



Research Report

RESE8419

Title: A Brand Experience Audit, based on passenger experiences at four South African airports, following COVID-19.

By

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Student number:

A research project submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Honours in Bachelor Arts in Strategic Brand Communication
at the Independent Institute of Education: Vega School

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Submission date: 5 December 2022

Word Count: 14 924

I, Jackeline Riana van Pletzen, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the qualification BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University of Higher Education Institute for degree purposes.

Signature : Signed Electronically

Date: 5 December 2022

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Vega for giving me this opportunity. I did not realize how much of an impact the past two years would make, and I am very grateful.

Thank you for the guidance of Dr Tish Taylor and Tiaan Ras for all your assistance and guidance throughout.

Thank you to my Mom and Mumsy for always encouraging me, we lost two phenomenal women in the past year, you are missed. I hope I will continue to always make you proud.

Thank you to my wife for standing by me through grief, sorrow, and a very tough two years. You are my rock.

Abstract

Covid-19, a phrase known by everyone on this planet. One of the most impacted industries in the world was aviation, which is still reeling from the time where the world was placed on pause, and our lives changed forever. This research seeks to gain understanding of how the passenger journey has been impacted during COVID-19 and how the experience has changed in comparison to prior COVID-19, to seek understanding on why the air travel industry is slow in recovery.

By using Interpretivism, the research will unpack the reality of the traveler, based on their individual experiences at the airports. Quantitative, with qualitative open-ended questions were used in the primary research survey to understand the impact on the brands and establish how the brand experience has changed since COVID-19.

It is hypothesized that air travelers do not have confidence using the identified airports since COVID-19, as the brand experience has changed negatively.

The findings show that that the brand experience has changed negatively at the ACSA owned airports, however, no significant change has been experienced at Lanseria Airport.

It further shows that consumers would prefer to have different options and feel forced to make use of certain airports.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualisation

On 5 March 2020, the National Institute for Communicable diseases declared that the first suspected person carrying COVID-19 in South Africa tested positive (NICD, 2020).

This was the day that history changed forever in South Africa, specifically for the aviation industry. President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of emergency on 15 March 2020 and announced measures which included travel restrictions and the closure of schools on the 18th of March 2020. On 23 March 2020, the South African Government announced a national lockdown, which was implemented from 27 March 2020 onwards (Gov, 2022).

The airports in South Africa, as with most businesses, except for essential services was closed from 26 March 2020 to the end of April 2020. Citizens were not permitted to leave their homes, except to get medical attention or buy essential groceries and medicine. Only later, from 28 June 2021 the alert level was adjusted to permit the following airports to operate: O.R. Tambo International, Cape Town International, King Shaka International, Lanseria International and Kruger Mpumalanga International Airports (Gov, 2022). Flights were only permitted to operate during curfew which was between the hours of 21:00 and 04:00.

Citizens were not permitted to travel between provinces unless they were an essential worker or was returning as a once off to their home from the province they were stranded in (Gov, 2022). Travelers had to be in possession of a COVID-19 negative test, obtained no longer than 72 hours prior to their departure flight, to arrive from an international destination back to South Africa.

During alert level 3, in effect during June 2020, movement between provinces were permitted only for the following categories:

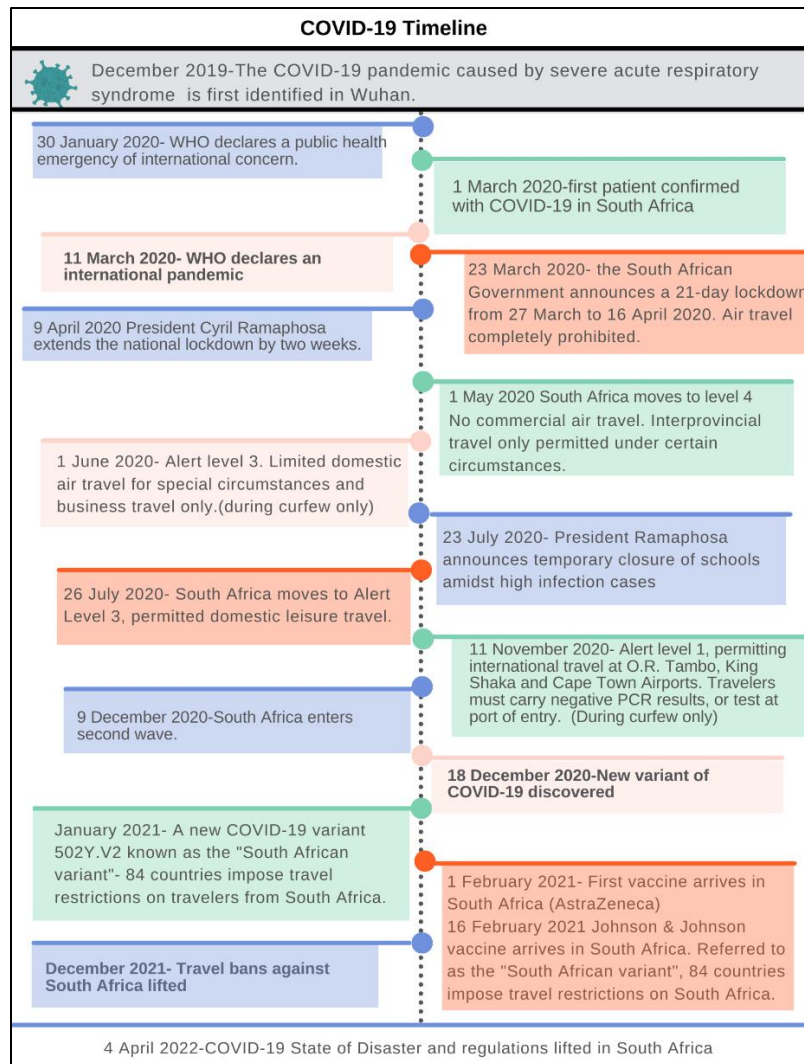
- Persons travelling for work, in possession of a valid work permit
- Persons moving residences
- Care of an immediate family member, which required an affidavit

- Members of Parliament on oversight responsibilities
- Students that had to commute between provinces to schools
- Attendance of funerals
- Transport of human remains
- Persons returning home from isolation or quarantine
- Movements permitted under regulation 41.

(Gov, 2022)

Strict screening protocols were implemented for international flights. Many countries in fact did not permit their residents to return to their country of residence. The evacuation of tourists stranded both in South Africa and our residents stranded in foreign countries was implemented. These measures often included isolation/quarantine for a period of 21 days (Gov, 2022).

