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AN ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY AND AIRPORT ELEMENTS INFLUENTIAL TO TRAVELLERS' EXPERIENCE AT ILORIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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ABSTRACT

The level of acceptability of a traveller's experience is important in determining the perceived value of airport service quality. To examine the level of the quality of service travellers' experienced from airport elements and to identify airport elements that are influential in this regard, this quantitative study was conducted. With a structured questionnaire that was administered to 413 non-randomly selected participants, a total of 398 valid responses was received and analyzed using frequency, t-test, factor analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings show that, in general, travellers' assessment of the quality of service experienced at Ilorin International Airport was not impressive. The result of the factor analysis used in identifying the service elements that are influential also shows that eight of the thirty-five variables are influential to travellers' experience. Finally, the results of the five null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significant show that travellers' demographic characteristics do not influence their response. The study recommended that a national minimum standard with regards to infrastructural availability, adequacy and maintenance should be developed while Kwara State government should invest in infrastructure development and maintenance at the airport. Finally, the airport management has been enjoined to periodically collect travellers' feedback on service experience and suggestions on the area to be improved upon for quality service experience identified.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature on travellers' evaluation of airports attributes and service experience. As a premier study in the study area, this study is unique given that it identifies and appraises the airport elements in the quality of service experienced by outbound travellers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The urgency among airport management to meet travellers' needs in a better way than those of other media of transportation continues to be fast increasing. This is not surprising when one puts into consideration the financial implication bore by travellers with regard to the cost of air travel. And in return, airports management are ensuring that the ambience of the airport environment in terms of infrastructure and basic amenities that support airport services are a reflection of the intended image to be projected. Whilst ensuring that passengers feel satisfied with the service experience, the essential elements of transportation to achieve efficient transport system are the routeway, the unit of carriage, the terminal facilities and methods of propulsion (Preservearticles, 2020). Of these, the terminal is vital (Gromule & Yatskiv, 2007; Yao, Sun, Wang, & Xiong, 2012) as it offers all the infrastructural need to dispatch, receive and transfer passengers from one destination to another. And as the airline industry continues to play an important role in tourism development through the movement of travellers from one

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destination point to another, efficient customer satisfaction at every airport depends largely on the availability and adequacy of basic facilities that are compulsorily required by travellers when waiting for, boarding and arriving at airports. These include lifts, restaurants, and toilets, waiting areas, trolleys and conveyor belts.

On the association between airport-services and tourism development, as captioned by Martín-Cejas (2006) in "tourism service begins at the airport", the author stated that airports are essential tourism gateways that help travellers' access to destinations. Thus, studies on travellers' service experience at airports mostly centre on the state of affairs - the availability, or, inadequacy of service amenities/components that are influential to travellers experience. Given that airports are the first and last point of air-travellers' contact in their destinations; their role in ensuring that tourists' first and last impressions of a destination are positive and supportive of tourism cannot be underestimated. Martín-Cejas (2006) stated that airports must provide a service standard which is of adequate quality in terms of amenities to attract travellers'.

Among those using the airport services and facilities are the travellers, airlines and airport employees, traders/business owners and their employees, family and friends who usually come for pick-ups and drop-offs. However, the focus of this study is on travellers, their perceptions of the service experience of airport elements. Air ports service elements are the physical amenities that are movable or immovable but contribute to service delivery at the airport. Although, it is opinionated that travellers are the most important among the users of airport facilities, given that the key reason travellers' go to an airport is fundamentally about catching a flight (Freathy & O"Connell, 2000). In support of this view, Fodness and Murray (2007) stated that airport travellers main mission at the airport is to move from ground to air, thereby using the airport as a transition point. In so doing, travellers' encounter a collection of tangible and intangible airport services. On the other hand, Paternoster (2008) views airports as service facilities, believing that an airport is not only as a transit point but also a destination. In contrast to the mainstream, Paternoster's standpoint might provide a totally new understanding of what passengers or any customer expect from an airport being a destination. This explains the way in which most of the successful airports handle and manage the airport as both a transfer point and a provider of service quality with respect to travellers' need both before and during flight catching exercise. Thus, any airport that hopes to compete favourably in the global market must be ready to invest in facility expansion and improve investment in airport services to attract more customers and ancillary businesses that operate within the confine of the airport premises.

1.1. Statement Problem

One of the challenges confronting the service industry is consistent delivery of actual services that meet guests' expectation (Adeniyi & Oluseye, 2013). Correia, Wirasinghe, and de Barros (2008) advocated that an effort to determine the importance that passengers attribute to airport components will be useful in this scenario. In response to this and other challenges within the airline industry, airports around the world have continued to compete fiercely on facility expansion and improvement of airport amenities to enhance users' service experience. Contrary to the abovementioned, the researcher observed on three separate visits to Ilorin International Airport (IIA) that service delivery seen experienced by travellers are not satisfactory. This further prompted an investigation into a literature review and it shows that issues of quality of service delivery at Nigerian airports have not been significantly addressed. Despite the recognition for and the inclusion of the adequacy, functionality and efficiency of the airport as one of the elements of transportation, one cannot proudly say that air travellers in Nigeria, and particularly, the study area are enjoying the best of service delivery with respect to adequacy, availability and maintenance of basic airport attributes. Even as the patronage of airline services increases along with the cost bore the travellers, issues such as power outage, delay in check-inns and luggage collection, the inadequacy of parking lot, pitiable toilet facilities, and inadequacy of basic amenities that make waiting for and boarding of flights a pleasant experience for travellers in most of the Nigerian airports still linger.

