

CONSUMER PROTECTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT DOMESTIC WINGS OF SELECTED AIRPORTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study looked at service delivery and consumer protection at particular South-South Nigerian airports' domestic terminals. 398 randomly chosen passengers were given questionnaires as part of a cross-sectional study design. With an average score of 3.07, the results showed that current consumer protection procedures operate effectively. The high mean score of 3.17 shows that most people were very pleased with the improvements in service performance and consumer protection brought about by technology. However, as seen by a mean score of 2.08, respondents believed that technology platforms were not substantially improving the effectiveness of information exchange. Strong and substantial relationships between the variables under investigation were found by statistical analysis. The first null hypothesis (H_{01}) showed that consumer happiness and the efficacy of current consumer protection schemes were significantly positively correlated ($r = .965, p < .000$). 93.12% of the variation in customer satisfaction levels was shown to be explained by these strategies. The significant impact of technology and consumer protection measures on satisfaction results was confirmed by the second null hypothesis (H_{02}), which yielded an F-statistic of 183.293 at a significance level of 0.000. As a result, both null hypotheses were rejected. Recommendations include refining communication channels, and leveraging technology to further improve consumer experiences and protection.

Keywords: Consumer Protection Mechanisms, Technological Advancements, Service Delivery, Domestic Airports in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The primary goal of consumer protection is to advance and safeguard the interests of customers about the services they get. According to this study, Nigeria's Civil Aviation Regulations include Consumer Protection Regulations. In the event of unanticipated events, they offer a financial and temporal care duty on the side of the passengers or the carrier. This division of the airline industry deals with matters including compensation for flight cancellations, delays, and rejected boarding. It lays down the bare minimum of passenger rights and airline obligations. Nigerian consumer protection laws were primarily formed by the Civil Aviation Act of 2006, according to Monye et al. (2021). In the scenario where a flight is affected by problems associated with airplane technology, weather conditions, restrictions by air traffic control, security issues, and labour disputes, the passengers are entitled to several rights as follows: The right to fair refunds in situations where things go wrong, The right to quick resolution of issues or grievances against service providers, The right to know the status of one's flight at all times, The right to be treated with kindness and respect, irrespective of one's physical and racial background.

As of 2019, the aviation industry accounts for 0.14% of the Nigerian GDP (Fakoyejo, 2020). As new businesses and new job opportunities, as well as foreign investments, the aviation industry remains one of the leading industry contributors to the Nigerian economy. As of today, despite the high prices of airline tickets, flying remains the major means of transport in Nigeria. As per this, the company is handing over more finances to the government. Nonetheless, due to the rising rate of disregarding consumer right standards and service delivery standards, there has been various complaints from the consumers, such as flight delays, luggage and cargo misplacement, and near-misses, among others, which further irritated consumers (Monye et al., 2021). As institutions, such as the National Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), and the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), don't seem to be utilizing their powers and responsibilities adequately, the Nigerian consumer right law that provides adequate service standards for aviation industry customers requires some changes (Nwakoby & Chukwujekwu, 2020).

According to the Consumer Protection Unit of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, eight regional airlines made available a total of 43,196 flight schedules between January and September of the year 2016. Of those, 24,075 were delayed and 854 were totally canceled. This shows that the problem of airlines not caring about their customers' rights and bad delivery services is true. (Bamford & Xystouri, 2005; Tiernan et al., 2008) say that airline customers often have to deal with bad service, lost or damaged luggage, wrong arrival times, and unpredictable aircraft delays and cancellations because of weather and technical problem.

Similarly, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that 318 flights were completely cancelled and 6,789 flights were delayed out of 10,366 local flight itineraries in the first quarter of 2017. There are several reasons for these difficulties, claims Daramola (2014). These consist of the following, albeit they are not the only ones: the recent high price of aviation fuel, supply chain disruptions and fuel shortages, aircraft with poor maintenance cultures, a lack of technical experts, high debt loads and economic downturns, stringent government regulations, and insufficient defence against more powerful and well-established foreign rivals. This urgently necessitates the need for these investigations involving Nigerian domestic airlines, in addition to the stories that imply service delivery in the airline operation is complex, with various elements both preventable and unanticipated contributing to low delivery services.

