



Analyzing Communication Effectiveness and Barriers of Airport Customer Service Officers at Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport

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ABSTRAK

Pasca relokasi counter Customer Service maskapai, Customer Service Bandara Internasional Halim Perdanakusuma menghadapi tantangan dengan tingginya inquiry yang masuk karena perubahan ini menimbulkan kebingungan bagi penumpang. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis komunikasi efektif yang diterapkan oleh CS bandara serta hambatan komunikasi yang dialami oleh petugas pasca relokasi tersebut. Metode penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi. Sebelum dianalisis secara kualitatif, triangulasi teknik dan sumber dilakukan untuk menjamin kredibilitas data. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa petugas CS Bandara Halim Perdanakusuma menunjukkan komunikasi yang sangat efektif dengan menerapkan tujuh unsur komunikasi efektif, khususnya dalam membangun kepercayaan dan mengelola interaksi kompleks pasca relokasi konter maskapai. Mereka profesional, adaptif, dan mampu menyampaikan informasi yang akurat, jelas, serta konsisten. Kredibilitas petugas terbangun dari sikap ramah dan responsif, dibarengi empati dan pemanfaatan beragam saluran komunikasi. Namun, hambatan komunikasi masih ditemukan, yaitu hambatan teknis (gangguan Wi-Fi, telepon internal, FIDS yang tidak update, dan signage yang kurang jelas), hambatan semantik (perbedaan pemahaman bahasa, aksen, jargon penerbangan, dan kesulitan menjelaskan hal kompleks pada penumpang asing), serta hambatan perilaku (ketidaksabaran penumpang atau penurunan keramahan petugas saat beban kerja tinggi). Secara keseluruhan, komunikasi yang efektif yang diterapkan menjadi kunci dalam menjaga kualitas layanan, meskipun masih diperlukan upaya untuk meningkatkan infrastruktur teknis, pelatihan bahasa dan komunikasi antarbudaya, serta mengembangkan alat bantu (misalnya, aplikasi penerjemah). Optimalisasi manajemen antrian dan beban kerja, serta pengembangan soft skill dan kecerdasan emosional petugas, juga krusial untuk pengalaman penumpang yang optimal.

ABSTRACT

The recent relocation of the airline Customer Service counters at Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport has presented challenges for the airport Customer Service Information Center, as the new location has led to an increase in the number of inquiries received. This change has resulted in confusion among passengers, highlighting the need for effective communication. The objective of this research is to analyze the effective communication applied by airport CS as well as the communication barriers experienced by officers after the relocation. This research method is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation with triangulation ensuring data credibility. The results of this study show that Halim Perdanakusuma Airport customer service officers demonstrate highly effective communication by applying the seven key elements, particularly in building trust and managing complex interactions after the relocation of airline counters. They were professional and adaptive, delivering accurate, clear, and consistent information, leveraging a friendly, empathetic approach and various communication channels. However, communication barriers still exist: technical barriers (Wi-Fi issues, outdated FIDS, unclear signage), semantic barriers (language differences, jargon, complex explanations for foreign passengers), and behavioral barriers (passenger impatience, reduced officer friendliness during high workload). The applied effective communication is crucial in maintaining service quality, but requires improving technical infrastructure, enhancing language and intercultural training, developing support tools (e.g., translator apps), and optimizing queue/workload management to ensure an optimal passenger experience.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The passenger experience at the airport is closely linked to the quality of information as well as communication, received while in the terminal area. Accurate, clear and readily available data on departure and arrival is important for passenger satisfaction. In practice conditions often change, for example schedules or service locations change, so this information service becomes very important ([Pratama & Novianti, 2024](#)). The best quality information services at airports should provide accurate, timely, and easily accessible information to all passengers ([Fitriandani, 2025](#)). Fundamental aspects include the delivery of information that is appropriate and also easy to understand, in line with the dimensions of service quality, namely responsiveness along with reliability ([Jumawan & Susanto, 2022](#)); (Parasuraman, et al., 1988). Thus, the reduction of confusion as well as the improvement of passenger comfort while at the airport play a significant role in the quality of good information services.

