

1 **CHECK-IN SERVICES AND PASSENGERS' IMPRESSION OF AIRPORTS IN**
2 **SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA**

3
4 **Abstract**

5 The study examined check-in service quality attributes and passengers' impression of airports in
6 South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The research was motivated by the desire to know how
7 well passengers' impression of Nigerian airport service quality have been shaped by four check-
8 in service attributes (competence of staff, politeness of staff, waiting time at check-in counters
9 and interactions with passengers). The study used simple random sampling to survey four
10 hundred passengers at Port Harcourt International Airport and Margaret Ekpo International
11 Airport. Data were collected using a five point likert scale questionnaire. The instrument was
12 content-validated, while the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the constructs gave a reliability of
13 96.9 percent. The data generated were analysed using mean rating and multiple linear regression
14 analysis. The findings revealed that politeness of staff, waiting time at check-in counters and
15 interactions with passengers significantly influenced passengers' impression of airports in South-
16 South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study recommended that Airport management should
17 regularly train frontline staff on customer service communication skills; provide feedback
18 mechanisms such as voice recorders and CCTV cameras to check front-line interactions with
19 passengers; and automate the check-in process as is obtainable in developed countries in order to
20 reduce the waiting time at check-in counters. These will ensure and improve passengers'
21 perception and patronage of aviation services in the zone, locally and internationally

22 Keywords: Aviation, Airport; Service; Quality; Check-in services; Impression.

23 **1. Introduction**

24 **1.1. Background to the study**

25 Transportation system, especially air transportation is a major facet of commercial and
26 economic growth of a country. Most investors and tourists ply the country through air transport
27 services. The aviation sector as a major contributor to the Nigerian economy cannot be
28 overlooked. Air transport internationally or domestically creates distinct economic benefits such
29 as increase in GDP, job creation, tax revenues to the government, and also generates income
30 internally to the State; but the economic value created by the industry is more than that
31 (Ogunkoya, 2008). The primary benefits are created for the target audience, the traveller or
32 hauler, who makes use of the services of airlines.

33 The Nigerian aviation sector no doubt consists of all the airports in Nigeria both local and
34 international. According to Sydney Airport (2016), some of the service point of airports in
35 Nigeria and around the world include but is not limited to check-in services, airline services and
36 lounges, aviation security, baggage services, loss tracing services, convenience, cafeteria or
37 restaurants, transportation within, emergency medical services, isolation services in case of

38 detection of contagious infections, money exchange services, telecommunications services and
39 visitor assistance. With regards to these services highlighted, the Federal Airport Authority of
40 Nigeria (FAAN) Service Charter of 2009 promised to do away with problems of unethical
41 practices and incompetence in the aviation sector by operating in such a way that customers can
42 expect quality service delivery; demand their rights to good service; have recourse when service
43 delivery fails and actively be involved in the service delivery programme. The pledge of the
44 Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) Service Charter of 2009 highlights the need for
45 service quality at airports. This includes the quality of check-in services. Check-in services are
46 those activities or processes associated with the admittance of passengers into their selected
47 flights. The quality of airport check-in services creates an impression among passengers which
48 can be either positive or negative. Hence, the impression of passengers towards such airport
49 services cannot be overemphasized as they expect core benefits, solution and satisfaction.

50 **1.2. Statement of the problem**

51 Air travellers have expressed displeasure towards certain services at various Nigerian
52 airports. One service for which displeasure has been expressed is the check-in service. Poor and
53 unprofessional airport check-in services have made passengers to develop a negative impression
54 of airport service quality in Nigeria. Besides the high air fares and flight delays, the
55 unprofessional disposition of check-in officials has led to complaints and is a source of worry to
56 air travelers. Passengers have complained about the rudeness of some of the staff. Despite the
57 trainings they receive, some check-in personnel display incompetence and poor communication
58 skills when attending to passengers. Additionally, the length of time spent at check-in counters
59 further reveals the unprofessional attitude of the check-in personnel. Painfully, instead of these
60 personnel working toward improving their efficiency, so as to meet up with international best
61 practices, their attitudes have deteriorated, exacerbated by their penchant for gratifications and
62 tips before attending to would-be travelers. To this end, this study examines the effect of check-
63 in service quality on passengers' impression of airport service quality in Nigeria.

