

PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY: A CASE OF JOMO KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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A management research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree in Master of Business and Administration, School of Business, University of Nairobi

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DECLARATION:

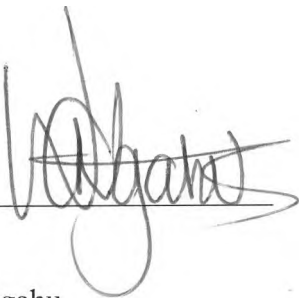
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DEDICATION

To my late father Peter Gituanja and my loving mother Margaret Wanjiru and all my sisters and brothers.

Special dedication to my mum who always encouraged me to study in order to be a better person in life and be able to meet all challenges. Thank you so much mum.

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at the issue of service quality delivery at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport as perceived by airline passengers using the airport.. The study had two objectives, namely:

1. To determine the level of service quality as perceived by airline passengers at JKIA.
2. To establish challenges the Kenya Airports Authority faces in order to ensure high quality service delivery to airline passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

The researcher examined the SERVQUAL model as developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1985 (Figure 2, page 16). The conceptual framework they developed helped to elucidate the various gaps that can exist in the service delivery process. GAP 5, which is the gap between the customer's expectations and perceived service quality, was the main theme of interest in this research (as explained in Figure 1, page 14). The review also looked at other paradigms that have been developed in the area of service quality measurement.

A survey research design was used. The population of interest was seen to be composed of airline passengers using the J. K. I. A. airport. A convenient sample size of 90 passengers was randomly selected on the basis of whether they were arrivals, transit and departures, with 30 respondents for each category. The research instrument was a questionnaire that consisted of open-ended questions, closed-ended questions and five-point Likert scales.

Data analysis using descriptive statistics that involved measures of central tendency, measures of spread and graphical methods was used. The simple disconfirmation model as originally elucidated by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) was adopted. This model looked at perceived service quality (Q) as being the difference between perceived service (P) and expected service (E) or $Q=P-E$.

A negative value of P-E was observed for all the eight variables under investigation. This was due to congestion, too many regulators who are poorly trained in customer service, old and plastic passenger seats, poor toilet infrastructure, congested departure lounge, cumbersome procurement procedures, poorly scheduled airline arrival and departures, too many taxi and tour operators and inefficient complaint handling were noted.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Overview of Recent Development Trends in the Aviation Industry

In recent years various developments have encouraged the airport industry to change its attitude towards benchmarking. Many airports, particularly in Europe, have become very much more commercially oriented and have adopted a much more businesslike management philosophy. This transformation away from the view of airports as public utilities towards being considered as commercial enterprises has naturally led to airports seeking ways to gain insights into their operations and to improve their performance by benchmarking themselves against others. The increasingly competitive airline industry, which is operating in a much more cost-conscious environment particularly post-September 11 and other recent events, is keener than ever before to identify any airport which is being inefficiently managed or which is providing a poor quality of service (Graham, 2005).

Graham (2003) also notes that in some cases commercialization has been taken to its limits by the airports severing their links with their government owners, through some type of privatization process. This has involved the transfer of the management of an airport and in many cases the ownership as well, to the private sector. This movement towards privatization in the industry has also led to the opening stages of airport globalization with the emergence of a few global airport companies who are operating at an increasing number of airports around the world.

Lemaitre (1998) describes how the measurement of airport performance can be viewed from three general management perspectives: financial; marketing and the operational perspective. Her definition of financial performance included the use of traditional accounting ratios which are used in most industries, such as return on capital employed, debt: equity ratio and (for the publicly quoted companies) enterprise value and price earnings ratio, as well as more specific airport economic indicators which involve defining specific measures of airport inputs and outputs.

Lemaitre (1998) also defines the marketing measures as those which look at passenger satisfaction with airport services in terms of, for example, crowding, comfort and signing or those relevant to perception of service quality by the airports users. These are based on passenger perception, usually using passenger surveys. By contrast operational measures, such as capacity utilization, waiting time and queue length are indicators based on the operator's measurements of the service provided or delivered service. In recent years the environmental perspective and the measurement of environmental good practice has also become increasingly important particularly in the key areas of noise and emission, and in terms of waste/energy management and use of public transport.

Likewise, Grönroos (1982) identified two service-quality dimensions-a technical aspect (“what” service is provided) and a functional aspect (“how” the service is provided). Technical (outcome) quality involves what a customer actually receives from a service or a service encounter or what Lemaitre (1998) classifies as operational measures. Functional (process) quality concerns the way a service is delivered to a consumer-that is, the customer's perception of the interaction that takes place during service delivery. The functional aspect conforms to Lemaitre’s (1998) definition of marketing measures of airport performance

Finally, in support of the literature, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) suggested that quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of service, but also involve evaluations of the service-delivery process. Although the dimensions of these evaluations are related, the difference depends upon when the evaluation occurs. For process quality, the evaluation occurs while the service is being performed; whereas, for outcome quality, evaluation occurs after service performance, and focuses on “what” service has been delivered.

1.1.2 Quality of Service and Operational Performance Indicators

Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) defined service quality in terms of physical quality, interactive quality and corporate (image) quality. Physical quality relates to the tangible aspects of a service. Interactive quality refers to the two-way interaction between a customer and a service provider (or the provider's representative), including both automated and animated interactions. Corporate quality refers to the image attributed to a service provider by its current and potential customers.

Graham (2005) observes that some of the airport performance indicators, which are listed under economic performance measures, depend purely on physical inputs and outputs and could equally well be considered as “operational” performance indicators. Then there is the other more disaggregate indicators which assess the service delivered and can cover areas such as queue length, space provision, waiting time, baggage reclaim time and availability of lifts, escalators and trolleys. There have been some *ad hoc* studies which have compared some of these different indicators at airports but there is no established source, which undertakes this on a regular basis. These fall under physical quality as per Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) above.

Whilst a “service delivered” approach can measure the reliability of equipment, it cannot tell whether consumers feel safe, assured and satisfied with their use of the equipment. Similarly a passenger's perception of the time that they have spent waiting in a queue may be very different from the actual waiting time. Qualitative measures, looking at passenger satisfaction ratings, are therefore also used {the interactive quality aspect (Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982); or functional aspect (Grönroos, 1982).

Graham (2005) also observes that these measures enable the quality of service to be assessed through the eyes of users rather than airport management. Consumer surveys are usually undertaken to gather information for this qualitative measure, although comment cards and occasionally mystery shoppers are used as well. Typically the surveys will ask passengers about their usage of facilities and services and their opinion of them in terms of comfort, congestion, cleanliness and value for money among other aspects.

1.2 JOMO KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (JKIA)

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport was built in 1978 and named after Kenya's first president. It is the main international gateway to Kenya and is the biggest and busiest airport in Eastern Africa, currently handling over four million passengers per year. Its runway is 4117 meters long and 45 meters wide and a parallel taxiway of 3000 meters long and 23 meters wide. The terminal building houses international arrivals area on the ground floor and three units.

Unit one and two are used for International departures and unit three for domestic arrivals and departures. Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is served by about forty airlines. Some of these airlines are Kenya Airways, British Airways, Qatar Airways, Air India, Emirates, South African Airways, KLM, Saudia Airways, Precision Airways and Ethiopia Airways. The main focus of JKIA is on improved efficiency, superior quality services and increased capacity.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As stated earlier, globalization has forced many airport managers to rethink the fundamental manner in which they approach business. Competition is no longer domestic; it is international. One faces competitors from all sides of the globe. Taylor (1994) in an interview with Bob Coleman, Director of Customer Services, Air UK Ltd notes that key airport customers, airlines, have ingrained in them a philosophy of good customer service and quality management in all the non-technical board members and management. Reasons are that if they do not provide good customer service, then the passengers will go with the airlines that do: the competition has always been there. There have always been too many passenger seats chasing too few passengers, so an airline has got to be good. Taylor (1994) further notes that the second reason follows on from that: the kind of people who get into senior positions in airlines recognize the need for good standards of customer service, and are the type who naturally want to deliver it—and get a great deal of job satisfaction from doing so.

Perrin (1991) notes that almost 90 percent of the US airline executives questioned in a survey said that establishing their carrier, as a leader in service quality was a top priority. Evelyn and DeCarlo (1992) argue that determining optimum levels of customer service is understood to depend on accurately assessing customer expectations, so that companies are able to meet highly valued customer expectations and avoid employing those services that customers do not value; regular customer feedback has been determined essential to such successful customer satisfaction strategies.

Peters and Waterman (1982) observe that successful customer service focused companies measure their service to ascertain how well they are satisfying their customers and Albrecht (1992) notes that superior companies have been shown to be consistently excellent listeners to their customers. All these and more conceptual and contextual literature points to the fact that airport managers must strive to offer quality service to their customers in order to attract and retain their custom. With this in mind, the purpose of this study is to determine the quality of service delivery by the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport management as perceived by airline passengers.

Several studies have been carried out locally on perceived quality of service in a number of organizations. Maina (2001) studied the perceived service quality: the case of mobile phone services whose first objective was to investigate whether customers perceived quality of mobile phone services coincided with their expectations of these services (GAP 5, see page 19 of this study). The findings reflect a significant perceived service quality gap. The service provider did not meet the customers' expectations on many of the service descriptors. Maina also examined GAP 1 and discovered no significant statistical difference between managers' perceptions of customer expectations and the customers' expectations.

Kandie (2002) conducted an investigation of GAP 5 in selected banks in Kenya. This revealed a negative value between customers' expectation and perception of service delivered. This was significant in that bank customers may not necessarily see banks investments in quality as contributing to quality. Maina (2003) investigated factors that determine perceived quality of service in the insurance industry in Kenya, specifically in Nairobi province and concluded that company efficiency, fast action on complaints, prompt service and understanding of customer needs were important to customers in judging service quality.

Other researches include Masinde (1986) who studied the perceived quality of service: the case of Kenya Airways; Mwenda (1987) who studied the perceived quality of port services: the case of Kenya Ports Authority; Muriithi (1996) conducted an analysis of customer service offered by Kenyan commercial banks; Njoroge (2005) looks at customers perception of service quality in a decentralized system in the public utility sector in Kenya:

The case of KPLC Ltd Murugu (2003) looks at the perceived quality of service in the mortgage sector: The case of HFCK and Mwaura (2001) studied the impact of perceived service quality: the case of matatu industry.

None of these studies touch on the issue of service quality at J.K.I.A. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no known study that has been carried out studying the perception of service delivery at J. K. I. A as perceived by airline passengers.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study will be:

1. To determine the level of service quality as perceived by airline passengers at J. K. I. A.
2. To establish challenges the Kenya Airports Authority faces in order to ensure high quality service delivery to airline passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be of benefit to the following: -

1. The management of Kenya Airports Authority will benefit through identifying passenger needs in terms of various services offered by different agencies at the airport
2. The various government agencies that provide services to passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport will get feedback on how passengers' perceive the quality of these services
3. Academics and research scholars can use this study as a basis for further research

1.6 CONCEPTS AND TERMS

- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): The International Civil Aviation Organization was formed in 1944 as a means to ensure secure international co-operation and highest possible degree of uniformity in regulations and standards procedures and organization regarding civil aviation matters. Its mandate is to ensure safe, efficient and orderly evolution of international civil aviation. There are one hundred and eighty-eight I. C. A. O contracting states and Kenya is one of them. Therefore, Jomo Kenyatta international airport must meet all the standards and recommended practices set by I. C. A. O.

- A standard is defined as any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, material, performance, personnel, the uniform application of which recognized as necessary for the safety or regularity of international air navigation and to which contracting states will conform in accordance with the convention, in the event of impossibility compliance, notification to the council is compulsory under article 38 of the convention.
- A recommended practice is any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, material, performance, personnel or procedure, the uniform application of which is recognized as desirable in the interest of safety, regularity or efficiency of international air navigation and to which contracting states will endeavor to conform in accordance with the convention. States are invited to inform the council of non-compliance.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE NATURE OF SERVICES

Service has traditionally been difficult to define. Kotler (1999) defines a service as any “act or performance that one party can offer another, which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.” Rust *et al* (1996) defines services as any acts or performances that one party offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will adopt the definition given by Kotler (1999) above. This definition has the following implications: There is no transfer of title as there is no physical good; the entity that is under consideration must be intangible although perceived

Marketing exchange occurs; the purchaser as an activity, benefit or satisfaction acquires something of value.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICES

When evaluating service quality, every company must consider four unique service characteristics. These are:

2.2.1 Intangibility

Services are intangible; they cannot be seen, tested, heard or smelled before they are purchased. Services are performances that can be experienced only as they are delivered (Maina, 2001). Kotler (1999) states that the work of the services provider is to make the service more tangible by associating it with tangible products. Ennew (1990, as reported in Bateson, 1977) and others point out that intangibility has essentially two meanings. At one level, it is concerned with the fact that services are impalpable in the sense that they have no physical form, but it also recognizes that many services are intangible from a conceptual point of view in that they are not easily defined and may be difficult to understand. Many services will display both aspects of intangibility and the problem is particularly acute with many professional and financial services (Donnelly, Berry and Thompson, 1985).