For more than thirty years, Nigerian airlines have ignored the rights of their passengers. The fact that there is no aviation body to police the rules that are already in place has only made things worse. Nwakoby and Chukwujekwu (2020) say that domestic airlines often cancel or delay flights without compensating customers, saying that operational or weather-related issues are to blame. Flight delays are becoming typical at Nigerian airports because the government isn't enforcing the rules and travellers aren't paying attention. The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has put into place a passenger bill of rights to deal with these problems. This bill is mentioned in the Nigerian Civil Aviation regulation. This rule tries to protect Nigerians' rights and build their trust in air travel services, with a focus on consumer protection.

Among other things, a number of studies (Adeola & Adebisi, 2014; Chikwendu et al., 2012; Dike, 2013; Gambo, 2016) discovered that passengers on Nigerian domestic flights encountered unfavourable customer service from airline front desk staff. Nigerian airline operators in the domestic wing are therefore under tremendous pressure to demonstrate that their services are excellent and customer-focused, even though their rights are protected. Given these circumstances, this study looked at service delivery and consumer protection in domestic wings of several airports in south-south Nigeria. The study's goals are to: i. assess the efficacy of current consumer protection measures at Nigerian airport domestic wings; and ii. investigate how

technological developments may improve customer protection and service delivery at Nigerian airport domestic wings.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Area

The research article is a passage taken from a thesis. The focus of the study is south-south Nigeria. One of the biggest deltas in the world, the south-south spans an estimated 70,000 km². It is situated between latitudes 5°33'49"N and 6°31'38"E in the north, in the central region of southern Nigeria. Benin (5°44'11"N and 5°03'49"E) is its western boundary, while the Imo River (4°27'16"N and 7°35'27"E) is its eastern boundary. The South-South is situated along the Atlantic coast, which constitutes Nigeria's southern border. It is where the Niger and Benue rivers enter the ocean through a network of tributaries, including rivers, creeks, and estuaries. There are roughly six airports with operating facilities spread over the southern area of Nigeria. Based on their level of operation and area of expertise, the airports in each of the states that form the research region fall into several categories. They include domestic and international airports as well as military or specialized airlifts. Commercial airlines, private aircraft, and military aircraft use almost all of the airports together for a variety of operational services.