In the context of airport service, the role of Customer Service (CS) has become very important along with the importance of quality communication and information to ensure that assistance is provided directly and information is conveyed effectively to passengers ([Purwandari & Wijaya, 2023](#)). CS acts as a central source of information as well as the front line. CS officers are responsible for providing information, facilitating passengers' needs, and handling complaints. A CS officer should ideally have good interpersonal communication skills, an in-depth understanding of airport facilities and procedures, and the ability to adapt quickly to changing field situations ([Dyahjatmayanti & Febrianto, 2023](#)). The smooth travel of passengers is influenced by CS excellent service that is fast and accurate and according to commitment, which contributes greatly to the image of professionalism and trust in airport management ([Agustin, 2024](#)).

In the practice, the Customer Service Information Center of Halim Perdanakusuma Airport (HPA) faces some challenges that have the potential to hinder service effectiveness. One of these challenges is the dynamics of operational conditions, such as changes in service locations of airline Customer Service counters. In HPA, passenger handling responsibilities are divided between airline Customer Service and airport Customer Service. Airline Customer Service focuses on services related to tickets, baggage, and flight information specific to that airline while Airport Customer Service, through the Information Center Unit, provides more general assistance regarding facilities, location directions, and other supporting services. The HPA CS processes a high volume of inquiries, with a significant proportion originating from the airline sector. In June 2025, airline-related queries constituted approximately 34.57% of the total reports reviewed. The high number of questions is partly due to the relocation of the airlines Customer Service counter to the airline check-in area. Passenger inquiries and complaints most commonly encountered by HPA CS officers include inquiries regarding 1). the location of airlines CS and 2). the procedure or flow of passing through or accessing the airlines' CS area.

The relocation of the airline's Customer Service counter at HPA from beside the arrival area to inside the departure area has resulted in service constraints impacting passenger accessibility and quality. Only passengers with boarding passes can access the counter, causing delays in handling complaints and creating confusion. Passengers seeking services like rescheduling, refunds, ticket purchases, or information before check-in face difficulties. Lack of information outside the terminal adds to the confusion, despite efforts from Airport Security (Avsec) and Customer Service officers at the Information Center. Inconsistent assistance procedures potentially lead to long queues and disrupt the departure area's flow, reducing the effectiveness of the airline's services for passengers and the public.

In such a specific context, effective communication in service becomes very crucial. In the context of customer service, effective communication entails the ability to convey information in a clear, polite, and empathetic manner. This approach ensures that customers

feel respected and understood, and are provided with the necessary assistance. For communication to be considered effective, the message conveyed by the sender must be received and understood by the recipient as intended. Several research studies have emphasized on the significance of effective communication. A study by Pamungkas and Widagdo (2024) on the service quality of customer service at Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA) revealed that customer service officers provide fairly good service to passengers and can interact and coordinate with other officers regarding the latest information. At Sultan Hasanuddin Airport, for example, CS interpersonal communication patterns encourage more adaptive, responsive, and personalized interactions between staff and passengers ([Indarwati et al., 2024](#)). In public services, such as at the airport, it means that the information conveyed by customer service officers must be precise, relevant, and communicated in a way that is easily understood by passengers from diverse backgrounds ([Devito, 2013](#)). Hence, an effective communication between CS officers and passengers is essential to create a positive experience and minimize potential problems (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

To address this situation, this study seeks to explain how effective communication is applied by HPA CS officers as well as what the communication barriers they experience during the process of delivering messages to passengers in relation to the airport CS relocation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective Communication

DeVito (2013) defines effective communication as the process of exchanging messages that results in a shared understanding between the sender and receiver of the message. This not only involves the verbal delivery of information, but also includes non-verbal communication, voice intonation, body language, and the appropriate use of information technology. In the service industry, ineffective communication can lead to negative perceptions and even conflict. Furthermore, good communication can foster trust, increase customer loyalty, and create a positive image of the institution. Effective communication, according to Macaulay & Cook (as cited in [Ratri & Ambarwati, 2021](#)) includes: 1) demonstrate attentive listening, 2) use good questioning to gain more specific in understanding the customer's situation, 3) cultivate awareness of the effects of non-verbal communication such as body language, 4) utilize voice effectively (warm, positive and clear) and 5) provide clear explanations.

Cultrip & Allen (through [Chandra et al., 2023](#)) mention 7 factors that affect effective communication, namely: 1) Credibility, related to mutual trust between communicants and communicators. 2) Context, related to the relationship between situations and conditions where communication occurs directly. 3) Content, is the content of information that will be conveyed by the communicator to the communicant. 4) Clarity, is an explanation of the information conveyed by the communicator accurately. 5) Continuity and consistency is a way that the information conveyed can be successfully conveyed properly. 6) Communicability, related to the level of knowledge and ability to receive messages, such as educational background, age, etc. 7) Distribution channels, as a means or media in delivering messages.