2.2.2 Inseparability

Services cannot be separated from their providers. If an employee provides the service, then the employee is part of the service because the customer is also present as the service is produced. Provider-customer interaction is a special feature of service marketing. Quiroz (1995) argues that customer service is the sum of interactions between the airport and its customers; customer service is also the offerings (services, facilities) that will ensure the satisfaction of the customer. The customer is increasingly demanding and aware; he/she is willing to pay to receive quality that can be relied upon, and to be considered as a person worthy of respect. Ennew (1990) and others observe that to a large extent, the qualities of inseparability and heterogeneity arise because of the intangible nature of services. They go on to point out that the characterization of services as an act rather than as an object leads to an emphasis on the individuals providing the service and their interaction with the organization's customers.

2.2.3 Variability

Variability or heterogeneity of a service arises because of the high dependence of service quality on personal interactions. Service quality will be affected in turn by the fact that different frontline personnel have different abilities. Even the same service provider has good and bad days, or may be less focused at different times along the day. Unlike tangible products, which are manufactured in the same way, services are produced differently to different customers (Maina, 2003; Kotler and Armstrong, 2000). In essence, therefore, the quality of service product is typically highly dependent on the quality of the personnel conducting the transaction. The challenge to the service provider is to as much as possible create uniformity.

2.2.4 Perishability

Services cannot be inventoried. They are performed in real time and are consumed as they are produced. One cannot inventory them and once consumed they leave nothing with the consumer except memories. Perishability of services put pressure on service marketers to match services capacity to demand patterns. Idle capacity during service delivery represents revenue-earning potential lost (Ennew, 1990).

2.3 SERVICE QUALITY

It is generally agreed that service quality is an attitude or global judgment about the superiority of a service, although the exact nature of this attitude is not agreed (Robinson, 1999). Some suggest that it stems from a comparison of expectations with performance perceptions (disconfirmation) (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), while others argue that it is derived from a comparison of performance with ideal standards (Teas, 1993) or from perceptions of performance alone (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). It is also agreed that service quality is distinct from customer satisfaction, although the exact nature of this distinction seems to be somewhat blurred (Robinson, 1999).

Some argue that, while service quality is an overall attitude towards a service firm, customer satisfaction is specific to an individual service encounter (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). For instance, a customer may be very satisfied with an individual service encounter in a bank, but his/her overall attitude towards that bank might be one of offering poor service.

Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml *et al.* (1994) have outlined the following ten critical lessons for improving service quality: listening, reliability, basic service, service design, recovery, surprising customers, fair play, teamwork, and employee research and servant leadership. This concurs with current research that suggests that consumer's judge service quality based on five broad dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

The most important of these dimensions is reliability or the ability to perform as promised in a dependable and reliable manner. Delivering reliable service is difficult without a clear understanding of the design of the service system itself. A service map not only outlines the process involved in delivery but also identifies processes that are visible to customers and those that are not. The map also focuses on identifying fail points in the system that require special attention such as redesign, staff training, etc. Mistakes happen and this is where responsiveness (willingness to help), assurance (employee knowledge and courtesy), and empathy (caring, individualized attention) come into play. The ability to recover from a service failure can be critical to keeping and/or restoring customer confidence (Berry *et al.*, 1994).

Successful service quality strategies are generally characterized by customer segmentation, customized service, guarantees, continuous customer feedback, and comprehensive measurement of company performance. The experience in many industries and companies demonstrates that this process, although generally acknowledged, is not universally implemented. Market segmentation by customer expectations, to create a separate level of service that exceed those levels of expectations, has also been found essential to attract customers and create customer loyalty (Porter, 1980). Knowing accurately what customers prefer, successful service companies are able to give customers exactly what they want by customizing the product or service, to surprise and “delight” them (Porter, 1980 and Albrecht, 1992).

2.3.1 Dimensions of Service Quality

Customer use basically similar criteria to determine service quality regardless of the type of service (Parasuraman et. al., 1985). The ten service quality dimensions are: -

1. Access: Approachability and ease of contact, waiting time to receive service is not extensive. Convenient hours of operations and location of service facility.
2. Communication: Keeping customers informed in language they understand and listening to them.
3. Competence: Possession of required skills and knowledge to perform the service involving contact personnel, the operational support personnel and the service organization i.e. research capability of the organization
4. Courtesy: Politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel. Clean and neat appearance of public contact personnel. Friendly and polite reception.
5. Credibility: Trustworthiness, believability, honest and having customer’s best interest at heart.
6. Reliability: Consistency in performance and dependability e.g. performance of service at the designated time.
7. Responsiveness: Willingness or readiness of employees to provide service e.g. giving prompt service.
8. Security: The service is free from danger risk or doubt.
9. Tangibles: Physical evidence of the service, which includes physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipment used to provide the service.

10. Understanding/Knowing the Customer: Making the effort to understand the customer needs, learning the customer's specific requirements. Providing individualized attention and recognizing the regular customer.

For criticism of this model, please refer to section 2.5.4, pg. 26.

2.3.2 Customer Perception of Quality

Customer perceptions and expectations of service quality are increasingly used to forecast company profitability and prospects for improved market share. Although many other "quality-focused" initiatives have often failed to enhance company performance, customer-perceived service improvements have been shown empirically to improve profitability (Buzzell and Gale, 1987). The shift from an industrial to a customer-value paradigm (Albrecht, 1992) places service at the center of company efforts to improve profitability.

As virtually all organizations compete to some degree on a basis of service (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990), and as the US economy has become a predominantly "service economy" (Albrecht and Zemke, 1985), service quality then becomes significantly important to achieve a genuine and sustainable competitive advantage. Service-based companies are compelled by their nature to provide excellent service in order to prosper in increasingly competitive domestic and global marketplaces, i.e. there is no "tangible" product to equate otherwise to quality.

2.3.3 Satisfying Customer Preferences

Quiroz (1995) defines customer satisfaction or non-satisfaction is the difference between how the customer expected to be treated and how he/she perceives the treatment received. Customer-driven strategies require satisfying customer preferences; it is first necessary to identify the customer (Sonnenberg, 1991), which is also found to be prerequisite to successful global competition (Butterworth, 1990) and service competition generally (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Many companies intending to employ a customer service-based strategy find the process of identifying and measuring customer preferences very difficult, often owing to mistaken business perceptions of customer wants (Fornell, 1992).

Nonetheless, providing superior service quality requires creating a distinct relationship between what the customer wants and that which the company provides, or a relationship between customer requirements and essential business elements (Evelyn and DeCarlo, 1992). Service quality literature recognizes expectations as an instrumental influence in consumer evaluations of service quality (Brown and Swartz, 1989). Expectations are understood as the desires or wants of customers, i.e. what the service provider should offer (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), and studying companies understood to be leaders in various industries (and not limited to direct competitors), i.e. “benchmarking” or “studying the winners”, has become a vital source in identifying gaps that exist between customer expectations and company performance (Albrecht, 1992) as perceived by its customers (Miller, 1992).

Maina (2001, as reported in Christopher *et al.*, 1991) views customer service as being concerned with the building of bonds with customers and other markets or groups to ensure long-term relationships of mutual advantage. He looks at customer service as a process which provides time and place utilities for the customer and which involves pre-transaction considerations, transaction and post-transaction considerations relating to the exchange process with the customer. He notes that provision of quality customer service involves understanding what the customer buys and determining how additional value can be added to the product or service being offered.

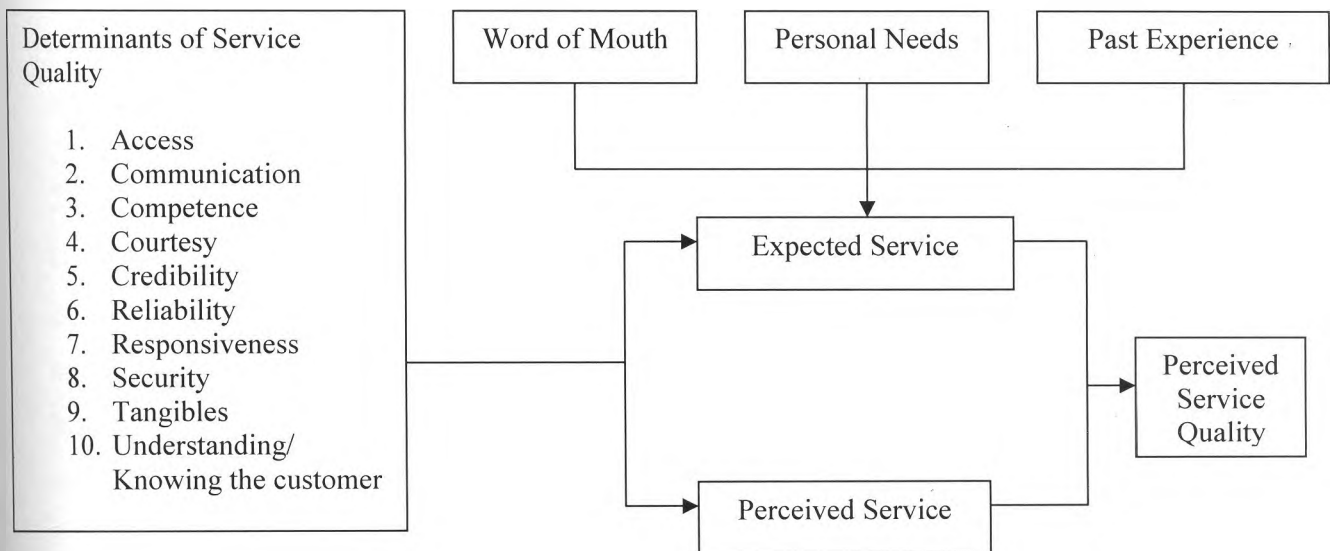
2.3.4 Perception Value and Expectations

Figure 1 below is a flow diagram that demonstrates the relationship between the 10 dimensions of service quality set out by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) as forming the basis upon which the customer builds their expectations in terms of service based on what other customers say (word of mouth), customers personal needs and past experience (if any); the same variables form the basis of how the service received is perceived (or judged by the customer); the gap between these two constitutes the perceived service quality.

Sultan and Simpson (2000) found that both expectations and perceptions of service quality vary by nationality, as do overall service-quality assessments. Perceived value is a construct that goes beyond perceived service quality (Bolton and Drew, 1991). As an antecedent to value, perceived service quality addresses the get components in the service delivery process (Zeithaml, 1988).

Perceived value may be conceptualized as the result of the customer's trade-off between quality perception and the monetary and non-monetary sacrifices (Bolton and Drew, 1991). Yet, value can be extended in its conception to capture functional, social, emotional and epistemic components on both sides (Hartmann, 1967). The input components other than money (evolved through customer participation) have been investigated recently by Kellogg *et al.* (1997). However, the development of reliable and valid scales to measure sacrifices other than money (e.g. time,

Figure 1: DETERMINANTS OF PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY



Source: Martin Christopher, Adrian Payne and David Ballantyne, 1991, Relationship Marketing: Bringing quality, Customer Service and Marketing Together.

Physical, or psychological effort) still remain a rich field of research (Zins, 1998).

It was shown that in a pre-purchase situation value perceptions exercise a direct influence on the re-purchase intention (Bolton and Drew, 1991) or the willingness to buy (Dodds *et al.*, 1991). In the post-purchase situation, where extensive service experience is available, it can be assumed that the influence of the value-for-money evaluation on behavioural intention will be partly or fully-mediated by the customer satisfaction (Pettersson and Spreng, 1997). While there seems to evolve some consensus on the fact that expectations may be split into two groups (i.e. quality norms or should-expectations and quality estimates or will-expectations) (Cadotte *et al.*, 1987) there is no certainty about the role of them in.