64 The specific objectives of this study are to:

- 65 1. examine the effect of competence of check-in personnel on passengers' impression of
66 airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria,
- 67 2. ascertain the effect of politeness of check-in staff on passengers' impression of airports in
68 South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria,
- 69 3. examine the effect of waiting time at check-in counters on passengers' impression of
70 airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria,
- 71 4. determine the extent to which interactions with airport personnel affect passengers'
72 impression of airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria,

73

74 **2. Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature**

75 **2.1. Theoretical framework**

76 The study is based on the Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) theorized by
77 Oliver (1980). It came from works that were carried out on customers' satisfaction (Anderson &
78 Sullivan, 1993). The EDP theory opined that consumer's perception of satisfaction comes from
79 comparing their expectation with the outcome/performance. Thus satisfaction can be measured
80 by two variables- expectation and outcome performance. Based on expectancy disconfirmation
81 paradigm, satisfaction can be increased by enhancing the perception of the product or service
82 performance or by reducing expectation. The expectancy disconfirmation paradigm infers that
83 customers buy products with prepurchase expectations about expected outcomes. The product is
84 thereby judged based on the expected outcome. That is, once the product or service has been
85 used, outcomes are compared against expectations. Confirmation is said to occur when the
86 outcome, that is the satisfaction derived from the product or service equals the expectation.
87 However, a difference between expectations and outcomes results in disconfirmation.
88 Customers' satisfaction or dissonance is an outcome of a positive or negative difference between
89 expectations and perceptions (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001).

90 This theory is relevant to the study of service quality of airport. As implied in the
91 expectancy disconfirmation theory, customers have certain expectation of the quality of services
92 they expect to derive when they visit the airports. It is true that the perceived performance of the
93 quality of services received may rise or decline directly with their expectations, hence, perceived
94 service quality may either confirm or disconfirm the passengers' expectation of the airport
95 service quality. Therefore, the passengers' perception (or judgment) of airport check-in services
96 quality comes from comparing the expectation and actual performance of the airport check-in
97 services.

98 **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

99 **2.2.1 History of aviation in Nigeria**

100 The Nigerian civil aviation has its beginning from the era of British colonization. Its
101 inception can be traced to Kano in July, 1925 during an incident that created tension between the
102 British colonialists and the residents. On sensing the trouble in Kano, London promptly
103 instructed the commanding officer of the Khartoum RAF Squadron to fly to Kano and deal with
104 the circumstances. The officer made his way to Kano flying a Bristol fighter and made a
105 spectacular and incident-free landing on the horse race course in Kano, thereby marking the
106 beginning of air travel activities in Nigeria (Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, 2016).

107 "The earliest known commercial aviation activity in Nigeria is credited to Bud Carpenter,
108 who owned the earliest type of the Light aircraft, de Havilland Moth. Records show that he
109 frequently undertook high-risk flights between Kano and Lagos, using the rail tracks as his guide
110 and piling up extra distance in the process. In the early 1930s, an enterprising pilot carried a few
111 fare-paying passengers in a sea-plane between Lagos and Warri. With the continuation of the
112 annual RPLF flights, aviation activities in Nigeria became quite considerable, creating the need
113 for aerodromes. Consequently, a representative of the Air Ministry in London visited Nigeria to
114 inspect what could then be appropriately described as landing grounds. Sites were selected at
115 Maiduguri, Oshogbo, Lagos, Minna, Kano and Kaduna". (FAAN, 2016).

116 Between 1935 and 1936, air traffic operations carried out by RAF were substituted by the
117 Imperial Airways flying mails and passengers from London to Nigeria and other routes such as
118 Cairo to Uganda and Khartoum to Nigeria. With the rise in aviation activity, more landing fields
119 were needed. Initially, 24 more landing fields were planned to link the entire country; two were
120 to be constructed yearly. But these landing fields were all completed before the outburst of the
121 Second World War in 1940. When the war ended in 1945 civil aviation regained its prime place
122 in Nigeria with the services of both the BOAC (via the West Coast), and the old Imperial
123 Airways (via the Nile and Khartoum). They also introduced a range of aircraft such as Dove,
124 DC-3, Tudor; Skymaster, York and later Comet and Britannia. BOAC's services were to be
125 extended to the whole of West African colonies (FAAN, 2016).

