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Post-Merger Cultural Integration and Customer Experience: An NLP Analysis of Indonesian Airport Reviews

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Abstract: This study investigates the post-merger organizational culture integration of Indonesia's state-owned airport operators, PT Angkasa Pura I and II, under the InJourney holding. It explores how core values are reflected in customer experience (CX) through digital feedback. Leveraging Natural Language Processing (NLP), the study analyzes 1,971 segmented review sentences derived from 619 user-submitted Google Maps reviews across six major airports. Reviews were classified by language and grouped into three time periods. Using lexicon-based sentiment scoring, CX dimension mapping, and cultural artifact detection linked to the AKHLAK core values, the analysis reveals that customers primarily discuss functional service aspects such as service quality, environment, and flow. Emotional and loyalty-related expressions were minimal. A decline in sentiment was observed in the post-merger phase, especially in ex-AP II airports. Cultural value mentions remained sparse and inconsistent. Statistical tests confirm significant differences across periods and regions, yet the impact of cultural integration on CX remains limited. These findings highlight the gap between internal cultural transformation efforts and external customer perceptions, offering methodological and managerial implications for monitoring public service transformation using big data analytics.

Keyword: Post-merger integration; Organizational culture; Customer experience; Natural language processing; State-owned enterprise (SOE).

INTRODUCTION

In the last five years, the Indonesian government has aggressively restructured state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the tourism and transportation sectors. A centerpiece of this effort was the creation of Holding PT Aviarsi Pariwisata Indonesia (Persero) – branded InJourney – which consolidated strategic entities including the country's two airport operators, Angkasa Pura I (API) and Angkasa Pura II (APII). The 2021–2022 merger of API and APII was positioned as a national strategic project with the vision of forming the world's fifth-largest airport operator by passenger volume [pwc.com/gentala.institute](https://www.pwc.com/gentala/institute). Indeed, post-merger Indonesia now manages 37 airports serving approximately 162 million passengers annually, putting it fifth globally in scale [pwc.com](https://www.pwc.com). Such scale, however, cannot be achieved by structural

integration alone – unifying the disparate organizational cultures, values, and work practices across entities is deemed a prerequisite for long-term success. As noted by industry observers, merging cultures, not just systems, is critical to realizing merger synergies in the long run. This underscores the importance of studying organizational culture integration as part of the SOE transformation agenda.

Integrating the cultures of API and APII poses a considerable challenge given the complexity of the public airport service environment. An airport’s operations involve a multifaceted ecosystem of actors – security officers, check-in staff, ground handlers, airline personnel, immigration and customs authorities, commercial tenants, regulators, and more – each with their own procedures, service standards, and even sub-cultures. Passengers interact with multiple stakeholders during their journey, so any breakdown at one service touchpoint can mar the overall experience. Prior to the merger, API and APII operated independently for decades, managing different regional airport clusters (API in central/eastern Indonesia and APII in the western region). They evolved distinct organizational cultures – potentially varying in leadership style, service orientation, and accountability structures – shaped by their geographic and historical contexts. Merging these two entities requires reconciling these cultural differences. A purely structural or procedural approach is insufficient; a cultural approach is needed to bridge norms and values so that integration proceeds harmoniously. Thus, examining post-merger organizational culture integration is crucial, especially for ensuring sustainable service performance in the public eye.

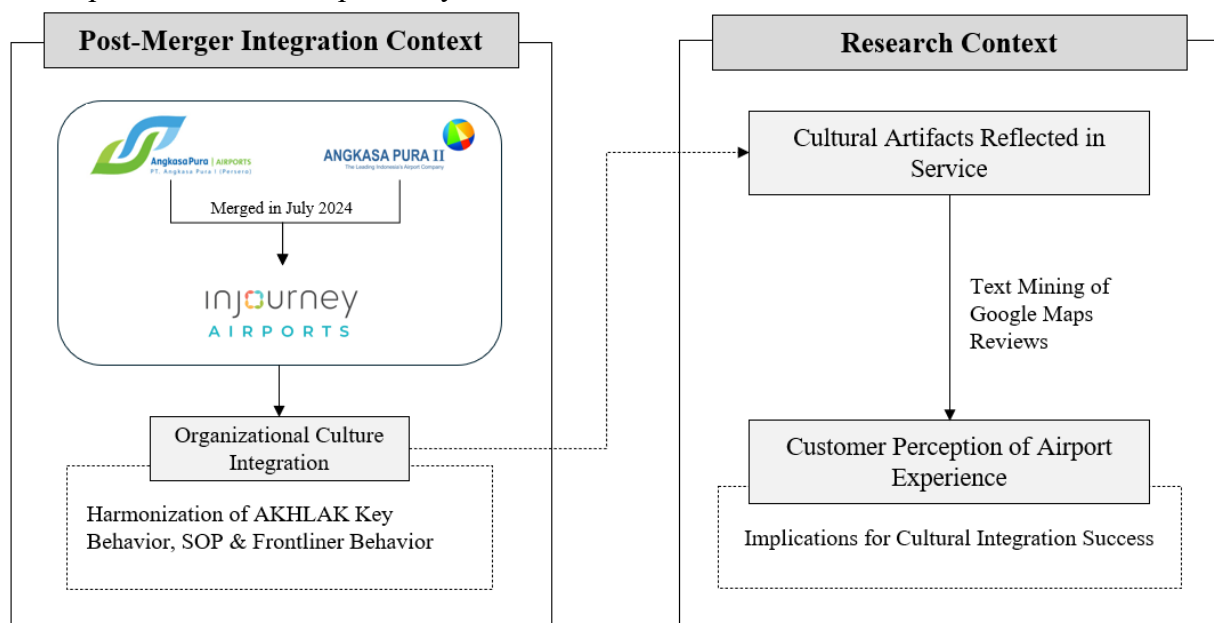


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Research

Beyond internal challenges, the merger takes place against a backdrop of rising customer expectations in public services. Driven by digital literacy and modern lifestyles, the public now demands fast, efficient, “seamless” service that is also empathetic and personalized. Airports today are viewed not just as transit points but as “experience spaces” that must deliver comfort, safety, and professionalism. Global trends show that customer experience (CX) has become a key success factor in airport management, as superior passenger experience drives higher satisfaction, revenue, and loyalty. According to Airports Council International, enhancing customer experience is critical for airport operators to meet evolving passenger needs. In this light, an airport’s organizational culture plays a pivotal role in service quality – a culture emphasizing friendliness, clarity of information, and responsiveness will be directly reflected in frontline staff behavior and daily services, shaping positive customer perceptions. Conversely, internal cultural disharmony can lead to inconsistent service delivery on the

ground. Therefore, post-merger culture integration should not be seen as merely an internal issue; it is a determining factor for passenger satisfaction and loyalty in the merged entity’s services. This situation creates urgency for empirical research connecting internal cultural integration with external customer experience outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of Key Literature Themes