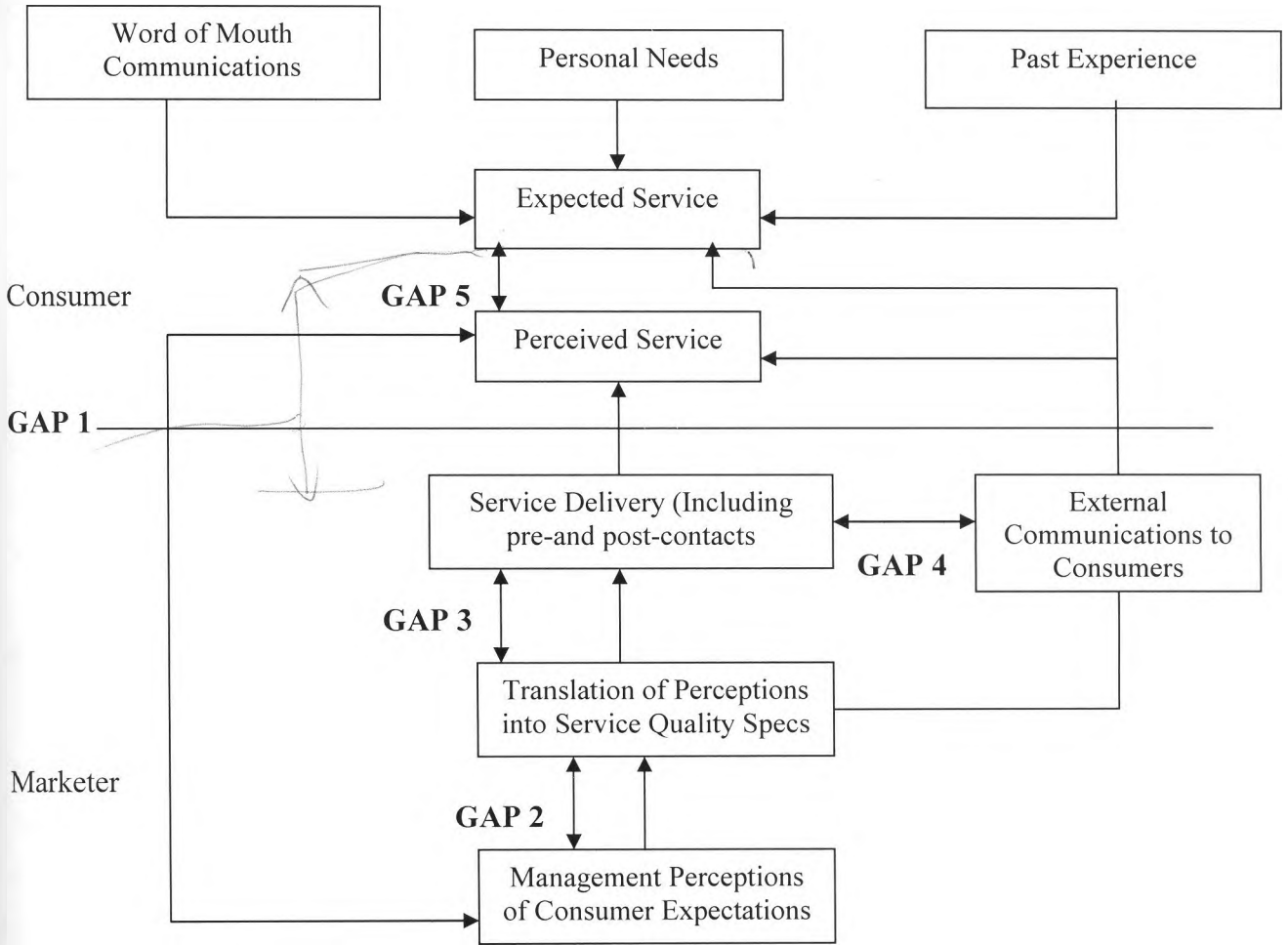
Service quality assessments (Johnson and Mathews, 1997).

Generally speaking, most researchers acknowledge that customers have expectations and that they play a certain role as standards or reference points used by consumers to evaluate the performance of a company (e.g. Bolton and Drew, 1991; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988, 1994). Models of the type of subtractive disconfirmation approach (e.g. Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988) make use of this component. Criticism of the expectancy-based models is predominantly targeted towards the negligible contribution to the overall evaluation (Cronin and Taylor, 1994) and not toward the possible important role. Zins (2001) observes that on the transactional level it is conceivable that expectations are more correlated with perceptions than on the relationship level as expectations are formed and adjusted for every transaction individually.

2.4. THE GAP THEORY

Donnelly *et al.* (1995) observe that in principle, the SERVQUAL model can be extended to investigate five possible gaps in the process of service delivery in meeting customer expectations. These are illustrated in Figure 2. The service quality gap (GAP 5) is the gap between customer expectations of the service and the perceived service delivered and is the gap on which many service

Figure 2: Service Quality Model



Source: A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml and Leonard L. Berry (1985), *A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implications for Future Research*, *Journal of marketing*, p. 44

Organizations frequently focus. However, simply looking at this gap and searching for solutions to help close it might not, by itself, be adequate in terms of matching customer expectations. Other gaps in the service process may be contributing to such service shortfalls and must be identified and dealt with directly by managers if service quality is ultimately to be improved. The understanding gap (GAP 1) is the gap between customer expectations and management perceptions of what these customer expectations are. If there is a mismatch then management in the service provider organization must understand customer expectations adequately if the right priorities are to be set, the right resource allocations made, and the right corrective actions taken.

Such a gap may be caused by inadequate research into customer needs, poor internal communications, or inadequate management structures. The design gap (GAP 2) is the gap between management's understanding of customer expectations and the design and specification of service quality. Management understanding of customer expectations must be accurately translated into appropriate quality specifications and performance standards. Such a gap might be caused by an inadequate commitment to service quality; inappropriate goal setting; or by management who are inexperienced or inadequate in this area.

The delivery gap (GAP 3) is that between the specification of service quality and the actual quality of the service delivered. Such a gap may arise because of a shortage of resources in key areas, lack of commitment and motivation, inadequate quality control procedures or inadequate staff training.

Finally, the communications gap (GAP 4) is that between what is actually delivered and what has been promised in terms of external communications such as media, service publicity, local and national charters, customer contracts and the like. Essentially, the SERVQUAL approach assesses the size of each of these gaps and their resulting impact on the imbalance between customers' expectations and experiences as measured in the service quality gap (Donnelly *et al.*, 1995).

2.5 MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

Robledo (2001) notes that the inclusion or not of expectations as a determinant of perceived service quality has resulted in two conflicting paradigms:

- a. The disconfirmation paradigm: according to this approach customers evaluate a service by comparing their perceptions of the service received with their expectations.
- b. The perception paradigm: supporters of this paradigm maintain that expectations are irrelevant and even misleading information for a model intended to evaluate perceived service quality. They maintain that the perception of the customer is the only measure required.

As a result of the lack of agreement in that area, customer expectations of service quality have not been successfully understood and examined. In particular, sources of expectations remain largely unexplored and expectations

Management is an area of study yet to be developed. However, the debate that has originated the greatest amount of attention among service quality experts is the one related to the measurement of service quality. Basically there are three areas of debate when it comes to determining the ideal method of measuring service quality, the first one of them directly related to the problem of expectations (Robledo, 2001).

2.5.1 Disconfirmation models

Disconfirmation models are based on the disconfirmation paradigm (Bolton and Drew, 1991). Quality is therefore defined as the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of actual service delivered ($Q = P - E$), and a customer will perceive quality positively only when the service provider meets or exceeds his expectations (Robledo, 2001).

The most important model developed upon this theory is SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). The original SERVQUAL model identifies specific criteria by which customers evaluate service quality. These criteria are classed in five major dimensions: tangibles, the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials; reliability, the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; responsiveness, the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; assurance, the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service and empathy or the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs.

The model begins with the assumption that customers are able to articulate both their *expectations* of the general characteristics and determinants of quality service and also their *perceptions* of actual and current service quality for a specific service provider. The model therefore not only provides an assessment of customer views of current service quality; it also provides a yardstick in terms of their expectations of what that service quality should be.

For each statement, the respondent is provided with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (1, Strongly disagree; 2, Disagree; 3, Tend to disagree; 4, Neutral; 5, Tend to agree; 6, Agree; 7, Strongly agree). They are then asked to score their expectations of the service and later to score their perceptions of the service actually experienced from the organization under examination. So, for example, a question relating to the reliability dimension might be: “An excellent housing repair service will provide their services at the time they promise to do so”.

Later in the questionnaire the related statement appears: “Midtown housing department provides its services at the time it promises to do so.” Such a questionnaire structure – comprising between 20 and 30 statements around the five dimensions – allows analysis in a number of ways: assessing which service dimensions score highly in terms of customer expectations—for example whether customers place more value on tangibles or on reliability; assessing how these different service features are rated by the customer—on the basis of their actual experience—for the specific service provider being investigated; and assessing the gap between customers’ expectations of the service and their perceived experience of the service actually delivered overall and for each of the service quality dimensions.

This last point is a particularly important outcome of the SERVQUAL model. If, in the illustrative question used earlier, the customer had strongly agreed with the statement in the expectation section but strongly disagreed with the corresponding statement in relation to the actual service received, then clearly a major gap exists—in the customers mind—between the service that should be provided and the service that is currently being delivered (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). This approach may sound unduly simplistic but it is in fact supported through the model with sophisticated statistical analysis. This allows a rigorous and testable analysis of the customer responses (Robledo, 2001).

2.5.2 Perception models

This second model, mainly resulting from examinations and assessments of the gap theory, is based only on perceptions of performance. Frameworks for service quality measurement following that approach are, for example, SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) and EP (Teas,

1993). Despite its popularity, a number of criticisms are leveled at the SERVQUAL instrument, aimed at both the conceptual and the operational level. Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Teas (1993a) are particularly vociferous in their critique, both developing their own measurement instruments. Based on a review of the service quality and customer satisfaction literature, Cronin and Taylor (1992) conclude that current performance best reflects a customer's perception of service quality and that expectations are not part of this concept. They perform an empirical test with four alternative service quality models:

- a. Service quality = performance - expectations
- b. SERVQUAL: Service quality = importance \times (performance - expectations)
- c. Service quality = performance
- d. SERVPERF: Service quality = importance \times performance

A survey instrument is developed using the same 22 items as the SERVQUAL scale; indeed, Cronin and Taylor (1992) concur with the reliability of Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1991) scale items. A third section is added that measures the importance of each item using a similar set of 22 statements and a seven-point Likert scale. From the results of their empirical investigation Cronin and Taylor (1992) conclude that the unweighted SERVPERF measure (performance only) performs better than any other measure of service quality.

Teas (1993a) discuss the conceptual and operational difficulties of using the performance-minus-expectations approach, with a particular emphasis on expectations. He proposes and empirically tests two alternative perceived service quality models, evaluated performance and normed quality. He concludes that the evaluated performance model outperforms SERVQUAL and the normed quality model. In this model service quality is measured by the gap between perceived performance and the ideal amount of a feature, rather than the customer's expectations.

2.5.3 Weighted versus Unweighted Models

The discussion is about the convenience of weighting or not weighting the specific criteria by which customers evaluate service quality according to the importance they assign to each of those criteria. Hence, we find weighted models and unweighted models. The initial version of the SERVQUAL instrument simply measures expectations and performance, and does not measure

the importance of the various features (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Carman (1990), however, argues that since the importance of each item is quite distinct from the customer's expectations, it is relevant to the assessment of service quality.

Indeed, Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) introduce importance weights to the SERVQUAL instrument. Respondents are asked to assign importance weights, out of 100, to descriptions of the five dimensions, these weights then being used to provide a weighted average of the overall service quality score. Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) demonstrate the validity of their revised instrument, but say little more than this in relation to the benefits of importance weights.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) test the use of importance weights in conjunction with both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. They adopt a different approach to Parasuraman *et al.* (1991). Respondents are asked to assign an importance score, between one and seven, to each of the 22 items. Following empirical tests, they conclude that this does not add to the predictive power of the instruments, and in fact reduces it.

Teas (1993a) also conclude that weighted models perform worse than the unweighted versions. Parasuraman *et al.* (1994) argue against individually weighting every item. They believe that using individual importance scores as independent variables in regression analysis is a form of double counting, since the primary purpose of regression analysis is to derive the importance weights through the beta coefficients.

Cronin and Taylor (1994) consider the opposite to be true, seeing the mathematical derivation as being quite distinct from directly asking respondents to state their perceptions of importance. What is surprising is that no one notes the problems of weighting importance on an interval, rather than a ratio, scale. Meanwhile, Cronin and Taylor (1994) believe that weighting by dimension is dangerous because of the uncertainty over the dimensionality of service quality (see the next sub-section) and because of the intercorrelation between the dimensions.

Since Parasuraman *et al.* (1994) regard importance weighting merely as a means for providing an indication of the overall service quality gap, they do not perceive this to be a problem. In a later paper, Taylor (1995) uses evidence from the literature to suggest that explicitly asking for importance weights is an unreliable approach. Instead he suggests that indirect methods, in which the importance weights are statistically derived, are more appropriate; that is, implicit importance weights. He demonstrates the efficacy of the method by using a weighted multidimensional scaling technique with the SERVPERF instrument. Lewis and Mitchell (1990) also suggest that an indirect method should be employed in which the level of expectations and perceived performance indicates the importance of each item.