126 As further narrated by FAAN (2016), “the King of England established the West African
127 Air Transport Authority (WAATA) in May 1946. WAATA consisted of the governors of
128 Nigeria, Gold Coast (Ghana), Sierra Leone and the Gambia, with the governor of Nigeria as the
129 President. The court edict that established WAATA also authorised the establishment of the
130 West African Airways Corporation (WAAC). The Transport Authority was to supervise the
131 WAAC as well as all other aviation matters in the region. WAAC was charged to develop air
132 services in and between West African territories. The control and administration of Civil
133 Aviation were vested in the Directorates of Public Works of these countries who applied United
134 Kingdom Colonial Air Navigator orders as their legislative authority. In August 1958 the
135 Nigerian government in partnership with BOAC and Elder Dempster lines formed the West
136 African Airways Corporation (Nigeria) limited which later became Nigeria Airways”. This
137 distinct momentous move foreshadowed the dawn of the airline industry in Nigeria.

138 **2.2.2 Understanding the concept of airport service quality**

139 Service quality can be referred to as an individual evaluation of the service attributes
140 (Widarsyah, 2013). Widarsyah (2013) rightly acknowledged that quality of services offered
141 differentiates successful organizations from unsuccessful ones. Business owners and executives
142 have the responsibility of ensuring that they offer high quality service. There is a general
143 consensus that service quality is vital, however, many organizations find it difficult to effectively
144 measure and grasp the concept of service quality. However, service quality has been measured in
145 two broad dimensions or model- Service Quality (SERVQUAL) and Service Performance
146 (SERVPERF). SERVQUAL holds that service quality is measured through the comparison of
147 expectations with performance or service experience. On the other hand, SERVPERF dimension
148 holds that service quality is measured simply by the performance of individual service attributes.
149 This implies that airport service quality depends on the extent to which the service offered fulfils
150 requirements of airport customers, instead of a comparison between expectations and
151 performance (Crompton & Love, 1995). This study adopts the Service performance dimension of
152 service quality.

153 There are various perspective to the study of airport service quality. While some scholars
154 examine airport service quality by analysing expectations and experience of the passengers,
155 others apply several techniques of airport performance assessment. However, some authors study
156 and assess the quality of services offered at the airport using the SERVQUAL dimensions. For
157 instance, Chou, Liu, Huang, Yih, and Han, (2011); and Erdil and Yildiz, (2011) used the five

158 SERVQUAL dimensions (tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and reliability) to
159 establish a benchmark for the assessment of airport service quality.

160 On the other hand, Pabedinskaitė and Akstinaitė, (2014) simply used several technical
161 airport features to examine the operational efficiency of airport. The technical characteristics
162 were availability of runways, size of the airport, number of workers, number of aircraft stands
163 (platforms), number of trips, size of cargo, number of travellers among others. However,
164 Seyanont (2011) emphasized that airport service quality should be measured in terms of the
165 following concerns of passengers towards services offered, accessibility of airport, interface
166 between the airlines and the airport, mobility within the airport, car parks, dining and stores and
167 condition of the waiting lounges. He backed his claims by mentioning that these factors affect
168 passengers' perception of airport service quality.

169 The Airport Cooperative Research Program (2013) found that airport service quality
170 should be measured by ease of movement through the airport; brilliant collection of retail
171 enterprises; neatness and environment of the airport terminal, halls, and boarding gates;
172 outstanding service delivery and politeness of airport personnel; and encouraging passengers'
173 experience at boarding gates or check-in points. The quality of these services can be determined
174 both quantitatively and qualitatively.

175

176 **2.2.3 The concept of passengers' impression**

177 Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) defines impression as the effect or influence that
178 something or someone has on a person's thoughts or feelings. The word 'impression' connotes
179 perception and is sometimes used interchangeably. According to Eze and Ozo (2005), perception
180 has to do with how we see the world around us. Achumba (2006) defines it as the process of
181 selecting, organizing and interpreting stimulus received through the five physical senses of
182 vision, touch, smell and taste. He also stated that perception begins when one is confronted with
183 a stimulus or a situation. Mogaba (2006) expatiates further by stating that in marketing setting,
184 impression or perception means value attached to communications about products received or
185 services experienced.

186 It is beneficial to study impression or perception. This is because only by studying the
187 way we perceive, can we recognize our own mistakes and imperfections and eventually eliminate
188 them from our cognition. This can be applied at the perception level as well as at the level of
189 ideas and constructs which are derived from perceptions (Démuth, 2013). Schiffman, O'Cass,
190 Paladino and Carlson (2014) noted that there are three aspects of perception- selection,
191 organization and interpretation of stimuli. First, individuals select stimuli which they identify
192 (selection); next, the selected stimuli is subconsciously categorized according to commonly
193 believed principles of psychology (organization of stimuli), finally, explanations are given to the
194 stimuli according to their needs, expectations and experiences (interpretation of stimuli).

