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AIRPORT ATTRIBUTES AND PASSENGERS' BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of airport attributes on passengers' behavioural intentions in the tourism industry in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. The descriptive research generated primary data from 150 domestic passengers who patronised Minna Airport. A well-structured questionnaire containing 15 items, with four demographic items was used for the primary data collection. The result of the inferential statistical analysis with the use of SPSS showed that passengers' behavioral intentions towards the Minna airport were driven by safety and security. The empirical study extends the understanding of the airport attributes construct by studying its influence on travellers behavioural intentions in the context of Northern Nigeria. Airport owners/managers are expected to prioritize safety and security measures at the airport while making concerted efforts towards improving the physical evidence of the airport.

KEYWORDS

Physical Evidence. Safety & Security. Revisit Intentions. Brand Loyalty.



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INTRODUCTION

Transport/airport managers and marketers can develop useful marketing strategies from knowing passengers' behavioural intentions after experiencing transit services. The availability and adequacy of information about passengers' behavioural intentions can shape convenient strategies aimed at satisfying existing passengers and attract new ones (de Oña, deOña, Eboli, Forciniti, & Mazzulla, 2018). This is very important because in the current competitive business environment, airport owners/managers are under growing pressure to attract more passengers and airlines, through the creation of desirable Airport Experiences (AEs) (Batouei, Iranmanesh, Mustafa, Nikbin, & Ping, (2020).

The quest to achieve positive passengers' behavioural intentions in the aviation industry places a demand for managers of airports and airlines to understand what constitute value for passengers. Empirical evidence suggest that many studies had focused on service quality delivered at the airports through two settings: the airport attributes and in-flight service settings (Chen & Chang, 2005). The first setting describes the quality of service deliverable by the airport owners/management, while in-flight services describes the quality of service which the various airlines render to their passengers.

In extant literature, there are empirical studies in various tourism market contexts at the exclusion of Northern Nigeria to prove that airport attributes affects passengers' behavioural intentions (Rachman, 2017; Batouei, Iranmanesh, Mustafa, Nikbin, and Ping, 2020; Park, Robertson, R., & Wu, 2005; Park, Robertson, and Wu, 2006; Saut & Song, 2022; Ceccato & Masci 2017; Sonari-Otobo, & Ekeke, 2020; Barros, Wanke, Nwaogbe & Azad, 2017; Nwaogbe, Ogwude & Ibe, 2017; Adeniran & Fadare, 2018; Güreş, Yılmaz, Arslan, Durmuşçelebi, Yüksel, & Ünsal, 2017; Njoroge & Iraki, 2017). This current study attempts to fill the gap in literature by investigating the effect of airport attributes on passengers' 'behavioural intentions, in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Airport Attributes

Bogicevic, Yang, Cobanoglu, Bilgihan, and Bujisic, (2016) are of the view that airline passengers do evaluate airport service attributes especially the ones that enhance the quality service level and consequent passenger satisfaction. Airport owners and managers are therefore expected to live up to expectations by ensuring that they "treat passengers as customers" and therefore design and develop the airport environment in such a way that its atmosphere offers "a sense of place". (Gee as cited in Bogicevic, et 2016, p.122) This understanding necessitate the concept of airport marketing attributes which defines those airport attributes that are capable of eliciting passengers' emotions and behavioural intentions. This current study considers two of such marketing attributes: physical evidence and airport safety and security.

Physical Evidence: Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) describes physical evidence as the environment in which the service is performed or delivered and where the interaction between the firm and customers takes place as well as any tangible commodity that facilitates performance or communication of the service. The authors also argued that since service is neither felt nor seen for possible evaluation before consumption, consumers usually look for possible 'tangible cues', or 'physical identity/appearance' to enable them assess the potential service available to them for the satisfaction expected.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) also conceptualise physical evidence as 'servicescape' and prove that physical appearance is the combined effect of the exterior and interior appearances. The exterior

include external signage, outside building design, parking, colour/paint, surrounding environment/location, and overall exterior appearance), while the interior appearance is made up of internal signage, noise, furnishing, interior light, frontline office setting, cleanliness, layout, temperature, air quality, and overall interior appearance. Other tangibles that make up the servicescape include website, network, employee dress, leaflets, display banners, and gifts to customers. In extant literature, physical evidence positively affects service quality and customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al. 1988); Bitner, 1992; Brady and Cronin, 2001; Ryu & Jang, 2008).

Airport Security and Safety: Airports needs to be secured and made safe for passengers and workers as well. Edwards (2005) is of the view that three main ways to maintain airport security are space syntax, surveillance, and territoriality. Other security and safety measures common with airports include trained security personnel, proven and functional security equipment, and well-thought out document procedures, etc

Passengers' Behavioural Intentions

In line with the operationalization of the concept of 'customer behavioural intentions by Lii and Sy (2009), the term is used in this study to represent airline domestic passengers' behavioural intention and their actual behaviour. The behavioural responses of consumers in various market contexts including this current research effort consist of intention and engagement in positive or negative word-of-mouth communication, complaint as a result of service failure, loyalty to the brand and price sensitivity. In practice, customers engage in a behavioural response as a result of whether service delivery, image and perceived value are favourable or otherwise. (Park, Choi, & Moon, 2013).

