

# CHECK-IN SERVICES AND PASSENGERS' IMPRESSION OF AIRPORTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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## Abstract

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

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

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background to the study

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

The Nigerian aviation sector no doubt consists of all the airports in Nigeria both local and international. According to Sydney Airport (2016), some of the service point of airports in Nigeria and around the world include but is not limited to check-in services, airline services and lounges, aviation security, baggage services, loss tracing services, convenience, cafeteria or 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 (Ojo,  
53 2014). Poor and unprofessional airport check-in services have made passengers to develop a  
54 negative impression of airport service quality in Nigeria. Besides the high air fares and flight  
55 delays, the unprofessional disposition of check-in officials has led to complaints and is a source  
56 of worry to air travelers. Passengers have complained about the rudeness of some of the staff.  
57 Despite the trainings they receive, some check-in personnel display incompetence and poor  
58 communication skills when attending to passengers. Additionally, the length of time spent at  
59 check-in counters further reveals the unprofessional attitude of the check-in personnel. Painfully,  
60 instead of these personnel working toward improving their efficiency, so as to meet up with  
61 international best practices, their attitudes have deteriorated, exacerbated by their penchant for  
62 gratifications and tips before attending to would-be travelers. To this end, this study examines  
63 the effect of check-in service quality on passengers' impression of airport service quality in  
64 Nigeria.

65 The specific objectives of this study are to:

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

74

## 75 **2. Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature**

### 76 **2.1. Theoretical framework**

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

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

## 99 **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

### 100 **2.2.1 History of aviation in Nigeria**

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

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

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

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

## 139 **2.2.2 Understanding the concept of airport service quality**

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

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

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

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

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

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### 177 **2.2.3 The concept of passengers' impression**

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

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

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#### 198 2.2.4 Airport check-in services

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

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#### 207 2.3 Empirical review

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 267 **2.4 Conceptual model of airport services quality and passengers' impression**

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

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

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

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

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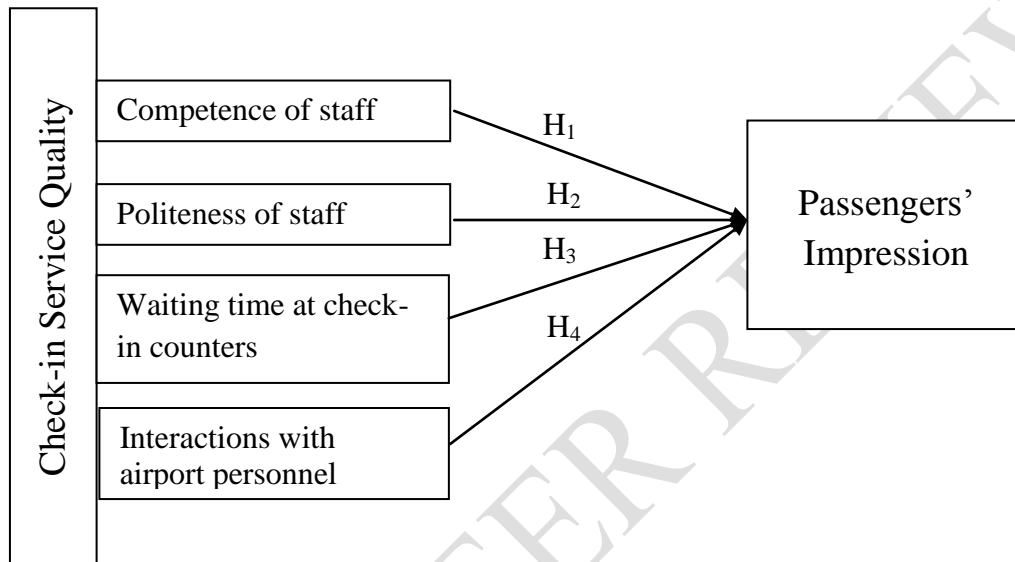
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293 Source: Authors' model modified from Widarsyah, R. (2013). *The impact of airport service*  
294 *quality dimension on overall airport experience and impression*. Las Vegas: University of  
295 Nevada.

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### 298 3. Methodology

299 The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population was limited to  
300 passengers of two FAAN operated airports in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria  
301 (Margaret Ekpo International Airport and Port Harcourt International Airport). According to the  
302 National Bureau of Statistics (2016), the total number of passengers to travel through these two  
303 airports is 1,413,714. Since this population is known, the Taro Yamane Formula was used to  
304 arrive at a sample of 400 respondents using an error margin of 5% (0.05). The study employed  
305 stratified random sampling technique in selecting passengers at the airports waiting/departure  
306 lounges. The data for the execution of this study were mainly obtained from primary source. The  
307 primary data were gotten from the respondents through the deployment of a structured  
308 questionnaire consisting of five-point Likert scale. Content-validation was used for the



309 instrument validity, while Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to confirm the reliability after  
310 carrying out a pilot survey on 40 airport passengers. The Cronbach's alpha score for the four  
311 constructs was 0.699. Data analysis techniques employed was the multiple linear regression and  
312 mean rating. This analysis was computed electronically with the aid of Statistical Package for  
313 Social Science version 23.