195

196

197 **2.2.4 Airport check-in services**

198 The first and mandatory point of call for every passenger visiting the airport is the check-
199 in counter. This process is usually takes place before the flight departure. The check-in processes
200 at the airport is often times characterised by several activities such as certification of travel
201 papers, admission of passenger baggage/belongings and issuing of boarding passes. This stage is
202 usually considered extensive and strenuous by air travellers. (Phillips Consulting, 2015). Four
203 major service areas of check-in services which customers look out for includes waiting time,
204 extra luggage cost, courteousness, helpfulness, and efficiency of staff at the check-in desk.

205

206 **2.3 Empirical review**

207 There have been studies on customers' perception and service quality in the aviation
208 industry which would be relevant to review. Oghojafor and Adekoya (2014) studied the
209 determining factor of passengers' satisfaction in the air travel industry with specific emphasis on
210 airline services. The study surveyed a convenience sample of one hundred passengers at the
211 Murtala Mohammed Airport 2 in Lagos, Nigeria. It also employed the snowballing methods.
212 Data obtained were analysed using Analytical hierarchy process model (AHP). The result
213 showed that passengers are satisfied when their needs are responded to in record time especially
214 the timely provision of flight information. The study also noted that courtesy of personnel during
215 ticket purchase, booking and check-in critically affects air travellers' satisfaction. The study
216 recommended that further research be carried out in geo-political zones using a larger sample.

217 Another study by Ojo (2014) revealed that passengers' perception of service delivery at
218 Murtala Muhammed International Airport was not very encouraging. This conclusion was drawn
219 from the survey of two hundred and thirty four (234) passengers at the airport. The data was
220 analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies. The findings showed that the International
221 Wing of Murtala Muhammed Airport is yet to offer its full potential despite being dubbed as the
222 hub of aviation industry in Nigeria and West Africa. Though huge federal allocation is pumped
223 into the airport, it is still performing below expectation. The study further made
224 recommendations for certain service areas of the airport which included ground access, flight
225 services, airport facilities, fire and rescue services, airport security, airport personnel and
226 landscape.

227 A study by Airport Cooperative Research Program (2013) involving nine airports in
228 America revealed customer service efficiency is measured based on an updated understanding of
229 what passengers' desire to experience at the airport. The survey made use of descriptive statistics
230 such as bar chart to analyze data obtained. The study showed that passengers rated the following
231 factors as most important- waiting time, neatness, staff politeness, experience at boarding gates,
232 and shops with product assortments. Nonetheless, passengers may have negative airport
233 experience even when unforeseen occurrences happen. These occurrences include flight
234 cancellations, flight delays, inadequate parking space and gridlock on the way to the airport.

235 Widarsyah, (2013) examined the effect of key service dimensions of airports and overall
236 passenger perceptions of service quality. The dimensions studied were conditions of facilities,
237 personnel and security interactions, shopping and dining experience, airport access, immigration
238 and customs and airport aesthetics. Using online self-administered questionnaire copies, the work
239 surveyed a convenience sample of three hundred and four passengers of four major international
240 airports in the West Coast region of United States (Las Vegas McCarran International, Los
241 Angeles International, San Francisco International, and Seattle-Tacoma International). Multiple
242 linear regression was adopted to analyse the data gathered. The study revealed that four service
243 dimensions were significantly related to passengers' overall perception of airport service quality.
244 They are airport access, aesthetics, dining experience, and immigration. The study further
245 revealed that airport environment or aesthetics had the highest effect on air travellers' perception
246 of service quality. This is followed closely by airport access, dining experience, immigration
247 interactions and efficiency of customs service.

248 Teikake (2012) in his work showed that passengers were not satisfied with service
249 delivery at Kiribati airports. The level of dissatisfaction was centred on the rating of the quality of
250 15 airport service attributes (some of which include availability and airport accessibility, cosiness
251 and neatness of airport terminals, staff friendliness, and baggage delivery time). The study
252 discovered that there were differences in satisfaction between the 4 islands under study. The
253 study also showed that passengers' satisfaction varied along with gender and age of travellers.
254 These conclusions were drawn from the results of the descriptive statistics analysis (mean,
255 median and standard deviation) and the non-parametric test (such as Wilcoxon signed rank test
256 and Kruskal-Wallis test) used in the study. The study recommended training of frontline
257 personnel, imbining a customers' orientation culture in the organization and provision of
258 resources by Ministry of Transport to improve service delivery at airports.