Marketing practitioners and academics are in agreement with the fact that several marketing stimuli/attributes do predict the future behavioral intentions of consumers. In the market context under consideration in this study airport physical evidence and safety & security are part of the key elements that can predict the future behaviour of airline passengers. However, as noted by Bendall-Lyon & Powers, (2004) customers' behavioral intention is argued to be the outcome of the overall customer satisfaction that includes the intention to return for patronage, and the intention to recommend the brand to family and friends.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Airport Attributes and Passengers' Behavioural Intentions

Rachman, (2017) investigated the effect of physical evidence and service assurance on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the context of car rental service (PT Pusaka Prima Transport Cases). The primary data was collected from 107 consumers of PT Pusaka Prima Transport. The statistical analysis showed that the relationship between the physical evidence, service assurance, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in PT Pusaka Prima Transport were positive and significant.

Batouei, Iranmanesh, Mustafa, Nikbin, and Ping, (2020) examined the effects of Airport Experiences (AEs) dimensions on travellers' satisfaction and ultimately their behavioural intentions towards the airport (intentions to revisit and to spread word-of-mouth). The dimensions of AE were measured from psychological, sociological, and services marketing perspectives. The primary data were generated collected from a sample of 377 travellers. The findings revealed that service fairness, servicescape, service encounter, and self-service technologies had significant effects on travellers'

satisfaction. Also, travellers' satisfaction had positive and significant effect on behavioural intention in terms of their revisit intention and word of mouth.

Park, Robertson, R., & Wu, (2005) in Australia investigated the effects of airline service quality on airline image and passengers' future behavioural intentions. The statistical results from Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) shows that in-flight service, convenience had positive and significant effect on passengers' future behavioural intentions.

Park, Robertson, and Wu, (2006) examined how perceived value, perceived price, airline service quality, passenger satisfaction and airline image influenced passengers' future behavioural intentions. The primary data were collected from Australian international air passengers. With structural equation modelling using the statistical results showed that there were significant relationships between the variables of interest except for three paths: Perceived value, perceived price, passenger satisfaction, and airline image had a direct effect on passengers' future behavioural intentions. The three insignificant paths in the results were between 'service quality and airline image', 'perceived price and passenger satisfaction', and 'perceived value and airline image'.

In Cambodia, Saut, and Song, (2022) investigated the effect of airport service quality, satisfaction, and airport image on passengers' behavioural intention towards visiting the destination country. Primary data was collected from 314 Cambodian outbound travellers. The statistical results from Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling showed that satisfaction strongly affects behavioural intention towards visiting the destination country, while air service quality has a moderate effect, and airport image has no effect

Güreş, et al (2017), in Turkey found that the effect of security practices at airports on European passengers' satisfaction was positive. In another European airport, Ceccato and Masci (2017) found that passengers were not satisfied with their perceived safety at the airport. The passengers were also less satisfied with the airport entrances, security checkpoints, boarding areas, toilets, and restaurants.

Sonari-Otobo, and Ekeke, (2020). investigated the effect of airport marketing attributes on word of mouth communication at the Sam Mbakwe Airport, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research generated data from 150 domestic passengers at the Sam Mbakwe Airport, Owerri. The inferential statistical analysis showed that airport terminal facilities and airport security and safety had significant effect on word of mouth communication of the passengers.

Consistent with the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are offered:

H1. Physical evidence has a significant influence on passengers' behavioural intentions

H2s. Safety and security has a significant influence on passengers' behavioural intentions

Research Methodology

This empirical study adopted descriptive

The research design was descriptive because of the fact that the study collected data from domestic passengers in order to evaluate passengers' attitude, preference, behaviour and perception towards airport's marketing attributes. The descriptive research design also allow researchers to hypothesise several variables in measurable relationships. The target population for study were current passengers found at the Minna airport in Niger State of Nigeria during the period of questionnaire administration.

A sample size of 150 was determined using Freund and William's formula for sample size determination from unknown population. The purposeful sampling technique was the sampling method adopted. Out of a total of 150 questionnaires distributed, 110 was retrieved and they were all proved useable and therefore subjected to data analysis.

The questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. Extant literature provided the sources of items used with appropriate readjustments in order to conform with the current study's research purpose and context. The items for airport marketing attributes (physical evidence) were measured using items adapted from Rachman, (2017). The items for passengers' behavioural intentions were adapted from Ryu, Lee and Kim, (2012), Mahdzar, et al (2015), and Vada, Prentice, and Hsiao, (2019). All the measurement items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by: Strongly Disagree [SD](1), Disagree [D](2), Agree [A](3), Agree fairly strongly(4) and Strongly Agree [SA](5) to express the degree of agreement with the items or otherwise.

Research Results/Data Analyses

To ascertain the effect of the study dimensions on travellers' behavioural intention, the hypothesized relationships were subjected to statistical analysis using Multiple regression analysis.

Table 1-3 Multiple Regression analysis showing the effect of airport attributes (physical evidence and safety & security) on travellers' behavioural intentions.