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More so, there is a scarcity of academic studies on travellers' satisfaction on the quality of service experienced and perception of basic airport attributes contributing to the quality of service experienced by travellers. Known studies about air transportation in Nigeria examined travellers' decision making on airlines, the service quality offered by a Nigerian airline, the determinants of domestic airline patronage in Nigeria, and customers' perception of service quality in domestic airlines services (Adiele & Etuk, 2017; Chikwendu, Ejem, & Ezenwa, 2012; Ukpere, Stephens, Ikeogu, Ibe, & Akpan, 2012). These studies focused on the airline, not the airport or issues regarding the availability and adequacy of airport elements that contribute to travellers' experience. And as the numbers of airline travellers/airport users in Nigeria continue increasing, on the one hand, healthy patronage from travellers would translate to improve return on investment (ROI) for stakeholders in the airline business; and, will also, be a source of employment generation. On the other hand, a worrisome situation where the number of domestic air travellers 'to' and 'from' IIA and indeed, the entire country declines; consequently altering travellers' willingness to use the airport services within the country will spell doom for stakeholders in the airline and the tourism industry at large.

In addition, the Federal Government of Nigeria had and still investing in the rehabilitation of old and construction of new and modern infrastructure in the rail sector, this is a wakeup call: and a rivalry to years of dominant by the airline services as the most efficient and the most preferred. Travellers are now plighting Abuja and Kaduna State via rail transportation and things have continued to improve in this regard. As a pioneer study on airport amenities in the study area, Ilorin, Kwara State, this study is significant in many ways. First, it is trying to improve the quality of service enjoyed by travellers. Second, an improvement in service delivery may attract would-be travellers consequently increasing their willingness to travel. Third, an improve service delivery at this airport will serve as image branding and destination attractiveness for the host community, the city and the state at large. Fourth and final, this study is going to be a source of secondary data and a direction for future study. To empirically verify what was observed about the quality of travellers' experience in the study area, the objectives of this study were to: (i) compile travellers' demographic information, (ii) evaluate travellers' perception of the quality of service experienced from airport attributes, (iii) identify the airport attributes that are influential to travellers' experience, and, (iv) determine if travellers' demographic characteristics will have influences on the assessment of their response to the quality of service experience.

1.2. Justification of This Study

Ilorin the study area and the capital of Kwara state was established in 1967 and located within the North Central geopolitical zone. Kwara state comprises sixteen local governments, of these; Ilorin has three local governments which are Ilorin West, Ilorin South and Ilorin East. Arguably, Ilorin is one of the most developed capital cities among states in central Nigeria region. Due to proximity, visible basic infrastructure, advantageous location among neighbouring states amongst other features as shown in Figure 1, Ilorin a suitable connecting point for travellers travelling in and out of the Federal Capital Territory - Abuja, Ekiti, Kogi, Niger and Osun states. Many at times, people travelling to and from these states would most likely split their journey by first catching a flight from Lagos to Ilorin and then connect their destinations via other means of transportation and vice-versa. Kwara state population stood at around 3,518,771 (Babatunde, Iyanda, Mayowa, & Ola, 2014) and the three local Ilorin Local Government Areas accounted for 30% of the entire Kwara State population. That is, in total, residents of Ilorin at this moment are more than a million. And as the state capital, Ilorin houses the most number of institutions in Kwara state and this makes the majority of travellers to Kwara State to stop by or have one thing or the other to do in Ilorin. For instance, Ilorin houses the only airport in Kwara State, the State Secretariat Office, Kwara State Internal Revenue Service (KWIRS), the State Ministry of Finance, Kwara State High Court and the Court of Appeal, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria, head offices and branches of numerous corporate businesses and banks, leisure and recreation centres and residential buildings.