Only passengers were permitted inside the terminal buildings, and meeters and greeters were not permitted under any circumstances. The airports closed all entrances and exits to ensure that one exit and entry point was allowed, where temperature screening took place before a person was permitted to enter the airport. All passengers had to always wear a mask. All airports had to have isolation facilities should a passenger display symptoms or screen positively for COVID-19. Front line staff were issued with gloves and sanitiser and social distancing protocols were implemented, with 1.5 meters to be maintained between all persons (Gov, 2022).



(Gov, 2022)

(WHO, 2022)

As the alert levels were adjusted, protocols for the airports changed in accordance with measures implemented by the Government. For international travel, a traveler had to supply proof of vaccination or present a negative PCR test. The timeframe for the PCR test varied from 24-72 hours, based on the country regulations (Gov, 2022). Citizens of South Africa have adjusted to hybrid working and conducting meetings on a virtual platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams (Pathmatic, 2021). It is no longer necessary to travel between provinces for meetings. The use of remote collaboration software skyrocketed to over 176% during the month of May 2020 (Pathmatics, 2021).

South Africans had to embrace digital as they were not given any other option. However, as the country opened and alert levels relaxed, the air travel industry is struggling to recover. Two domestic airlines have failed since 2021. Mango Airlines was the first business to enter voluntary business rescue from the 28th of July 2021. Comair/Kulula ceased operations on 9 June 2022. The CEO of the Tourism Business Council, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, has already hypothesised that this will mean more road traffic. Comair's market share in domestic flights were 40%, through Kulula and British Airways flights (Businesstech, 2022). The future of the newly relaunched South African Airways also hangs in the balance as the troubled airline struggles to take off after the lengthy business rescue and losing over 20 routes (Thesouthafrican, 2022). There has also been recent controversy about the Takatso Consortium, which is the chosen strategic equity partner, following the resignation of director Gideon Novick (News24, 2022).

Whilst the Competition Commission has stated that they will monitor airlines to ensure that flight prices are not inflated, collusion cannot be counted out and is a real possibility (Businesstech, 2022). The other impact factor further impeding the industry is the price of jet fuel. With the Ukraine/Russian conflict, the price of oil has skyrocketed (The Guardian, 2022). This has affected both jet fuel and fuel such as petrol and diesel, affecting normal travel by vehicle also. Airports were faced with a reduction of revenue received due to airlines not operating, as well as retail stores closing. The aviation industry is regulated by the Government, and the airports only receive the following fees per passenger on departure flights.

Regions	ACSA Airports	Lanseria International	Routes
Domestic	R86.75	R82.61	All domestic routes within South Africa
Regional	R180.57	R172.61	Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland & Lesotho
International	R238.07	R228.26	All other countries

(Airports, 2022)

(Lanseria, 2022)

Less passengers means less aeronautical fees, which is the main source of income for airports (Airports, 2022). As the aviation industry shut down, all airports had to rely on non-aeronautical fees. These fees are from commercial activities such as parking, retail, restaurants, and real estate. As the pandemic shut down the country with only essential services, most retail and concessionaires were closed at airports, except for essential services that included medical services such as pharmacies, as well as food and hygiene products sold by companies such as Woolworths (Gov, 2022). This means that both aeronautical and non-aeronautical revenue suffered for airports companies.

With regards to ACSA owned airports, the company severely cut CAPEX to cover only maintenance and legislative requirements as well as offering Voluntary Separation packages to staff (Airports, 2021). This resulted in all of the airports not being maintained with regards to gardens, terminals, ablutions, and general cleanliness. The research needs to unpack whether the air travel experience has changed for the passenger and in which way/s since the pandemic. Have the airport brands been able to cater for the changing needs of a post-pandemic traveler? This may lead to answers as to why the air travel industry has been terribly slow to recover. What is hampering the return?

1.2 Rationale

A lot of research has been done on how COVID-19 has impacted the aviation industry from different perspectives such as the economic impact, statistical numbers, job stability etc.

However, there is a gap in understanding how the airport brands in South Africa are viewed from the passenger's perspective, since COVID-19, and why the air traveler is slow in returning to air travel as a preferred choice of transport. Prior to COVID-19, the air travel industry predicted the air transport market in South Africa to grow by 102% in the next 20 years (IATA, 2017).

However, we have only seen about a 50% increase to pre-COVID passenger figures (Airports, 2022). For airports to recover fully and adapt to a future where pandemics can happen again, the industry needs to understand the passenger and their needs now more than ever. The public have adapted to not traveling or finding different alternatives such

as driving or meeting virtually. The airports need to convince travelers that air travel is the most convenient and accessible option for them to opt for air travel instead of other alternatives.

By dissecting how the brand experience has changed specifically for the air traveler, the airports can adapt to ensure that their USP's fully convince the public that air travel is the best option available.

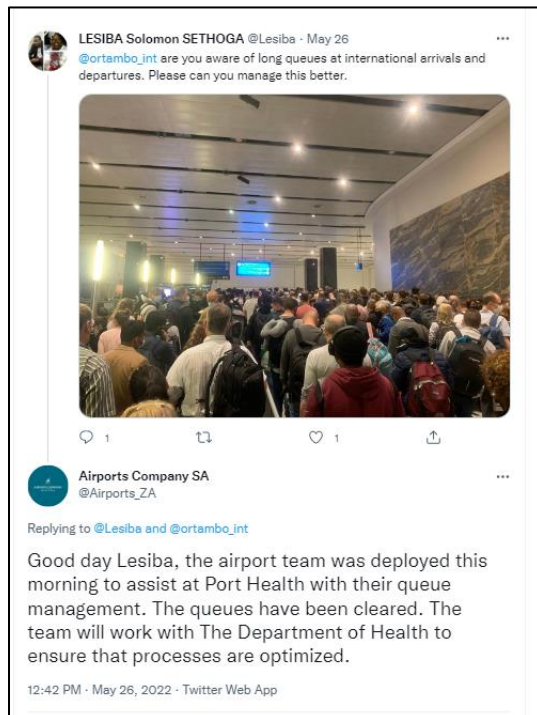
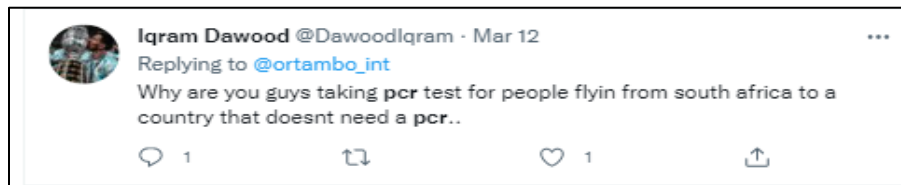
1.3 Problem Statement

Aviation was impacted on a global scale following COVID-19. Although air travel demand strengthened in 2021 the outlook is still uncertain, with air travel in South Africa only expecting to recover in 2023 (African Business, 2021). We look at how the brand experience of the four identified airports has changed, since COVID-19.