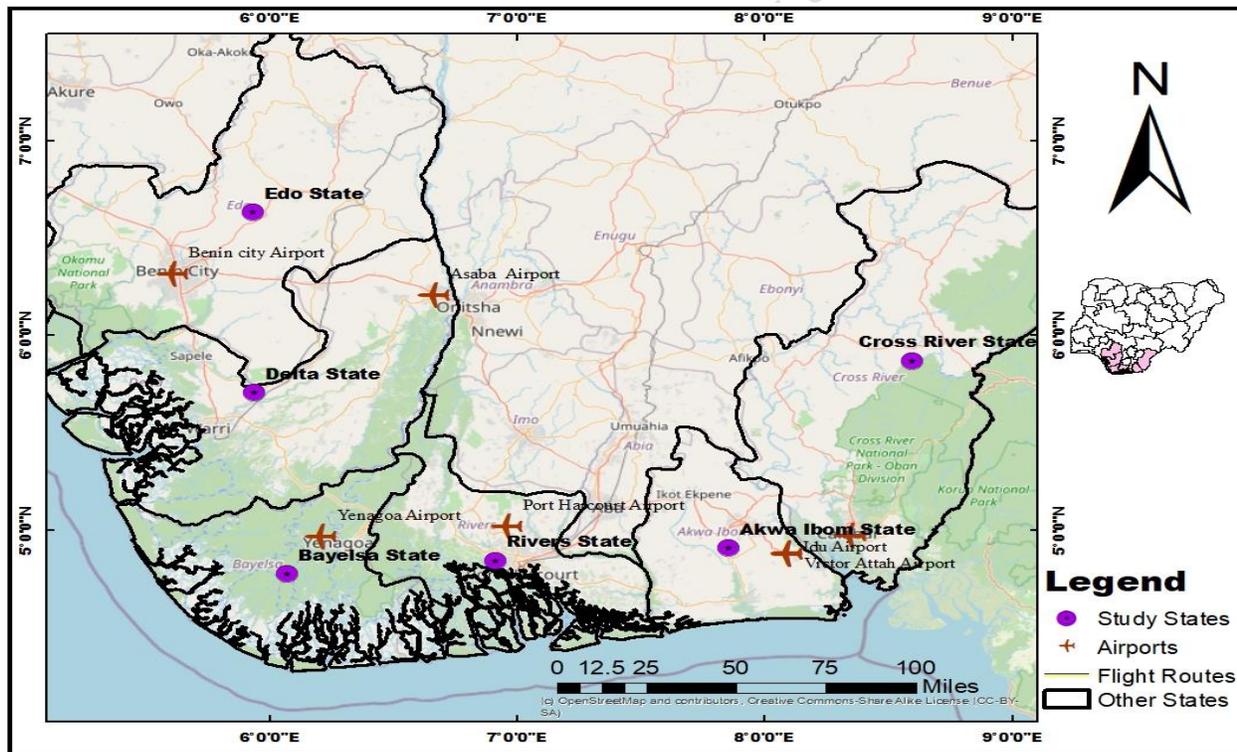


Figure 1: Study Area Map Showing Airports in South – South, Nigeria.

Source: Author's work, (2023)

2.2 Methods

A cross-sectional inquire about plan was utilized in this think about. The ponder populace of intrigued is centred on air terminals within the consider range, which incorporate the major airplane terminals in Bayelsa State, Cross Stream State, Delta State, Edo State, Streams State and Akwa Ibom State. The populace unit of request were 87,229 travellers (clients) of carriers producing its trips from the six (6) airplane terminals within the consider range (Olawoye, 2024).

Table 1: Determination of Sample Size

Study Airports	List of Airline operators	Volume of Passenger Traffic	Proportional Method of Allocation
Bayelsa Airport	United Nation, Ibom Air	5,600	25.4
Delta State Airport	Max Air, Air Peace, Arik Air, Overland Airways, Aero Contractors, United Nigeria Airlines	8,164	36.7
Port Harcourt Int' Airport	Air Peace, Ibom Air, Aero Contractors, Arik Air, Green Africa Airways, Dana Airline	20,888	94.6
Margaret Ekpo International Airport, Cross River State	Air Peace, Ibom Air, Aero Contractors, Cally Air	8,547	38.3
Uyo Airport, Akwa Ibom State	Air Peace, Ibom Air	5,430	24
Benin Airport, Edo State	Air Peace, Arik Air, Aero Contractors, Green African Airways, Max Air	38,600	175.8
Total		87,229	398

Source: Author's work, 2024.

Since it is a large population, the overall population of interest was subjected to the Taro Yamane formula, which was used to establish a manageable population size, due to its homogenous characteristics. While the simple random sampling technique was applied in the course of the field survey, after taking prior permission from the airport authorities, airline management. The study also incorporated the Prohibition Criteria were included, along with operational air terminals, aircraft personnel, and discussions of passengers who were bound from the household wings of Asaba Airplane Terminal, Bayelsa Universal Airplane Terminal, Calabar Airplane Terminal (Margaret Ekpo Universal Air Terminal), Benin Air Terminal, Port Harcourt Universal Air Terminal, and Uyo Airplane Terminal, as they were. Avoided were the military transport terminal from the Air Force base, the operating airplane terminal, and aircraft staffs and discuss bound travellers from the globe wing who are not on the incorporation criteria list. The entire population of intrigued was substituted using the Taro Yamane equation to create a manageable research population. (estimate of the test) as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = the sample size

N = the total population

e = the error of sampling/accepted error limits (0.05%)

1 = the constant figure/level of precision.

In substituting into the taro Yamane formula, we have;

$$n = \frac{87229}{1 + 87229 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 398 \text{ (Sample size)}$$

The survey instrument was distributed to the sample strata using the proportionate method of allocation as adopted from Amamilo, (2021), see table 1.

Where
$$\frac{N_p \times n}{N}$$

N_p – Total population of each stratum

n – Sample size

N – Total population of the study

The nature of information used for this think about was based on the logical strategies of information gathering. The essential information and auxiliary information were majorly joined. Hence; essential information was gotten by employing a observation study to get operational information, key source interviews with carrier activity directors and heads of buyer assurance units at the airplane terminals, and well-structured pre-tested traveller survey were used for the reason of scholarly inquire about, in this way their biodata were gotten barring their names. Whereas the auxiliary information was accumulated from recorded reports from pertinent diaries and distributions found in libraries and web. 398 duplicates of four-point Likert scale survey was managed to carrier travellers handling the household wing of Nigeria Air terminals through physical overview strategy to get profitable reactions of intrigued. The information gotten were dissected unmistakably in connection to each objective, it took the shape of recurrence and rate dispersion tables, cruel and standard deviation to display and examine the information gotten. The consider hypothesis one state that there's no critical relationship between the adequacy of existing customer assurance components at residential wings of airplane terminals in Nigeria and the level of buyer fulfilment was tried with Pearson Item Moment Correlation, speculation two which state that there's no critical relationship between the effect of innovative progressions on improving customer assurance and benefit conveyance at household wings of air terminals in Nigeria and by and large customer fulfilment was tried with Investigation of variance (ANOVA). The invalid speculations were inspected with a computer within the environment of measurable bundle for social science (SPSS form 23.2).