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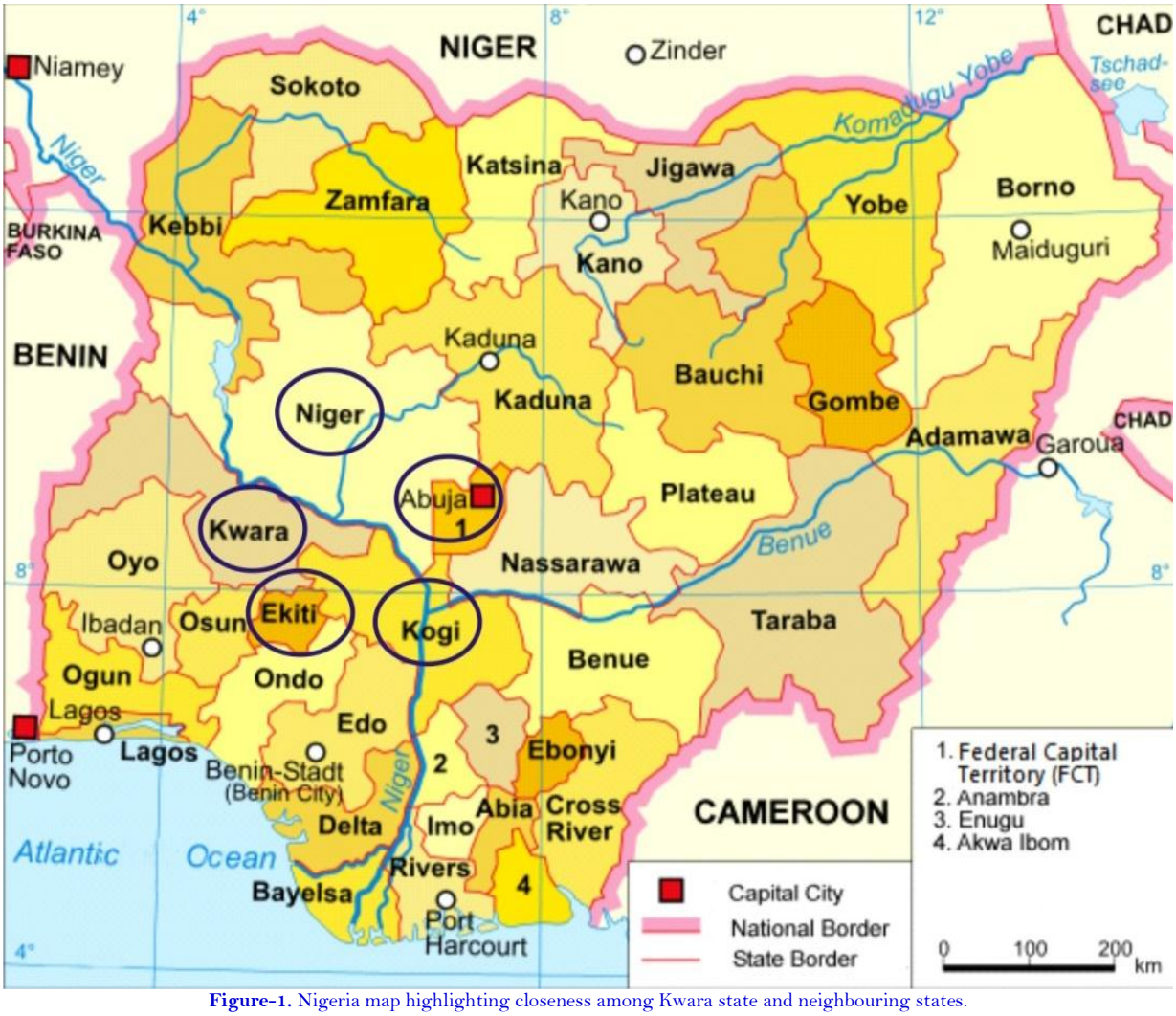

Figure-1. Nigeria map highlighting closeness among Kwara state and neighbouring states.

As a place of resident, work, holiday and a destination for those partaking in other forms of inbound mobility recognised as tourism trips, the three Ilorin local governments are the most resided and most visited by the entire three million-plus Kwara State residents, and thousands of intra and inter-state travellers respectively. This is because of the abundance of infrastructure and amenities that are suitable for multiple purposes of visit by visitors. Similarly, Ilorin boasts of a number of standard hotels and guests houses and food-service outlets for visitors' lodging and enjoyment. Another reason currently responsible for the increase in the number of inbound and outbound travel activity in Kwara State is the presence of five highly attended Universities, including the prestigious University of Ilorin. Also, there is a Federal and state-owned polytechnic each, five colleges of education and Federal and State College of Health Sciences. A visit to popular motor parks in Lagos during students resumption will give one an idea of how highly sought the institutions of higher learning in Kwara State have become. As students enrolment keeps increasing from all over the country and to these institutions, same with visits from family and relatives (VFR) and consequently a growth for Kwara State tourism. Empirically, the presence of students at destinations of learning has been established as a catalyst for tourism growth (Engberg, 2009; Pawlak, 2013).

On the choice of IIA, first, it is the only place through which transportation to and from Kwara State can be made. Second and last, at this moment when travelling within the country by road comes with increase risks of having auto-accidents, bad road, kidnapping and highway robbery to mention a few, it is certainly appropriate to embark on a study that could transform the status of air transportation to a global standard for stakeholders but with special focus on the travellers who pay relatively high cost than those using other media of transportation.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Airports are major economic drivers for a city or region and the whole country are places where aeroplanes can take-off and land, including one or more runways and one or more passenger terminals. Airports may also be active as a cultural and symbolic gateway to a country (Lohmann & Duval, 2014). More so, technology advancement has made it desirable more than ever, users of airports now demand high-quality service experience. As a result, airports manager/management faces considerable challenges in satisfying numerous users. There are many different segments of airport users: from luxury to budget, and frequent business flyers to holiday travellers, each may have different needs, and the airport must find a way to meet those needs. An additional challenge airport management encountered is that different organisations are sometimes involved in the making of travellers' experience, ranging from private to public, retail to regulatory.

Over the years, airports have continued to play vital roles in the air transport systems globally. According to Yao et al. (2012) efficient airport facilities can improve the process of passenger transportation networks, adjust the layout of public transportation networks, provide a passenger guidance system, and regulate the development of commercial activities and optimise the assembly and distribution of modern logistic modes. As airports are significantly useful to airlines take-off and landing, they also provide splendid experience for airport users by bringing together a wide range of facilities and services such as elevators, information desk, conveniences, meeting rooms, waiting facilities for friends and families escorting their loved ones. Airports also offer a large variety of commercial facilities ranging from shops, restaurants, business centre, hotels, conference services, and duty-free shops (Freathy & O"Connell, 2000) for unforgettable experiences for all categories of travellers and other airport users.

