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Assessment of Passengers' Satisfaction and Service Quality in Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos, Nigeria: Application of SERVQUAL Model

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Abstract

SERVQUAL model was used to assess passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the domestic terminal of Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos, Nigeria. This airport is the only concessioned airport terminal in Nigeria, and it facilitates major domestic air travel in Nigeria. The study adopts primary data collected with questionnaire instrument through purposive sampling technique. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed to domestic passengers in MMA2 and 114 questionnaires were returned valid for data analysis and reporting. The most prioritized airport services were encapsulated in the reliability service quality attribute. The study reveals that there is need to improve the standard of facilities for the physically impaired at the Murtala Muhammed Airport 2 (MMA2). The respondents of MMA2 were satisfied with the reliability service attribute; however, respondents were not satisfied with other service attributes. This might be as a result of the fact that there is high expectation on the quality of service in MMA2 being managed under concession management strategy which is referred to as expectancy disconfirmation model. The respondents were satisfied with the overall level of service quality delivered in MMA2.

Keywords: Passengers' satisfaction; Service quality; SERVQUAL model; MMA2

Introduction

Background to the study

There has been emphasis on customers' satisfaction by all service-oriented industries including civil aviation industry. Civil aviation is one of the most prominent service industries in the world today. Because of the global nature of airports, passengers expect the implementation of the highest levels of technology and safety [1]. The principal civil aviation product is the airline, also the principal airline products are the passengers. Air passengers are the major customers using the airport facilities and they are best in assessing the quality of service delivered in the airport.

Customer is an individual that purchases a commodity of service at a particular time (Merriam Webster Dictionary). It is expedient that customer has expectation about a particular service to be offered; the extent of this expectation (High or Low) is dependent on the goodwill that the organization has accumulated over time, also, the customer will have perception about the service offered [2]. Satisfaction is the fulfillment of need or wants. Airport customers include the following; passengers, employees, aircraft owners and pilots, airport tenants and visitors who are dropping off, greeting passengers, or visiting other airport tenants. There are many tenants as well as third-party contractors and consortiums that are also airport's internal customers (ACRP Synthesis 48, 2013). For this research work, the targeted airport customers are the passengers.

Satisfaction is the condition or a form which a person who has experienced a service that has met his or her need at a particular point in time. Passengers' satisfaction is a cumulative construct that is affected by service expectations and performance perceptions in any given period and is affected by past satisfaction from period to period. Service quality is considered the core and focal point for airport management, as airports in the world continue to adopt market oriented business strategies. This has resulted in increased efforts, especially amongst top performing airports being the providers of excellence service, such as Incheon Airport in South Korea, Changi Airport in Singapore, and others [2].

There is increasing number of air travel demand worldwide, and this can be attributed to the global in nature of air transport, technological advancement, globalization, and other factors. As a result of this, taste of passengers differs and airport becoming global, also air travelers are becoming more experienced; it is therefore necessary that airport services are sufficient and quality [2]. Hence, evaluating the quality of airport services rendered in the airport is necessary to find-out if the passengers are satisfied, the growing needs of passengers, and identifying areas of improvement. This research is carried out to assess passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the domestic terminal of Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos, Nigeria. This airport terminal is a domestic terminal and the only concessioned airport terminal in Nigeria.

Statement of research problem

Quality is an important aspect of service industry, and it has been affirmed as fundamental for the survival of any organization when faced with competition, and to gain acceptance of the society together with achieving its mission [3]. Besides, air transport industry has played important role in the global economy especially serving

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as a vital component in the tourism industry and remains essential to the conduct of international business [4]; which without airport terminal the industry as a system cannot function. There are various services rendered in the airport which will enhance the facilitation of transfer from land mode of transport to air mode of transport. It is essential that those services are assessed based on the expectation of airport passengers which can be referred to as quality of services and passengers' perception also referred to as customer satisfaction.