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Perceived consumer protection mechanisms at domestic wings of airports in Nigeria

S/N	Variables	Respondents' responses		
		\bar{X}	S. D	Remark
1	When customers complain, the airport's customer service is totally unresponsive.	2.41	1.07	Disagree
2	Although there is need for improvement, the airport often conveys crucial information in an effective manner.	2.95	0.95	Agree
3	The airport routinely fails to promptly address customer complaints.	2.82	1.18	Agree
4	Although the channels for complaints are normally available, there is need for improvement	3.52	0.50	Agree
5	I believe the airport's reimbursement is insufficient to address the problems encountered.	3.76	0.43	Agree
6	I am rather pleased with the consumer protection procedures in place at the airport, as it fails to sufficiently educate customers about their rights, resulting in a general lack of awareness.	3.45	0.60	Agree
7	I am highly satisfied with the consumer protection mechanisms in place at the airport.	2.58	0.83	Agree
Grand mean		3.07	0.79	Agree

Source: Author's computation, 2024.

Travellers' views on consumer protection measures at Nigeria's domestic airport terminals give us valuable information. The average score of 2.41 shows that most people who answered thought that airport customer service didn't care about problems. People were happier with how easy it was to file a complaint (mean = 3.52) and how well communication worked (mean = 2.95). This means that even though the performance wasn't great, it could become better. People were worried about how fast customer problems were treated (mean = 2.82) and how well compensation was supplied when difficulties arose (mean = 3.76). Moreover, the participants showed a lack of knowledge about consumer rights (mean = 3.45). The mean value of 2.58 reveals the fact that the community thinks that the airports are taking good care of the customers despite some reservations. This suggests that the community accepts the existing policy. The management of the airport needs to work on enhancing consumer rights awareness and addressing customer complaints more quickly. This can be inferred by the total mean of 3.07 regarding all the categories.

The correlation between the effectiveness of consumer protection policies at the Nigerian domestic airport terminals and the happiness of consumers was found to be strongly and significantly positive ($r = .965$, $p < .000$). The analysis establishes that a total of 93.12% of the variance in levels of satisfaction could be explained by consumer protection policies, establishing the crucial role played by these policies in shaping the views of all transport users in general. These outcomes are prima facie consistent with a similar study conducted by Koklic et al. (2017), which concluded that consumer protection programs are associated with increased happiness of airline customers. The study establishes its relevance with regard to current literature in terms of

communication, complaint resolution, and the awareness of consumers' rights that are proposed by the recommendations laid down by Rahman et al. (2017). The issue of safety for air travellers in Nigerian airports is clearly made abundant in the report. The research establishes the shortcomings that are crucial and establishes how this affect air travellers' satisfaction. Legislators and airport management must improve communication, speed up complaint resolution procedures, and raise consumer rights awareness in order to improve consumer protection and customer happiness in the aviation industry.

Hypothesis 1:

H0: The degree of customer satisfaction and the efficiency of the current consumer protection measures at Nigerian airports' domestic wings do not significantly correlate.

H1: The degree of customer satisfaction and the efficiency of the current consumer protection measures at Nigerian airports' domestic wings are significantly correlated.

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient between the degree of customer satisfaction and the efficacy of the current consumer protection measures at Nigerian domestic airport wings.

Correlations			
		Consumer protection mechanisms	The level of consumer satisfaction
Consumer protection mechanisms	Pearson Correlation	1	.965
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	398	398
The level of consumer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.965	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	398	398

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's computation, 2024.

In Nigerian airports, Table 3 displays the correlation coefficient between the level of customer satisfaction and the effectiveness of the existing shopper security measures at the residential wings. A strong correlation ($r=.965$, $p<.000$) was found between the level of customer satisfaction and the efficiency of the present customer security measures at Nigerian airports' residential wings. The effectiveness of the current customer security procedures at the residential wings of Nigerian airports explained 93.12% of the variation in customer fulfilment.