The identified airports have suffered significant passenger reduction and struggles to recover even when travel restrictions have been eased to alert level 1 in South Africa. Currently passenger figures are at about 48% of pre-pandemic numbers for the three ACSA owned Airports, O.R. Tambo International, Cape Town International and King Shaka International Airports (Airports, 2022).

Lanseria Airport on the other hand does not readily avail aircraft and passenger statistics. The latest study that was found was for 2020, where passenger numbers for the entire year of 2020 was at 723526, compared to 2,480,872 in 2019 (DCLA, 2021). This means that Lanseria had only recovered a third of passenger numbers during 2020. There are no studies conducted within South Africa currently that speaks to brand experience at the identified airports.

Most studies conducted speak about how the pandemic has affected businesses, but not in this case, how the consumer feels and what has changed for them. These regulations were often ambiguous and had to be clarified, such as the PCR test requirements (Gov, 2022). Whilst the airports do not make the regulations, they had to implement them. The air traveler can often not discern between The Department of Health at the airport and that of the O.R. Tambo International Airport team, as displayed by the below tweets:



(Twitter, 2022)

The constant changes make it hard for the traveler to keep up and adhere to implemented regulations. The journey at the airport is much more difficult and easier perceived alternatives are available, such as driving or taking other modes of transportation.

1.4 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to identify how the four airports are viewed based on passenger experiences at the airports from travelers, since COVID-19 and establish if the views have changed since pre-COVID-19 and why. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be utilised to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the identified brands and to understand how the passenger needs have changed since the pandemic, with the aim of informing the air travel recovery strategy and how to build passenger confidence at the tail end of the pandemic.

The aim of the research is to audit the brand experience at Lanseria International, O.R. Tambo International, Cape Town International and King Shaka International Airports. These are the airports with the highest number of travelers, and will feed to the other smaller airports, to gain understanding of how the passenger journey has been impacted during COVID-19 and how the experience has changed in comparison to prior COVID-19.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How has the consumers perception of air travel changed in South Africa, during the COVID-19?
2. How do passengers view the identified airports, post COVID-19?
3. How have the identified South African Airport brands been impacted following COVID-19?

1.5.1 Subsidiary Questions:

1. What has changed for the passenger?
2. Have the airport brands adapted successfully to all the changes?
3. What are the feelings and emotions of the traveler?

1.6 Research Objectives

- To understand how the brand experience has changed for the passenger since COVID-19 impacted airports.
- To understand what is preventing air travelers from using the identified airport brands.
- To unpack how the air travel experience has changed since COVID-19 and travel restrictions were imposed.
- Establish what have the identified airports done well and what can be improved upon.
- To explain what the reasons are for the slow recovery when travel restrictions have been eased.
- Establish whether COVID-19 has triggered other issues that have impacted the brand experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualisation

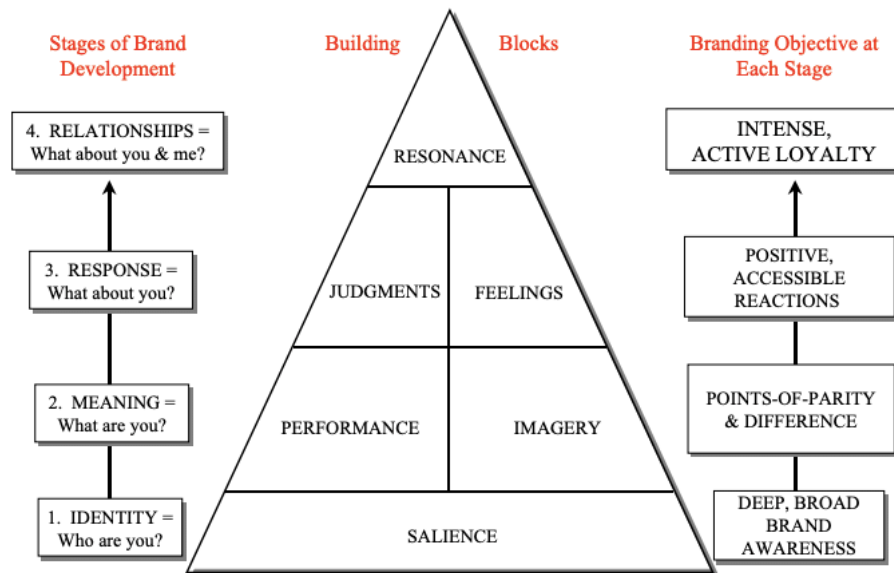
COVID-19	At the end of December 2019, a severe Pneumonia with Novel Pathogens emerged from Wuhan (China) and was officially named COVID-19 or coronavirus. This novel coronavirus resulted in a pandemic that affected the entire globe with a low to moderate mortality rate of 2-5%. Transmission from person to person can occur through droplets or contact transmission. According to the WHO, 6 2 33 526 deaths have been reported globally at 29 April 2022. (WHO, 2022)
Travel restrictions & Lockdown	217 travel destinations introduced travel restrictions during the pandemic. (Journal of Travel Medicine, 2020) During March 2020, most countries closed their borders and introduces various types of lockdowns. South Africa declared a a national state of disaster on 15 March 2020 and the closure of schools and travel restrictions were introduced. Lockdown in South Africa started off with a 14 day lockdown where all citizens had to stay at home and only essential

	workers such as nurses, fire men, police etc, had permission to leave their homes to go to work. These essential workers had to obtain a permit to show they are essential workers when stopped by the police or army to ensure that all non essential persons remained at home. The lockdown also entailed a curfew, in which times were adjusted according to the level of lockdown. (Gov, 2020) Airports were closed during this period and no travel was permitted at all. South Africa and the world adjusted restrictions based on the number of deaths and infections. South Africa first opened for essential domestic air travel during June 2020. Repatriation flights was organised for many citizens that were stuck abroad. Leisure travel between provinces was not permitted until 18 August 2020. International travel resumed during October 2020, with stringent measures implemented at airports. After the Omicron variant was identified by South Africa, many countries imposed travel bans on South Africa and neighbouring countries. (Gov, 2022)
Measures introduced at airports	Following the hard lockdown of 14 days, essential travel between provinces was permitted. The traveller had to have a travel permit, stating reason of travel. Persons travelling for essential travel was categorized in the following permissible reasons to travel: travelling for essential work travel, children that had to travel to another province for schooling, moving residences and medical reasons. (Gov, 2020) The government also imposed wearing of a cloth mask for any person in a public space. As a national keypoint, airports had to close certain entry ways to ensure that points of entry and exit was monitored for high temperatures and screening processes which required all persons entering the terminal buildings to write down their personal details and state whether they have had any flu like symptoms or have had contact with anyone who contracted COVID-19. On international travel, passengers had to undergo extensive screening in order to exit the country, with regulations of the country