259 In 2009, carried out by J.D. Power and associates surveyed twenty four thousand
260 passengers at North America Airports. As a result of the survey, airports were ranked based on
261 airport access, luggage claim, check-in procedures, condition of airport facilities, security, and
262 retail services. During the survey, passengers were asked probing questions such as the length of
263 time it took to obtain their baggage. Using a sequence of categorized regressions analysis, the
264 research analysts aggregated each response from the 81 airports surveyed and created an index
265 model that weighed the significance of the service quality attributes examined.

266 **2.4 Conceptual model of airport services quality and passengers' impression**

267 The conceptual model which shows the effect of airport check-in service quality
268 attributes on passengers' impression is represented in figure 1. The model expresses the
269 following null hypotheses:

- 270 1. Competence of check-in staff has no significant effect on passengers' impression of
271 airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
- 272 2. Check-in staff politeness does not significantly affect passengers' impression of airports
273 in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
- 274 3. There is no significant effect of waiting time at check-in counters on passengers'
275 impression of airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

276 4. Interactions with airport personnel have no significant effect on passengers' impression
277 of airports in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

278

279

280 Figure 1: Conceptual model of the relationship between airport check-in services quality and
281 passengers' impression

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

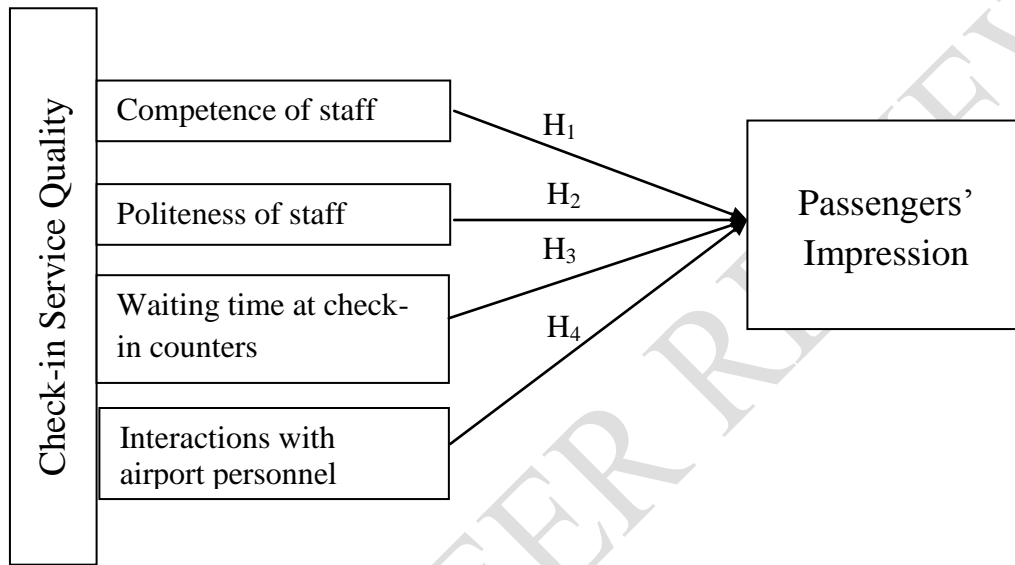
305

306

307

308

309



Source: Researcher's model

3. Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population was limited to passengers of two FAAN operated airports in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria (Margaret Ekpo International Airport and Port Harcourt International Airport). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2016), the total number of passengers to travel through these two airports is 1,413,714. Since this population is known, the Taro Yamane Formula was used to arrive at a sample of 40 respondents using an error margin of 5% (0.05). The study employed convenience sampling technique in selecting passengers at the airports waiting/departure lounges. The data for the execution of this study were mainly obtained from primary source. The primary data were gotten from the respondents through the deployment of a structured questionnaire consisting of five-point Likert scale. Content-validation was used for the instrument validity, while Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to confirm the reliability after carrying out a pilot survey on 40 airport passengers. The Cronbach's alpha score for the four constructs was 0.969. Data analysis techniques employed was the multiple linear regression and mean rating. This analysis was computed electronically with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science version 23.