Table 4: Evaluation of how creative developments have improved transportation and customer satisfaction at Nigerian airports' residential wings

S/N	Variables	Respondents' responses		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
	Technological advancements have significantly improved consumer protection and service delivery at domestic airports.	3.70	0.51	Agree
	Technological tools have not made it much easier to provide information, so customers are still in the dark.	2.08	0.65	Disagree
	Thanks to new technology, people in the United States can now easily use grievance resolution platforms at airports.	3.25	0.94	Agree
	During aircraft delays, technology makes it possible for people to talk to each other in real time, which keeps passengers up to date and lessens their frustration.	3.34	0.67	Agree
	Technological progress has not greatly improved security safeguards, which puts consumers at risk.	3.47	0.68	Agree
	Improvements in technology have made it much easier to keep track of luggage, which has resulted to fewer lost or mishandled bags.			
	Most people are happy with how well technology is being used to improve services and safeguard consumers at airports in the United States.	3.11	0.92	Agree
		3.24	0.95	Agree
	Grand mean	3.17	0.76	Agree

Source: Author's computation, 2024.

The results of the study offer a comprehensive understanding of how technological advancements affect consumer protection and service delivery at domestic airports in Nigeria. The majority of respondents (mean: 3.70) believe that technology has greatly enhanced these aspects, hence elevating the overall airport experience. Consumer awareness is low because people still believe that technological advancements haven't made information sharing much easier (mean: 2.08). The majority of respondents (mean: 3.25) concur that customers may now obtain assistance with their problems much more easily thanks to new technologies. The findings demonstrate that when flights are delayed, technology facilitates real-time communication between passengers (mean: 3.34). Passengers are happier and less sad as a result. The respondents believe that the security system has, in fact, seen no improvement, but they also believe that new technology has made customers more exposed to risk (mean: 3.47). New technology will also ensure that luggage tracking systems work much better, which means that there won't be as much luggage misplaced or mishandled (mean: 3.11). A mean of 3.17 with a standard deviation of 0.76 suggests that respondents believe new technology has greatly improved consumer protection and service delivery when using local airports. This suggests that customers perceive new technology positively for improving overall customer experience through various means of enhancing airports. As revealed in Table 4, the ANOVA test gives significant differences between the groups, with the immense value of the F-statistic at 183.293 and p-value of .000. This indicates that technology

plays a major role in this context by showing the extent to which the impact of technology developments affects the aspect of consumer protection/ services in Nigeria’s domestic airports. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This agrees with previous research by Bakır, Kurt, & Demiralp (2022), Bogicevic (2017), and Bezerra & Gomes (2020) that showed the extent to which technology improves airport services, customer satisfaction, and overall experience.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no discernible correlation between overall customer satisfaction and the effects of technology developments on improving consumer protection and service delivery at Nigeria's domestic airport terminals.

H1: Overall customer happiness and the effects of technology improvements on consumer protection and service provision at Nigeria's domestic airports are significantly correlated.

Table 5: Synopsis of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on how technological advancements have improved service delivery and consumer protection at Nigerian domestic airport terminals

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	75.968	19	3.998	183.293	.000
Within Groups	8.246	378	.022		
Total	84.214	397			

Source: Author’s computation, 2024.

The results of the ANOVA used to evaluate how new technology would affect service delivery and consumer protection at Nigeria's domestic airport terminals are shown in Table 5. Two sources of variance are examined in the analysis: "Between Groups" and "Within Groups." The results show significant differences between groups, as shown by a p-value of .000 and a significant F-statistic of 183.293. This means that the differences that were seen were not random. This example proves the relevance of technology in this area by illustrating the great impact created by technology on customer protection and services rendered in Nigerian domestic airports. So, the null hypothesis is not true.