In-line with the above statements, many studies have been carried out regarding passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the air transport industry. Dale and Brian conducted a research on passengers' expectations of airport service quality with focus on New York Kennedy Airport and Liverpool's John Lennon Airport in the USA [5]. The study made use of the following eight (8) airport service indicators; sign-post and functions, ambient conditions, signs and symbols, attitude, behaviors, expertise, productivity and leisure. The airport indicators might not sufficiently give accurate level of airport passengers' satisfaction and airport service quality, also the study was not conducted in Nigeria. The data was analyzed using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Also, Mattazo et al. studied passengers' satisfaction at the Augusto Severo Airport in Brazil [6]. The work focused on five (5) key airport variables affecting satisfaction which are safety of the premises, waiting time for a taxi, availability and quality of seats in the airport, as well as prices of the food at terminal restaurants. The study also made use of few airport service indicators noted earlier which are limited in determining the level of airport passengers' satisfaction and airport service quality. The study was not carried out in Nigeria. Gap analysis was used to analyze the data.

Al Refaie et al. studied potential drivers of satisfaction and loyalty at the Jordan Airport [7]. The study focused on three (3) different factors mainly on ticket pricing, reservation process and flight performance. The few airport service indicators earlier mentioned are not enough to give the accurately level of airport passengers' satisfaction and airport service quality. Gap analysis was used for data analysis. The study was not carried out in Nigeria. Also, Sung and Jin conducted a study on the importance and satisfaction of airport selection attributes by targeting Incheon International Airport and Gimpo International Airport in the metropolitan area of Korea [8]. The study was limited to three (3) airport attributes: airport accessibility, airport facilities and spatiality. The listed airport attributes are not sufficient in determining the level of airport passengers' satisfaction and airport service quality. Gap analysis and importance-performance analysis was used to analyze the data. The study was not carried out in Nigeria.

The above researches conducted in foreign countries might not be applicable for Nigeria because of the differences in culture, level of development and norms. Also the airport service indicators might not be enough to give the accurately level of airport passengers' satisfaction and airport service quality. The studies below were conducted in Nigeria regarding the subject matter.

Ben and Adebola conducted a research on the determinants of customers' satisfaction in the Nigerian Aviation Industry, using Analytic Hierarchical Process (AHP) model [9]. The study was modeled on both airline and airport indicators. The focused airline services in their study are ticket and reservation, on-board services, ticket fees, flight schedule, speed on responding to request, information or reconfirmation, ticket purchase time limit, convenience of ticket purchase, convenience of flight schedule, courtesy and helpfulness staff, and information related to flight. The focused airport services in the study were orderliness and cleanliness of check-in-area, speed of check-in process, information on flight status, boarding process, on-time departure and services at transit point, baggage handling services, and airport facilities and services. The sample size for the study is one hundred (100) but eighty-five (85) responses were valid. The airport services used in the study were limited to determining the efficiency of the airport, also the sample size of the study may be too small to give a plausible result. Analytic Hierarchical Process (AHP) model was used for data analysis.

Fadare and Adeniran conducted a study on comparative analysis of public operated airport terminal and concessioned airport terminal in Lagos, Nigeria [10]. They made use of the entire thirty-nine (39) SKYTRAX indicators and blended into SERVQUAL attributes. Also, gap analysis and Spearman rank correlation were used for data analysis and to compare the services in the two airport terminals. Their study was not limited to one terminal.

After scrupulous review of past researches on passengers' satisfaction and service quality in various airports in the world and extraction of different gaps for modification, this study however used all the thirty-nine (39) SKYTRAX indicators which are the benchmark for services rendered by airport and blended into SERVQUAL attributes to assess passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the domestic terminal of Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos state, Nigeria. It is believed that this approach is capable of providing more plausible result, and be a modification to the study carried out by Ben and Adebola in 2014 [9]. The research is aimed at assessing passengers' satisfaction with a view to measuring the service quality in MMA2. The specific objectives are to identify the most prioritized airport services, and to determine the overall level of passengers' satisfaction in MMA2.

Literature Review

Unique characteristics of air transport

The demand for air transportation service is a derived demand such that it is rarely demanded to satisfy its own purpose. Apart from the fact that air transportation is a derived demand, there are other unique characteristics [2,11,12]. The unique characteristics of air transport are: air transport is a product that cannot be stored or kept; there is no replacement for bad product; it is difficult to test the product before use; the delivery of product cannot be guaranteed because of unpredictable factors; the product can be produced only in batches and not in individual units; and .the product is usually personalized such that transport consumers feel differently about the product. Adeniran and Fadare and Adeniran established the heterogeneous perception of airport passengers towards airport services [2,10].