310 **4. Results and Discussion**

311 Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 369 were completed and returned, while 31
312 questionnaires were not returned. Descriptive statistics shows that passengers' rated the airport
313 check-in services attributes well above average for the items (Table 1).

314 Statement 1 in Table 1 shows that 2 (0.5%) respondents rated the competence of check-in
315 staff as poor, 56 (15.2%) respondents rated it as fair, 121 (32.8%) of the respondents rated it as
316 average, 80 (21.7%) respondents rated it as good, 59 (16.0%) respondents rated it as excellent,
317 and 51 (13.8%) respondents were uncertain on this service attribute. The responses gave an
318 average (mean) rating of 3.4 out of 5-point scale. This shows that majority of airport passengers
319 had a positive perception of the competence of check-in staff at the airport.

320 Statement 2 in Table 1 shows that 3 (0.8%) respondent rated the politeness of check-in
321 staff as poor, 152 (41.2%) respondents rated it as fair, 70 (19.0%) of the respondents rated it as
322 average, 29 (7.9%) respondents rated it as good, 64 (17.3%) respondents rated it as excellent, and
323 51 (13.8%) respondents were uncertain on this service attribute. The responses gave an average
324 (mean) rating of 3.0 out of 5-point scale. This shows that majority of airport passengers had a
325 positive perception of check-in staff politeness.

326 Statement 3 in Table 1 shows that 10 (2.7%) respondents rated the waiting/processing
327 time at check-in counters as poor, 58 (15.7%) respondents rated it as fair, 121 (32.8%) of the
328 respondents rated it as average, 75 (20.3%) respondents rated it as good, 54 (14.6%) respondents
329 rated it as excellent, and 51 (13.8%) respondents were uncertain on this service attribute. The
330 responses gave an average (mean) rating of 3.3 out of 5-point scale. This shows that majority of
331 airport passengers had a positive perception of waiting/processing time at the airports' check-in
332 counters.

333 Statement 4 in Table 1 shows that 4 (1.1%) respondents rated interactions with airport
334 personnel as poor, 6 (1.6%) respondents rated it as fair, 129 (35.0%) of the respondents rated it
335 as average, 117 (31.7%) respondents rated it as good, 58 (15.7%) respondents rated it as
336 excellent, and 55 (14.9%) respondents were uncertain on this service attribute. The responses
337 gave an average (mean) rating of 3.7 out of 5-point scale. This shows that majority of airport
338 passengers had a positive perception of their interactions with airport personnel.

339

340

341

342

343

Evaluation of airport check-in service quality

S/N	Statements	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	Uncertain	Mean Rating
1.	Competence of check-in staff	2 (0.5%)	56 (15.2%)	121 (32.8%)	80 (21.7%)	59 (16.0%)	51 (13.8%)	3.4
2.	Politeness of check-in staff	3 (0.8%)	152 (41.2%)	70 (19.0%)	29 (7.9%)	64 (17.3%)	51 (13.8%)	3.0
3.	Waiting/processing time at check-in counters	10 (2.7%)	58 (15.7%)	121 (32.8%)	75 (20.3%)	54 (14.6%)	51 (13.8%)	3.3
4.	Interactions with airport personnel	4 (1.1%)	6 (1.6%)	129 (35.0%)	117 (31.7%)	58 (15.7%)	55 (14.9%)	3.7

346 **Source: Field survey, 2018.**

348 4.1 Test of hypotheses

349 To test for the hypotheses, the four check-in services attributes were regressed against
 350 passengers' impression of airports in South South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The result shows
 351 a significant positive relationship ($R=56.5\%$; $R^2 = 31.9\%$; $F= 42.644$; $p = 0.000$). The value of
 352 R^2 indicates that only 31.9% of the variation in passengers' overall impression is accounted by
 353 change in check-in services. The high association between check-in services and passengers'
 354 impression indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the outcome variable, and is
 355 a good fit for the data.