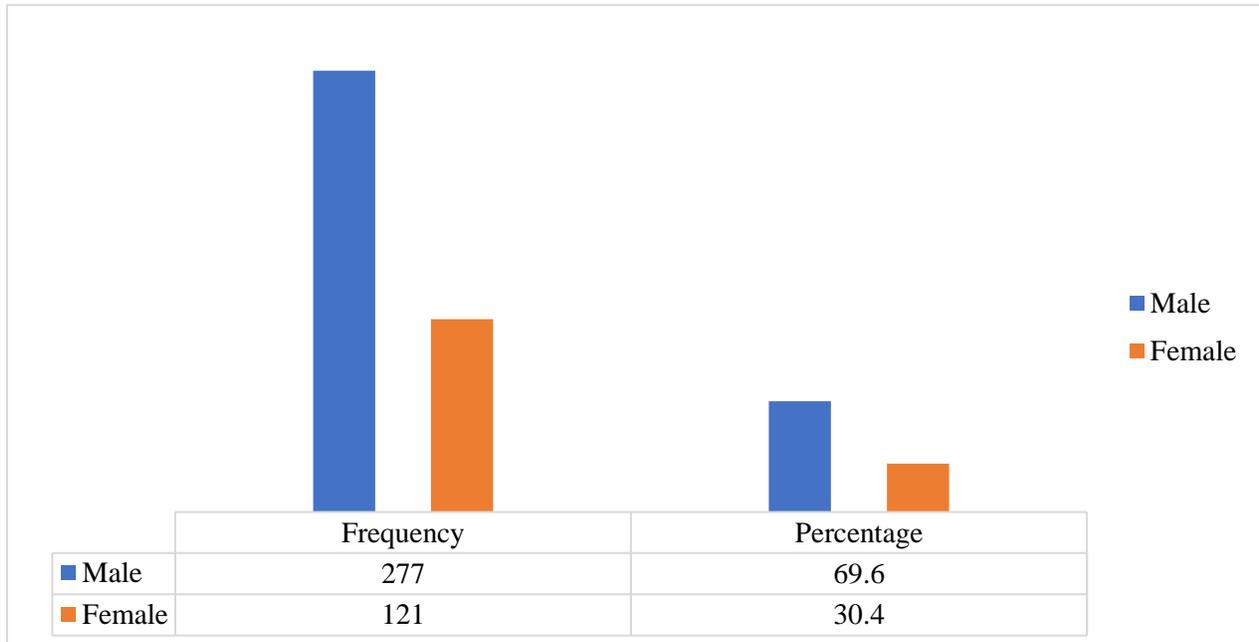


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondent

Source: Author’s Computation, 2024

From the respondents population 398 replied to the gadget, as seen in Figure 1. Of them, 121 (30.4%) were women and 277 (69.6%) were men. Every participant filled out the questionnaire to participate in the study. This indicates that the majority of the impacted respondents in the study area are men.

Perspectives on Every Gender: When it comes to consumer protection issues and service delivery at domestic airports, there may be differences between male and female tourists. For example, women could face different obstacles than men in terms of safety, security, or access to facilities. Therefore, a more comprehensive knowledge of these gender-specific patterns would result from a more equal gender representation in the sample.

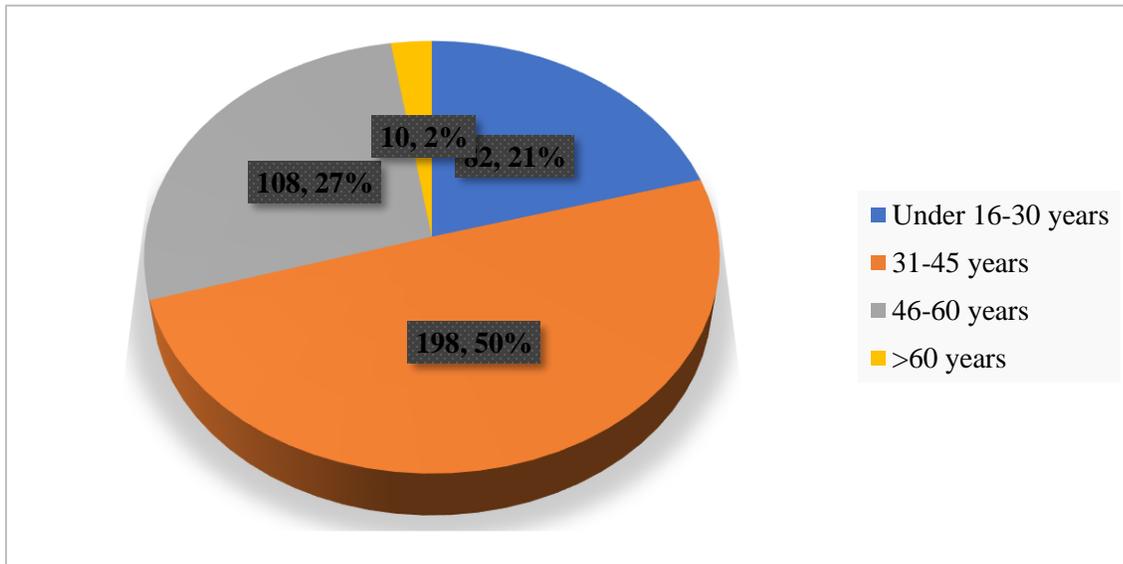


Figure 2: Age of the Respondents
Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2024