	which was travelled to that had to be complied with as well. Many countries would require vaccination and PCR testing to be done 48-72 hours prior to travel. Persons who did not adhere to the regulations were asked to quarantine at the country of arrival for 10 days. At the start of the pandemic and lockdown, many persons were stranded at foreign countries, placed in state quarantine. (Gov, 2020) Airports also had to regulate a 1.5 meter distance to be maintained between air travellers. COVID monitors were placed inside terminals to address social/physical distancing. (Airports, 2022) Isolation facilities had to be opened for anyone who screened positive for COVID-19. All high touch areas had to be frequently sanitised, and hand sanitiser being provided throughout all the buildings.
End-to-end process	The end-to-end process for an air traveller is the entire journey that marks their airport experience. This starts at the research stage when the user starts investigating costs and processes. It involves all the touchpoints the consumer will use during this process, such as the website, parking, information counters, check-in counters, security, boarding gates, right through to the arrival at the destination airport, collecting their bags and exiting the airport. (Fierce electronics, 2017)

2.2 Theoretical foundation

The key theories applicable to the research is based on Keller's Brand Equity model, especially as we look at building customer-based brand equity. Keller's theoretical model is the most applicable as we look towards the emotions and feelings of the air traveler at the identified airports.

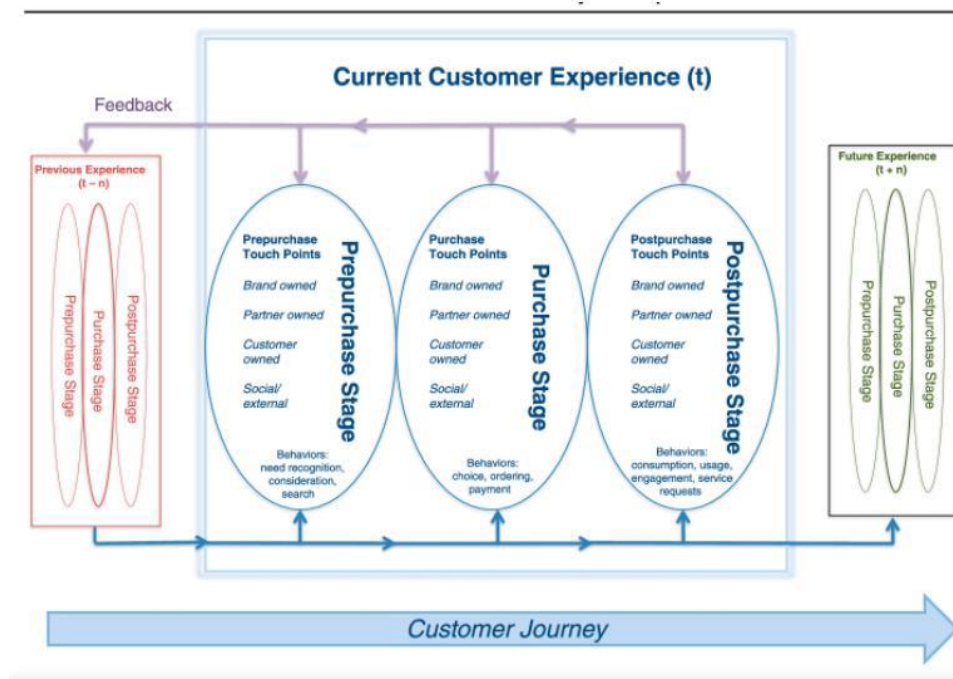


Customer-Based Brand Equity pyramid (Keller, 2009)

We look towards the relationship the airports have with the air traveler and unpack the feelings and judgements the air traveler has. The performance and imagery that the airports portray will directly impact the judgements and feelings of the traveler. The Customer-Based Brand Equity model fully displays the relationship between the brand and consumer and looks at the identity of the brand and how the consumer perceives that brand to get a holistic image of the salience and resonance of the brand. Brand resonance will only occur if the other brand building blocks have been established. This is the true indicator of brand loyalty as the consumer seeks to interact with the brand, and not just be forced to use the brand as there are no other alternatives (Keller, 2001).

The impact of COVID-19 on the aviation industry has been devastating. For airports to successfully recover and sustain air travel in the future, we need to understand if the air travelers' habits have changed and how the airports need to adapt in order for the consumer to feel reassured within the airport spaces again. If a traveler feels unsafe or that there is a better and "safer" solution that can replace air travel, they will not readily return to air travel. The theory of "Airport user experience unpacked, Conceptualising its potential in the face of COVID-19" gives us background to challenges on the aviation industry following the pandemic. It further highlights the passenger experience and the complexity of air travel. This study looks at how airports can strategise to be more agile

and look to the future to accommodate passenger requirements in a world of pandemics. The study furthermore places the user experience right at the center, to show how the pandemic has affected the journey of the passenger and elaborates on how airports could mitigate and plan ahead for these kinds of situations.



Process Model for Customer Journey and Experience (Lemon, N. & Verhoed, P, 2016)

Understanding the Customer Experience throughout their journey, also known as the end-to-end process at the airports, is a complex task and is critical for airports to understand. The touch points, physical and digital in nature, needs to create a positive brand experience for the air traveler, one that is consistent and trusted. The process model indicated shows how the customer journey is viewed and directly impacts a brand. There are three stages here which directly aligns with the air traveler experience, pre purchase, also known as the research phase. Then followed by purchase stage, which can be applied to the “at the airport” stage. Then lastly, the post purchase phase, which is the feelings that linger with the air traveler post trip. Was their trip smooth? Were there any incidents that would prevent the air traveler from using the facility again such as baggage pilferage, unhygienic airport spaces or expensive parking.

These three identified theories will work hand in hand in unpacking the brand experience audit in the eyes of the passenger, with understanding of how COVID-19 has impacted air travel, as well as lay foundation as to how the airport brands should respond.

