in the demand of people to travel has led to expand the car usage for domestic tourism and the air for international and domestic travel. For developing communities, air links ensure a crucial economic lifeline, for example, Africa and other small island states can expand GDP in economies by a steady increase of the number of international visitors, most of them arrive in the region by air transport. The current issues regarding creating cleaner aircraft engines and using more environmentally-friendly fuels have affected tourism. The connectivity between international tourism and aviation sector has always been noticeable. The future prospects of tourism industry depend on the global enhancement of air transport. Disruptive changes in the economic and political sides such as terrorism, pandemic threats, disorders, military attacks, crisis have always impacted negatively the tourism and aviation sectors. Air transport expands the rate of inter-regional movements of tourists, which enhances travel over long distances. Appealing package tours, competitive characteristics of airfare attract more tourists day by day. The transport basic infrastructure and policies of governments can contribute to the development of destinations available to travelers.

In general, the construction style, design, implementation tools and operations of airports can lead to the growth of airline revenue of countries. For example, in Uzbekistan, JSC "Uzbekistan Airports" acts as a single executive body of all airports of Uzbekistan. Its main goal is creating strategies for the long-term development of airports as well as attracting investments to developing the infrastructure of all the airports of Uzbekistan. These airports can be further improved by providing the efficient functions of the airport services: optimizing the process of handling passengers, cargo and mail, ensuring punctuality and good preparation of airside for flights, practicing measurements of provision of the regularity and safety of flights, expanding the network of modern trade, catering, banking and other passenger services at airports, developing new destinations, providing training sessions for specialists in the field, establishing the up-to-date telecommunications and IT infrastructure, such as WIFI with a 5-G base station.

The current trends that affects tourist travel;

- a. the price sensitivity of air travelers has risen;
- b. Collaboration among airline companies has managed to create an interconnected transport system;
- c. Quality service is always pressure upon transport service providers, travelers search reasonable prices. However, the distinguishing features and premium services of well-designed and reputable companies always gain the competitive

advantages in the key market. The successful story of Orient Express is an obvious example.

Key managerial operations to achieve expanding tourist satisfaction in airline transport system:

- a. Effectively cost monitoring: reducing the operation costs using advanced technologies;
- b. A clear realization of transport policy changes ,such as privatization, liberalization and globalization processes;
- c. The necessity of training operators who have influential leadership skills;
- d. Improving yield management to operate existing infrastructure and capacity more profitably. [1]

In order to improve the airports and aviation sector of Uzbekistan, it is crucial to focus on some key strategies:

- 1) the government needs to put investment on the innovative infrastructure and which provide that airports are equipped with modern technologies and facilities;
- 2) The quality of service at the airports of Uzbekistan should be developed, namely, customer service, security, commercial areas, scheduling processes and amenities;
- 3) Turnaround activities in terminal and airside of airports should be undertaken with highly-experienced specialists without being postponed, which can improve the high utilization factor of airports. Because aircrafts can make profit only while flying. The profit of airway companies heavily depends upon the punctuality and responsibility of airport system managers and workers;
- 4) Partnerships should be developed with international airlines and airports to increase international cooperation and expand the potential and opportunities of Uzbekistan's tourism sector.

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