No.	Theme	Key Concepts / Dimensions	Main Authors & Sources	Implication for This Study
1	Organizational Culture in Post-Merger	Cultural integration, cultural misalignment, acculturation, subculture conflict	Cartwright & Cooper (1993), Weber & Camerer (2003), Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988)	Highlights risks of cultural fragmentation and necessity of harmonization after institutional restructuring.
2	Cultural Artefacts in Public Institutions	Symbols, narratives, rituals, systems, language	Schein (2010), Hatch (1993), Hofstede et al. (2010)	Emphasizes visible indicators of culture that can be captured from customer-facing processes and reviews.
3	AKHLAK Core Values in SOEs	Amanah, Kompeten, Harmonis, Loyal, Adaptif, Kolaboratif	Kementerian BUMN (2020), Setiawan et al. (2022)	Provides value-based framework for evaluating employee behavior and organizational branding in state enterprises.
4	Customer Experience (CX) Frameworks	Functional, emotional, sensorial, social, symbolic dimensions	Verhoef et al. (2009), Lemon & Verhoef (2016), Pine & Gilmore (1999)	Serves as main structure for NLP classification of customer reviews in multi-dimensional CX space.
5	Experience of Service in Public Airports	Service encounter, waiting time, security, cleanliness, signage	Fodness & Murray (2007), Chen & Chang (2005), Graham (2011)	Provides airport-specific context for CX variables relevant to passenger reviews.
6	Sentiment Analysis & NLP in CX Research	Lexicon-based polarity, entity extraction, topic modeling	Cambria et al. (2017), Liu (2012), Feldman (2013)	Justifies methodological use of sentiment scoring and classification using unstructured customer feedback.
7	Public Trust and Institutional Perception	Satisfaction, loyalty, transparency, accountability	Bouckaert & Van de Walle (2003), Grimmlikhuijsen et al. (2013)	Connects CX outcomes with long-term public trust in post-merger service institutions.

Existing research suggests that many mergers and acquisitions (M&As) fail to meet expectations, often due to cultural incompatibility rather than financial or legal issues. *Harvard Business Review* estimates that roughly 70–90% of mergers do not achieve their intended goals primarily because of post-merger integration problems diva-portal.org. In particular, misalignment of organizational cultures and lack of shared values are frequently cited as factors that derail synergy, even when a merger’s strategic rationale is sound. Kenny (2020) reports that cultural integration issues undercut most other synergy levers in M&As, and indeed Kenny (2020) notes that about 70–90% of M&A deals fail to capture anticipated added value diva-portal.org. Similarly, Bapat (2025) highlights that failing to harmonize company cultures can nullify potential gains from reorganization. In the case of API and APII – two large SOEs – the risk of “culture clash” is very real. Differences in values, communication styles, and work habits could generate internal frictions that impede cross-unit collaboration. However, scholarly studies on organizational culture in Indonesian SOE mergers remain limited, let alone those linking culture integration directly with customer perceptions. Most prior studies have focused

on conceptual discussions or internal evaluations, without addressing the impact of culture integration on service users' perspectives. This literature gap points to a pressing need for empirical research that connects organizational culture dimensions with customer experience in a merger context. Findings from such research would provide strategic insights for managing cultural change in SOEs and offer empirical evidence to inform post-merger public service improvements.

A novel aspect of this study is the use of digital data from public customer reviews to assess cultural integration outcomes. In the digital era, customers increasingly share their service experiences openly on platforms like Google Maps, TripAdvisor, and social media. Google Maps, in particular, has become a dynamic repository of public opinion on services at facilities including airports. These online reviews are written voluntarily and spontaneously by users, reflecting their actual experiences with rich detail in context and time. Compared to structured surveys, digital review data offer several advantages: sheer volume (potentially thousands of observations), diversity of user perspectives, and greater candor/spontaneity since feedback is given without provider intervention. Online reviews are also publicly accessible, making them an authentic data source for deep exploration of the "voice of the customer." Recent research has demonstrated that such user-generated content can serve as an alternative means to evaluate airport service quality, complementing and cross-validating conventional survey results. For example, analyses of thousands of Google Maps reviews have produced sentiment scores and service topic trends strongly correlated with official Airport Service Quality (ASQ) satisfaction metrics. By tapping into this abundant data, we can gauge not only how customers rate their experiences, but also *what* they talk about and *how* they talk about it – including any references to values or behaviors indicative of the underlying organizational culture.

In summary, this study bridges literature on post-merger cultural integration, customer experience management, and big-data text analytics. It responds to calls for more empirical work in the context of public-sector mergers and leverages an innovative data source to do so. The objectives are twofold: **(1)** to examine how the merger's cultural integration efforts (embodied by the introduction of new core values) have impacted customer experience as reflected in online reviews, and **(2)** to demonstrate an NLP-based approach for assessing alignment between internal culture initiatives and external service outcomes. The next sections detail our methodology and present findings on whether and how the merged organization's culture change is visible to its customers.

METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This research is designed as a qualitative, exploratory study with an interpretivist orientation. It investigates an emerging phenomenon – customer experience in the context of a new corporate values implementation – where predefined hypotheses are not firmly established. An interpretivist stance allows us to understand the subjective meanings and context of the merger experience, rather than to test a priori theories under strictly controlled conditions. The study uses a multi-case, longitudinal design. Each "case" corresponds to a different organizational unit within the InJourney holding (for confidentiality, specific company names are masked, but they include major SOEs in Indonesia's airport sector). Essentially, the two primary cases are the merged entities analogous to the former API and APII organizations. By examining multiple cases (the two regional groups of airports), we can identify common patterns and divergent outcomes, increasing the analytic generalizability of the insights compared to a single-case study. The cases were selected purposefully to be information-rich: all are entities that adopted the new AKHLAK core values and have an active presence on Google Maps for customer reviews. Studying these related cases under the same holding allows

observation of how a broad corporate culture program is reflected in customer experience across different service units.