2.1.1 Theme 1

The identified sources for theme 1 all speak to how COVID-19 impacted the air travel industry.

ACI (Airports Council International) is the voice of the world's airports. ACI says that: "Airports Council International (ACI) represents the collective interests of airports around the world to promote excellence in the aviation industry. We do this by working with governments, regional ACI members, experts, and international organizations like ICAO to develop policies, programs, and best practices that advance airport standards globally" (ACI, 2022). ACI's case study, "The impact of COVID-19 on the airport business- and the path to recovery" speaks specifically on how the pandemic has impacted the aviation industry, and more specifically on the airport business.

This assessment was conducted in November 2021, towards the end of the pandemic and while aviation is on a path to recovery. The article shows statistical numbers of how COVID-19 has impacted the air travel industry and how the economy is projected to recover, following hard lockdowns and vaccination. This used in conjunction with passenger and aircraft statistics, will give valuable insight as to the rate of recovery and revenue for airports. Revenue will impact OPEX and CAPEX expenditure and will create a difference in the value offerings at airports. Where airports are only conducting required maintenance due to budget cuts, as this situation betters, airports will be better equipped at giving better and cleaner experiences to travelers. It is a good overview of the airport business and gives insight as to how exactly COVID-19 has impacted the industry.

While it is not academic literature, ACI is renowned for their articles on aviation globally and was established in 1991, thus having 31 years' experience on the subject matter. While the research is globally recognised, a deep dive is required into the four identified airports. The articles look towards the global and African market. While this is indicative

of how aviation is being affected, we need to establish if this is indeed the case at the four identified airports.

Another source that is not academic is the literature by Deloitte, on “How COVID-19 is challenging orthodoxies in airport customer experience”. Deloitte has been in operation for 175 years now and is a global leader in professional services providing audit and assurance, consulting, risk advisory, tax, and related services. The sources on this articles quotes ACI, IATA (International Air Travel Industry) which is another leading global aviation brand, as well as an academic source by Patel, Vishra. “Airport Passenger Processing Technology: A Biometric Airport Journey”, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Scholarly Commons; April, 2018. Page 69. Deloitte has written this paper with an all-encompassing view from the airport and passenger and provides valuable insights into the integrated airport journey.

The website for the South African Government pertaining to all the guidelines and regulations provides insights and timelines to when lockdown and what kind of travel restrictions were imposed that was gazetted and is imperative to this research study. The timeline is fully available, discussing the different lockdown levels and what regulations were implemented. Some of the regulations were a bit ambiguous and had to be clarified, such as PCR testing requirements which were interpreted differently by Port Health, managed by the Department of Health (Gov, 2022).

2.1.2 Theme 2

The Airports Company South Africa Corporate Plan, was signed off by the Minister of Transport and is indicative of the recovery plan for ACSA and their owned airports (Airports, 2022). This includes the response plan to COVID-19 and strategies implemented, with mention of how the pandemic impacted their airports.

Lanseria International Airport has not published much on how the pandemic has affected the company. However, secondary news sources provide insight on how the airport has been impacted. CEO Rampa Rammopo advised during December 2020 that they would be expecting about 10% of usual traffic volumes (ENCA, 2020).

The STATS SA figures and statistics is very important so we may view quantitative data of how COVID-19 has impacted the tourism industry in South Africa. These statistics gives a view of the devastating blow of COVID-19 on the air travel industry. Travel and tourism contributed to one billion rand in 2018 in South Africa. By 2020, the volume of tourists declined by almost 73%, and no leisure travelers were received for six months between April to September 2020 which had severe financial consequences on airports, airlines and the general economy.

By looking at the case study, “An Effective Response to COVID-19 impacts on Africa’s Aviation Sector”, gives a great overview of how the aviation sector has been agile in response with regards to the pandemic. ALG is a leading global consultancy team that specialises in the transport, infrastructure, and logistics space. This company operates globally and in most countries 70 countries). The disclaimer on this paper states that: “The sources consulted at the document production are mostly public and on-line. The document also incorporates a preliminary analysis based on aviation sector databases. Therefore, the results presented below should not be considered as definitive but rather as inputs to enrich the discussion among the representative stakeholders of the aviation sector. The different insights obtained during the High-Level Conference alongside the ongoing complementary analysis will enrich the definitive version of this document, which will be distributed in due course.” There is a concern here that it is stated that results are not definitive. Research should be based on actual findings and facts. The information is also derived from a conference and states that it is a preliminary analysis that this is not the final document. I was unable to find the final document. This paper does however quote legitimate sources such as IATA, OAG and ICAO and the findings are indicative of what transpired within the aviation environment at the beginning of COVID-19. This study is based on facts and quantitative data, however this study outlines facts and figures at the start of the pandemic. There is still much research to be done with respects on how the aviation industry is recovering now at the tail end of the pandemic.

2.1.3 Theme 3

On the third theme we look more towards the human aspect of the passenger experience at the airports to understand how the traveler has changed since the pandemic affected

us globally. The passenger journey at the airports have changed substantially for the air traveler and we need to understand what needs and requirements must be fulfilled for the air traveler to feel safe at the airports and not choose another method of transportation, which they deem safer. These other modes of transportation can mean longer travel journeys for a traveler, however if the benefits, such as safety outweighs benefits at the airport of shorter travel times, they may choose the safer option. This case study was published in 2020 and quotes IATA and ACI but is dated in the terms of COVID-19. There is also not much that was unpacked in terms of strategies for the future. The Willis Tower Watson Employees Norm Database represents 230 thousand employees from 50+ companies. This is a small size however if compared globally.

The analysis of the airport experience from an air traveler's perspective is a great case study, however it was published in 2017, which was many years prior to COVID-19. While this study is relevant in terms of the passenger experience, it does not give insight to the traveler post COVID-19, which is a gap and why the research must be conducted. It does however give good insight to the different touchpoints at the airport and will therefore be included in this research.

By specifically looking at the airport user experience with respects to COVID-19 and the impact thereof, the case study "Airport user experience unpacked: Conceptualising its potential; in the face of COVID-19 was published towards the end of the first year of COVID-19, October 2020. The literature speaks to strategic road mapping that can be utilised by brands for recovery. This case study focuses more on the views of employees and stakeholders, which brings a different perspective to the research. It is important to understand how the airport journey unfolds internally to bring understanding on why the consumer experiences certain things in certain ways. The employee and stakeholder are an essential cog in the customer journey at the airport, who provides the user experience in many instances at the airports. However, the sample size used in this study was relatively small compared to 365 million passengers. Is this enough data to provide an unbiased opinion? While a variety of travelers were targeted, customer personas were not used in this research. Were appropriate samples used according to the different types of travelers? It is not stated in the research. Research was conducted mostly on social

media due to the pandemic and within the USA. This could potentially lead to skewed data as travelers may recall a series of events differently after the occasion, as well as the research only being conducted in one region.