#### 314 4. Results and Discussion

315 Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 369 were completed and returned, while 31  
316 questionnaires were not returned. This gave a high response rate of 92.25 percent. Descriptive  
317 statistics shows that passengers' rated the airport check-in services attributes well above average  
318 for the items (Table 1).

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

325 Statement 2 in Table 1 shows that 3 (0.8%) respondent rated the politeness of check-in  
326 staff as poor, 152 (41.2%) respondents rated it as fair, 70 (19.0%) of the respondents rated it as  
327 average, 29 (7.9%) respondents rated it as good, 64 (17.3%) respondents rated it as excellent, and  
328 51 (13.8%) respondents were uncertain on this service attribute. The responses gave an average  
329 (mean) rating of 3.0 out of 5-point scale. This shows that majority of airport passengers had a  
330 positive perception of check-in staff politeness.

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

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

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**Table 1**

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**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

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

352

353 **4.1 Test of hypotheses**

354 To test for the hypotheses, the four check-in services attributes were regressed against  
 355 passengers' impression of airports in South South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The result shows  
 356 a significant positive relationship ( $R=56.5\%$ ;  $R^2 = 31.9\%$ ;  $F= 42.644$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). The value of  
 357  $R^2$  indicates that only 31.9% of the variation in passengers' overall impression is accounted by  
 358 change in check-in services. The high association between check-in services and passengers'

359 impression indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the outcome variable, and is  
 360 a good fit for the data.

361 Table 4 is the coefficients table, which provides the necessary information to predict  
 362 passengers' impression from check-in services, as well as determine the aspects of check-in  
 363 services that contribute statistically significantly to the model. Although the regression model  
 364 generally reveals a statistical significance, Table 4 shows that not all aspect of check-in services  
 365 significantly affect passengers' impression of airports in the South South geo-political zone;  
 366 from the table it can be seen that politeness of check-in staff ( $p = 0.000$ ), waiting/processing time  
 367 at check-in counters ( $p = 0.003$ ) and interactions with airport personnel ( $p = 0.000$ ), significantly  
 368 affect passengers' overall impression since they all have probability value less than 0.05. On the  
 369 other hand, competence of check-in staff ( $p = 0.877$ ) does not significantly affect passengers'  
 370 overall impression as its p-value is greater than 0.05. Additionally, from the beta column it is  
 371 seen that politeness of check-in staff made the strongest unique contribution to explaining the  
 372 dependent variable (Beta = 1.109), followed by interactions with airport personnel (Beta =  
 373 0.633), and then waiting/processing time at check-in counters (Beta = 0.453), while competence  
 374 of check-in staff made the least and most insignificant contribution in explaining the dependent  
 375 variable (Beta = 0.027). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the  
 376 results show that politeness of check-in staff, waiting time and security interactions significantly  
 377 affect passengers' impression of airports in South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

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**Table 2**

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**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 <sup>a</sup>	.319	.312	.709

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

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**Table 3**

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

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Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.841	4	21.460	42.644	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	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

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**Table 4**

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**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

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

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## 5. Conclusion

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The study examined the effect of check-in service quality on passengers' impression of airports in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Understanding specific airport check-in

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

## 418 5.1 Recommendations

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

- 420 i. To improve airport check-in services, the Servicom Department of the airport should  
421 train the frontline staff regularly on customer service communication skills. This will  
422 go a long way to facilitate effective customer service and smoothen the relationship  
423 between the airport and its stakeholders.
- 424 ii. Additionally, airport management should provide feedback mechanisms such as voice  
425 recorders and CCTV cameras to check front-line interactions with passengers.
- 426 iii. Finally, airport management should automate the check-in process as is obtainable in  
427 developed countries in order to reduce the waiting time at check-in counters.
- 428 iv. Aviation policy makers should endeavour to formulate policies aimed at discouraging  
429 poor check-in services at the airport. In the condition of service for airport staff, it  
430 should be clearly stated that there would be penalties against airport staff who  
431 defaults the check-in rules or codes.
- 432 v. In the course of this research, it was observed that a number of staff requested for  
433 monetary tips and provided quality services to those who tipped them. To this end, it  
434 is recommended that researchers further examine the relationship between  
435 remuneration of airport check-in staff and their service delivery.

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