2.5.4 Dimensions of Service Quality

Consumers evaluate providers of services along dimensions, which are groupings of criteria. The question is one of determining those. Dimensions, and if they are general for any service company or, rather, are context specific. Despite Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1988) initial claim that their five service quality dimensions are generic, it is generally agreed that this is not the case, and that the number and definition of the dimensions varies depending on the context. When measuring the quality of accounting firms, Freeman and Dart (1993) conclude that service quality is a seven-dimensional construct. Robinson and Pidd (1998) propose 19 dimensions of service quality in the context of management science projects.

Babakus and Boller (1992) perform an empirical study on an electric and gas utility company using the SERVQUAL instrument. They conclude that the proposed dimensionality of SERVQUAL is problematic and that in the industry under investigation service quality is probably a unidimensional rather than a five-dimensional construct. Babakus and Boller believe that this is due to the service being delivered on a continuous basis, without face-to-face contact, by a monopolistic company. As a result of this finding, they argue that the dimensionality of service quality is a function of the service under investigation, and therefore it is not worth pursuing the development of a standard measurement instrument. Different measures should be developed for different services, and the classification of services into continuous/discrete and low/high involvement may prove a useful line of enquiry.

What is less clear is whether the five dimensions are correct for the services studied by Parasuraman *et al.* Carman (1990) confirms the existence of the dimensions in the SERVQUAL scale, but he believes that two additional dimensions should be included: courtesy and access. These are two of Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) original ten determinants of service quality, which, through their empirical research, are later, reduced to their five dimensions (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

Cronin and Taylor (1992) conclude that the five-component structure of SERVQUAL is incorrect and, in fact, service quality is a unidimensional construct. Parasuraman *et al.* (1994) argue, however, that Cronin and Taylor reach this conclusion because they ignore the intercorrelation between the variables representing the five dimensions in their analysis.

2.5.6 Difficult challenges.

Meeting rising customer expectations has proved to be one of the most difficult challenges to service businesses (Sonnenberg, 1991). Quality is found to be measured most accurately through the eyes of the customer (Miller, 1992), and it is not found to improve unless it is regularly measured (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Customers are therefore never mistaken when they say that (service) quality is bad, because if they perceive it so, it necessarily *is* so (Schneider and Bowen, 1995).

Companies that actively search for and incorporate the best service methods and processes to improve the performance, regardless of sources and ultimately the perceptions of their customers, are found to excel in relation to their competitors (Sellers, 1991). In practice, companies that exceed customer expectations without impairing profit margins have frequently been found to develop a solid foundation of customer loyalty, based on segmented service (Drucker, 1964 and Porter, 1980). Customer satisfaction and customer retentions are always at risk. Therefore managers must be vigilant if they are to maintain sufficient high quality in order to maintain customer loyalty (Rust, 1996).

2.6 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE QUALITY AT JOMO KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

In July 2001, the Kenya Airports Authority conducted a customer services survey whose objective was to determine passenger perception of facilities and services at the JKIA (Kenya Airports Authority, 2001). This study was done in the middle of a major rehabilitation and expansion project at the JKIA airport. This project was a response to increased usage of air travel and the subsequent stiffer competition in the aviation industry marked by continual service- and facility-improvement with a view to retaining and expanding market share.

The JKIA study made use of descriptive techniques of analysis, using frequencies and percentages to analyze data. Out of a total of 1000 questionnaires distributed, 527 responded (a response rate of 52.7%). The gender ratio was 38% female and 62% male respondents spanning over 50 nationalities. Over 50% of the respondents fell under the upper middle age group (26-45 years). Over 60% indicated that they were regular users of the airport. The survey captured 30% transit and 40% holiday airport users respectively. The very young (under 18) had a particularly poor response rate of about 0.8%.

With regard to signage, 38% voted JKIA, as above average, 11.5% as inadequate and 5.9% did not rate this service. Under Flight Information displays, 41% rated this service, as above average while 15% were dissatisfied. The dissatisfied segment complained of few display screens, poorly manned information counters and lack of real time flight information. 41% and 32% rated availability and quality of baggage trolleys as excellent while 14% and 15% felt availability and quality of the same was poor. A point to note was that passengers were more concerned about the quality as opposed to the availability of trolleys

The customs service desk was rated as above average by 40% of the respondents, 13% were dissatisfied and 9% did not rate this service. Notably, the study established a drop in customs rating compared to an earlier study conducted in 1997. Respondents who were dissatisfied evaluated customs staff as unfriendly, gloomy-faced, bribe seeking and inefficient in service delivery. 53% of passengers rated the check-in counters as excellent, 9% as poor and 5.5% did not rate this service. Comments among the 9% who rated the service as poor included colour

discrimination, rude staff and slow processing. Immigration desk was rated by 38%, as satisfactory and 13% was dissatisfied. Among the latter, immigration staff were seen as rude, unconcerned, corrupt and generally uninspiring. 17% and 25% of passengers rated availability and quality of washrooms as below expectations. The mean scores were 3.9 for the latter and 3.5 for the former indicating that users were more disappointed with quality as opposed to availability. These users pointed that the washrooms were untidy, lacking toilet tissue and showers or had non-functional shower systems. Transit lounges were also noted as lacking bathrooms. Duty free shops were rated by 50% as superb, 10% as dissatisfactory while 7% did not respond. Dissatisfies were issues like overpricing, lack of variety, lack of innovativeness and a small shopping area.

Ground catering service was rated as excellent by 28%, by 52% as average, 20% as poor. Complaints here included too expensive meals, lack of a "local" touch, lack of snack bars at the departure gates and food on offer lacking an enticing variety. 44% and 48% of transit passengers felt that the transit lounges were fairly adequate and comfortable respectively; 27% and 22% rated the facility as above average respectively. 29% and 30% thought that availability and comfort of the lounges was poor while 14% and 16% were indifferent regarding the adequacy and comfort of lounges respectively. Complaints were that the lounges needed bathrooms, were small, had few, aged and uncomfortable seats, did not provide for special cases such as prayer rooms for Muslims, no designated area for smokers and were congested.

Overall 65%, 63% and 53% rated JKIA as average in terms of overall facilities, services and cleanliness. 14%, 12% and 10% rated the airport poorly in terms of general facilities, services and cleanliness. 22%, 25% and 37% of the users felt that the airport was excellent in terms of facilities, services and cleanliness. Given that the survey was done in a period of restructuring, it will be interesting to see what kind of result would be generated by this study in comparison with the KAA 2001 survey on the different service parameters.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey research design was used to obtain data for this study.

3.2 POPULATION

The population of study was composed of International airline passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. These were further split into arrivals, departures and transit passengers.

3.3 SAMPLE DESIGN

The respondents were randomly selected on the basis of whether they were arrivals, transit and departures.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

A sample size of 90 airline passengers was selected. Passengers were grouped into three destination categories: arrivals, transit and departures. 30 were included in each category. On the Kenya Airports Authority management side, one senior manager in the area of Customer Service was chosen by the researcher to provide information on Part III.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data was collected via means of a questionnaire. This consisted of open-ended questions, closed-ended questions and matrix questions. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher. The operational definition of variables put forward by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) was being adopted. The questionnaire was divided into Part I, II and III. Part I captured general data about the respondent, Part II addressed objective 1. In Part II, the questionnaire was structured so as to obtain information on what service quality attributes customers considered important and then proceeded to seek out information on whether these were delivered in the actual service delivery. Part III investigated objective 2.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics that involved measures of central tendency, measures of spread and graphical methods. For purposes of analysis, the simple disconfirmation model as originally elucidated by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) was adopted. This model looks at perceived service quality (Q) as being the difference between perceived service (P) and expected service (E) or $Q=P-E$.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to present in summary and statistically analyze the primary data that was gathered from the study. A total of 90 questionnaires were completed. This marked a 100% response rate. Summaries are presented in form of frequencies, mean scores and graphical format.

4.2 SUMMARY OF GENERAL INFORMATION (PART 1 OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE)

Table 4.2.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	39	43.3	43.3	43.3
	Female	51	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

43.3% of the respondents were male while 56.7% were female

Table 4.2.2: Distribution of Respondents by Visits- First time users vs. Multi-users

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	16.7	16.7	16.7
	No	60	66.7	66.7	83.3
	No Response	15	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

16.7% of the respondents were using the JKIA airport for the first time, while 66.7% had used it before. 16.7% did not respond.

Table 4.2.3: Distribution of Respondents by Frequent Users

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once	21	23.3	23.3	23.3
	Twice	39	43.3	43.3	66.7
	Thrice	3	3.3	3.3	70.0
	More than Three times	18	20.0	20.0	90.0
	No response	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Of the 66.7% who had used JKIA before (Table 4.2.3 above), 23.3% had used it only once before; 43.3% had used it twice; 3.3% had used it thrice and 20% had used more than three times. 10% did not respond to this question.

Table 4.2.4: Respondents by Age Bracket

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
	18-25	9	10.0	10.0	20.0
	26-35	12	13.3	13.3	33.3
	36-45	24	26.7	26.7	60.0
	46-55	33	36.7	36.7	96.7
	Above 55	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Under age bracket, 10% of the respondents were under 18 years of age; 10% between 18-25 years; 13.3% between 26-35 years; 26.7% between 36-45 years and 36.7% between the ages of 46-55 years. 3.3% registered above 55 years.

Table 4.2.5: Respondents by Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Secondary	36	40.0	40.0	50.0
	Tertiary	45	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

10.0% of the respondents were of primary school level education; 40% secondary and 50% tertiary level.

4.3 CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS REGARDING EACH OF THE SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS.

Table 4.3.1: Customer Expectation: Importance of Airport Cleanliness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Very Important	81	90.0	90.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

10% of the customers rated airport cleanliness as important; and 90% as very important.

Diagram 4.3.1: Customer Expectation: Importance of Airport Cleanliness

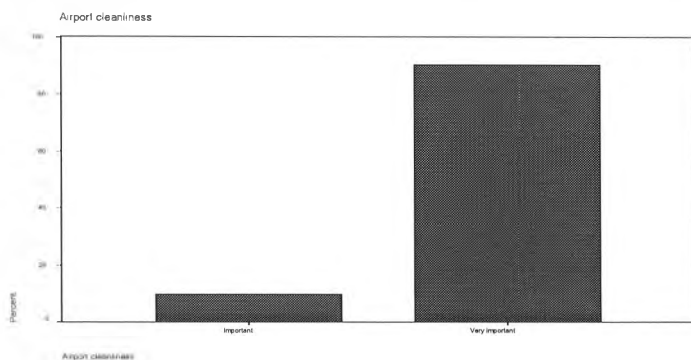


Table 4.3.2: Customers Expectation: Importance of Airport Signage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	54	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Very Important	36	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Airport signage was rated by 60% of the respondents as important and by 40% as very important

Diagram 4.3.2 Customers Expectation: Importance of Airport Signage

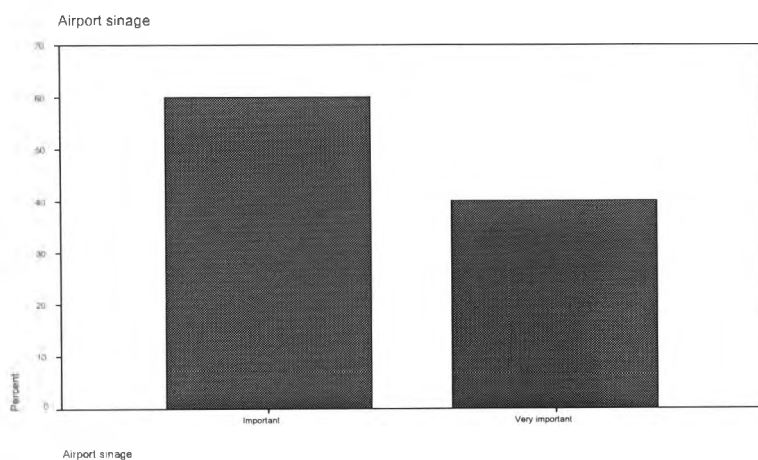


Table 4.3.3: Customer Expectation: Importance of Availability of Business Centre

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not important	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Somewhat important	27	30.0	30.0	33.3
	Important	51	56.7	56.7	90.0
	Very Important	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Business center availability was rated by 3.3% of the respondents as not important; 30% as somewhat important; 56.7% as important and by 10% as very important.