The two other sources: “Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey” and the Global State of the Consumer Tracker brings insights directly from the consumer to unpack different behaviours of the consumer and their responses to external factors. Consumers will interact with a brand through various touchpoints, and it is imperative for a brand to understand how this interaction is for the consumer. Does it fulfil the brand promise? Customer experience is one of the most important drivers of success for a business and gives a competitive advantage over competitors. A brand needs to understand the complexities of their consumer and how their needs change during the customer journey lifecycle to adapt in an agile manner and provide the consumer with the best experience possible. It is therefore necessary for us to understand the consumer deeply to fulfil brand resonance and salience.

2.1.4 Theme 4

Theme four focuses on the branding element and the case study of: “Rethinking the brand concept for air transportation” is important as it specifically relates to branding for air travel. It is also quite recent being published in 2021 and takes the pandemic into consideration. This thesis makes use of qualitative methods, which brings rich insights to understanding brands within the air travel industry. Furthermore, the nature of brand associations that an air traveler makes with airports is explored to understand the airport choice a traveler makes when choosing an airport. The research here includes airlines and there is always the possibility of brand confusion between and airline and airport. The existing literature included focuses on airport service quality which is an important benchmark used throughout the world to measure the quality of service provided by an airport. The study also delves into geographical differences experienced at the different airports and highlights how consumers differ depending on their geographical locations.

Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities, by Keller further supports this theme of the branding experience. The brand experience needs to be holistic. When

a consumer thinks of a brand, the entire experience, throughout all the touchpoints needs to be consistent for the brand to resonate strongly with the consumer.

Not much research has been conducted within the branding space of the four identified airports and it is not known if the air traveler does completely recognize the airport brand as a standalone brand or if the entire airport experience, including that of the airlines and other stakeholders are viewed as the “airport experience”. Airports brands are often lost in translation as the passenger associates with the airline and does not often distinguish between the different stakeholders. Many times, a passenger will think the airport handles baggage, whereas the airport provides the physical infrastructure such as the baggage belts. The passenger sees a problem that transpired at the airport, and expects the airport to resolve it, regardless of it was an airline or vendor issue.

2.1.5 Theme 5

Theme 5 explores the direct concern of COVID-19 on the air traveler and their willingness to return to air travel. This research was done in 2021, mid-pandemic and it offers insights on what the air traveler felt. This is after second and third waves of COVID-19 and speaks to some of the strategies deployed by aviation brands to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. The literature is more based on the Indian consumers attitude towards the airline industry following the pandemic and as such there is a gap here towards airport companies. However, the research is still relevant as it offers insight as to the consumers feelings and judgements towards air travel, which is part of the customer journey of the air traveler. Research into the feelings of the air traveler in South Africa is not available currently. Therefore, it is necessary for this research to be conducted to offer insight to the South African traveler as only assumptions based on current research can be made.

2.1.6 Theme 6

The Customer Based Brand Equity Model by Keller is the most appropriate model to be used for this research as we explore how the power of these identified airport brands lies

within what the air traveler has felt, seen, and heard about the brand, based on their actual experiences. The concept is fully explained in the theoretical foundation section. The Brand Equity Model will be the foundation to fully appreciate the relationship between the brand and customer and what is required for the airport to have a positive relationship with the air traveler and for brand resonance to take place (Keller, 2001).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Paradigm

Thus, the paradigm of Interpretivism is the most applicable with regards to this research study as the research used quantitative online surveys to understand how the traveler interprets the situation they are placed in, more specifically, the air travel experience pre and post COVID-19. The research aims to understand how the experience was for the traveler and to further gain understanding on whether the airports response to the pandemic was successful and where there were any gaps that needs to be filled in order for the air traveler to regain confidence in using the identified airports.

Whilst quantitative research was used, many questions on the survey is open ended to gain more clarity on responses (Research Matters, 2014). By understanding what the air traveler needs at an airport, a strategy can be developed to cater for those needs and ensure that the airport creates a positive brand experience to ensure that the passenger always feels that air travel is a positive experience and can be used as a preferred choice of travel.

Secondary data is also used to substantiate findings towards the end of the research. By using phenomenology, the understanding of the research within the concept of air travel experiences during a pandemic, will be explored from the eyes of the traveler. The research findings will give understanding of why air travel is recovering slowly and what can be done by the identified airport brands to increase trust from the passenger again (Research-Methodology, 2022).

3.2 Research Approach

The chosen approach of this research is to understand what the brand experience has been, through the personal experiences of the passenger, at the identified airports. By comparing the brand experience pre and post COVID-19, we can establish if the brand experience has changed and how?

Quantitative Exploratory research was conducted in the form of online surveys to better understand why the traveler is hesitant to return to air travel and to use the identified airports as a preferred method of travel. The survey explores and establishes how the passenger needs have changed and if the needs have been fulfilled by the airport brands. How was the brand experience at the airports? What is required from the airports to restore confidence for the air traveler in order to return to air travel as a preferred method of travel.

Sentiment analysis was be conducted to establish sentiment pre and post COVID-19 on the identified airport brands. Ornico and Pear Harvest reports, were used to create a framework of what the sentiment was like before and after COVID-19 on the identified airport brands to holistically look at what was being done well at airports and what was a problem for air travelers. This will create a “before” benchmark to establish what the pain points are for air travelers. However, as not much data was found on these reports with regards to Lanseria Airport, Google reviews will also be added for the airport brands to provide a holistic view of passenger sentiment, from their first hand experience.

3.3 Population and Sampling

Persons who qualify for the survey, are persons who travelled to the identified airports prior to COVID-19 and at least once since COVID-19, and thus had a view of the airports pre-pandemic and experienced the airports during the pandemic, to establish whether there was a change in the brand experience from their personal perspective.

The airports have the following passenger numbers per annum detailed below:

**Numbers are based on 2021 figures*

Lanseria International Airport: 1.9 million passengers per annum (Lanseria, 2022).

O.R. Tambo International Airport: 9 633 163 passengers per annum (Airports, 2022).

King Shaka International Airport: 3 215 925 passengers per annum (Airports, 2022).

Cape Town International Airport: 7 700 811 passengers per annum (Airports, 2022).