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851 ^a	.724	.718	.29493

a. Predictors: (Constant), Safety & Security, Physical Evidence

Table 2 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.153	2	11.076	127.337	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.437	97	.087		
	Total	30.590	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Travellers' Behavioural Intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Safety & Security, Physical Evidence

Table 3 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.269	.220		5.766	.000
	Physical Evidence	.251	.214	.281	1.175	.243
	Safety & Security	.500	.209	.574	2.398	.018

a. Dependent Variable: Travellers' Behavioural Intentions

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 1, 2 and 3 shows the multiple regression analysis which shows that un-standardized beta (β) of physical evidence and safety & security are: ($\beta = 0.250$) and ($\beta = 0.500$) respectively, while value of R square = 0.724, $F = 172.337$ & $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. This specifies that physical evidence and safety & security explains 72.4% variation in passengers' behavioural intentions to the Minna airport in Niger state, Nigeria.

The result of the regression analysis shows that only one out of the two marketing attributes of the domestic airport in influencing their passengers' behavioural intentions made significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable (see Table 5 and 6). The significant factor: safety & security, ($\beta = 0.500$, $p = 0.018 < 0.05$), while physical evidence did not make any significant contribution to the model ($\beta = 0.724$, $p = 0.243 < 0.05$).

This implies that only safety & security made significant unique contribution to the equation.

Therefore the model can be written as:

Passengers' Behavioural Intention = 0.500(SS) + 1.169.

The model suggest that by associating safety & security as a marketing attribute of a domestic airline, the empirical model can increase the level of passengers' behavioural intention towards the domestic airport when other things remain constant. Accordingly therefore, changes in safety and security of the domestic airport can have the biggest influence on level of passengers' behavioural intentions such as re-patronise the domestic airport as its beta co-efficient ($\beta = 0.500$, $p = 0.018 < 0.05$) is the highest and significant, followed by physical evidence ($\beta = 0.724$, $p = 0.243 < 0.05$) which is not significant.

Testing of hypotheses 1 and 2

Decision Rule

If $PV < 0.05$ = Hypothesis is supported

$PV > 0.05$ = Hypothesis is not supported

Hypothesis one: The outcome of analysis show that physical evidence had no significant effect on passengers' behavioural intentions to the domestic airport ($\beta = 0.724$, $p = 0.243 < 0.05$).

Hypothesis two: The result of analysis show that safety & security had significant effect on passengers' behavioural intentions to the domestic airport ($\beta = 0.500$, $p = 0.018 < 0.05$).

Discussion of Results

Hypothesis 1 showed a non significant effect of physical evidence on passengers' behavioural intentions to the domestic airport ($\beta = 0.724$, $p = 0.243 < 0.05$). Therefore, H1 is not supported. This finding is consistent with the findings of Rachman, (2017) and Sonari-Otobo, and Ekeke, (2020).

Hypothesis 2 posited a significant effect of safety & security on passengers' behavioural intentions to the domestic airport, With $\beta = 0.500$, $p = 0.018 < 0.05$ the effect is significant. This result is consistent with the prediction of H2 and is therefore supported. Thus, a higher level of safety & security provided by the domestic airports is associated with a high propensity by passengers to revisit the

domestic airports for patronage. This finding is consistent with the finding of Güreş, et al (2017), Sonari-Otobo, and Ekeke, (2020) and Ceccato and Masci (2017).

Conclusion

The empirical study examined the effect of factors shaping the airport experience of passengers at Minna domestic airport in the tourism market segment in North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. To test the hypotheses, data were collected from current passengers at the Minna domestic airport who were at the airport at the time of questionnaire administration. The empirical results supported one of the posited research hypotheses significantly.

An important finding of the study is the fact that only safety & security had the strongest effect on passengers' behavioural intentions towards the domestic airport at Minna ($\beta = 0.500$) and also made a significant contribution to the model. The reason is not far-fetched. This is because the North in general have been plagued by insecurity in recent years with unpleasant consequences. A safe and well secured airport will therefore be and for an exclusive bar operating in a GRA, customers expect a more relaxed and well conducive bar atmosphere to enhance their dining experience.

In conclusion therefore, the outcome of the research indicates that safety and security constitute important determinant of passengers' behavioural intentions such as revisiting the airport for patronage. It is very important for entrepreneurs and stakeholders like national/regional governments operating airports to among other things first determine the factors that are of utmost concern to passengers and ensure they are provided.

Study Implications

The effect of the principal factor determining passengers' behavioural intentions in the transportation sector of the tourism sector in terms of revisit intention is a novel contribution in the context of Nigeria. Entrepreneurs and government agencies responsible for airport management should prioritise safety and security of airports. This will enhance passenger satisfaction which is capable of promoting passengers' behavioural intentions towards the airport. Efforts should also be made to improve the quality of the physical environment of the airport.

Limitations and Future Research

The fact that the sample unit for this study was limited to Nigerians who patronised the domestic airports in Minna may hinder the quest to generalize the research findings. Further research should involve tourists/travellers who visit the North-Central state from foreign countries.

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