2.1. Classification of Airline Travellers

Essential travellers that make use of an airport are classified into three different groups (Park & Se-Yeon, 2011) as below:

i. Departing Passengers

Departing passengers are highly concerned with being in time for check-in, completing exit formalities and departing on time. These passengers also have more time at the airport and when they complete their exit formalities, they are more exposed to the tangible attributes of the airport service. Service encounters that are crucial to departing passengers include the check-in process and security screening. Departures could easily get frustrated by long check-in queues and tedious security screening procedures.

ii. Arriving Passengers

Passengers who have just arrived at an airport are usually exhausted and their focus is on collecting their baggage, completing immigration and customs formalities and then proceeding with their journeys. They typically have someone waiting for them and do not want to waste much time. Critical areas of concern to arriving passengers include customs clearing and baggage collection. Long queues for immigration and customs as well as delayed delivery of baggage from the aircraft are possible sources of dissatisfaction at arrivals.

iii. Transfer Passengers

Transfer or transiting passengers are a unique set of passengers and they consist of those passengers who make connections from one flight to the other at the same airport. These passengers also have a different set of needs and priorities with regards to the dimensions of service. Their major concern is to have a smooth transition from one flight to the other. Depending on their itineraries, transfer passengers have discretionary time at the airport. The time between connecting flights can range from minutes to more than six hours. In the event that there is a

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relatively long time frame between the connecting flights, then transfer passengers have more time to experience the physical environment of the airport. It is thus imperative for service providers to make sure that the specific needs of the different groups of passengers are satisfactorily met.

2.2. Airline Travellers' Experience

Airport travellers' experiences are activities and interactions that travellers undergo in an airport terminal building (Popovic, Kraal, & Kirk, 2010). A traveller's experience is categorised into two broad categories: (i) processing activities, and (ii) discretionary activities. Processing activities are those that should be completed by every passenger in sequence upon arrival at the airport such as check-in, security screening, immigration, and boarding – while discretionary are optional, based on each passenger's freedom of choice as well as having the need for any of such activities. The experience of a traveller at an airport represents the complete set of passenger activities covering departure, transit, and arrival terminals, at both processing and non-processing domains. In the airport performance context, the function of a traveller's experience is important in determining the perceived value of airport service quality. As the major stakeholders of any airport, travellers should ideally have the right to articulate their opinions, including their level of satisfaction with airport services. Furthermore, their needs must be investigated to identify what is important to them, and how airports respond to any inadequacy. Travellers' first impressions of airport facilities could influence their perceptions of airport service; Martín-Cejas (2006) recommended that airports provide comfortable and convenient facilities for an impressive experience.

More so, by offering an outstanding passenger experience, airports can gain competitive advantages (Kramer, Bothner, & Spiro, 2013). Thus, travellers' experience has become a strategic priority for several airports serving their customers with quality service for an unforgettable experience. On the quality of service at airports, (Kramer et al., 2013) identified five common competitive factors affecting airport service quality as (i) speed of the journey through the airport; (ii) cleanliness; (iii) a selection of value for money services; (iv) a positive gate (entrance and exit) experience; and (v) customer service/courtesy of the staff. However on travellers' experience, researchers have based the overall level of service using a number of customer satisfaction indicators such as waiting time at check-in, waiting time at security, number of available baggage carts, waiting time at immigration, information convenience, and terminal facilities (Bogicevic, Yang, Bilgihan, & Bujisic, 2013; Correia et al., 2008; Correia. & Wirasinghe, 2004; Fodness & Murray, 2007; Tsai, Hsu, & Chou, 2011).

An ordinary inspection of airports' facilities are not enough when examining travellers' experience at airports Mansor and Redhwan (2012). Moreover, since travellers are compelled to experience the service before developing perceptions on its quality, if the experience falls short of the expectation, travellers are disappointed (Lewis & Mitchell, 1990; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) implying that poor service quality (organisations' dimension) or poor service experience (travellers dimension). Service quality does not only focus on the outcome of the service, it also centres on the processes involved in delivering the service (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). As a process, major outcomes of airport services are the ease of access and the smooth transition between air and ground modes of transport. To achieve the process, airline passengers are exposed to various service encounters. Nonetheless, the manner in which services are delivered at each point contributes to the overall airport service quality impression which could result in either satisfied or dissatisfied travellers.

Satisfied travellers' are passengers that will be willing to spend (expend time and money) in the various outlets at the airport given that the quality of service is satisfactory to them. For instance, efficient check-in and security procedures will reduce the number of time passengers spend in queues leaving them with more time to shop around and enjoy other commercial services offered. Businesses at airports are known for setting premium prices for their products and increase their profits as passengers will be satisfied and willing to spend their money. Fowder, Fowder, and Beegadhar (2006) affirmed this position; the authors stated that providing quality airport service helps to improve customers' satisfaction which in turn leads to increased international arrivals, customer loyalty and

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relationship commitment. Authors further put forward that highly satisfied tourists spread positive word of mouth and become living' advertisements for service providers.