Diagram 4.3.3: Customer Expectation: Importance of Availability of Business Centre

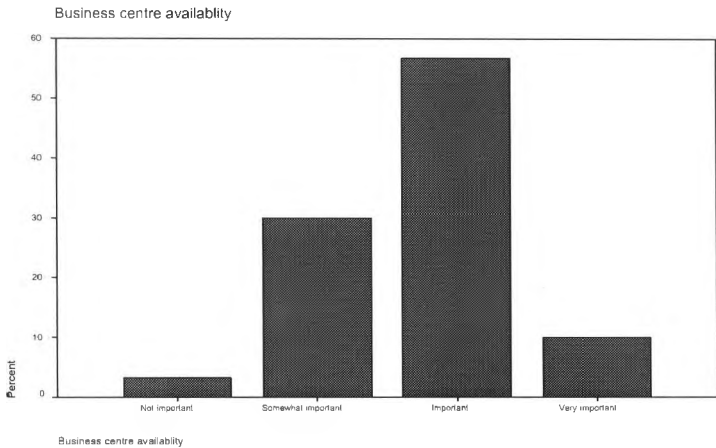


Table 4.3.4: Customer Expectation: Importance of Lounge Comfort

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	36	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Very Important	54	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

This dimension was rated by 40% as important and by 60% as very important.

Diagram 4.3.4: Customer Expectation: Importance of Lounge Comfort

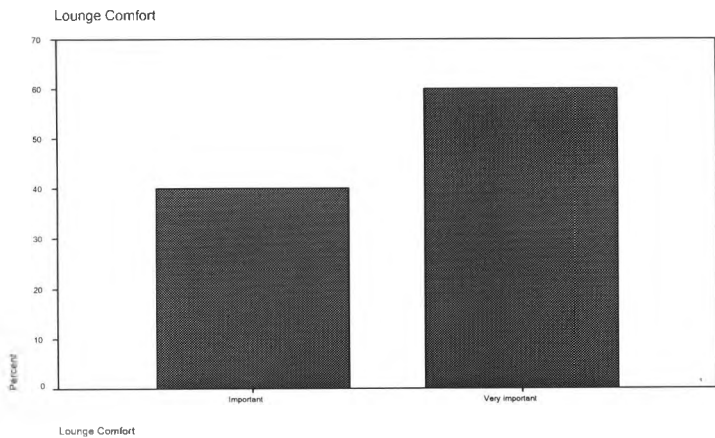


Table 4.3.5: Customer Expectation: Importance of Transport to and from Airport

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat important	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Important	60	66.7	66.7	76.7
	Very important	21	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

10% rated this dimension as somewhat important; 66.7% as important and 23.3% as very important

Diagram 4.3.5: Customer Expectation: Importance of Transport to and from Airport

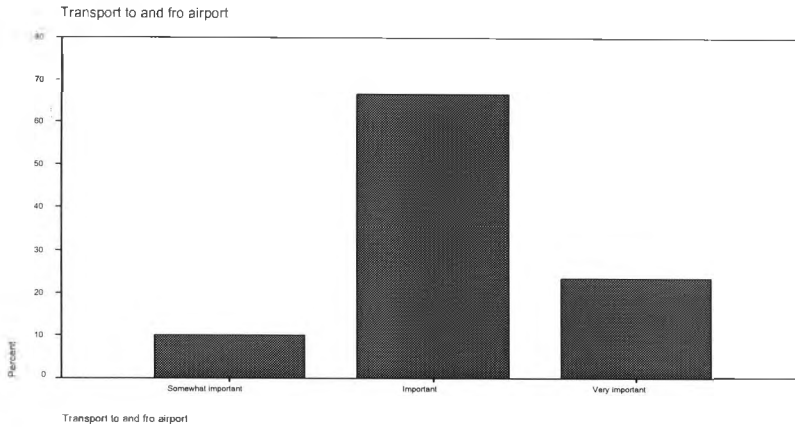


Table 4.3.6: Customer Expectation: Importance of Banking Services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not important	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Somewhat important	15	16.7	16.7	20.0
Important	30	33.3	33.3	53.3
Very important	42	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

3.3% rated banking services as not important; 16.7% as somewhat important; 33.3% as important and 46.7% as very important. This is illustrated below.

Diagram 4.3.6: Customer Expectation: Importance of Banking Services

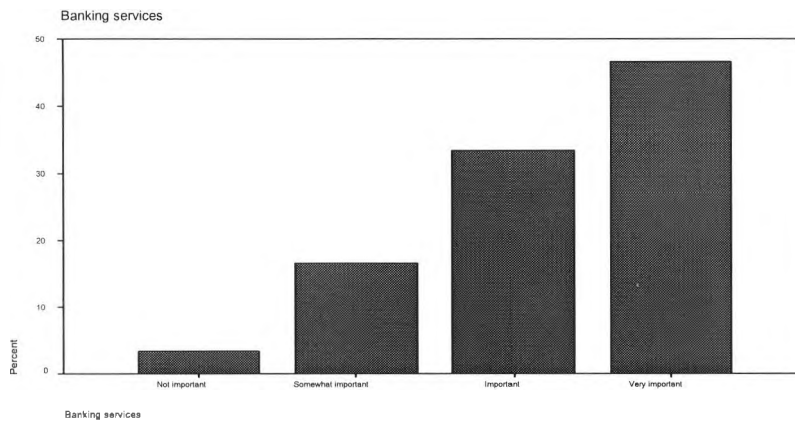


Table 4.3.7: Customer Expectation: Importance of Customer Care Services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Somewhat Important	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Important	21	23.3	23.3	26.7
Very important	66	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

3.3% somewhat important; 23.3% as important and 73.3% as very important

Diagram 4.3.7: Customer Expectation: Importance of Customer Care Services

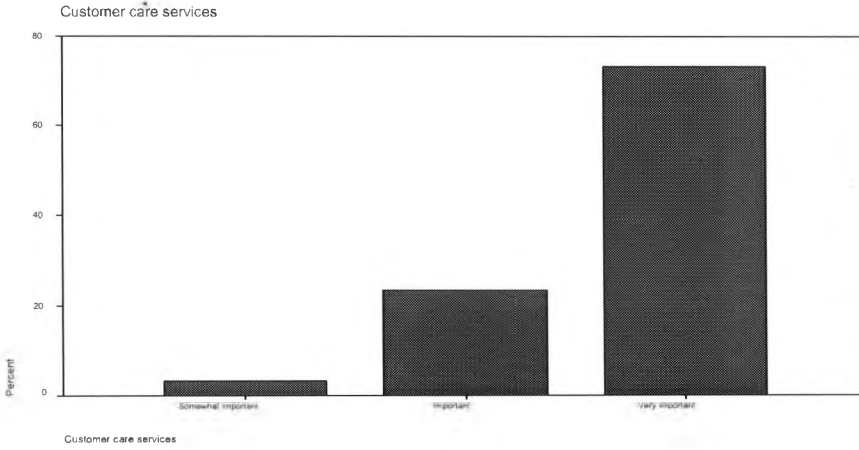


Table 4.3.8: Customer Expectation: Importance of Waiting Time to Receive Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat important	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Important	18	20.0	20.0	23.3
	Very important	69	76.7	76.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Waiting time: 3.3% somewhat important; 20% important and 76.7% very important as illustrated below.

Diagram 4.3.8: Customer Expectation: Importance of Waiting Time to Receive Services

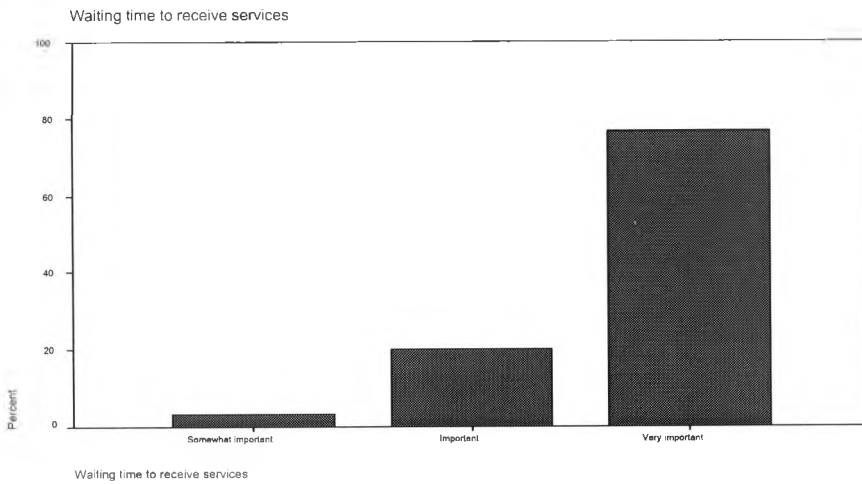


Table 4.3.9: Customer expectation: Mean Score of Key Variables. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD DEV
Airport Cleanliness	90	4.00	5.00	4.9000	0.3017
Airport Signage	90	4.00	5.00	4.4000	0.4926
Business centre availability	90	2.00	5.00	3.7333	0.6837
Lounge comfort	90	4.00	5.00	4.6000	0.4926
Transport to and from airport	90	3.00	5.00	4.1333	0.5649
Banking services	90	2.00	5.00	4.2333	0.8487
Customer care services	90	3.00	5.00	4.7000	0.5289
Waiting time	90	3.00	5.00	4.7333	0.5149

From the above, the customers attached the greatest importance on cleanliness and least on business center availability. Waiting time, customer care and lounge comfort received similar ratings.

4.4 CUSTOMER'S PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS ALONG THE AIRPORT SERVICES CENTER.

Table 4.4.1: Customer Perceptions: Airport Cleanliness

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below Expectations	30	33.3	33.3	33.3
Met expectations	30	33.3	33.3	66.7
Above expectations	18	20.0	20.0	86.7
Far above expectations	12	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Airport cleanliness was rated as below expectations by 33.3% of the respondents; met expectations by 33.3%; above expectations by 20% and far above expectations by 13.3%

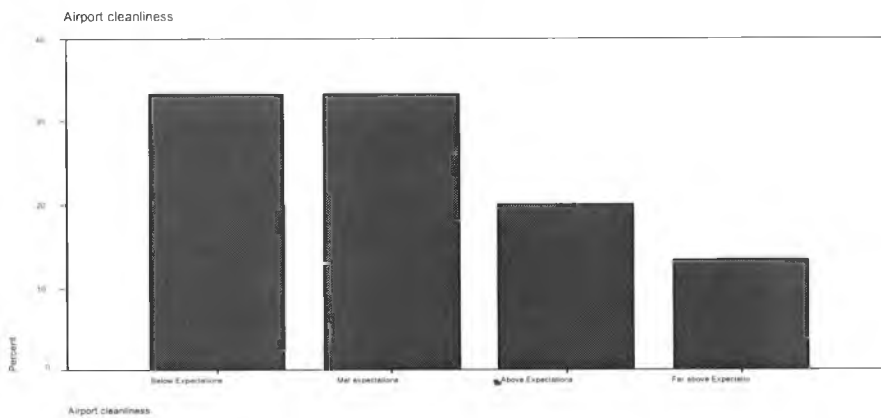
Diagram 4.4.1: Customer Perception: Rating of Airport Cleanliness

Table 4.4.2: Customer Perception: Airport Signage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Below expectations	12	13.3	13.3	16.7
	Met expectations	66	73.3	73.3	90.0
	Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

3.3% rated signage as far below expectations; 13.3% below expectations; 73.3% as met expectations and 10% as above expectations

Diagram 4.4.2: Customer Perception: Rating of Airport Signage

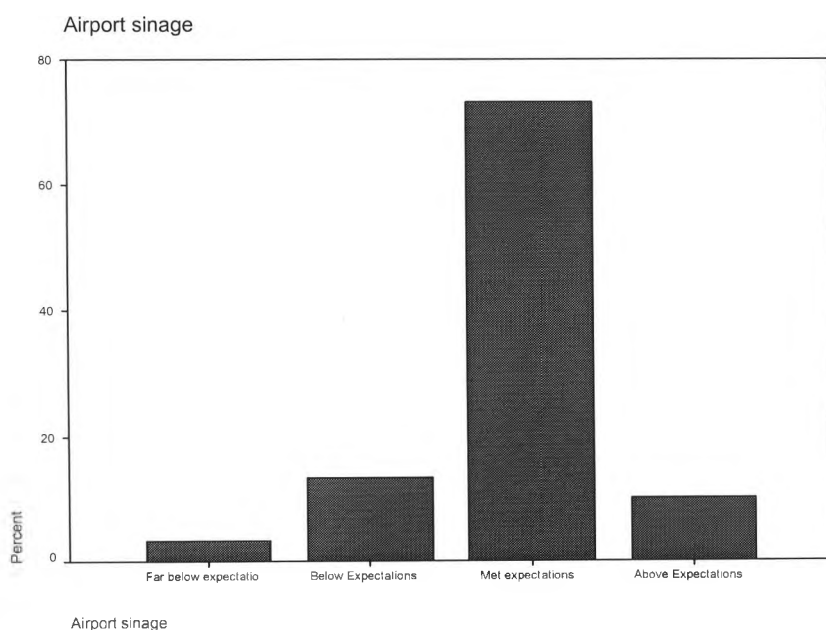


Table 4.4.3: Customer Perception: Airport business centre availability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	30	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Below expectations	27	30.0	30.0	63.3
	Met expectation	24	26.7	26.7	90.0
	Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

33.3% rated this as far below expectations; 30% as below expectations; 26.7 as met expectations and 10% as above expectations.