Communication Barriers

Despite our best efforts to establish communication, there is still a possibility of failure due to various factors. Disorders or obstacles in communication can arise and affect part or even the entire course of the communication process. According to Cruden and Sherman (in [Silviani, 2020](#)), barriers to communication can occur due to: 1) Technical barriers: include a lack of necessary facilities and infrastructure, the use of inappropriate communication techniques and methods, and physical conditions that prevent communication, 2) Semantic or linguistics barriers: obstacles related to errors in interpretation, incorrect understanding of

language, and improper message conveyance during the communication process, and 3) Behavioural barriers: include a priori views, prejudices based on emotions, an authoritarian atmosphere, an unwillingness to change, and an egocentric nature.

Customer Service

Customer service is any form of activity aimed at providing satisfaction to customers by meeting their needs and desires through service ([Kasmir, 2018](#)). The success of this service is contingent on creativity, initiative, and the ability to establish relationships with others. This underscores the significance of customer service representatives' interpersonal skills in addition to their service delivery. In the context of customer service roles, Blanding (through [Ratri & Ambarwati, 2021](#)) asserts that companies must prioritize individuals with strong interpersonal skills, resilience, proficiency in problem-solving, the capacity to work effectively under pressure, meticulous attention to detail, and proficient communication skills.

In managing customer service operations within airport settings, PT Angkasa Pura II (Persero) (2021) categorizes this service into two primary segments:

1) Customer Service PID (Public Information Desk)

The Customer Service Public Information Desk is part of the Information Center unit. As a frontline officer, the person on this team is responsible for serving customers directly. This includes greeting customers, maintaining a positive demeanor, referring them to the appropriate resources if necessary, and providing services for information requests or customer complaints.

2) Customer Service PAS (Public Address System)

The Customer Service Public Address System utilizes a voice amplification system that is distributed throughout the airport service area. This system is responsible for conveying information verbally through a loudspeaker system (announcement). The information conveyed includes flight schedules, airport services, and other information of a general or emergency nature.

It is clear that both roles are essential to the effective functioning of airline customer service. Specifically, they are instrumental in ensuring the effective dissemination of crucial information, such as boarding announcements, final calls, and notices regarding items left behind. Their efforts play a pivotal role in maintaining order and safety within the airport environment.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative descriptive research study, to describe a clear picture of a problem in accordance with the facts in the field. This research was conducted at Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport in June 2025 at Customer Service in the Information Center Unit.

The primary data of this research are qualitative which derived from participatory observation techniques and semi-structured interviews with three (3) Customer Service officers: supervisors and officers. The observation sheet and interview guide were developed from the Standard Operative Procedure (SOP), Cultip & Allen (1952) and Cruden & Sherman (1976). The secondary data of this research was obtained from documents related to SOPs and HPA Customer Service reports/logbooks.

The validity of the research data was ensured by triangulation of data collection techniques and data sources that already exist (Sugiyono, 2022). Triangulation of sources tests the data credibility by examining data obtained from various data sources, including interviews, archives, and other documents. While, triangulation of techniques involves evaluating data obtained from one source using different methods, such as comparing observation results with interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was employed in accordance with Miles & Huberman (2014) covering data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Effective Communication implemented by HPA Customer Service Officers

The success of information services by HPA CS officers is greatly influenced by their ability to apply effective communication. Studies indicate that customer satisfaction is positively correlated with the reputation-building and problem-solving skills of service staff ([Ali et al., 2018](#)). Information services at the airport encompass more than just the delivery of instructions; they are a complex two-way communication process that demands a high level of professionalism. In order to establish effective communication, there are at least seven key aspects that must be considered.