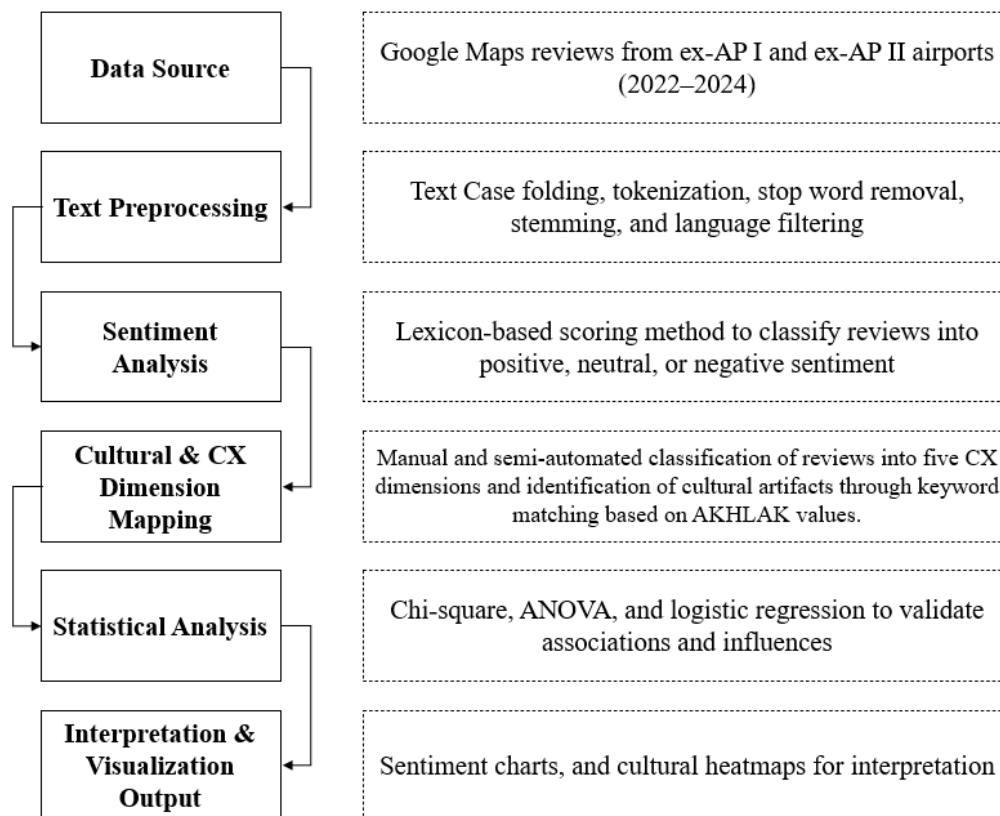


Figure 2. Structure of the NLP Analytical Flowchart

The longitudinal element involves analyzing data over multiple time periods to observe changes over time. The customer reviews were collected from three distinct periods relative to the merger and values implementation: more than 12 months pre-merger (Period A), within 12 months pre-merger (Period B), and post-merger (Period C). The temporal cutoffs were guided by the introduction of the AKHLAK core values in mid-2020 by the Ministry of SOEs. AKHLAK is an Indonesian acronym for six values – *Amanah* (Trustworthy), *Kompeten* (Competent), *Harmonis* (Harmonious), *Loyal* (Loyal), *Adaptif* (Adaptive), *Kolaboratif* (Collaborative) – which were mandated in July 2020 as the new universal values for all SOEs. The expectation was that internalizing these values would eventually manifest in improved customer experiences and service ethos across the SOEs. To capture the potential impact of this cultural transformation, we defined the “before” period as up to mid-2020 and the “after” period as the time from July 2020 onwards. In practice, “pre-merger” reviews include all customer comments dated through June 2020, and “post-merger” reviews include those from July 2020 through the end of 2021 (covering roughly 18 months post-values rollout). We further subdivided the pre-merger period into two to distinguish longer-term baseline (Period A, >12 months prior) from the immediate run-up to the merger (Period B, the year leading up to it). This three-period segmentation allows a nuanced view of trends: whether any changes were already underway just before the merger versus longer-term patterns, and what happened after the merger.

Data Collection

We collected a total of 619 Google Maps reviews from six major airports in Indonesia (three airports formerly under API and three under APII). From these reviews, we extracted 1,971 segmented sentences that constituted the unit of analysis for NLP processing. Table 2

provides an overview of the dataset and review distribution. The six airports included top-tier facilities such as Soekarno-Hatta (Jakarta), I Gusti Ngurah Rai (Bali), and other regionally important airports. By including airports from both the ex-API and ex-APII groups, we capture any regional differences in customer feedback. Of the 1,971 review segments, 87% were in Indonesian (1,713 sentences) and 13% in English (258 sentences), reflecting the dominant use of the local language in feedback. In terms of timing, 81 segments were from >12 months pre-merger, 1,641 from the ≤12 months pre-merger, and 249 from post-merger, indicating that the bulk of available reviews occurred in the year before the merger (this includes a surge of domestic travel reviews in late 2019 and early 2020). The smaller number of post-merger reviews is partly due to reduced travel during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, but it still provides a substantial sample for assessing early post-merger impressions. All review data were retrieved from the Google Maps platform by searching each airport’s reviews and using the date filter to segment periods. The data was exported and stored in a structured format (CSV) for analysis, ensuring that each review entry included a timestamp, airport identifier, and text content.

Data Preparation and NLP Analysis

Prior to analysis, the review text underwent preprocessing and content classification according to our conceptual framework. Data preprocessing was necessary to clean and normalize the text for reliable analysis, while content classification involved labeling portions of text based on relevant categories (customer experience dimensions and culture-related themes):

- *Text Preprocessing*: We applied standard NLP preprocessing techniques using Python and R (with packages such as tidytext and textclean). Steps included converting all text to lowercase, removing punctuation, numbers, and extraneous symbols, and stripping stopwords (common words like “the”, “and” in English or “dan”, “yang” in Indonesian) that carry little meaning. We performed tokenization (splitting text into individual words) and corrected common slang or misspellings (e.g., mapping “gak” to “tidak” for “no/not”). Because the dataset was bilingual, we implemented a simple language detection by checking for language-specific stopwords, enabling us to split the corpus and apply appropriate sentiment lexicons for each language (Indonesian and English).
- *Experience Dimension Classification*: Each review sentence was categorized into major customer experience (CX) dimensions relevant to airport services. Based on prior literature and industry frameworks, we defined five broad CX dimensions: Service Quality (e.g., staff responsiveness, courtesy, efficiency), Physical Environment (e.g., facilities, cleanliness, comfort), Process Efficiency (e.g., wait times, queue management, baggage handling, flow), Experiential/Affective Factors (e.g., overall comfort, atmosphere, emotional impressions of the airport), and Overall Perception/Loyalty (e.g., indications of willingness to recommend or revisit, comments reflecting loyalty or general image). We developed keyword dictionaries for each dimension – for example, words like “clean” or “dirty” and “toilet” for Physical Environment; “delay”, “queue”, “fast” for Process Efficiency; “helpful”, “rude”, “friendly” for Service Quality; terms like “comfortable”, “enjoyable” for Experiential factors; and phrases like “recommend” or “best airport” for Overall perception. Using these lists, we programmatically tagged each review segment with one or more CX dimension labels if the text contained those keywords or related expressions. Notably, a single review could touch on multiple dimensions (e.g., “The airport was clean but the security line was very slow” would be tagged as both Physical Environment and Process Efficiency). This classification enabled quantification of what topics customers discussed most frequently and whether those emphases shifted after the merger.