On the influence of travellers' demographic characteristics on service experience, Chao, Lin, and Chen (2013) highlighted that travellers' expectations of airport service are influenced by demographic characteristics; for example, by whether a traveller' is a frequent/non-frequent flyer, old or young, a high or low-income earner, or travelling for business or personal reasons. Authors assert that travellers' expectations are influenced by travelling factors (such as connecting flights, flight delays, time of departure, and flight duration); the type of carrier (for example, regular or low-cost); services and queuing time in various airport domains (check-in, security screening, immigration and boarding); and by airport facilities. For instance, reducing queuing time, eliminating operation bottlenecks, planning clear traffic flows and signs, increasing the variety of business services and areas and providing better public facilities providing more comfortable and convenient services to travellers, and increase overall service quality (Chao et al, 2013) would naturally translate to a positive service experience.

More studies also found that different groups of travellers had different expectations of airport services. These differences were related to travellers' characteristics, for example, whether they were frequent flyers (Fodness & Murray, 2007) the elderly (Chang & Chen, 2012) or high-income travellers (Chao et al, 2013). Other studies found that there was a significant difference in how some aspects of airport facilities (i.e. airport function, the interaction between members of airport staff and travellers and servicescape) affected the overall travellers' experience. Again, this difference is caused by different travellers' demographic profiles, such as (i) travellers' travel purpose, (ii) whether they are departing or transit travellers, and (iii) their travel frequency. And given that further research to analyse the different expectations of various travellers groups and their relationship to socio-economic variables such as gender, age, family income, the purpose of the trip and the frequency of the trip have been recommended (Correia & Wirasinghe, 2004) this study responds to this recommendation and thus included the analyses of the influence travellers' socio-demographic characteristics on their perception of the airport facilities.

2.3. Measuring the Quality of Airport Services

A number of studies had explained that the service quality concept is attributed to the emerging customers' interest. Customers are becoming more conscious of their needs and thus elevating standards of the service they demand from service providers (Sachdev & Verma, 2004). Being the ultimate consumers of the service, they are the most reliable sources of service quality feedback. In concurrence with this school of thought, getting customers to judge on the quality of services, an organisation becomes better positioned to provide and deliver a service that does not only meet but also exceeds customer expectations. Therefore, it is becoming imperative for organisations to assess their positioning by measuring the service experience that is customers' perception based.

In the context of airport services, Bogicevic et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of service quality by drawing our attention to the need for providing quality services in the attainment of passenger satisfaction. Also, travellers' satisfaction depends a great deal on the quality of service experienced.

Acknowledging the achievement recorded in measuring service quality (expectation and experience) in the service industries, various service measuring models have been developed, used and are still being adopted for new studies. These include SERVQUAL model invented by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), it is a method to capture and measure the service quality experienced by customers, and SERVICESCAPE (Bitner, 1992) it highlights the influence of the physical environment in which a service process takes place. However, this study acknowledged and considered the various airport services mentioned by Doganis (1992) vital and self-explanatory.

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Table-1. Classification of service offered at the Airport.

Essential operational Services	Traffic handling service	Commercial activities
• police and security • fire and ambulance • runway • building maintenance • immigration and customs	• power supply, loading, unloading of baggage/freight • passenger processing e.g. check-in and boarding	• car parking • car rental • banks • hotel • lounges
		
Provided by: airport, local government, the government department	Provided by: airlines, handling agents, airport authorities	Provide by: concessionaires, airport authorities

Source: Doganis (1992).

As depicted in Table 1, the author grouped, in general, services offered at airports into three categories: (i) essential operational services, (ii) traffic handling services, and (iii) commercial activities. However, for discussion, in no particular order, some of the services offered at an ideal airport that are not clearly portrayed in Table 1 are briefly discussed below.

Beginning with the spatial layout of a service area to an airport scenario, this could translate to the arrangement of seats in the waiting area, security scanning equipment and information display screens among others. As suggested by Ryu and Han (2010), the spatial layout also determines the perceptions developed by customers regarding service quality and as such, there is a need for management to always ensure that the layout does not squeeze customers. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) stated in their study that customers are more relaxed and happy in a spacious service environment because it affects their overall experience and later their perceptions on service quality too. Lovelock and Wright (2002) concur, and suggested that the spatial layout in a service area creates an exact image for a firm, positioning it in the eyes of customers.

An additional important factor is the appearance of airline and airport personnel. This has a great deal of effect on customers, more so that the appearance of staff can either build or destroy customers' confidence in the service provider. Unlike in the production of goods, employees are synonymous with service delivery and are most times part of the service delivery, especially during a face-to-face service encounter (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2008). Customer service personnel directly in contact with the customer are the core of the service and, according to Parasuraman et al. (1988) have a pivotal role in determining the quality of service delivered by an organization. For instance, the manner in which a customer contact employee dresses (appearance) sends a signal to the customer of what to expect from the service. What employees wear is highly important, as they are the first people customers interact with. The image communicates significantly about the values, achievements, work ethic, and professionalism associated with an organisation.

On efficient communication as a service, passenger communication plays a pivotal role at an airport. Flight arrivals and departures, check-in and boarding, flight delays, rescheduled and cancellations are examples of the various issues that need to be communicated to passengers. There is a need for visible, accurate and conveniently placed signs directing them to the various facilities and locations at an airport (Caves & Gosling, 1999; Fewings, 2001). Toilet facilities, departure lounges, car parks, security checkpoints, restaurants and boarding gates all need to be clearly marked for the passenger's convenience. Getting passenger communication right can be a significant aid in improving overall airport efficiency and more importantly, in providing a better passenger experience.