Passengers' trust is built through a professional, friendly and informative attitude. Officers demonstrate this by listening to details, delivering accurate, straightforward, clear and relevant information without beating around the bush, and communicating calmly, kindly and politely using the "three magic words" (*excuse me, thank you, please wait*). Appropriate non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, polite tone of voice, and empathetic gestures, also reinforce credibility. This is supported by Arumawati et.al (2024) that language etiquette can contribute to the establishment of harmonious relationships, and that maintaining a polite and respectful manner can make others feel valued and listened to. To ensure this credibility, officers also regularly conduct briefing sessions before going on duty. The company also conducts quarterly internal refreshment and training and biannual socialization from the airport training center to ensure officers' knowledge and confidence ([Arumawati & Aulia, 2024](#)). This is in line with Tanković, et al. (2023) who emphasize on the significance of employee training in establishing credibility. Besides, good communication skills coupled with credibility are needed among front-office staff or customer service representatives (CSRs) in the tourism sector to ensure customer trust ([Tankovic et al., 2023](#)).

Officers prioritize passengers based on the urgency of the question, not the order of arrival. In crowded or emergency conditions, they remain calm and confident when delivering information. The delivery method is customized with short, clear, and straightforward sentences, and a slight increase in voice volume without appearing panicked. These are in line with Macaulay & Cook (as cited in ([Ratri & Ambarwati, 2021](#))) that building effective communication can be manifested by utilizing voice effectively and also providing clear explanations. The communication atmosphere remains conducive even during peak hours at HPA Customer Service, with officers able to organize the flow of services verbally in a persuasive manner and adjust the way of communicating to the surrounding conditions.

Accurate and relevant information is essential for effective communication content. CS officers are responsible for not only conveying information, but also ensuring that the content of the message addresses the needs of passengers. They refer to SOPs, information update documents, and airport information systems (FIDS) to maintain validity. The alignment between verbal and visual information, such as digital boards, is indicative of effective internal communication. Any information provided to passengers is also reconfirmed to ensure that there is no miscommunication. Indarwati, et.al (2024) states that the ability to read nonverbal signals and establish positive interpersonal relationships can help officers to convey information that suits passenger needs ([Indarwati et al., 2024](#)).

HPA CS officers ensure clarity of oral communication by using simple, non-technical language, speaking slowly with clear intonation, and maintaining eye contact to keep passengers focused. Research suggests that non-verbal behaviors, such as facial expressions and body language, convey messages that can affirm or undermine the verbal content being communicated ([Tusell-Rey et al., 2021](#)). Information is often repeated in different forms (e.g., short points or general terms) and adapted to the unique characteristics and understanding of each passenger, demanding officer creativity. This aligns with the findings of Ratri and

Ambarwati (2021), who emphasize the essential role of effective communication in ensuring exceptional service quality by customer service officers, particularly when engaging with passengers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In the field, officers also use simple Indonesian or systematic basic English to communicate with foreign passengers. Messages always begin with an introduction to the need and are delivered without confusion, maintaining clarity and calmness even in time-pressure situations close to boarding time.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of information, officers participate in daily briefings during every shift change and the appointment of a PIC (Person In Charge) is made. The PIC is responsible for regularly updating data. This aims to prevent contradiction in information communication among team members. This aligns with the findings of Pamungkas and Widagdo (2024), which underscores the significance of seamless coordination and consistency in information dissemination among airport personnel to prevent passenger confusion. This ensures that passengers receive consistent and accurate information from different officers. This clarity was also boosted by providing reconfirmation or additional directions ([Pamungkas & Widagdo, 2024](#)).

CS officers demonstrate strong active listening skills and provide prompt and appropriate responses. One of the most significant challenges is effectively accommodating diverse passenger characteristics. They adjust their communication style (language, intonation, tempo) based on passenger characteristics (e.g., more casual for millennials, more patient and slower for the elderly) and create a comfortable atmosphere with a personalized approach. This awareness supports one of communication competence by Beebe & Beebe (2021) that communicators should adjust to the situations, culture, and who they are talking to. Similar to Ginusti & Sari (2023), to take this effort communicators should consider the cultural variances and ensure the respectful and effective conveyance message. Active listening is also evident from the habit of repeating the gist of passengers' questions for confirmation and observing their responses. In their responses, officers are both direct and clear, often using gestures to clarify instructions. This adaptability and responsiveness proved to be very effective, especially when dealing with rushed or confused passengers' post-relocation, ensuring they received clear and practical information to prevent mistakes or delays. Officers also demonstrated empathy towards passengers who were frustrated or panicked by the relocation, and they calmly provided solutions and ensured passengers felt valued ([Ginusti & Sari, 2024](#)). This aligns with the findings of Zulqaidah et al. (2025), who concluded that, in addition to managing one's own emotions, the ability to empathize with the feelings of others is a crucial component of emotional intelligence in interpersonal communication ([Zulqaidah, 2025](#)).