356 Table 4 is the coefficients table, which provides the necessary information to predict
 357 passengers' impression from check-in services, as well as determine the aspects of check-in
 358 services that contribute statistically significantly to the model. Although the regression model
 359 generally reveals a statistical significance, Table4 shows that not all aspect of check-in services
 360 significantly affect passengers' impression of airports in the South South geo-political zone;
 361 from the table it can be seen that politeness of check-in staff ($p = 0.000$), waiting/processing time

362 at check-in counters ($p = 0.003$) and interactions with airport personnel ($p = 0.000$), significantly
 363 affect passengers' overall impression since they all have probability value less than 0.05. On the
 364 other hand, competence of check-in staff ($p = 0.877$) does not significantly affect passengers'
 365 overall impression as its p -value is greater than 0.05. Additionally, from the beta column it is
 366 seen that politeness of check-in staff made the strongest unique contribution to explaining the
 367 dependent variable (Beta = 1.109), followed by interactions with airport personnel (Beta =
 368 0.633), and then waiting/processing time at check-in counters (Beta = 0.453), while competence
 369 of check-in staff made the least and most insignificant contribution in explaining the dependent
 370 variable (Beta = 0.027). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the
 371 results show that politeness of check-in staff, waiting time and security interactions significantly
 372 affect passengers' impression of airports in South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

373

374

Table 2

375

Model summary of the effect of check-in services on passengers' impression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.565 ^a	.319	.312	.709

a. Predictors: (Constant), Security interactions, Check-in politeness, Waiting time, Check-in competence

376

377

378

Table 3

379

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the effect of check-in services on passengers' impression

380

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.841	4	21.460	42.644	.000 ^b
	Residual	183.183	364	.503		
	Total	269.024	368			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Impression

b. Predictors: (Constant), Security interactions, Check-in politeness, Waiting time, Check-in competence

381

382

383

384

Table 4

385

Coefficients of the effect of check-in services on passengers' impression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.873	.086		33.314	.000
	Check-in competence	.016	.101	.027	.154	.877
	Check-in politeness	.626	.063	1.109	9.886	.000
	Waiting time	.256	.087	.453	2.949	.003
	Security interactions	.355	.052	.633	6.784	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Impression

386

387 The result of the hypotheses tests showed that check-in services had a significant positive
388 effect on passengers' impression of airports in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The
389 result further showed that only three aspects of check-in services significantly affected
390 passengers' impression of the airports. They include politeness of check-in staff, waiting time at
391 check-in counters and interaction with check-in personnel. A closer look at the mean rating for
392 check-in services at both airports revealed that among the significant check-in services,
393 politeness of check-in staff had the least score (3.0) which was fairly positive. On the other hand,
394 interaction with check-in personnel was positive as seen from the mean score of 3.7. Meanwhile
395 no check-in service area was rated as very positive. This implies that there is need for
396 improvement in check-in services of the airports. This finding is in agreement with that of
397 Oghojafor and Adekoya (2014) which showed that customers of the aviation industry were
398 pleased when check-in staff operators responded quickly to their requests and politely provide
399 information in relation to their flights.

400 5. Conclusion

401 The study examined the effect of check-in service quality on passengers' impression of
402 airports in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Understanding specific airport check-in
403 service quality attributes and how they impact on passengers' impression of airports is a
404 necessary step towards improving airport service quality. This study considered four check-in
405 service attributes- politeness of check-in staff, interactions with passengers, competence of staff
406 and waiting time at check-in counters. Interestingly, the research results have shown that these
407 attributes studied shape the impression of passengers at airport in South-South Geopolitical
408 Zone of Nigeria. By implication, the study has shown the need for airport managers to prioritize
409 customers' satisfaction at airports by measuring their impression of service performance using
410 these services attributes as yardsticks. This is because improving passengers' experience at the
411 airports can generate revenue for the airports and encourage more patronage of aviation services
412 in the zone, locally and internationally.

413 **5.1 Recommendations**

414 Based on the result of this research, the following recommendations are proffered:

- 415 i. To improve airport check-in services, the Servicom Department of the airport should
416 train the frontline staff regularly on customer service communication skills.
417 ii. Additionally, airport management should provide feedback mechanisms such as voice
418 recorders and CCTV cameras to check front-line interactions with passengers.
419 iii. Finally, airport management should automate the check-in process as is obtainable in
420 developed countries in order to reduce the waiting time at check-in counters.

421

422 **REFERENCES**

423 Achumba, I. C. (2006). *The dynamics of consumer behaviour*. Lagos: Mac-Williams Publishers
424 Limited.

425 Airport Cooperative Research Program. (2013). *How airports measure customer service*
426 *performance: a synthesis of airport practice*. Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research
427 Board.

428 Anderson, W. E. & Sullivan, W. M. (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer
429 satisfaction for firms. *Marketing Science*, 12 (2), 125-143.