Diagram 4.4.3: Customer Perception: Rating of Airport Business Centre

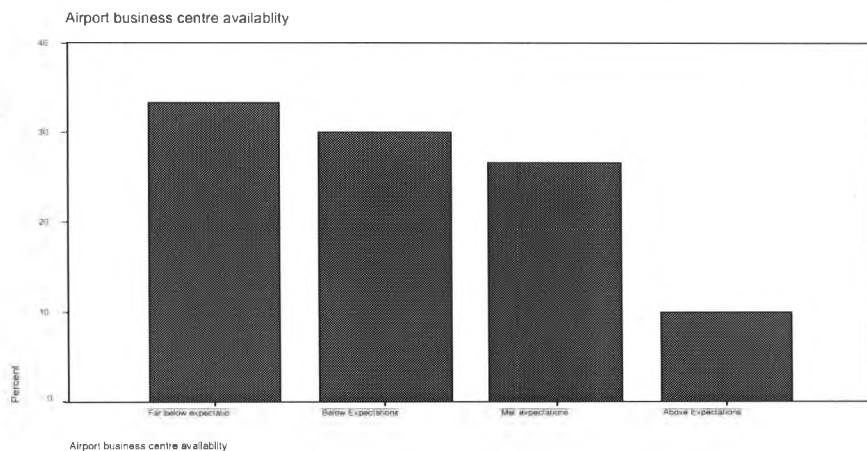
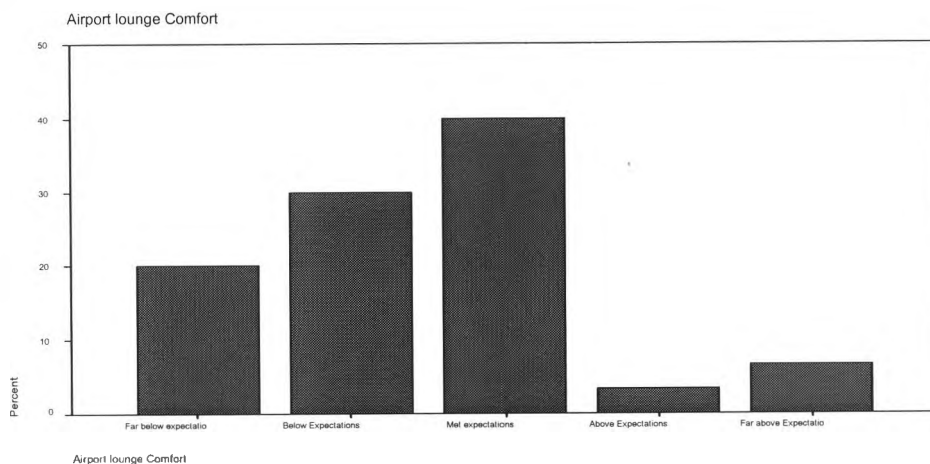


Table 4.4.4: Customer Perception: Airport lounge comfort

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	18	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Below expectations	27	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Met expectations	36	40.0	40.0	90.0
	Above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	93.3
	Far above expectations	6	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total		90	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.4.4 above, lounge comfort was rated by 20% as far below expectations; 30% as below expectations; 40% as meeting expectations; 3.3% as above expectations and 6.7% as far above expectations

Diagram 4.4.4: Customer Perception: Airport lounge comfort



In table 4.4.5 below, Transport to and fro was rated by 10% as far below expectations; 46.7% as below expectations; 33.3% as meeting expectations and by 10% as above expectations.

Table 4.4.5: Customer Perception: Airport transport to and from airport

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Below expectations	42	46.7	46.7	56.7
	Met expectations	30	33.3	33.3	90.0
	Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Diagram 4.4.5: Customer Perception: Rating of Airport transport to and from airport

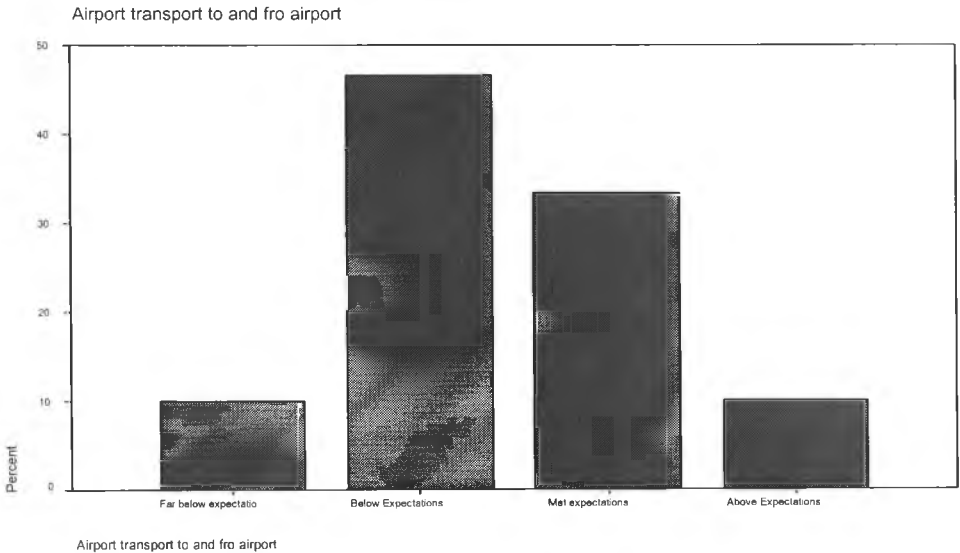


Table 4.4.6: Customer Perception: Airport banking services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below expectations	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Met expectations	66	73.3	73.3	76.7
	Above expectations	21	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

These were rated as below expectations by 3.3% of the respondents; as meeting expectations by 73.3% and above expectations by 23.3%

Diagram 4.4.6: Customer Perception: Airport banking services

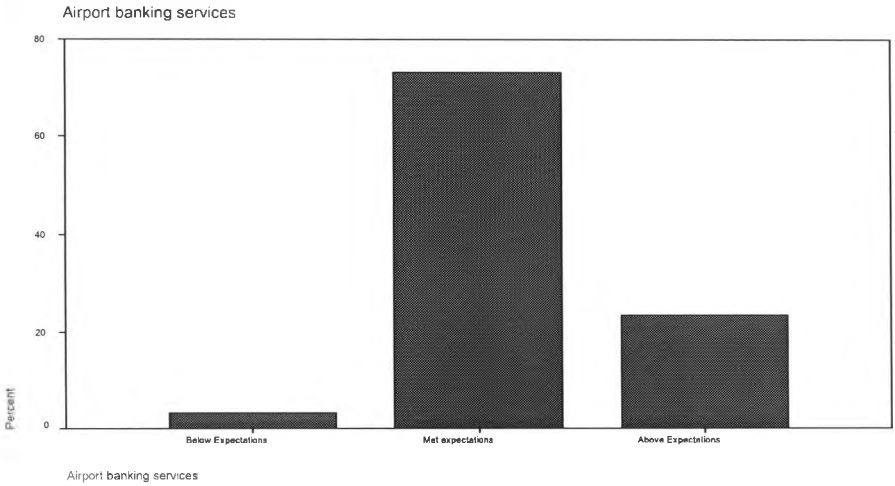


Table 4.4.7: Customer Perception: Airport customer care services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below expectations	27	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Met expectations	51	56.7	56.7	86.7
	Above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	90.0
	Far above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Airport customer care services was rated by 30% as below expectations; 56.7% as met expectations; 3.3% above expectations and 10% as far above expectations

Diagram 4.4.7: Customer Perception: Airport customer care services

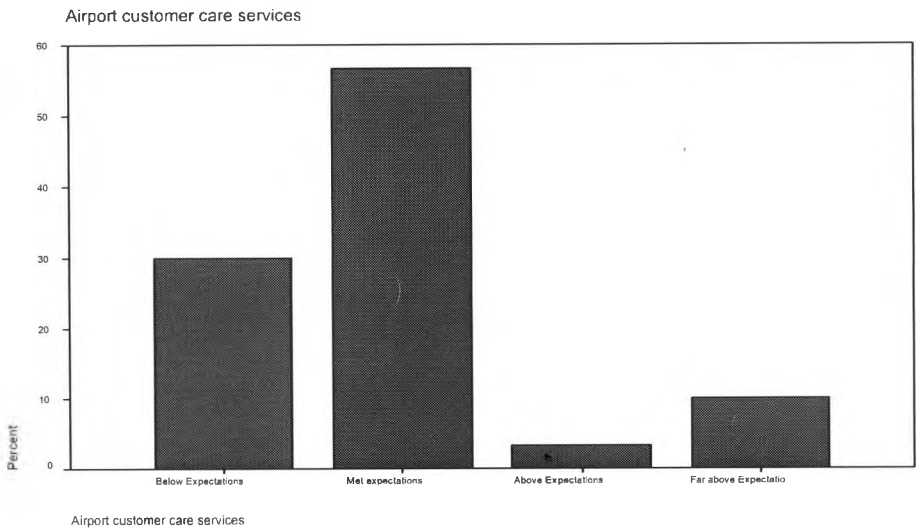


Table 4.4.8: Customer Perception: Airport waiting time to receive services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	6	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Below expectations	21	23.3	23.3	30.0
	Met expectations	51	56.7	56.7	86.7
	Above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	90.0
	Far above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Rated far below expectations by 6.7%; below expectations by 23.3%; met expectations by 56.7%; above expectations by 3.3% and far above expectations by 10%

Diagram 4.4.8 Customer Perception: Airport waiting time to receive services

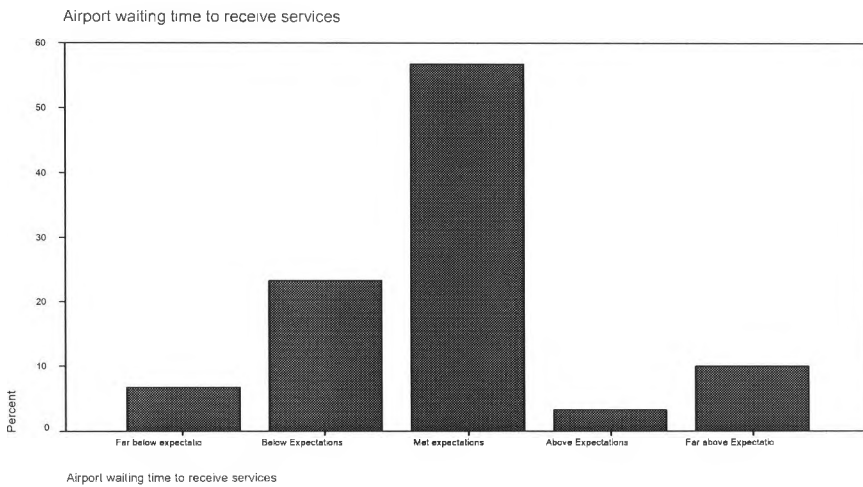
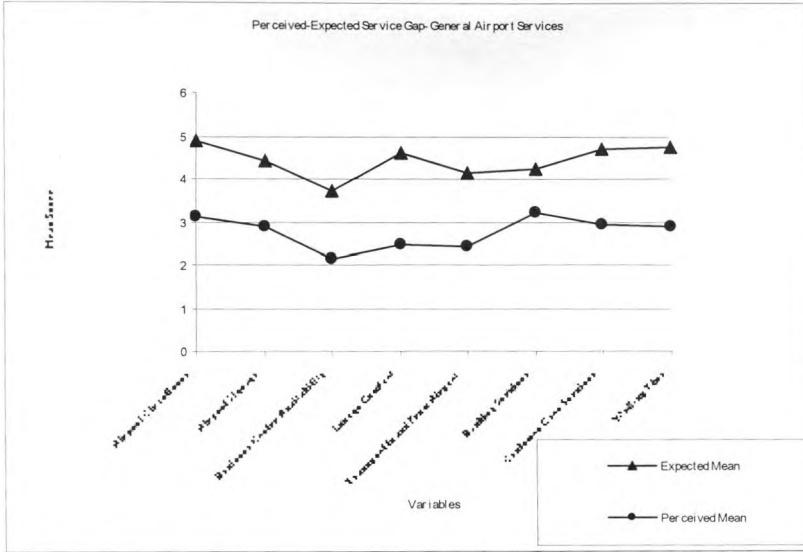


Table 4.4.9: Customer Perceptions Mean Score of Key Variables for General Airport Services. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer care services	90	3.00	5.00	4.7000	.52894
Waiting time to receive services	90	3.00	5.00	4.7333	.51495
Airport cleanliness	90	2.00	5.00	3.1333	1.02989
Airport signage	90	1.00	4.00	2.9000	.60056
Airport business centre availability	90	1.00	4.00	2.1333	.99662
Airport lounge Comfort	90	1.00	5.00	2.4667	1.08212
Airport transport to and fro airport	90	1.00	4.00	2.4333	.80797
Airport banking services	90	2.00	4.00	3.2000	.47876
Airport customer care services	90	2.00	5.00	2.9333	.85853
Airport waiting time to receive services	90	1.00	5.00	2.8667	.96221
Airlines customer care services	90	2.00	5.00	3.0333	.60800
Airlines waiting time to receive services	90	2.00	4.00	2.8000	.65686
Valid N (listwise)	90				

From the table of means above, there was little customer variance on expectations for most of the airline dimensions. Only airport cleanliness and lounge comfort scored variances greater than 1.00. Cleanliness had the highest mean (4.9000) while airport business center availability the lowest (2.1333).