There are other physical features at the airport that can also communicate with passengers consequently influencing their emotions and attitudes. Kazda and Caves (2015) opined that the physical set up in service areas are so crucial to passengers at an airport, to the extent that it can even stress them if not well managed. A specific note

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is given to the check-in, security and boarding points. Airports can also make use of these ambient conditions to create an excellent service environment for travellers. Good lighting, proper ventilation and suitable sounds at airport terminals will greatly contribute toward a pleasant environment for passengers.

An additional area of concern is the availability of comfortable seating for travellers and their family who came to receive or see them off. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) uphold that in services that might entail customers sitting for relatively long hours, seat comfort is an essential aspect of service quality. They further posit that the comfort of seats is a function of the physical attributes of the seats as well as space between the rows. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) unambiguously suggested that the amount of space between seats determines the ease of mobility and ultimately the quality of service experienced at the airport. Authors further put forward that seats that are compacted restrict the movement of passengers and therefore, make it difficult for the customer to relax and move freely. In support of this, Barker and Pearce (1990) suggest that closeness of seats determines the comfort of the seats; customers may easily get annoyed or feel uncomfortable if they are seated too close to each other.

Lastly, Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) concluded in their work to establish the significance of cleanliness in the servicescape quality that cleanliness of the service area was a vital determinant of perceived service quality. Furthermore, customers tend to associate cleanliness with the quality of service they anticipate to receive. Apart from the health benefits, cleanliness creates a positive image of facilities. As a result, it is practical for airport managers to make sure that all public facilities especially the toilets are well maintained.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive and quantitative approaches were adopted. And from the information obtained from the management of Ilorin international airport on the population of outbound travellers as at April 2019, an average of 650 out-bound travellers usually make use of Ilorin international airport on a weekly basis. This average figure was based on the record provided for the last six (6) weeks before the fieldwork carried out by May 2018. And since the period granted for data collection by the management is a week, this study adopted the average weekly figure of 650 travellers as population. Ideally, for a population size of 650, a sample size of 240 was required on a 95% confidence level, at 0.05 margin of error (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). However, there was an opportunity to reach out to more than the stated sample size thus, this opportunity was utilised. A total of 413 respondents were non-randomly intercepted at the departure lounge of the airport and given a copy of the survey. However, 411 of those responses were received but only 398 were valid and usable for the analysis.

A structured questionnaire with queries on variables on airport services as asserted by Doganis (1992) was adapted. More queries as it concerns the service elements that are available (seen and verified to be available for public use) were included. The entire questionnaire was divided into two main sections: the first part was the respondent's demographic characteristics while the second part contains 5 point Likert-scale queries (1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree) that thirty-three service elements noticed to be available at the airport was used to solicit responses on travellers' perception of the quality of service received on selected airport attributes. The Likert-scale type question was deployed due to its effectiveness in gathering respondent perceptions on service quality related matters and measurement of satisfaction levels in tourism-related studies as put forward by Hassan and Shahnewaz (2014). Prior to the actual data collection exercise, a pilot test was conducted through questionnaires distributed to fifty-five respondents who are not part of the sample size, but they are also travellers at Ilorin international airport but at an earlier date to the actual data collection. The purpose was to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The reliability value for this study stood at 0.78.

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4. RESULTS

The data were statistically analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data in section A were analyzed using frequency and percentage, while data in section B were analyzed using frequency, t-test, factor analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Tables 2 – 8 emanated from the field exercise (the fieldwork).

Objective 1: to compile travellers' demographic information

The information below shows that 398 valid responses were analysed, out of which, 241 (60.5%) were male, while 157 (39.5%) were female. This implies that there was more male than female in the study. On respondents age range, 24 (6.0%) of the respondents were less than 20 years of age, 61 (15.0%) were between 21-25 years, 50 (12.5%) were between 26-30 years, 56 (14.0%) were between 31-35 years, and 49 (12.5%) were between 36-40 years. Similarly, 39 (10.0%) of the respondents fall within 41-45 years age bracket, 37 (9.5%) were between 46-50 years, while 82 (20.5%) with 50 years and above.

On marital status, 141 (36.0%) of the participants were single, 205 (51.5%), which form the majority, were married, 34 (8.5%) were widowed, 6 (1.5%) were divorced, 5 (1.0%) were separated, while 7 (1.5%) were in other categories of marital status. the employment status of the respondents shows that 263 (66.0%) were employed, 106 (26.5%) were unemployed, 19 (5.0%) have retired from work, while 10 (2.5%) fall within others category of employment status. With respect to the travellers' nationality, 391 (98.2%) were Nigerians, while only 7 (1.8%) of them were foreigners.

Table-2a. Mean score and rank order showing travellers' perception of the quality of service experienced (N = 398).