CS officers employ creative methods to distribute information through a variety of channels. In addition to verbal explanations, they utilize gestures and mimics to assist passengers. Besides, they also provide an airport floor map at the information desk. Other channels used include the Public Address System (PAS) for comprehensive voice announcements and Digital Wayfinding (electronic maps) that passengers can access. However, field observations indicated limitations in static visual channels, such as airport signage. Some passengers experienced confusion due to unclear or outdated signage following the renovation and relocation of the counters. Signage is essential visual assistance in providing information to passengers, since incorrect or even ambiguous signage can potentially lead to confusion ([Ginusti & Sari, 2024](#)). While the role of officers as direct information channels has proven effective in clarifying, the effectiveness of visual channels still needs to be improved to ensure information is conveyed fully and consistently, reducing passenger confusion.

Communication Barriers of HPA Customer Service Officers

On the other hand, such communication does not always run smoothly, especially in an operational environment such as a busy, dynamic, and punctuality-oriented airport. In such

conditions, any form of disruption or ineffectiveness of communication has the potential to cause misunderstanding, decreased service quality, and disruption of the information service process to passengers following the relocation of the airline's CS counter. Based on interviews and observations conducted, researchers have identified various barriers to effective communication during interactions between airport CS officers and passengers. These barriers include technical, linguistic, and behavioral aspects, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

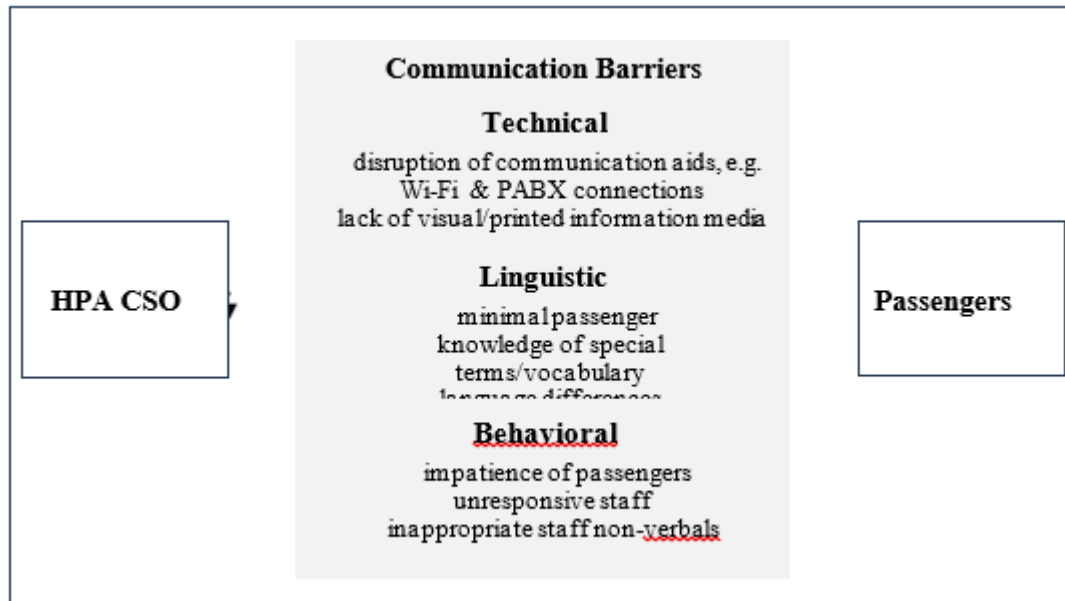


Figure 1. Communication Barriers Faced by HPA CSO (Source: data processed, 2025)

Technical barriers occur when the means of communication aids used to support the delivery of information are disrupted. From the observations, there were frequent Wi-Fi signal interruptions on the computer (PC) used by officers to access the flight information system, airline schedules, and terminal maps as well as internal telephone line interruptions (PABX) to coordinate with airlines or other units. It was also found that some FIDS (Flight Information Display System) screens in certain areas were not displaying the latest information or were even experiencing technical problems, making it difficult for passengers to find information about the position of new counters. In addition, visual information facilities or printed information media such as brochures or terminal maps are not yet evenly available at all strategic points of the terminal, which causes some passengers to not have access to supporting visual information. This certainly hinders officers in explaining the location of the counters thoroughly, especially when the terminal is congested.