Historical development of Murtala Muhammed Airport terminal two (MMA2): Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal Two (MMA2) is the first and only privately-funded, as well as the preeminent terminal in Nigeria. It was conceived after fire gutted the domestic terminal of the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, on May 10, 2000. The terminal had been built in the pre-independence era, and before the construction of the International terminal, to cater for both international and regional flights.

After the inferno, the Federal Government of Nigeria made a decision to redevelop the airport using private sector investment under a Public-Private Partnership Scheme. The plan completely transferred all development and operating risks to the private sector, specifically on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) arrangement. There were competitive bids from several companies for the project. A company named Royal Sanderton emerged the preferred bidder, while Bi-Courtney Limited,

a wholly-indigenous conglomerate and the parent company of Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited (BASL), was the reserved bidder [13]. But owing to prolonged delays in commencing the project, the Federal Government invited Bi-Courtney to take up the responsibility.

Consequently, in 2003, the Federal Government awarded the concession to design, build and operate MMA2 and ancillary facilities to Bi-Courtney Limited. Bi-Courtney set out to work promptly with the goal of building a world class Airport Terminal that would be the pride of Nigerians and promote Lagos as the major hub in Africa. The company, however, suffered the pains of being the pioneer of the BOT arrangement in Nigeria, given the fact that the idea was novel. The attendant challenges associated with funding huge projects on a long-term financing in Nigeria also required the strength and determination often associated with Bi-Courtney.

Despite all these challenges, the company remained undeterred, even when it was forced to scale down the scope of the project considerably. While syndication was being processed, Bi-Courtney commenced work due to the belief, patriotism and determination of the promoters of the company. The project was funded from two sources:

1. Equity of the owners/proprietor and
2. The loans from the banks which was syndicated from six banks.

The terminal eventually commenced operations on May 7, 2007. (Culled from Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited [13].

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

SERVQUAL model

Service quality (SERVQUAL) model is also referred to as Gap model is used to assess passengers' satisfaction and service quality of service enterprises. It defines quality as the difference between passengers' expectation and passenger's perception of service delivered. The model was developed by Parasuraman et al. [14,15], and was consistently used by marketing practitioners. It was also applied in different countries such as United States (Kilbourne et al.), India (Randheer, et al.), Nigeria (Ali; Fadare and Adeniran), China (Chung-Wei et al.), and Ghana (Aidoo et al.) [10,16-20]. Furthermore, several researchers have used it to measure service quality in various sectors such as public transport (Aidoo et al.), airline (Sultan and Simpson), retail banking (Ravichandran, et al. ; Ogunnaike and Olaleke) and internet (Eriksson and Friman) [5,20-22]. The model was adopted in this study.

Thomas stated gap model as the assumption that when the Expected Service (ES) is greater than Perceived Service (PS) [23], quality will be perceived as being less and less than satisfactory, the greater the difference between ES and PS is. For proper clarification, Adeniran; Fadare and Adeniran, clearly explained that customers (passengers) must have an expectation about a particular service before the service is been offered [2,10]. When the service is been offered, it is said to be perceived service. Hence, when Expected Service (ES) is equal to Perceived Service (PS), the quality is satisfactory; when Expected Service (ES) is less than Perceived Service (PS), quality will be more and more satisfactory; when Expected Service (ES) is more than Perceived Service (PS), the quality is less than satisfactory.

Originally, this model has ten (10) determinants of service quality comparing the customers' expectations and perception of services as a gap [15]. The determinants are; tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; competence; access; courtesy; communication; credibility; security; and understanding. According to Ravichandran et al. and Budiono, these 10 dimensions were further regrouped in the well-known five (5) dimensions which are tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; assurance; and empathy [21,24].