- *Cultural Artifact and Value References*: In parallel, we analyzed the reviews for any references to cultural values or artifacts related to the AKHLAK core values. We created a dictionary of keywords associated with each of the six AKHLAK values. For instance, for *Amanah* (trustworthy), we included terms relating to trust, honesty, or integrity; for *Kompeten* (competent), terms about professionalism, skill, or knowledge; for *Harmonis* (harmonious), terms about friendliness, courtesy, or respect; for *Loyal* (loyal), terms about dedication or going above and beyond; for *Adaptif* (adaptive), terms about responsiveness to change, innovation, or flexibility; and for *Kolaboratif* (collaborative), terms about teamwork, coordination, or partnership. We did **not** expect customers to explicitly use the word “AKHLAK” (an internal acronym), but these keywords serve as proxies – e.g., a review saying “*staff sangat jujur dan membantu*” (“staff were very honest and helpful”) might reflect *Amanah* or *Kolaboratif* values in action. We scanned the tokenized reviews to flag occurrences of any value-related keywords. Each candidate was then manually reviewed in context to confirm it indeed signaled the intended value (to filter out false positives). This allowed us to mark review segments that contained any indication of the core values being reflected in the service encounter. Essentially, this is a search for cultural artifacts in the customer experience – evidence in customer language that might indicate the new corporate values have permeated front-line service.
- *Sentiment Analysis*: We performed a sentiment analysis on each review segment to gauge its overall positive, neutral, or negative tone. Sentiment analysis quantifies the affective valence of text – in our case, how satisfied or dissatisfied the customer is as inferred from their wording. We employed a lexicon-based sentiment scoring approach. For Indonesian, we utilized an Indonesian sentiment lexicon (adapted from research literature and augmented with common colloquial terms), and for English segments we used the VADER sentiment lexicon (which is well-suited for short social media-like texts). Each review segment received a sentiment polarity score; we then categorized the sentiment into Positive, Neutral, or Negative based on thresholding the score (with a band of near-zero scores considered neutral). This approach is transparent and interpretable, which was preferable for our managerial audience, though we acknowledge it might miss some context nuances compared to advanced machine learning models. The output was a sentiment label for each segment, which we later aggregated to compute the proportion of positive/neutral/negative reviews in each period and region.

After these steps, we had a structured dataset for analysis: each review segment was annotated with one or more CX dimension labels, zero or more cultural value flags, and a sentiment score/category, along with metadata for period and airport (region). This dataset allowed us to perform both descriptive analysis (e.g., distributions of topics and sentiments) and statistical tests for changes across time and between regions.

Statistical Analysis

We applied several statistical tests to examine differences in the distributions of customer feedback characteristics:

- *Chi-square Tests*: We used chi-square tests of independence to compare categorical distributions. For example, we tested whether the distribution of sentiment categories (positive/neutral/negative) differed significantly pre- vs. post-merger, and whether sentiment distribution differed between the API vs. APII region reviews. Similarly, we constructed contingency tables of CX dimension frequency by period to see if topic emphasis shifted significantly post-merger. Another chi-square test was used on a contingency table of CX dimension *by presence/absence of cultural value mention* to

identify any association between the type of service comment and whether it included a cultural reference. These tests help determine if observed differences in percentages (e.g., an increase in neutral comments after the merger) are statistically significant or likely due to chance.

- *ANOVA*: Given our longitudinal design with two factors (Time Period and Region), we conducted a two-way Analysis of Variance on the sentiment scores. Here, Period (pre vs post) and Region (ex-API vs ex-APII) were treated as independent factors, and the sentiment score (on a numeric scale) as the dependent variable. This allowed us to test for a main effect of period (i.e., overall change in sentiment from pre to post), a main effect of region (difference between API and APII overall), and an interaction effect (whether the change over time depended on region). We used a significance level of 0.05. Significant effects would corroborate patterns observed descriptively (for instance, a period×region interaction would confirm that one region's sentiment dropped more than the other's).
- *Logistic Regression*: To further investigate factors influencing sentiment, we fitted a logistic regression model treating sentiment category as the outcome. We ran models for different dichotomies: (a) Positive vs Non-positive (neutral/negative combined), and (b) Negative vs Non-negative, etc. Predictor variables included Period, Region, and the presence of certain CX dimensions or value mentions in the review. The logistic regression estimates the odds of a review being positive (versus not) given these factors. This helps quantify, for example, the effect of being in the post-merger period on the likelihood of a positive review, controlling for other factors. It also identifies which service topics or values, if present in a review, significantly tilt the sentiment. For instance, we can see if mentions of a particular CX dimension (say, *Physical Environment*) are associated with higher odds of a positive review, or if a review that contains a trust-related word (*Amanah*) is more likely to be positive. These regressions complement the descriptive analysis by statistically validating which factors are significant drivers of sentiment.

For all statistical tests, results with $p < 0.05$ were considered significant. We report key test statistics in the results section alongside the substantive interpretation of those results. The combination of content analysis and statistical testing provides both qualitative insight and quantitative rigor, aligning with the mixed-methods spirit of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Customer Experience Dimensions Before vs. After Merger

Analysis of the review content revealed that functional service aspects overwhelmingly dominated customer discussions both before and after the merger. Reviews were coded into the five CX dimensions described above, and the distribution was highly skewed toward core service quality and process issues. The most frequently mentioned dimension across all reviews (in all periods) was Service Quality, followed closely by Process Efficiency – together, these two categories (essentially the functional performance of the airport services) accounted for the majority of the comments. This aligns with prior research in airport satisfaction which shows that tangible service elements (like efficient processes and competent service delivery) are primary drivers of passenger satisfaction. Customers in our dataset largely focused on pragmatic concerns: for example, many reviews talked about how long they waited in lines, the helpfulness or rudeness of staff, the smoothness of baggage claims, etc., rather than more abstract experiential factors. This finding is consistent with Bezerra and Gomes (2019), who found that tangible service quality dimensions strongly affect overall airport satisfaction. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of CX dimensions in the review data by merger period.

Table 2. Distribution of Customer Experience (CX) Dimensions by Merger Period

CX Dimension	Pre-Merger (A)	Pre-Merger (B)	Post-Merger (C)	Total (All Periods)
Service Quality	22.4%	13.3%	23.6%	18.3%
Physical Environment	28.8%	24.0%	28.4%	33.3%
Process Efficiency	25.4%	24.0%	25.4%	23.7%
Experiential Factors	20.6%	36.0%	19.7%	22.8%
Loyalty & Overall Image	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%	1.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

In Table 2, each column sums to 100% for that period, indicating the proportion of comments that fell into each category (note that a single comment can be counted in more than one category if it mentioned multiple aspects, but these percentages represent share of total mentions). Several observations emerge: Service Quality was a top category in Period A and C (roughly 22–24%), dipped notably in Period B (~13%), and then rose again post-merger. Process Efficiency stayed relatively consistent around 24–25% in all periods. Physical Environment was about 24–29% each period, with a slight uptick post-merger compared to Period B. Experiential factors were rarely mentioned overall, except an unusual spike in Period B (36% of mentions in that period included some experiential aspect), and then returned to ~20% post-merger. Loyalty/Image remained very low (around 2–3%) throughout.

