

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

**Article type: Original Research Article**

## **Abstract**

The study examined check-in service quality attributes and passengers' impression of airports in the 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 reliability of 96.9 per cent. 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 the 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 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**

The 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 the increase in GDP, job creation, tax revenues to the government, and also generate 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 hauliers, 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 develop a  
54 negative impression of airport service quality in Nigeria. Besides the high airfares and flight  
55 delays, the unprofessional disposition of check-in officials has led to complaints and is a source  
56 of worry to air travellers. Passengers have complained about the rudeness of some of the staff.  
57 Despite the training 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 this personnel working toward improving their efficiency, 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 travellers. 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 the expectancy  
82 disconfirmation paradigm, satisfaction can be increased by enhancing the perception of the  
83 product or service performance or by reducing expectation. The expectancy disconfirmation  
84 paradigm infers that customers buy products with prepurchase expectations about expected  
85 outcomes. The product is thereby judged based on the expected outcome. That is, once the  
86 product or service has been used, outcomes are compared against expectations. Confirmation is  
87 said to occur when the outcome, that is the satisfaction derived from the product or service  
88 equals the expectation. However, a difference between expectations and outcomes results in  
89 disconfirmation. Customers' satisfaction or dissonance is an outcome of a positive or negative  
90 difference between expectations and perceptions (Yüksel &Yüksel, 2001).

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

## 99 **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

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

101 Nigerian civil aviation has its beginning from the era of British colonization. Its inception  
102 can be traced to Kano in July 1925 during an incident that created tension between the British  
103 colonialists and the residents. On sensing the trouble in Kano, London promptly instructed the  
104 commanding officer of the Khartoum RAF Squadron to fly to Kano and deal with the  
105 circumstances. The officer made his way to Kano flying a Bristol fighter and made a spectacular  
106 and incident-free landing on the horse racecourse in Kano, thereby marking the beginning of air  
107 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 the extra distance in the process. In the early 1930s, an enterprising pilot carried a  
112 few fare-paying passengers in a sea-plane between Lagos and Warri. With the continuation of  
113 the annual RPLF flights, aviation activities in Nigeria became quite considerable, creating the  
114 need for aerodromes. Consequently, a representative of the Air Ministry in London visited  
115 Nigeria to inspect what could then be appropriately described as landing grounds. Sites were  
116 selected at 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 the 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) on 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 for  
135 United 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 the 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 consensus that  
144 service quality is vital, however, many organizations find it difficult to effectively measure and  
145 grasp the concept of service quality. However, service quality has been measured in two broad  
146 dimensions or model- Service Quality (SERVQUAL) and Service Performance (SERVPERF).  
147 SERVQUAL holds that service quality is measured through the comparison of expectations with  
148 performance or service experience. On the other hand, SERVPERF dimension holds that service  
149 quality is measured simply by the performance of individual service attributes. This implies that  
150 airport service quality depends on the extent to which the service offered fulfils requirements of  
151 airport customers, instead of comparison between expectations and performance (Crompton &  
152 Love, 1995). This study adopts the Service performance dimension of service quality.

153           There is 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 the airport. The technical characteristics  
162 were the availability of runways, size of the airport, number of workers, number of aircraft  
163 stands (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), the  
180 perception has to do with how we see the world around us. Achumba (2006) defines it as the  
181 process of selecting, organizing and interpreting stimulus received through the five physical  
182 senses of vision, touch, smell and taste. He also stated that perception begins when one is  
183 confronted with a stimulus or a situation. Mogaba (2006) expatiates further by stating that in  
184 marketing setting, impression or perception means value attached to communications about  
185 products received or 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 are 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).

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### 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 usually takes place before the flight departure. The check-in processes at  
200 the airport are oftentimes characterised by several activities such as certification of travel papers,  
201 admission of passenger baggage/belongings and issuing of boarding passes. This stage is usually  
202 considered extensive and strenuous by air travellers. (Phillips Consulting, 2015). Four major  
203 service areas of check-in services which customers lookout for include waiting time, extra  
204 luggage cost, courteousness, helpfulness, and efficiency of the 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 were  
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 the aviation industry in Nigeria and West Africa. Though huge federal allocation is  
223 pumped 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 the 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 the bar chart to analyze data obtained. The study showed that passengers rated the  
231 following factors as most important- waiting for time, neatness, staff politeness, experience at  
232 boarding gates, and shops with product assortments. Nonetheless, passengers may have negative  
233 airport 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 the airport environment or aesthetics had the highest effect on air travellers'  
246 perception of service quality. This is followed closely by airport access, dining experience,  
247 immigration 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, imbuing a customers' orientation culture in the organization and provision of  
258 resources by the 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 the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