The survey link was posted to the following platforms:

Figure 1- Platform Matrix

Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/jackie.vanpletzen https://www.facebook.com/groups/thekempton/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/1471252773172295/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/448056522061334/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/220303334662583/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/georgiete/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/1689898527982455/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/suidafrikafreeads/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/1940525386093171/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/371455326535555/ https://www.facebook.com/ortambointernational/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/19335292232/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/459142131094050/ https://www.facebook.com/capetowninternational/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/HereIamSA/ https://www.facebook.com/boksburgads/	290 friends 2500 members 1900 members 63 600 members 1 600 members 78 000 members 28 100 members 6900 members 868 members 21 300 members 143 122 followers 4600 members 21 800 members 56 595 followers 12 000 members 7656 followers Total: 450 831
Twitter	https://twitter.com/AirportsSouth	

Reddit	https://www.reddit.com/user/lcy-Cardiologist5359	234 100 persons on forums posted
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/lobotomy_barbie/	213 followers
WhatsApp	Status and to contact list	50+ persons
LinkedIn	Profile - https://www.linkedin.com/in/jackie-van-pletzen-3b654951/ Aviation professionals- https://www.linkedin.com/groups/141784/	1088 followers 36 857 members

Sampling was set initially at 10-100 respondents per airport; however, the number was not achieved due to most groups on all social media platforms advising that they will not permit posting of surveys or any “self promotion”.

The number of group members indicated in the table above, show a high representation of possible participants. A total number of 712 139 possible persons were targeted. The groups chosen were online communities surrounding the airports, and South African groups. The total population of persons who travelled through the four identified airports were 22 449 899, thus the targeted online groups represent 3.17% of the total population of people who have travelled through these airports in the past year. It can be hypothesised that:

- The survey was too long, and participants opted out during the survey
- The subject matter was not interesting
- Persons had not travelled using any of the airports in the survey since COVID
- Persons contacted had a negative experience and did not want to participate
- Persons contacted could not recall their experience

The airports received the following number of participants in the survey:

- Lanseria Airport - 14 participants

- O.R. Tambo International Airport - 32 participants
- Cape Town International Airport – 15 participants
- King Shaka International Airport – 13 participants

In total 74 valid responses were received, which shows that 0.0103% of the targeted audience voluntarily participated in the survey.

3.4 Data Collection

The research instrument was an online questionnaire using Google Forms. Please see Annexure A for the survey.

Multiple choice questions as well as open-ended questions were used to ensure that the experience of the passenger was described in responses.

- 25 multiple choice questions
- 12 open ended questions in which all participants relayed their personal experience and justification on questions which required more understanding
- Nominal and ordinal scales were used

As the four airports were within different provinces, online questionnaires were the most cost effective, permitted a varied audience and was a time efficient manner of data collection.

Research Matters (2014) states that a major disadvantage of surveys is that people do not like to fill in questionnaires and this will result in a low response rate. There is also the factor of illiteracy and language barriers that could have prevented many persons taking part in the survey, as they did not understand some of the questions. The survey was lengthy at 37 questions. This was done to get the most comprehensive feedback and to understand what the passenger experience was like at the identified airports, as the processes at the airports are quite complex and involve many steps and touchpoints.

Quantitative data collection was employed to test the hypothesis and to find any causal relationships of correlations. The participants participated in a before-and-after survey design, which was used to measure changes in the brand experience at the identified

airports. Data collected in open ended questions establish trends that have taken place for retrospective studies and to see what changes have taken place at the airports.

All participants' data which was collected was kept anonymous. It was interesting that several Reddit users refused to participate in Google surveys as they claim that Google collects data and was therefore unwilling to participate, even when advised that surveys were anonymous.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

3.5.1 Primary Data

The data was analysed by using the Google Forms analytics for the quantitative data, by using tabulated data sets. All open-ended questions have been captured to establish trends and patterns in response, per airport. Data has been analysed overall and per airport, and all periods of travel noted to establish if any trends that may be apparent with respects to travel restrictions implemented at the time.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was gathered, where results and findings were already analysed and was used in conjunction with finding to provide contextual and comparative data. Social Media sentiment analysis is used to substantiate findings between the survey and responses of persons following the social media accounts of the airports.

3.5.3 Validity

Arguments will be structured using the Toulmin model by using the three basic elements namely, the claim, the data and the warrant. Sound reasoning will be utilised to display that the data is used from an unbiased point of view. The data must be analysed conclusively to establish what the facts are, and whether there has been a change in the brand experience. All facts presented must be scrutinised with regards to whether it is factually correct and applies in this instance. The warrant must clearly demonstrate that evidence supplied in the research supports the claim made (Research Matters,2021).

Research Matters state that confusion may often occur between perceived "logic" and "truth" (Research Matters, 2021). Statistics must be drawn from representative samples

and all samples selected must not result in any bias being created to skew results (Research Matters, 2021).

By using non-probability sampling, the survey will be open to anyone who has used the airports at least once prior to the pandemic and at least once since the pandemic.

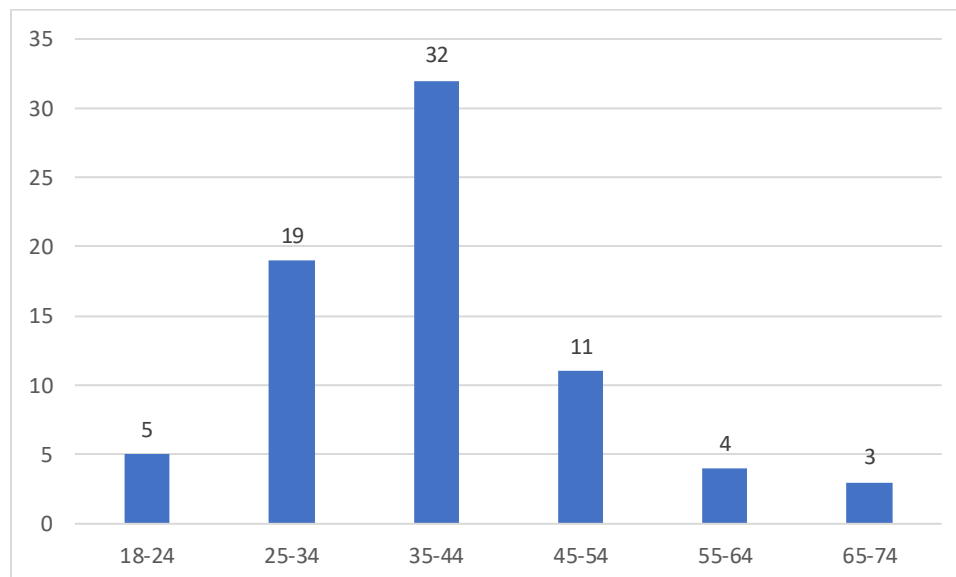
4. Findings and interpretation of findings