Diagram 4.4.9: Perceived-Expected Service Gap-General Airport Services



4.5 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMER CARE AND WAITING TIME AT THE AIRLINES DESK.

Table 4.5.1: Customer Perception: Airlines customer care services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below expectations	12	13.3	13.3	13.3
Met expectations	66	73.3	73.3	86.7
Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	96.7
Far above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Airline customer care was rated by 13.3% as below expectations; 73.3% as met expectations; 10% as above expectations and 3.3% as far above expectations.

Diagram 4.5.1: Customer Perception: Airlines customer care services

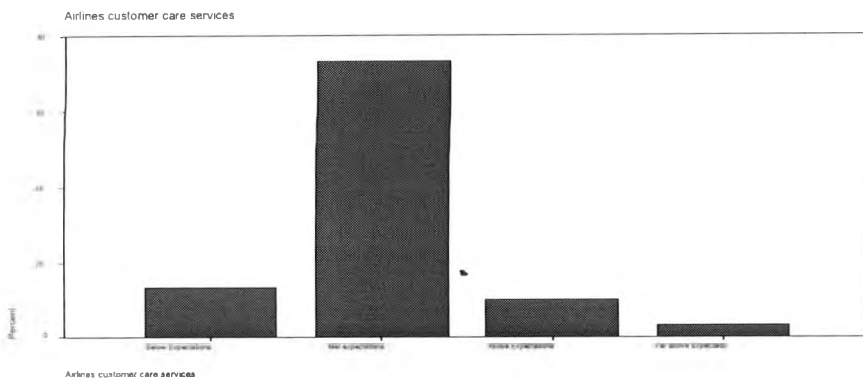
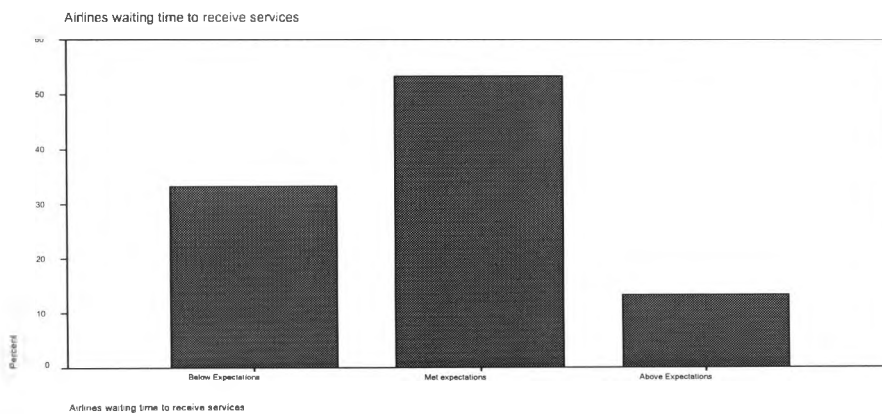


Table 4.5.2: Customer Perception: Airlines waiting time to receive services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below expectations	30	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Met expectations	48	53.3	53.3	86.7
	Above expectations	12	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Airline waiting time was rated below expectations by 33.3%; met expectations by 53.3% and above expectations by 13.3% of the respondents.

Diagram 4.5.2: Customer Perception: Airlines waiting time to receive services



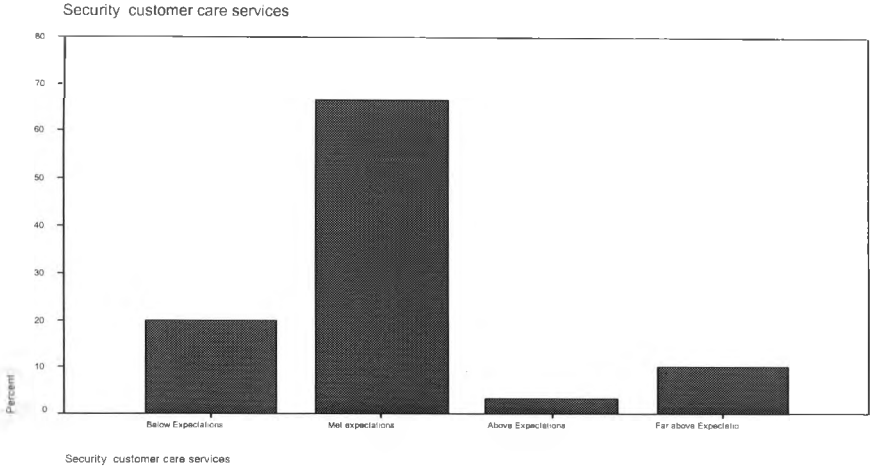
4.6 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMER CARE AND WAITING TIME AT THE SECURITY DESK.

Table 4.6.1: Customer Perception: Security customer care services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below Expectations	18	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Met expectations	60	66.7	66.7	86.7
	Above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	90.0
	Far above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Security customer care services were rated by 20% as below expectations; 66.7% as meeting expectations; 3.3% as above expectations and by 10% as far above expectations.

Diagram 4.6.1: Customer Perception: Security customer care services

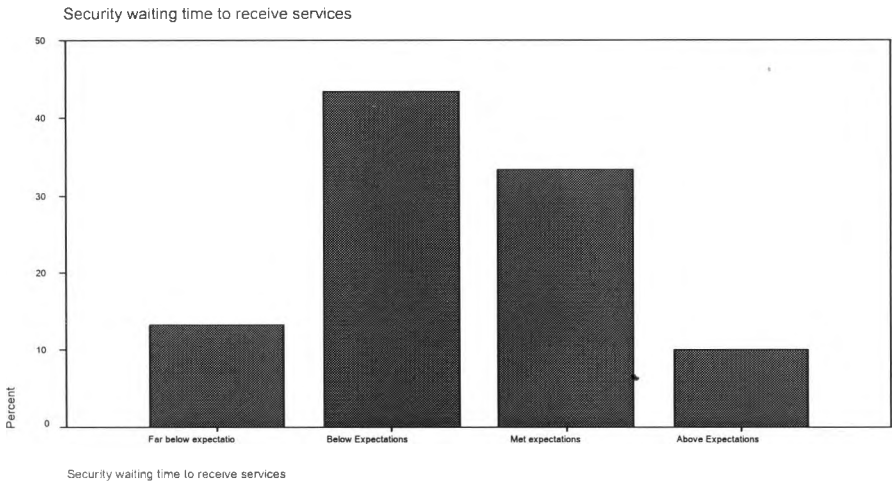


In table 4.5.2 below, 13.3% rated security waiting time as far below expectations; 43.3% as below expectations; 33.3% as meeting expectations and 10% as above expectations

Table 4.6.2: Customer Perception: Security waiting time to receive services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	12	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Below expectations	39	43.3	43.3	56.7
	Met expectations	30	33.3	33.3	90.0
	Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Diagram 4.6.2: Customer Perception: Security waiting time to receive services



4.7 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMER CARE AND WAITING TIME AT THE IMMIGRATION DESK.

Table 4.7.1: Customer Perception: Immigration customer care services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below expectations	15	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Met expectations	63	70.0	70.0	86.7
	Above expectations	12	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

On customer care, immigration was rated at 16.7% below expectations; 70% met expectations and 13.3% above expectations.

Diagram 4.7.1: Customer Perception: Immigration customer care services

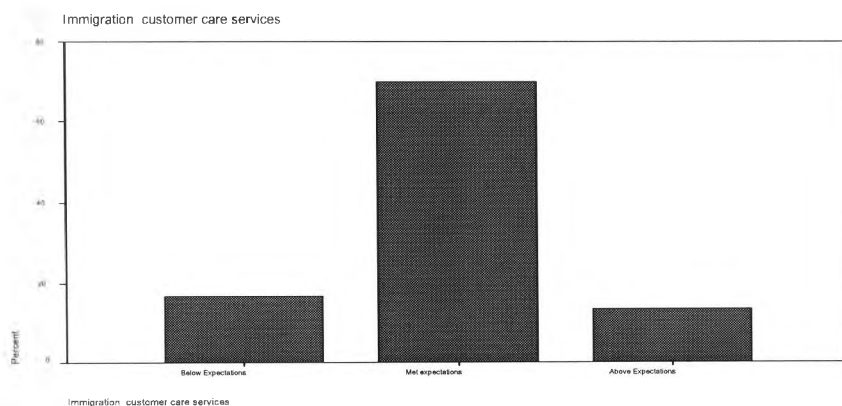
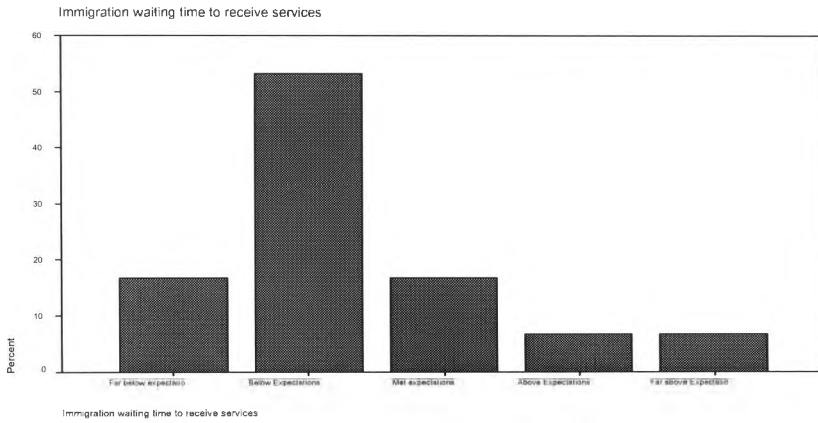


Table 4.7.2: Customer Perception: Immigration waiting time to receive services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	15	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Below expectations	48	53.3	53.3	70.0
	Met expectations	15	16.7	16.7	86.7
	Above expectations	6	6.7	6.7	93.3
	Far above expectations	6	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

On waiting time, immigration was rated by 16.7% as far below expectations; 53.3% below expectations; 16.7% met expectations; 6.7% above expectations and 6.7% far above expectations

Diagram 4.7.2: Customer Perception: Immigration waiting time to receive services



4.8 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMER CARE AND WAITING TIME AT THE CUSTOMS DESK.

Table 4.8.1: Customer Perception: Customs customer care services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Far below expectations	9	10.0	10.0	10.0
Below expectations	33	36.7	36.7	46.7
Met expectations	36	40.0	40.0	86.7
Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	96.7
Far above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

On customer care, customs were rated by 10% of the respondents as far below expectations; by 36.7% as below expectations; 40% as meeting expectations; 10% as above expectations and 3.3% as far above expectations.