One notable dimension is Physical Environment. Mentions of facilities, cleanliness, comfort, and infrastructure were relatively frequent, making Physical Environment the third most common category in the reviews (and even the second most common in overall aggregate, at 33.3%, indicating many comments touched on this along with other factors). Customers often commented on airport cleanliness, availability of amenities, seating comfort, and so on. The prominence of environment-related feedback resonates with studies highlighting the importance of the built environment in passenger experience – for instance, maintaining clean and comfortable facilities can significantly influence satisfaction (Lim & Tan, 2022). Our data indicated a modest increase in the relative frequency of environment-related comments in the post-merger period (28.4% of comments, up from 24.0% in the preceding year). One interpretation is that during the integration, management may have focused on visible infrastructure or facility improvements (or conversely, some issues arose as facilities were consolidated) which prompted slightly more customer attention to those aspects. However, the key point is that the hierarchy of customer priorities did not fundamentally change after the merger: operational service quality and efficiency remained top-of-mind, environment was important but secondary, and more emotional or loyalty-related themes were scarce.

Indeed, the Experiential/Affective dimension (which might include comments on the overall atmosphere, feelings about the airport, pride or comfort beyond utilitarian aspects) was relatively rare in comments. It spiked to 36% in Period B – this could be due to fewer total reviews in that COVID-impacted timeframe, where those who did travel perhaps remarked on the eerie quiet or other unusual aspects, thus more experiential comments. Post-merger, experiential mentions fell back under 20%. Similarly, Loyalty & Overall Image (e.g., “I love this airport, will use again” or comparisons of one airport’s reputation versus another) were almost negligible. This suggests that few reviewers talked about the airport experience in a holistic or relationship sense – the vast majority stuck to the concrete positives or negatives they encountered.

Importantly, the merger did not dramatically alter what customers were talking about. In the post-merger dataset, customers still predominantly discussed the same functional aspects

(service speed, staff behavior, cleanliness, etc.). There was no surge of comments about new services, improved hospitality, or other changes that might have resulted from a cultural integration initiative. In other words, the distribution of topics remained quite stable. A chi-square test comparing the distribution of CX dimensions in pre-merger vs post-merger periods was not significant at the 0.05 level ($p \approx 0.15$, χ^2 test), reinforcing that any small shifts (like the slight rise in physical environment mentions) could be due to chance. From the customer perspective, the day-to-day service experience felt continuous despite the internal merger and culture change. This is a first indication that, at least in the short term, the merger’s cultural integration had not introduced new focal points in the customer experience.

This finding can be interpreted through an organizational culture lens. One might argue that the two organizations (API and APII) prior to merger each had established routines and priorities that were effective in keeping operations stable – essentially a cultural equilibrium focusing on reliable service delivery. Denison’s organizational culture model identifies *Consistency* (strong core values and stable processes) as a trait that can drive efficiency and reliability. It is possible that both API and APII had a high degree of internal consistency in their operations, which continued post-merger, resulting in customers perceiving no major changes. In contrast, if the cultural integration had immediately introduced new visible practices (for example, a new emphasis on customer courtesy campaigns or technology that wowed customers), we might have seen new themes emerging in comments. The absence of such indicates that cultural change was either not yet manifesting in operations, or it maintained continuity by design (to avoid disrupting service).

Sentiment Trends and Regional Differences

We next examine the sentiment trends in customer feedback from before to after the merger. Quantitatively, there was a discernible dip in positive sentiment post-merger alongside a rise in neutral sentiment. Before the merger, positive reviews constituted roughly 60–65% of all comments, with the remainder split between neutral and negative. In the post-merger period, the share of positive reviews dropped by about 5 percentage points, with a corresponding increase in neutral reviews. Negative review proportions stayed relatively constant or rose only slightly. This pattern – declining positivity and growing neutrality – was observed in both main regional groups (the airports originally under API and those under APII), though it was more pronounced for APII’s region. In other words, the western region airports (former APII) saw a stronger sentiment decline than the central/eastern region (former API).

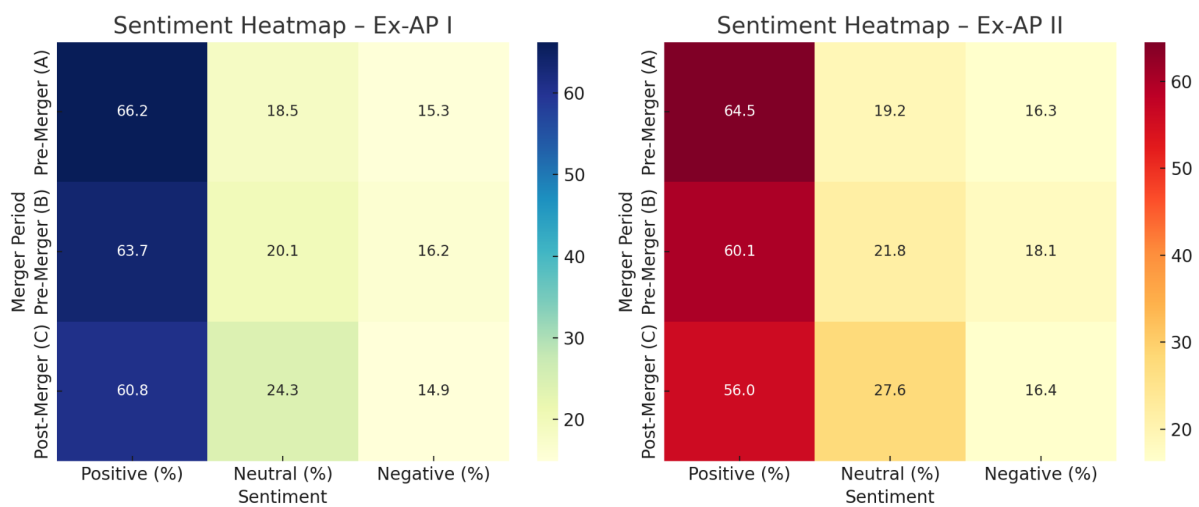


Figure 2. Sentiment trends by period for ex-AP I region (left) and ex-AP II region (right).

Each plot shows the percentage of reviews that were Positive, Neutral, or Negative in the two pre-merger sub-periods (A: >12 months pre; B: ≤12 months pre) and post-merger (C).

The ex-AP II region experienced a sharper drop in positive sentiment and larger rise in neutral sentiment after the merger, compared to the ex-AP I region.