430 Chou, C. C., Liu, L. J., Huang, S. F., Yih, J. M., & Han, T. C. (2011). An evaluation of airline
431 service quality using the fuzzy weighted SERVQUAL method. *Applied Soft Computing*,
432 11, 2117–2128.

433 Crompton, J. L. & Love, L. L. (1995). The predictive validity of alternative approaches to
434 evaluating quality of a festival. *Journal of Travel Research*, 34 (1), 11-24.

435 Démuth, A. (2013). Perception theories. Retrieved from [http://fff.truni.sk/userdata/ebooks/
436 demuth_perception_theories%20%281.1%29.pdf](http://fff.truni.sk/userdata/ebooks/demuth_perception_theories%20%281.1%29.pdf)

437 Erdil, S. & Yildiz, O. (2011). Measuring service quality and comparative analysis in the
438 passenger carriage of airline industry. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Science*, 24,
439 1232–1242

440 Eze, F. J. & Ozo, J. U. (2005). *Consumer behaviour*. Enugu: Immaculate Publications Limited.

- 441 Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (2016). History. Retrieved from
442 <http://www.faannigeria.org/index.php/about-faan/history>
- 443 Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria. (2016). List of airports owned and managed by FAAN.
444 Retrieved from www.faannigeria.org
- 445 Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (2016). Airport Operations. Retrieved from
446 <http://www.faannigeria.org/index.php/about-faan/airport-operations>
- 447 Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria Service Charter (2009). Retrieved from
448 <http://www.faannigeria.org/documents/FAAN%20Charter.pdf>
- 449 Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary (2018). Impression. Retrieved from
450 <http://learnersdictionary.com/>
- 451 Mogaba, J. E. (2006). *Consumer Behaviour. A conceptual and practical approach*. Lagos:
452 Serenity Printing and Publishing Co.
- 453 Oghojafor, B. E. A. & Adekoya, A. G. (2014). Determinants of customers' satisfaction in the
454 Nigerian aviation industry using analytic hierarchy process (AHP) model. *Oeconomica*,
455 10(4), 107-126.
- 456 Ogunkoya, A.O., (2008). The impact of deregulation in the Nigerian air transport industry:
457 An overview. Paper Presented World Air Transport Research Society in Athens, Greece
458 from 6th-11th, July.
- 459 Ojo, T. K. (2014). Users' perceptions of service quality in Murtala Muhammed International
460 Airport (MMIA), Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*, 3, 48-
461 53
- 462 Oliver, R. L. (1980) A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction
463 decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17 (4), 460-69.
- 464 Pabedinskaitė, A. & Akstinaitė, V. (2014). Assessment of the airport service quality.
465 Proceedings of 8th International Scientific Conference on "Business and Management
466 2014", 655-664.

- 467 Phillips Consulting (2015). The 2015 domestic aviation industry. Customer satisfaction survey
468 report. Retrieved from <http://www.phillipsconsulting.net>
- 469 Power, J. D. & Associates (2012). North America airport satisfaction survey press release.
470 New York: McGraw–Hill Companies. Retrieved from [http://www.jdpower.com/content/
471 press-release/4A0liSK/north-america-airport-satisfaction-study.htm](http://www.jdpower.com/content/press-release/4A0liSK/north-america-airport-satisfaction-study.htm)
- 472 Schiffman, L., O’Cass, A., Paladino, A. & Carlson, J. (2014). *Consumer Behaviour* (6thed.).
473 Australia: Pearson Australia.
- 474 Seyanont, A. (2011). Passengers’ perspective toward airport service quality at Suvarnabhumi
475 International Airport. Retrieved from <http://eprints.utcc.ac.th/1697/2/1697fulltext.pdf>
- 476 Sydney Airport (2016). Facilities and services. Retrieved from [http://www.sydneyairport.com
477 .au/find/service-categories.aspx?cat={3ED445B5-0AA5-4D0A-9B6668C70DBE52C2}](http://www.sydneyairport.com.au/find/service-categories.aspx?cat={3ED445B5-0AA5-4D0A-9B6668C70DBE52C2})
- 478 Teikake, A. (2012). Customer satisfaction with air service delivery within Kiribati. Palmerston
479 North: Massey University.
- 480 Widarsyah, R. (2013). The impact of airport service quality dimension on overall airport
481 experience and impression. Las Vegas: University of Nevada.
- 482 Yüksel, A. & Yüksel, F. (2001). The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm: a critique. *Journal*
483 *of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 25(2), 107-131

484

485