Diagram 4.8.1: Customer Perception: Customs customer care services

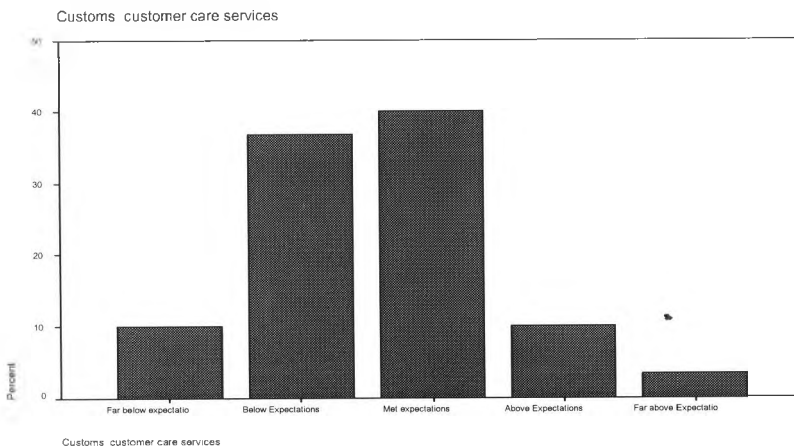


Table 4.8.2: Customer Perception: Customs waiting time to receive services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far below expectations	27	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Below expectations	30	33.3	33.3	63.3
	Met expectations	21	23.3	23.3	86.7
	Above expectations	9	10.0	10.0	96.7
	Far above expectations	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

On waiting time, customs were rated as far below expectations by 30% of the respondents; below expectations by 33.3%; met expectations by 23.3%; above expectations by 10% and far above expectations by 3.3%

Diagram 4.8.2: Customer Perception: Customs waiting time to receive services

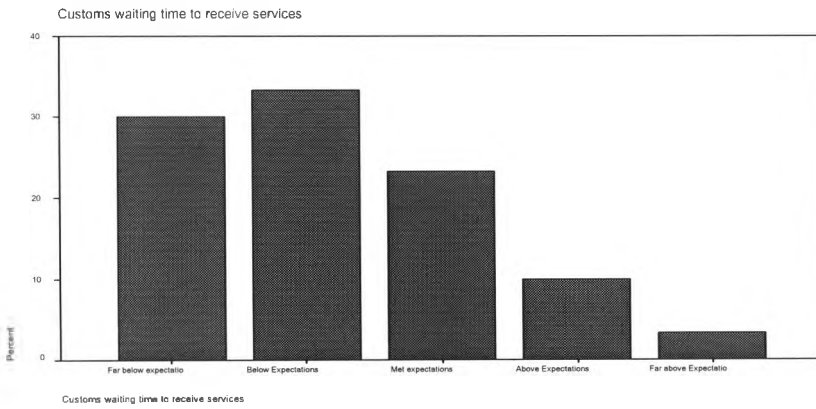


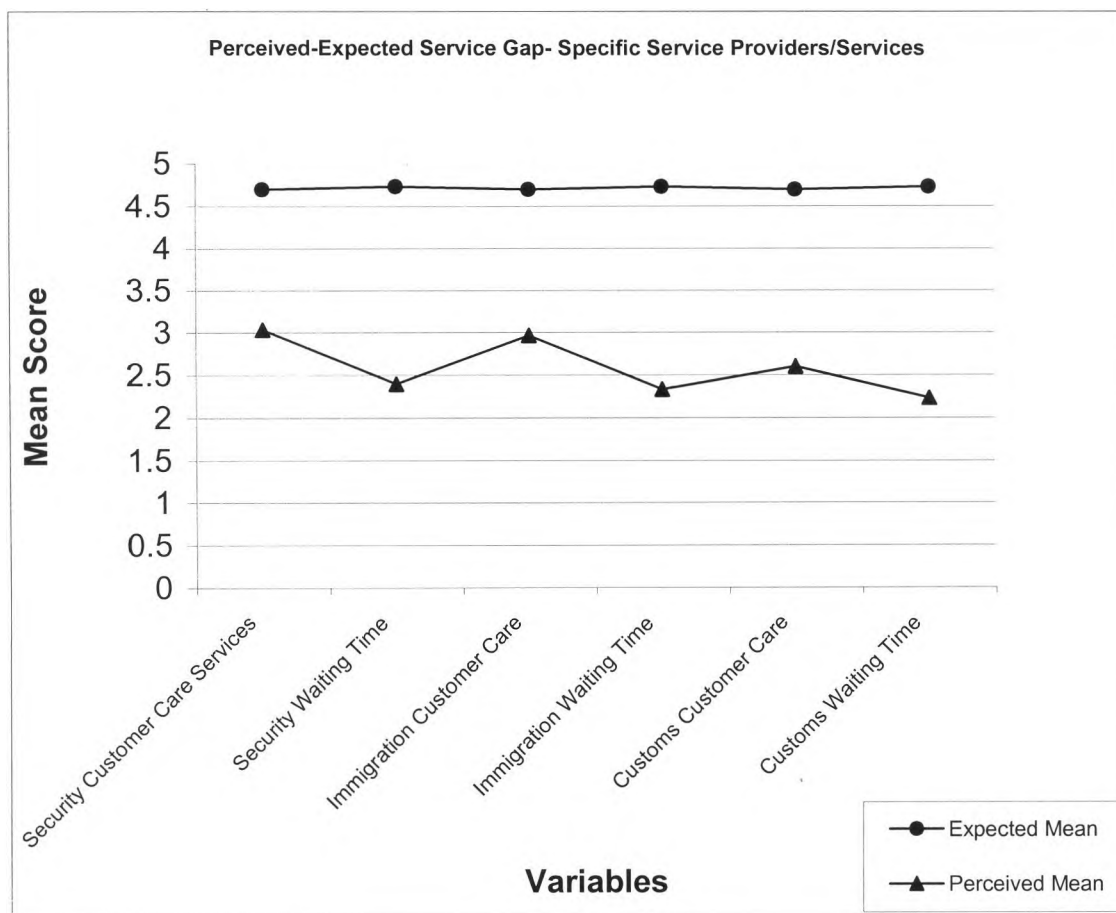
Table 4.8.3: Customer Perceptions Mean Score of Key Variables for Specific Services/Providers. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Security customer care services	90	2.00	5.00	3.0333	.79958
Security waiting time to receive services	90	1.00	4.00	2.4000	.84534
Immigration customer care services	90	2.00	4.00	2.9667	.54977
Immigration waiting time to receive services	90	1.00	5.00	2.3333	1.04934
Customs customer care services	90	1.00	5.00	2.6000	.92165
Customs waiting time to receive services	90	1.00	5.00	2.2333	1.09185
Valid N (listwise)	90				

For the other outlets under investigation, security customer care services had the highest mean of 3.0333 the lowest ranked being immigration waiting time to receive services (mean of 1.04934). Lowest standard deviation went to immigration customer care services (0.54977) and the highest to customs waiting time to receive services (1.09185). For the airlines, the means for these two variables (Table 4.3.9, Pg 51) average at 3, with similar S.D in the order of 0.6000.

Diagram 4.8.3: Perceived –Expected Service Gap- Specific Service Providers/Services



CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the findings of the research in relation to the two objectives of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first objective of the research was to determine the level of service quality as perceived by airline passengers at JKIA.

Variables	Expected Mean (E)	Expected SD	Perceived Mean (P)	Perceived SD	Q (P-E)
Airport Cleanliness	4.9	0.3017	3.1333	1.02989	-1.7667
Airport Signage	4.4	0.4926	2.9	0.60056	-1.5
Business centre availability	3.7333	0.6837	2.1333	0.99662	-1.6
Lounge comfort	4.6	0.4926	2.4667	1.06212	-2.1333
Transport to and from airport	4.1333	0.5649	2.4333	0.80797	-1.7
Banking services	4.2333	0.8487	3.2	0.47876	-1.0333
Customer care services	4.7	0.5289	2.9333	0.85853	-1.7667
Waiting time	4.7333	0.5149	2.8667	0.96221	-1.8666

Using the simple disconfirmation model as originally elucidated by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), where perceived service quality (Q) is being the difference between perceived service (P) and expected service (E) or $Q=P-E$, then a perceived mean of 3.1333 indicates a gap of -1.7667 (3.1333-4.9). This negative value indicates an overall drop in airport cleanliness quality as perceived by the customer. In Table 5.2.1, this trend is observed in all the eight variables under investigation. Thus, the airport service quality does not meet the customer expectations on all eight variables under investigation. 66.6% rated airport cleanliness as meeting or exceeding expectations. However, there are still a high percentage of customers not pleased with this service (33.4%) and this is a major area for improvement. This is particularly important, as

airport cleanliness was the highest ranked variable with a mean of 4.9 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.3017. On the other extreme, business centre availability was rated by only 36.7% as meeting or exceeding expectations. Again, this is an area for improvement.

Banking services performed best among the eight variables with the lowest perceived service quality gap (-1.0333) indicating a high correlation between expectations and perception (actual service received). 80% rated banking services as important or very important while 96.6% rated these services as meeting or exceeding expectations.

The negative perception of service quality by customers could be as a result of increased awareness of needs among the customers in general.

The second objective was to establish challenges the Kenya Airports Authority faces in order to ensure high quality service delivery to airline passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

The following were noted

- a. Congestion. The airport was built in 1978 to handle 2.5 million passengers per year, but it currently handles over 4 million passengers per year.
- b. There are too many regulators at the airport who are poorly trained in customer service.
- c. Passenger seats are plastic, too old and need urgent replacement.
- d. The toilet infrastructure is in need of rehabilitation.
- e. The departure lounge is congested with too many duty free shops selling the same items.
- f. Procurement procedures are cumbersome.
- g. Arrival and departure passengers are not well separated causing a major security threat to air travel.
- h. There are too many taxi and tour operators at the airport
- i. Complaint handling is inefficient-takes too long to for instance, resolve issues of lost luggage.
- j. Long queues during peak hours at the airport and almost no activity in some hours

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study was limited by poor resource availability e.g. time and money. Also, the researcher was not able to cover the entire scope of all the issues relating to service quality, only the eight variables. Regarding the method of analysis, the research would have obtained more precise results had there been weighting of the customer expectations (see Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991)

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the area of airport perceived service quality, it is recommended that replications of this research be done on all other international Airport's in Kenya to provide a benchmark for comparison among the airports. It would also be good for Jomo Kenyatta International Airports if the same were to be done regionally.

5.5 OVERALL CONCLUSION

From the results of the research, it can be safely concluded that there is a need for marked overhaul of airport services in order to improve service delivery. One way that this could be done is through expansion and renovations to increase the service delivery interface area; enhance the ability of the regulators; improve complaints handling process and procurement procedures; co-ordinate the different airlines schedules to prevent periodical congestion and streamlining of auxiliary transport services. These should as much as possible reflect the international standards for these services.

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APPENDIX ONE
INTRODUCTION LETTER

Complimentary Letter to the Respondent.

University of Nairobi
School Of Business
Lower Kabete
P. O. Box 30197
Nairobi
20th July 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a post graduate student at School of Business, University of Nairobi. In fulfillment of the requirements for attaining my degree, I am currently conducting a management research whose theme is determine the quality of service delivery by the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport management as perceived by airline passengers. To this end, I kindly request you to fill out the attached questionnaire to the best of your knowledge as soon as you can to facilitate this research.

I would like to assure you that all information provided will be used solely for the purpose of this research; be treated with the utmost confidence and in no way will your name be implicated in the research findings.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated. Thanking you in advance.

Yours respectfully,

Esther Gituanja: _____

APPENDIX TWO
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I:

1. Kindly indicate your gender? Male; Female
2. Is this your first time to use this airport? Yes; No
3. If your answer in Q (3) above is No, then how often on average, do you use this airport in any given year?
 Once; Twice;
 Thrice; More than three times
4. Kindly indicate your age bracket below:
 under 18; 18-25; 26-35;
 36-45; 46-55; above 55
5. Kindly indicate your level of education:
 Primary;
 Secondary;
 Tertiary

Part II:

1. Kindly rank the below **service quality dimensions** in order of their **importance** to you (**expectations**)

	(5) Very Important	(4) Important	(3) Somewhat Important	(2) Not important	(1) Not Important at all
(a) Airport cleanliness					
(b) Airport signage					
(c) Business centre availability					
(d) Lounge comfort					
(e) Transport to and from airport					
(f) Banking services					
(g) Customer care services					
(h) Waiting time to receive services					

2. Kindly rank the service you receive at various airport services centers (perceptions)

Airports

	(5) Far Above Expectations	(4) Above Expectations	(3) Met Expectations	(2) Below Expectations	(1) Far below Expectations
(a) Airport cleanliness					
(b) Airport signage					
(c) Business centre availability					
(d) Lounge comfort					
(e) Transport to and from airport					
(f) Banking services					
(g) Customer care services					
(h) Waiting time to receive services					

Airlines

	(5) Far Above Expectations	(4) Above Expectations	(3) Met Expectations	(2) Below Expectations	(1) Far below Expectations
(a) Customer care services					
(b) Waiting time to receive services					

Security

	(5) Far Above Expectations	(4) Above Expectations	(3) Met Expectations	(2) Below Expectations	(1) Far below Expectations
(a) Customer care services					
(b) Waiting time to receive services (Screening)					

Immigration

	(5) Far Above Expectations	(4) Above Expectations	(3) Met Expectations	(2) Below Expectations	(1) Far below Expectations
(a) Customer care services					
(b) Waiting time to receive services					

Customs

	(5) Far Above Expectations	(4) Above Expectations	(3) Met Expectations	(2) Below Expectations	(1) Far below Expectations
(a)Customer care services					
(b)Waiting time to receive services					

Part III: (To be filled by the Kenya Airports Authority Management)

1. Kindly enumerate below the kinds of challenges faced by the K. A. A. in ensuring high quality service delivery to airline passengers using Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.