Figure 1 illustrates these trends. In the ex-AP I group, positive feedback modestly declined from about 66% (Period A) to 61% (Period C), while neutral feedback rose from ~18% to ~24%. Negative stayed around 15%. In the ex-AP II group, positives dropped more markedly from ~64% to 56%, and neutrals rose from ~19% to ~28%, with negatives roughly 16–18% throughout. By the post-merger period, the ex-AP II airports had only 56% positive sentiment in reviews (a considerable majority still, but lower than before), whereas ex-AP I airports had about 61% positive. Neutral comments comprised more than a quarter of APII-region reviews post-merger, indicating a lot of “okay” or middling experiences, whereas API region had about 24% neutral.

To verify these patterns, we conducted statistical tests. A two-way ANOVA on sentiment scores (treating each review’s sentiment polarity as a numerical variable) found a significant main effect of Time Period on sentiment ($F = 16.06$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that overall sentiment levels changed from pre- to post-merger. There was also a significant Period \times Region interaction ($p < 0.001$), meaning the change over time differed between the two regions. The main effect of Region alone (ignoring time) was not significant ($p > 0.3$), implying that before the merger the two regions did not have dramatically different average sentiment – it was the *trajectory* of change that diverged. Post-hoc tests showed that for the APII group, the average sentiment score dropped more sharply than for the API group. This aligns with the raw proportions: APII’s positive review percentage fell more, and its neutral/negative combined rose more, compared to API’s more modest shifts. A chi-square test focusing just on the distribution of sentiment categories pre vs post within APII region was significant (χ^2 $p < 0.01$), whereas for API region it was marginal.

What might explain this relative decline in sentiment, especially in one region? Several plausible interpretations emerge. First, the introduction of a new organizational structure and culture (AKHLAK values, new holding company, integration of operations) could have introduced some short-term uncertainty or “growing pains” that affected service consistency. As noted in service quality theory, customer satisfaction is highly sensitive to consistency and reliability of service. During post-merger integration, changes in procedures or staffing could temporarily disrupt the smoothness of service (e.g. new coordination requirements, unfamiliar processes, or simply the distractions of internal change). This may have led to slightly more mixed or lukewarm experiences, hence more neutral feedback rather than delighted customers. Customers might have noticed minor issues or simply a lack of improvement, resulting in fewer glowing reviews.

Second, specifically for the ex-APII region (which includes Indonesia’s busiest hub Jakarta and others), the merger might have had tangible impacts: for instance, if certain management resources were reallocated or if there was greater confusion in that region due to blending of systems, passengers there could have felt it more. Some APII-region reviews post-merger did complain about things like longer queues at checkpoints or changes in procedures that were inconvenient (based on a qualitative read of sample comments). Such issues could have unsettled those customers, tipping some experiences from positive to neutral or negative. Meanwhile, API-region airports (generally serving less congested hubs in Bali, Yogya, etc.) might have experienced a steadier ride, or their customer base might be slightly different (e.g., more tourists who tend to be upbeat).

An alternative interpretation is customer expectation adjustment. It’s possible that once the merger was publicized, especially with the promise of improvements, some customers expected to see changes. If those didn’t materialize quickly, their sentiment might have tempered. This is supported by the rise in neutral sentiment: a neutral review often indicates “it was fine, nothing special.” The slight drop in positive and rise in neutral could mean that many

customers still had acceptable experiences (no surge in negatives, which stayed low), but they weren't impressed enough to gush. In service literature, a rise in neutral sentiment can occur when customers' expectations increase or when service stabilizes at a merely adequate level – not bad enough to complain, but not delightful either. Our logistic regression results indeed quantified this: holding other factors constant, being in the post-merger period increased the odds of a review being Neutral (vs Negative) by a significant margin, and decreased the odds of being Positive (vs Negative). In plain terms, after the merger, a given review was more likely to be lukewarm and less likely to be glowing.

The fact that the APII region saw a larger sentiment shift suggests a possible cultural or operational divergence. It might be that APII's customers had higher expectations (perhaps because APII airports like Jakarta are international gateways where passengers expect world-class service), so a lack of immediate improvement felt like a letdown. Or, the APII organization's internal adjustment to the new culture lagged slightly more, leading to some service inconsistencies that API's region did not face as strongly. Organizational behavior studies suggest that when two groups with distinct identities undergo change, one group may react more strongly – in this case, APII staff and customers might have had a more difficult adaptation, resulting in more polarized outcomes (some very positive, some quite negative, fewer in-between). Indeed, we noticed qualitatively that some APII reviews remained extremely positive (perhaps by customers unaffected by any hiccups), while others were quite negative, whereas API region had more “it's okay” moderate reviews. This polarization in APII's feedback (some love it, some hate it) could indicate internal inconsistencies during the transition in that region.

Overall, from a customer perspective, service continuity was maintained – there was not a collapse in quality or a surge in complaints (negative feedback did not spike). However, service improvement was not evident either – satisfaction did not increase; if anything, enthusiasm dampened slightly. This neutral drift might reflect customers taking a “wait and see” approach or simply not perceiving any changes worth noting yet. In sum, early post-merger customer sentiment suggests that the merger's benefits (in terms of CX) had not yet been realized, and there may have been minor service frictions introduced.

Manifestation of Core Values (AKHLAK) in Customer Feedback

A central question of this study is whether the new corporate values – AKHLAK – introduced in 2020 permeated into the customer experience by appearing in customer feedback. We scanned for any references or language that could be linked to the six values. The results were striking in their subtlety: explicit references to the AKHLAK values were very scarce. Less than 5% of reviews in any period contained any keywords related to the core values, and there was no noticeable increase after the merger (in fact, minor fluctuations were within random variation). In absolute terms, words corresponding to Amanah (trustworthiness) and Kompeten (competence) appeared the most among the values, but still infrequently. Mentions of Harmonis (harmonious/friendly), Loyal, or Adaptif (adaptive) were extremely rare to non-existent. For example, very few customers used words that we mapped to “collaborative” or “innovative” in their reviews, and only occasional comments hinted at trust or reliability. Essentially, the AKHLAK acronym and its values had not made a strong imprint on what customers talk about. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the distribution of value-related references (as a percentage of all value mentions) across periods, although the low frequencies make these percentages volatile.

Table 3. Distribution of AKHLAK-related Value Mentions Across Periods (share of total value mentions by period)

AKHLAK Value	Period A (>12mo Pre)	Period B (≤12mo Pre)	Period C (Post)	Overall (% of all value mentions)
Amanah (Trust)	25.93%	25.90%	29.32%	26.33%
Kompeten (Competent)	18.52%	19.62%	18.88%	19.48%
Harmonis (Harmonious)	8.64%	8.96%	7.23%	8.73%
Loyal (Loyal)	24.69%	24.13%	26.10%	24.40%
Adaptif (Adaptive)	18.52%	15.60%	12.05%	15.27%
Kolaboratif (Collaborative)	0.00%	0.24%	0.00%	0.20%
<i>Others/Unclassified</i>	3.70%	5.55%	6.43%	5.58%

(Note: “Others” refers to value-related words that were outside the six core categories, or ambiguous context. The percentages in each column sum to ~100% within rounding, representing the distribution of all value mentions in that period.)