The bulk of responders (49.7%) are between the ages of 31 and 45, according to Figure 4.2. The next most common age group, which makes up 27.1%, is 46 to 60 years old. Just 2.5% of responders are over 60, while 20.6% are between the ages of 16 and 30. This pattern indicates that middle-aged and older people, who may have higher service demands, are the main users of air travel. Older tourists may need more help, while younger travelers presumably have different tastes. The differences suggest that Nigerian domestic airports need to offer services and protect clients in a way that is open to everyone and takes their age into account.

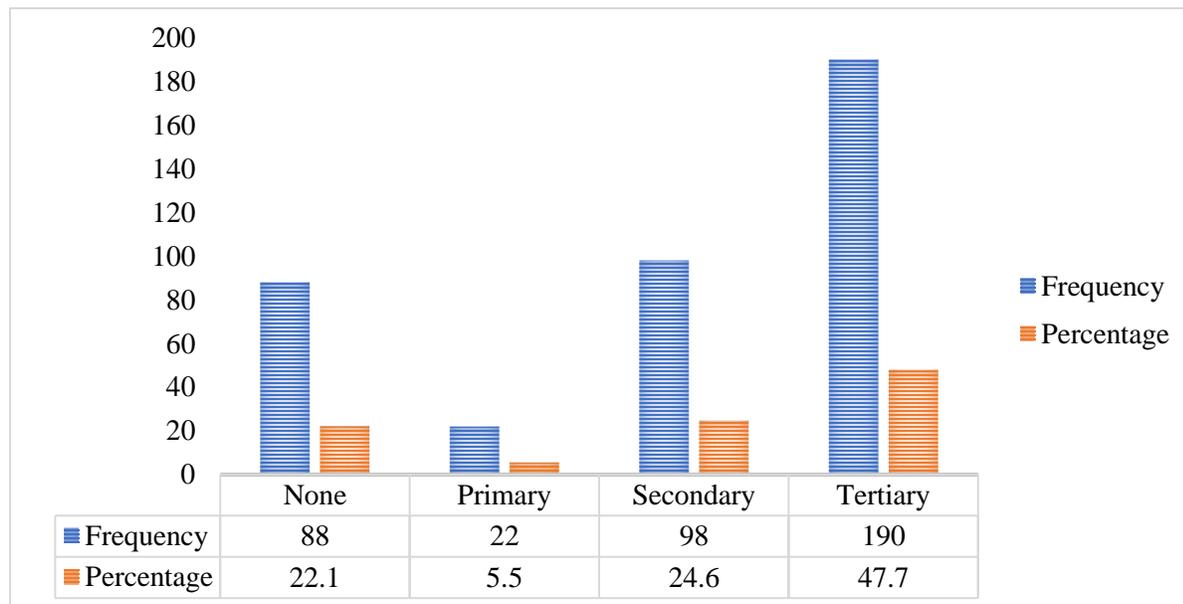


Figure 3. Educational Qualification
Source: Author’s Computation, 2024

Figure 3 shows that 47.7% of the people who answered have a college degree, 24.6% have a high school diploma, 22.1% have no formal education, and 5.5% have finished basic school. According to an article in, the majority of the travellers are well-educated; thus, they demand better safety, along with customer service at domestic airports. Better information, easily available services, and a well-directed complaint procedure is imperative to make sure all the passengers are informed and their rights are protected, as most of our customers lack formal education.

5. Conclusion

The research yields significant insights concerning passenger sentiments and the impact of technical advancements at local airports in Nigeria. Customer happiness and the success of consumer protection initiatives are directly related, as established by the study. This further establishes the need for improvement in these two sectors. Despite some challenges, it has been revealed by the study that technological innovation has brought about some good changes in the area of customer safety and service delivery. Based on the findings of the research, the recommendations that follow: Customers should be able to easily find out information about services, flight status, and consumer rights. This will help address the concerns that were established by the research study. You should also invest money in new technologies that will help optimize service delivery, customer safety, and communication because the research poll was successful.

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