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

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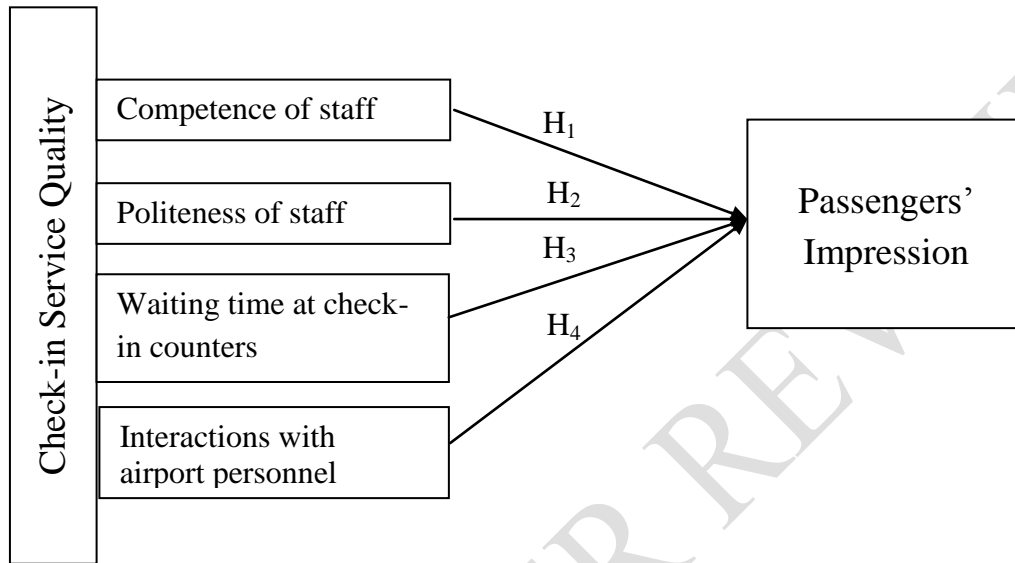
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292 Source: Authors' model modified from Widarsyah, R. (2013). *The impact of airport service*  
293 *quality dimension on overall airport experience and impression*. Las Vegas: University of  
294 Nevada.

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296

### 297 3. Methodology

298 The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The population was limited to  
299 passengers of two FAAN operated airports in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria  
300 (Margaret Ekpo International Airport and Port Harcourt International Airport). According to the  
301 National Bureau of Statistics (2016), the total number of passengers to travel through these two  
302 airports is 1,413,714. Since this population is known, the Taro Yamane formula was used to  
303 arrive at a sample of 400 respondents using an error margin of 5% (0.05). The study employed  
304 stratified random sampling technique in selecting passengers at the airports waiting/departure  
305 lounges. The data for the execution of this study were mainly obtained from the primary source.  
306 The primary data were gotten from the respondents through the deployment of a structured  
307 questionnaire consisting of the five-point Likert scale. Content-validation was used for the  
308 instrument validity, while Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to confirm the reliability after  
309 carrying out a pilot survey on 40 airport passengers. The Cronbach's alpha score for the four



310 constructs was 0.699. Data analysis techniques employed was the multiple linear regression and  
311 mean rating. This analysis was computed electronically with the aid of the Statistical Package for  
312 Social Science version 23.

#### 313 4. Results and Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

351

352 **4.1 Test of hypotheses**

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

360 Table 4 is the coefficients table, which provides the necessary information to predict  
 361 passengers' impression from check-in services, as well as determine the aspects of check-in  
 362 services that contribute statistically significantly to the model. Although the regression model  
 363 generally reveals a statistical significance, Table4 shows that not all aspect of check-in services  
 364 significantly affect passengers' impression of airports in the South-South geo-political zone;  
 365 from the table it can be seen that politeness of check-in staff ( $p = 0.000$ ), waiting/processing time  
 366 at check-in counters ( $p = 0.003$ ) and interactions with airport personnel ( $p = 0.000$ ), significantly  
 367 affect passengers' overall impression since they all have probability value less than 0.05. On the  
 368 other hand, the competence of check-in staff ( $p = 0.877$ ) does not significantly affect passengers'  
 369 overall impression as its p-value is greater than 0.05. Additionally, from the beta column it is  
 370 seen that politeness of check-in staff made the strongest unique contribution to explaining the  
 371 dependent variable (Beta = 1.109), followed by interactions with airport personnel (Beta =  
 372 0.633), and then waiting/processing time at check-in counters (Beta = 0.453), while competence  
 373 of check-in staff made the least and most insignificant contribution in explaining the dependent  
 374 variable (Beta = 0.027). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the  
 375 results show that politeness of check-in staff, waiting time and security interactions significantly  
 376 affect passengers' impression of airports in South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

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378

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

## 404 5. Conclusion

405 The study examined the effect of check-in service quality on passengers' impression of  
406 airports in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Understanding specific airport check-in  
407 service quality attributes and how they impact on passengers' impression of airports is a  
408 necessary step towards improving airport service quality. This study considered four check-in

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

## 417 5.1 Recommendations

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

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

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