Interpreting Table 3: Among the few value mentions that did occur, *Amanah* and *Loyal* were relatively higher (each around one-quarter of the scant mentions). *Amanah* spiked slightly in Period C (29% of mentions, up from ~26%), but given the low base, this might be just a couple of incidents (indeed, one or two extra “honest” comments could swing it). *Kompeten* stayed around 18–19%. *Adaptif* mentions, small to begin with, seemed to decline post-merger (12% of mentions in C, down from 18% in A). *Harmonis* hovered ~8%, and *Kolaboratif* was almost absent (only a single possible mention in Period B). The “Others” category (catching any cultural words not fitting these values) was tiny, a few percent. In sum, no significant increase in value-related language was detected after the merger; if anything, mentions of *Adaptif* and some others decreased, and only *Loyal* showed a slight uptick proportionally.

This observation suggests that the espoused values had not yet been internalized into day-to-day service in a way that customers notice. Customers largely continued to comment on operational outcomes (good or bad) without invoking any of the new corporate ethos. If the values were truly ingrained and influencing employee behavior, one might expect to see more reviews mentioning things like honesty, helpful teamwork, adaptability to needs, etc., in a positive light. Instead, the reviews were “business-as-usual” in focus – for instance, a typical positive comment would be “*Staff helped me carry my luggage,*” which certainly indicates helpfulness, but the customer doesn’t frame it as “collaboration” or attribute it to a cultural value, it’s just seen as standard good service. A negative comment might say “*security line was slow,*” not “*staff lacked integrity*” or something that touches values. In short, the core values did not register in the “voice of the customer” at this stage.

From an internal change perspective, this is not entirely surprising. The AKHLAK values were an internal initiative – essentially a top-down mandate for all SOEs to adopt common values. Translating those abstract values into concrete customer-facing behaviors is a process that takes time and effort. The lack of explicit value mentions doesn’t necessarily mean the values have *no* effect; it may simply reflect the early stage of implementation. The organization might have been focusing on internal alignment (training, internal communications about AKHLAK) and had not yet reached the point where these changes manifest externally in a noticeable way. It could also be that employees were exhibiting some of these values but customers don’t label it as such. For example, staff might indeed be more *collaborative* behind the scenes after the merger – but unless that teamwork yields a visible improvement (like faster problem resolution that the customer explicitly notes), customers won’t mention

“collaboration.” They’ll just be happy the issue was solved. In fact, one positive finding in our analysis was that team coordination issues were rarely complained about by customers; when coordination among staff was noticed, it was usually in a positive way (e.g., “the staff worked together efficiently to handle the crowds”). Our logistic regression supported this: comments that involved teamwork or multiple staff roles had a strong positive sentiment association (i.e. teamwork-related keywords had a high coefficient predicting positive sentiment). This suggests that front-line staff were largely competent and even collaborative – aligning with two of the values (Kompeten and Kolaboratif) – at least to the extent that teamwork was not a pain point for customers. However, customers did not explicitly call it “collaboration,” they just experienced it as smooth service. So one could argue that some values were *indirectly* present (e.g., competence, some teamwork), but they were likely already part of the legacy service culture to some degree.

Our findings here mirror internal assessments from other sources. Saragih et al. (2024) found that in many Indonesian SOEs, the AKHLAK slogans and symbols often did not effectively reach the front-line employees who directly serve customers. Likewise, a survey of 91 SOEs reported uneven internalization of AKHLAK values: only the *Kompeten* value had a sufficient level of implementation, while the other five values were rated in the “low” category proceedings.unikom.ac.id. This is consistent with what we see: the values most likely to appear (albeit rarely) in reviews were *Amanah* (trustworthiness) and *Kompeten* – precisely those which internal surveys indicated had higher uptake – yet even those appeared infrequently. The others (Adaptif, Harmonis, Kolaboratif, Loyal in our case) were virtually absent, suggesting those values were not yet embraced enough to show up in customer interactions. This points to a gap between the organization’s espoused values vs. enacted values. In organizational culture terms, there is a lag between what leadership says (“we value integrity, collaboration, etc.”) and what front-line service does (the actual behaviors customers see). Schein’s model reminds us that true cultural change is evident in artifacts (observable behaviors and symbols) only when they align with espoused values and underlying assumptions. Here, customers did not perceive new artifacts or cues embodying AKHLAK, implying that the espoused values hadn’t sufficiently translated into practice for customers to notice.

To clarify, the absence of explicit value mentions does not imply the values have no effect at all – it may simply be too early, or the effects are subtle. The organization might still be in the phase of building understanding and buy-in among employees. Often there is a significant delay between rolling out values and seeing them naturally reflected in customer interactions. Our data essentially provides a baseline measure of that delay: in the first 1–2 years, external impact was minimal. This finding can serve as a wake-up call or a measurement for management: it tells them that if they want the culture change to be more than a poster on the wall, more needs to be done to translate values into action.

We also explored whether *when* cultural terms did appear, they were associated with particular types of service situations. For example, do trust-related words appear more in comments about security processes? Due to the low counts, patterns were weak, but a chi-square test of CX Dimension vs presence of any value mention was significant (χ^2 $p < 0.001$) with a small effect size (Cramér’s $V \approx 0.16$). This hints that value-related words, rare as they are, tended to co-occur with certain topics. For instance, a few comments about security or safety included words like “safe” or “trust,” suggesting that if staff displayed trustworthy behavior in security processes, a customer might note it. Similarly, a couple of comments about helpful staff in problem-solving contained hints of adaptability or teamwork. These are isolated cases – a sign of “early synergies” where the new culture *might* have shone through for some customers. But given the tiny numbers, we cannot draw firm conclusions. At best, we interpret it as anecdotal evidence that in a few instances, cultural integration yielded a noticeable positive incident (e.g., an employee went above and beyond in a way that exemplified a value, and the

customer mentioned it). These are the stories management would want to amplify going forward.

Synthesis of Findings and Implications

Bringing the results together, a coherent picture emerges: the merger's cultural integration was, in the short term, largely neutral from the customer perspective – neither markedly improving nor drastically worsening the customer experience. Service quality and operational efficiency continued to be the main factors in customer satisfaction, just as before, indicating continuity rather than transformation. The overall customer sentiment slightly declined, reflecting perhaps some growing pains, but not a collapse. And the grand new values that the organization heralded were *not yet apparent* to customers in their service interactions.