Airport elements	Mean	Rank	Airport elements	Mean	Rank
Free Wi-Fi service offered at the airport	3.81	1st	The exterior environment is clean	2.98	18th
Check-in procedures	3.77	2nd	Safety/security inside the airport is acceptable	2.67	19th
Good Parking facility	3.71	3rd	The physical design of the airport is presentable	2.58	20th
Airport staff are polite	3.68	4th	Airport staff are knowledgeable	2.51	21st
The location of the airport	3.6	5th	Safety outside the airport is satisfactory	2.49	22nd
Baggage trolleys are functioning	3.57	6th	The terminus comfort (the temperature inside the airport) is satisfactory	2.44	23rd
The interior decoration meets international standard	3.56	7th	Staff appearance is of a good standard	2.43	24th
Seats inside the airport is sufficient	3.52	8th	A variety of transportation is available to the airport	2.39	25th
Signage for easy navigation in and out of the airport	3.48	9th	Information dissemination about flights	2.37	26th
The airport environment is calm	3.3	10th	Business café	2.36	27th
Power supply	3.28	11th	Services at the information desks are acceptable	2.31	28th
The exterior design of the airport is attractive	3.21	12th	Airport staff are always available to render assistance	2.25	29th
Sufficient parking facility	3.2	13th	Airport staff friendliness	2.13	30th
Quick check-out procedures	3.15	14th	Religious facility (e.g., mosque and church) are good enough	2.11	31st
Comfortable seating facility	3.11	15th	Retail shop(s) at the departure	2.08	32nd
Restrooms are in a good sanitary condition	3.09	16th	Adequacy of Banking service/facility	1.98	33rd
The airport interior environment is hygienic	2.99	17th	Airport lounges are ideal for waiting and relaxing	1.75	34th
The conference centre is ideal				1.59	35th

Education distribution of the sample shows that 1 (0.3%) of the respondents have no formal education, 14 (3.5%) were Primary/elementary school certificate holders, none 0 (0.0%) indicated that they have a secondary

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school education, 376 (94.5%), which forms the majority indicated that they have University/Higher qualification education, while 7 (1.7%) represents other types of educational qualification. In terms of the number of visit to Nigeria, 51 (12.8%) of the travellers indicated once, 80 (20.1%) have visited between 2-3 times, 54 (13.6%) indicated between 4-5 times, 46 (11.6%) showed they have visited between 6-7 times, 34 (8.5%) reported between 8-9 times, while 133 (33.4%) indicated that they have visited for 10 times and above.

Objective 2: to evaluate travellers' perception of the quality of service experienced from airport elements available at IIA.

Table 2a presents the mean and rank order of travellers' perception of airport elements. The table shows that the travellers weren't so impressed by the service experienced from most of these elements (given that sixteen out of thirty-five elements that were observed recorded more than 3.00 cut-off (being the benchmark for performance on a 5 point Likert-scale instrument). The five highest-ranked elements according to the table are free Wifi (3.81), checking procedures (3.77), parking facilities (3.71), polite airport staff (3.68), and the location of the airport (3.60). However, the five lowest-ranked elements are religious facility (2.11), retail shop (2.08), banking facility (1.98), ideal airport lounges (1.75), and conference facility (1.59). Given the poor rating the majority of airport element received, this particular result was analysed to a concise idea of the percentage distribution of travellers' level of the ranking of service elements available at Ilorin International Airport. The result is presented in Table 2b.

Table-2b. Percentage Distribution of Travellers' Level of Assessment of Service Features Available at IIA.

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
1-86	18	4.5	Poor
87-129	213	53.5	Inadequate / Fair
130-215	167	42.0	Good
Total	398	100.0	

Table 2b shows that a lower percentage of the respondents 18 (4.5%) rated the service features as poor, 213 (53.5) which is more than the average number of the respondents rated the airport service features as fair, while 167 (42.0%) of the travellers rated it as good. Overall travellers' assessment of the influence amenities on their service experience at Ilorin international airport can be considered fairly okay.

Objective number 3: To identify the airport attributes that are influential to travellers' experience.

Factor Analysis was deployed to determine the major service elements influencing travellers' experience at IIA as shown in Tables 3a and b:

Table-3a. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test showing the proportion of variance among variables on travellers' experience.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.869
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3397.339
	Df	630
	Sig.	.000

Tables 3a and b showed data for variables 8 to 43 subjected to factor analysis using Principal Axis Factoring and Orthogonal Varimax Rotation. Table 3a shows that all KMO values for the individual items (>.90) were well above .5 and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) was .869, indicating that the data was sufficient for Exploratory Factor Analysis. The Bartlett's test of Sphericity χ^2 (630) = 3397.339; $p < .001$ showed that there are patterned relationships among the items. Using an Eigenvalue cut-off of 1.0, the result of the analysis shows that there are eight (8) factors that explain a cumulative variance of 31.172%. Table 3b depicts the factor loadings after rotation using a significant factor criterion of .4 which shows that, accordingly, items 29 (.829), 33 (.796), 8 (.704), 36 (.721), 42 (.758), 12 (.781), 19 (.767) and 37 (.664) are significant factors in the model. The items are excellent Wi-Fi service, well-mannered staff, calmed environment, knowledgeable staff, good quality of parking facilities, sufficient seats inside the airports, standard interior decoration and uninterrupted power supply as the major service features influencing travellers experience at Ilorin international airport.

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Table -3b. Rotated Matrix Showing most influential elements to travellers' experience.