Additionally, semantic barriers may arise due to differences in language understanding or the use of terms that are less familiar to passengers. In some situations, officers encountered passengers who were unfamiliar with specific terms such as "*departure gate*," "*check-in counter*," or "*service relocation*." This was especially common among passengers who rarely traveled or were unfamiliar with aviation terminology. Additionally, there are challenges associated with communicating with foreign passengers who have limited proficiency in Indonesian or English. preferences. To communicate effectively and facilitate passengers from different language backgrounds, foreign language competences, including English, are vital for airport staff (Ginusti & Sari, 2024). HPA CS officers attempt to explain using plain language or gestures, visual aids, and translator apps. In some cases, officers may request that passengers provide written details, including the destination or the airline, to ensure clear comprehension. While these efforts are beneficial, they are not always sufficient for addressing complex

inquiries that necessitate detailed explanations. Language differences pose a significant challenge, particularly when the information being conveyed is urgent or technical, such as when passengers are already in a hurry or panic due to a change in service location. Having effective communication skills is essential for addressing such challenges ([Makayev et al., 2021](#))

Behavioral barriers relate to the attitudes and responses of both passengers and the officers themselves. CS officers sometimes encountered passengers who exhibited impatience or anger while waiting for their turn to be served, particularly when the queue at the information desk was quite crowded or when passengers refused to comply with explanations. Some passengers made their way to the front of the queue without waiting for their turn, and others interrupted the officer's questions to other passengers. This created a disruptive communication atmosphere. This issue often arises when passengers are in a hurry, fatigued, or unaware of the change in counter location. Employees trained in NVC are better equipped to interpret customer emotions, even those not verbally expressed, which can improve service responses and reduce customer frustration ([Awasthi & Kumar, 2022](#)). While the majority of officers conduct themselves professionally, there is a possibility of delayed response or less friendly communication in crowded conditions or when the workload is high. However, this occurrence is not prevalent. Friendliness and emotional involvement in communication also have a major influence on the success of service communication ([Zulqaidah, 2025](#)). The observation also revealed that the officer responded promptly, but his tone and facial expression appeared unenthusiastic and lacked empathy. While the information provided was accurate, the officer's non-verbal conduct led the passenger to appear uncertain. This aligns with Tusell-Rey et al. (2021) that non-verbal behaviors convey messages that can undermine the verbal content being communicated. Consequently, the passenger sought further clarification from other officers ([Tusell-Rey et al., 2021](#)).

CS officers have developed effective strategies to overcome these barriers. These strategies include the use of alternative media (e.g., gestures, maps, and translators), adaptive communicative attitudes, and improvisation when information media is ineffective. However, these barriers persist as a challenge that requires heightened attention from management, particularly in enhancing the inclusivity and reliability of communication channels in airport public areas.

5. CONCLUSION

Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport (HPA) Customer Service (CS) officers demonstrated high competence in effective communication, particularly in building trust and managing complex interactions especially after the relocation of airline counters. They demonstrated high professionalism, adaptability, and exceptional ability to build passengers' trust through strong credibility (friendly attitude, accurate information), context adaptation (staying calm when crowded), excellent message clarity and consistency (simple language, repetitive information), high responsiveness and empathy (active listening, adjusting communication style), and utilization of various communication channels (gestures, maps).

Nevertheless, officers still face various communication barriers. Technical barriers cover Wi-Fi interference, internal phones, outdated FIDS, and unclear or uneven signage. In relation to semantics or language, differences in language understanding (including accents and aviation jargon) and difficulty explaining complex information to foreign passengers can also hinder communication. Lastly, the behavioral contributing factors to communication barrier are passenger impatience or anger that disrupts interactions, as well as a potential decrease in staff friendliness when workload is high.

The findings have several implications. This research supports the relevance of effective communication models and the framework of communication barriers in the context of a

multicultural airport. Practically, HPA Airport needs to improve its technical infrastructure (Wi-Fi, FIDS, signage), provide more intensive language and intercultural communication training, and develop supporting tools (translator applications). In addition, it is essential to optimize queue and workload management. Furthermore, we should continuously promote the development of soft skills and emotional intelligence among officers to ensure an optimal passenger experience.

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