There are several implications of these findings:

- **Importance of Addressing “Soft” Factors:** The fact that service processes dominated feedback suggests the company did well not to “drop the ball” on its core operations during integration. However, to truly gain from cultural integration, eventually customers should notice qualitative improvements – like more friendly service (*Harmonis*), more trustworthy and ethical behavior (*Amanah*), or greater responsiveness to customer needs (*Adaptif*). The neutral sentiment trend post-merger suggests customers did not perceive such improvements. Management must therefore pay attention to these “soft” factors and how they manifest in day-to-day service. It is not enough to declare values; they must be operationalized. For example, if *Amanah* (integrity) is a core value, perhaps introducing visible commitments like on-time guarantees or transparent complaint handling could signal trustworthiness in action. If *Adaptif* is valued, empowering front-line staff to be flexible with customer requests or exceptions could create positive anecdotes that customers will mention (e.g., “they accommodated my special need quickly”). In essence, without tangible service expressions of the values, customers remain oblivious to the internal culture change.
- **Need for Targeted Change Management:** Cultural integration requires deliberate change management efforts that connect employees' behaviors to the desired values. Our results imply that front-line employees might not have fully embraced or been trained in the new values in ways that affect customers. The organization should invest in training programs, internal communications, and incentive structures that encourage behaviors aligned with AKHLAK when serving customers. For instance, recognizing and rewarding staff who exemplify “adaptive and collaborative” problem-solving for customers can reinforce those values. Leadership plays a role too – managers should consistently communicate how these values translate into service standards. As noted by integration case studies (e.g., Saunders et al., 2009), leadership and consistent communication are pivotal to turning cultural ideals into everyday practice. Right now, the values seem to live in corporate documents more than on the service floor; change management can help bridge that gap by making it *everyone's job* to live the values in each customer interaction.
- **Monitoring and Feedback:** Interestingly, our approach demonstrates the value of using customer feedback as a barometer for cultural integration. The company can continue to use NLP analysis on reviews (and perhaps social media or other channels) to monitor whether certain keywords or sentiment patterns change over time. If a year or two later we start seeing more comments like “staff really showed integrity” or generally higher sentiment, that could indicate progress. Conversely, if negative feedback begins citing issues that tie back to cultural misalignment (e.g., complaints about “unprofessional” or “uncaring” staff – which would be the opposite of *Kompeten* or *Harmonis*), that flags areas needing attention. This kind of continuous “voice of customer” monitoring can complement internal audits of culture. It effectively measures if the external

stakeholders (passengers) can feel the cultural changes. For an organization undergoing transformation, this is a critical check: it's possible to tick all the boxes internally (workshops, new mission statements, etc.) yet have zero impact on customers. Regularly analyzing unsolicited feedback provides an outside-in perspective on whether the culture shift is perceptible beyond the organizational boundary.

- **Regional/Customized Strategies:** The divergence between API (ex-AP I) and APII regions suggests a one-size-fits-all approach to integration may not have been fully effective. APII region possibly needed more focused interventions to reassure and win over its stakeholders. Organizations should recognize sub-cultural differences and address them. For example, if APII airports had a historically different style of service or faced more intense operational pressure, the integration plan could include specific transition support for APII staff or targeted customer communication in those airports to manage expectations. The goal would be to ensure one region's customers do not feel left behind or alienated by changes. Public sector mergers often face this challenge: different regional entities have their own identity – acknowledging and respecting that in the integration process can mitigate negative reactions. In practical terms, maybe APII airports need extra training in the new values or additional resources during the transition to maintain service levels. Our findings indicate regional tailoring of change management might be necessary; the approach that worked (or was sufficient) in Region API might not have fully worked in Region APII.
- **Short-term vs Long-term Perspective:** It's important to stress that our results capture a snapshot in the relatively short-term aftermath of the merger (roughly one to two years out). Cultural change is a long-term endeavor. The absence of immediate positive impact on CX does not equal failure; it underscores the need for *sustained effort*. The merger clearly succeeded in structurally combining the organizations and achieving operational stability – which is a foundation to build upon. In the short run, stability might actually be a reasonable outcome: the fact that customers did not experience major service failures is a positive (we observed no crisis in service delivery). The slight dip in satisfaction could be a temporary effect. Over the long run, if the cultural integration is successful, one would hope to see improvements: perhaps higher customer satisfaction, more consistent service across airports, and customers eventually noticing positive changes (like friendlier staff, better teamwork, innovative services). The organization should thus view these findings as *baseline* and continue efforts so that in subsequent years the trend lines bend upward. In essence, patience and persistence are key – cultural integration benefits might only become evident after several years of continuous improvement.
- **Benchmarking and Best Practices:** To leverage these findings, the organization can benchmark against other airports or service companies that underwent similar transformations. If case studies from elsewhere show that by, say, Year 3 post-merger there were significant CX improvements once certain cultural practices took hold, those could be instructive. For example, a well-known case in the hospitality industry showed that aligning staff culture through joint team-building and unified customer service training yielded a jump in guest satisfaction about 2–3 years post-merger. In our context, analogous tactics – like cross-regional staff exchange programs, unified service protocols that blend the “best of both cultures,” and visible cultural leadership from management – could be beneficial. Essentially, learn from those who succeeded in turning culture into a competitive advantage.

In summary, the results point to a classic scenario in post-merger integration: structural integration happened quickly, but cultural integration is lagging behind. Customers are still receiving the legacy experience. The organization has not yet capitalized on the potential upside

of the merger in terms of customer experience, but it also has avoided major pitfalls that would alienate customers. To move forward, the company should double down on culture-driven service improvements. By making the AKHLAK values truly come alive at the front line – and by communicating those efforts to the public – they could differentiate the new merged entity as not just a larger company, but a better one for customers. Until then, customers will likely continue to judge the service based on the same old criteria, unaffected by the new corporate ideals on paper.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the aftermath of a major merger in Indonesia's airport sector, focusing on whether the promised organizational culture integration (the AKHLAK core values) translated into improved customer experience. Our analysis of nearly two thousand Google Maps review segments indicates that, in the short term, the cultural integration has not yet yielded a tangible impact on passengers' experience. Key findings show that customers continued to prioritize functional service quality and efficiency issues, with little mention of the new corporate values in their feedback. Overall customer sentiment did not improve post-merger; in fact, positive feedback slightly decreased and neutral feedback increased, especially in the ex-APII region airports. This suggests that while service continuity was maintained (no collapse in quality), there was also no immediate enhancement from the customer viewpoint due to the culture change. The intended values – trustworthiness, adaptability, collaboration, etc. – remain largely internal ideals that have not become evident in frontline service behaviors as perceived by customers. In short, a gap persists between the espoused culture and the enacted culture, highlighting that the integration process is still underway.

However, it is important to recognize that cultural transformation is a gradual process. The absence of quick wins in customer experience does not imply failure; it underscores the need for sustained effort. The merger achieved structural combination and operational stability, which is a critical first step. The next step is to bridge the internal-external gap so that passengers begin to feel the positive effects of a unified, customer-centric culture. Below, we offer recommendations to help achieve that.

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