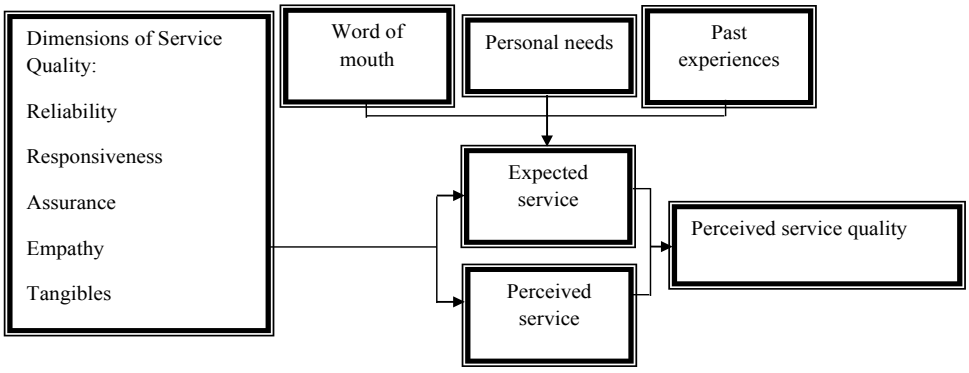
The Figure 1 below shows the process of evaluating service quality which impacts the passengers' satisfaction. The service quality is perceived by the transaction process together with the previous expectation of the service which could be generated by word-of-mouth; personal needs or past experiences, and can result in the perceived service quality which helps to identify the level of satisfaction [25].

Methodology

Benchmarking airport operational performance

SKYTRAX uses a ranking system for its passengers' satisfaction surveys based on the following thirty-nine (39) product and service factors or indicators. All these indicators were adopted in this research. Gap model addresses the following five dimensions in order to measure airport service quality and passengers' satisfaction, a list of thirty-nine (39) airport service factors was determined in accordance to the theoretical framework earlier discussed and review from previous studies on airport satisfaction is been summarized below.

Tangibles: These are the physical facilities and equipment available in the airport, the appearance of airport staff; how easy it is to understand communication materials.



Source: Adapted from Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2001).

Figure 1: SERVQUAL model.

Reliability: This is the ability of airport to perform the promised airport service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness: This is the willingness of the airport employees to help airport passengers and providing a prompt service.

Assurance: This is the ability of airport employees to convey trust and confidence in the passengers, such as; competence to perform the service, politeness and respect for the passengers.

Empathy: This is the act by which the airport provides caring, individualized attention provided to airport customers [10].

Research design

This is a survey research which explores only primary data in assessing the passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the domestic terminal of Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos, Nigeria. The target populations of this research study were domestic passengers. For data analysis, the study is descriptive in nature and therefore adopts SERVQUAL Model.

To determine the appropriate sample size for large (infinite) population and uncertain number of population, judgment was made about the confidence level and the maximum error allowance. The equation below was applied [26]. Sample size for each terminal was determined.

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{4E^2}$$

where;

n=Sample size for MMA2

Z=Z score for the 92 percent level of confidence is 1.75

E=Maximum acceptable error=0.08

92 percent Confidence level at 0.08 maximum error was chosen because of the time consciousness of air passengers. When inserting the above values into the sample size equation, it resulted to sample size of 120 questionnaires for distribution (Table 1).

The sampling technique is a purposive (non-probability) sampling. According to Henry, Saunders, Lewis and Thomhil, convenience sampling is also referred to as grab sampling, accidental sampling, opportunity sampling, or availability sampling [27,28]. It is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from part of the population that is close to hand or easy to reach. According to Adeniran, there are no other criteria to the sampling method except that people or respondents are available and willing to participate [29,30].

This is appropriate for this study because of time consciousness of air passengers in the airport, and limitation/constraint of resources regarding questionnaire distribution and response. Primary data was collected for one week and three days (19th August to 28th August, 2017). The study sought to gather information from airport passengers.

Table 2 shows that a total of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed to domestic passengers in MMA2 and 114 questionnaires were returned valid having been filled completely.

Terminal	Population
Airport passengers in MMA2	120

Source: Author's Survey.

Table 1: Sample population selection.

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent
Valid Questionnaires returned	114	95
Questionnaires not returned	6	5
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Table 2: Response rate of questionnaire distribution.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda , a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for data analysis and reporting; a rate of 60 percent is good and a response rate of 70 percent and over is excellent. This implies that 95 percent response rate for this study was excellent for data analysis and reporting [31].