Airport elements	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Excellent Wi-Fi service is offered at the airport	.829							
Business café	.805							
Restaurant(s) facility quality	.792							
Retail shop(s) at the departure	.729							
The conference centre is of good quality	.672							
Banking service/facility within the airport is commendable	.655							
Services at the information desks are acceptable	.610							-.428
Religious facility (e.g., mosque and church) are good enough	.568							
The signage is great, making it easy to navigate one's movement in and out of the airport	.479							
Airport lounges are ideal for waiting, relaxing and reading whilst waiting to board a plane	.471			.449				
Airport staff are polite (well-mannered)		.796						
Airport staff are friendly		.787						
Airport staff are always available to render assistance		.743						
Airport staff are knowledgeable		.732						
Airport staff appearance is of a good standard		.709						
The airport environment is calm (peaceful, serene and attractive)			.704					
The terminus (acceptable temperature maintained inside the airport) is			.694					
Safety outside the airport environment is satisfactory			.633					
The physical layout of the airport is presentable			.606					
The airport exterior environment is clean			.570					
The airport interior environment is hygienic			.523					
Restrooms are in a good sanitary condition			.509					
Safety inside the airport is acceptable			.484					
Excellent check-in procedures				.721				
The airport has quick check-out procedures				.704				
Information dissemination about flights	.426			.583				
Parking facility is of good quality					.758			
Parking facility is sufficient				.496	.680			
The location of the airport					.677			
A variety of transportation options to the city are available from the airport					.475			
Sufficient seats inside the airport lounge						.781		
Seating inside the airport is comfortable			.416			.781		
Baggage trolleys are functioning						.486		
The interior decoration of the airport meets international standard							.767	
The exterior design of the airport is attractive							.686	
Uninterrupted power supply								.664

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Objective 4: To determine the influence of travellers' demographic characteristics on the quality of service experienced.

Five null hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using independent t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The underlying reason for testing whether respondents' demographic characteristics influenced their submission is for planning purpose. This study recognises the possibilities that travellers' socio-demographic characteristics could influence their rating of experience of airport elements as it did in the following studies Fodness and Murray (2007) frequency of travelling, Chang and Chen (2012) age, and Chao et al. (2013) travellers' income.

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service by gender.

Table-4. Mean, SD and t-test result showing the difference in respondents' assessment of airport service by gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	Crit. T	p-value
Male	241	122.84	19.83				
				397	0.22	1.96	0.821
Female	157	123.51	20.83				

Table 4 shows that for a degree of freedom (df) of 397, the calculated t-value of 0.22 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 ($p = 0.821 > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by gender; hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, gender has no influence on travellers' assessment of service features at Ilorin international airport.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by age.

Table-5. ANOVA result showing difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by age.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F.	Crit. F.	p-value
Between group	3245.670	14	463.667	1.14	2.01	0.338
Within group	77851.125	384	405.475			
Total	81096.795	398				

Table 5 shows that for degrees of freedom (df) of 14 and 384, the calculated F-ratio of 1.14 is less than the critical F-ratio of 2.01 ($p = 0.338 > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements on the basis of gender; hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, travellers' age difference has no influence on their assessment of service elements at Ilorin international airport.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by employment status.

Table-6. ANOVA result showing difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by employment status.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F.	Crit. F.	p-value
Between group	2849.319	10	569.864	1.41	2.21	0.221
Within group	78247.476	387	403.338			
Total	81096.795	397				

Table 6 shows that for degrees of freedom (df) of 10 and 387, the calculated F-ratio of 1.41 is less than the critical F-ratio of 2.21 ($p = 0.221 > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service features on the basis of employment status; hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, travellers' employment status has no influence on their assessment of service elements at Ilorin international airport.

H_{04}: There is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by educational attainment.

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Table-7. ANOVA result showing difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by educational attainment.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F.	Crit. F.	p-value
Between group	1965.942	5	655.314	1.62	2.60	0.185
Within group	79130.853	392	403.729			
Total	81096.795	397				

Table 7 shows that for degrees of freedom (df) of 5 and 392, the calculated F-ratio of 1.62 is less than the critical F-ratio of 2.60 ($p = 0.185 > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements on the basis of educational attainment; hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, travellers' level of educational attainment has no influence on their assessment of service features at Ilorin international airport.

H_{05}: There is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by the frequency of airport usage.

Table-8. ANOVA result showing difference in respondents' assessment of airport elements by frequency of airport usage.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F.	Crit. F.	p-value
Between group	2894.815	9	578.963	1.43	2.21	0.213
Within group	78201.980	388	403.103			
Total	81096.795	397				

Table 8 shows that for degrees of freedom (df) of 9 and 388, the calculated F-ratio of 1.43 is less than the critical F-ratio of 2.21 ($p = 0.213 > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessment of airport service elements by the frequency of airport usage; hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, the number of times that travellers have used the airport elements has no influence on their assessment.

5. CONCLUSION

In view of the inadequacy in the quality of service travellers at Ilorin international airport as witnessed on a couple of personal visits, this study was conceived to set up an empirical investigation to gather information on the situation of affairs from travellers' point of view. This study was able to achieve all the objectives it sets out to do and findings from the data it collected from the travellers resulted in the under listed major conclusions:

1. The quality of service experienced by outbound travellers at Ilorin international airport is fairly adequate.
2. The respondents' submission does not differ by their demographic characteristics, indicating that they all appraised service received inadequately.
3. Although airport elements are available, they are either not adequate or sufficient to deliver a deserving experience for travellers'.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should see to the issue of infrastructure benchmarking in Nigerian airports by ensuring that availability and adequacy of basic airports amenities are available before granting a national recognition when required.
2. Kwara State Government should invest and monitor the implementation of an improvement process in the quality of service elements and service delivery at this airport.
3. The management of IIA should embrace a standard way of obtaining travellers' feedback on service experienced on a periodic basis and activate a meaningful implementation programme accordingly.

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