For SERVQUAL model, expected service was likened to service quality because quality has to do with doing the right thing at the right time, and in the right manner consistently which is referred to as efficiency. Hence, the evaluation of how a service is efficiently delivered airport overtime measures up to the expectation of passenger. Perceived service was likened to passengers' satisfaction because passengers would rate their satisfaction after they must have been offered the service. SERVQUAL model was achieved by obtaining the weight mean scores for expected service and weighted mean scores for perceived service. The difference between the weighted mean scores of perceived service and the weighted mean scores of expected service is referred to as gap scores.

Result and Discussion

The questionnaires were collected from the passengers who used the airport service. The analysis of results and discussions would be divided into two parts as follows:

1. The most prioritized airport services as rated by passengers; and
2. Overall level of passengers' satisfaction in MMA2.

The most prioritised airport services as rated by passengers

The mean scores of passengers' satisfaction in MMA2 based on each service quality attributes as shown in Table 3 are 3.6732 for Responsiveness, Empathy at 3.8877 which seems to be the highest mean score, Reliability at 3.4658 which was the least mean score, Assurance at 3.4803, and Tangibles at 3.7210. The least satisfaction in Reliability was standard of physically impaired facilities at 2.2719; in Assurance was Immigration staff attitude at 3.2368; in Tangibles were Bureau de change facility and ATM facility at 3.2368 and 3.2105 respectively. The highest rating in Tangibles was television and entertainment facilities at 4.3684. From entire service quality attributes, passengers of MMA2 were satisfied with the most of the services offered except the standard of physically impaired facilities. Furthermore, the mean scores of service quality in MMA2 based on each service quality attributes as shown in table 3, for Reliability at 3.4650, Responsiveness at 3.6776, Empathy at 3.8614 which was the highest mean score, Tangibles at 3.7150, and Assurance at 3.4627. The least satisfaction in Reliability was standard of physically impaired facilities at 2.6667; in Assurance was Immigration staff attitude at 3.1667; in Tangibles was ATM facility at 3.2105; in Empathy was cleanliness of washroom facilities at 3.8246; in responsiveness was Choice of bars, cafes and restaurants, including international options at 3.4386. Also, the highest service quality in Reliability was Ease of transit through the airport at 4.2281; in Assurance was Friendliness of airport staff at 3.7632; in Tangibles was Washroom and shower facilities at 4.2807, and Television and entertainment facilities at 4.3684; in Empathy was Flight information, screen clarity

SERVQUAL Attributes	Airport services	Weighted Mean PS	Weighted Mean ES	Model (PS-ES) of MMA2
Reliability	Efficiency of available public transport options	3.5175	3.3333	0.1842
	Taxi availability and prices	3.4474	3.5702	-0.1228
	Immigration and queuing times	3.614	3.9035	-0.2895
	Prevent lost luggage services	3.8246	3.6579	0.1667
	Security and safety standards	3.5351	3.4298	0.1053
	Ease of transit through the airport	4.1579	4.2281	-0.0702
	Baggage delivery times	3.3509	3.4211	-0.0702
	Smoking policy and standard of smoking lounges	3.5877	3.4123	0.1754
	Standard of physically impaired facilities	2.2719	2.6667	-0.3948
	Priority baggage delivery efficiency	3.3509	3.0263	0.3246
N = 10	Average rating overall	3.4658	3.465	0.0008
Assurance	Immigration staff attitude	3.2368	3.1667	0.0701
	Courtesy and attitude of security staff	3.2456	3.2456	0
	Waiting times at security screening	3.6754	3.6754	0
	Friendliness of airport staff	3.7632	3.7632	0
N = 4	Average rating overall	3.4803	3.4627	0.0176
Tangibles	Getting to and fro airport with ease	3.5789	3.5789	0
	Availability of luggage trolleys	3.7719	3.7719	0
	Terminal comfort, ambiance, general designs and appearance	4.1316	4.1316	0
	Seating facilities throughout terminal	3.9561	3.9561	0
	Washroom and shower facilities	4.2807	4.2807	0
	Television and entertainment facilities	4.3684	4.3684	0
	Quiet areas, day rooms, rest area, hotel facilities	4.1667	4.1667	0
	Children play area facilities	4.1842	4.1842	0
	Check-in, and queuing facilities	3.4211	3.4211	0
	Location of airline lounges	3.5263	3.5263	0
	Internet facilities and WIFI availability	3.3333	3.3333	0
	Business center facility	3.3421	3.3421	0
	Telephone and fax location	3.307	3.307	0
	Bureau de change facility	3.2368	3.2368	0
	ATM facility	3.2105	3.2105	0
N = 15	Average rating overall	3.721	3.715	0.006
Empathy	Cleanliness of terminal, floor, seating and public area	3.8509	3.8509	0
	Flight information, screen clarity and quality of information	3.9386	3.9386	0
	Clarity of boarding calls, and airport public announcement	3.9561	3.8509	0.1052
	Cleanliness of washroom facilities	3.8246	3.8246	0
	Terminal signage facilities, boarding gates, transfer and arrivals	3.8684	3.8421	0.0263
N = 5	Average rating overall	3.8877	3.8614	0.0263
Responsiveness	Language skills for airport staff	3.9035	3.9035	0
	Choice of shopping, tax free and other outlets	3.8333	3.8509	-0.0176
	Prices charged in retail outlets	3.5175	3.5175	0
	Choice of bars, cafes and restaurants, including international options	3.4386	3.4386	0
N = 4	Average rating overall	3.6732	3.6776	-0.0044
General	Average overall	3.6456	3.6363	0.0093

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Table 3: SERVQUAL model of passengers' satisfaction and service quality in MMA2.

and quality of information at 3.9386; and in Responsiveness was Language skills for airport staff at 3.9035 (Table 3).

The most prioritized airport services as shown in Table 4 are encapsulated in the reliability service quality attribute. They are Efficiency of available public transport options; Taxi availability and prices; Immigration and queuing times; Prevent lost luggage services; Security and safety standards; Ease of transit through the airport; Baggage delivery times; Smoking policy and standard of smoking lounges; Standard of physically impaired facilities; and Priority baggage delivery efficiency. The study reveals that there is need to improve the standard of physically impaired facilities at the Murtala Muhammed Airport 2 (MMA2).

Overall level of passengers' satisfaction in MMA2

The mean of perceived service is more than that of expected service for reliability service attribute, this denote that respondent of MMA2 were satisfied with the reliability services. However, respondents were not satisfied with other service attributes. This might be as a result of the fact that there is a very high expectation on the service delivery of MMA2 being managed under concession management strategy. The results were shown in Tables 4 and 5.

The respondents were satisfied with the overall level of service quality delivered at MMA2, as shown in Table 5 below.

SERVQUAL Attributes	Perceived service (MMA2)	Expected service (MMA2)	Model (PS-ES) MMA2
Reliability	3.466	3.465	0.001
Assurance	3.38	3.463	-0.083
Tangibles	3.701	3.715	-0.014
Empathy	3.087	3.861	-0.774
Responsiveness	3.673	3.678	-0.005

Source: Authors' Survey, 2018.

Table 4: SERVQUAL model of the Attributes.

Overall level of satisfaction	Perceived service (MMA2)	Expected service (MMA2)	Model (PS-ES) MMA2	Decision
Attributes Overall	3.6456	3.6363	0.0093	Satisfied

Source: Authors' Survey, 2018.

Table 5: Gap model of the attributes showing overall level of satisfaction.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has assessed passengers' satisfaction and service quality in the domestic terminal of Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA2), Lagos, Nigeria with the use of SERQUAL model. This airport is the only concessioned airport terminal in Nigeria, and it facilitates domestic air travel.

The most prioritized airport services were encapsulated in the reliability service quality attribute. The respondents of MMA2 were satisfied with the reliability service attribute alone; however, respondents were not satisfied with other service attributes. This might be as a result of the fact that there is a very high expectation on the service delivery of MMA2 being managed under concession management strategy, as this is referred to as expectancy disconfirmation model. The respondents were satisfied with the overall level of service quality delivered in MMA2. It was revealed in the study that there is need to improve the standard of facilities for the physically impaired passengers in Murtala Muhammed Airport 2 (MMA2).

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