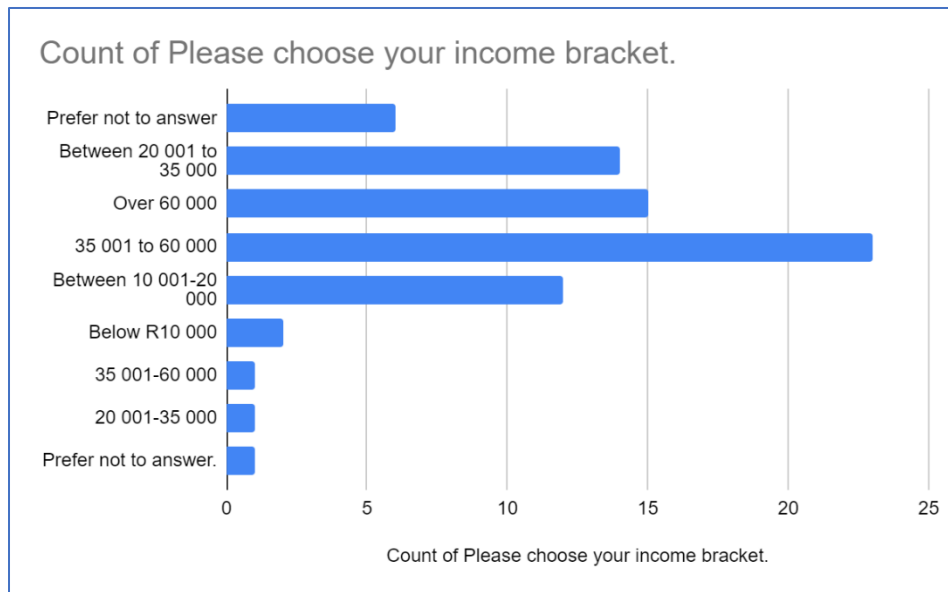
All respondents who have worked at any of the surveyed airports in the past 18 months were removed from the findings in order to eliminate any bias towards the brands.

Kindly note that all spelling and grammar was not amended, to factually represent answers of respondents.

4.1 Demographics

The majority of respondents who participated in the survey was in the 35-44 age group. The second highest is noted at 19 respondents within the 25-34 age group.





The majority of participants were in a high-income bracket of over R60 000 per month. This correlates with air travel being expensive and more commonly used by high income earners (Sage, 2019.) Earners of below R10 000 per month did not have high representation which determines that lower income earners typically may not use air travel as a preferred mode of transport due to cost. Airports should consider this fact when catering for consumers, to ensure that lower income earners have options to use their facilities. South African citizens are estimated to earn on average R23 982 per month according to Stats SA (Briefly, 2022.) This is represented by 21.4% in our graph.

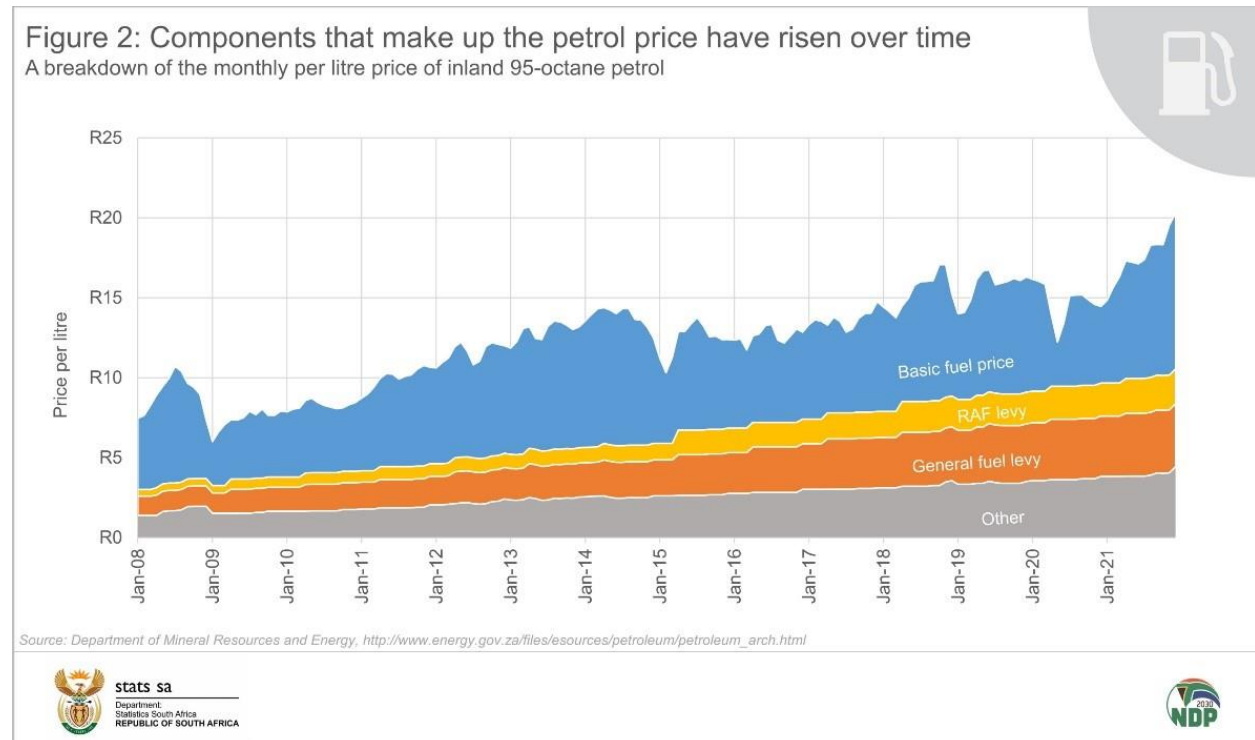
Whilst travel by rail is a very popular option, a journey between Cape Town and Johannesburg can take over 18 hours, which is a long and inefficient manner to commute compared to air travel (Expatica, 2022.) The cost for a ticket however is substantially less than an air ticket.

Shosholoza Meyl Cape Town to Johannesburg: R440 in economy class (Businessinsider, 2020.)

Flysafair Cape Town to Johannesburg: R2182 (Flysafair, 2022.)

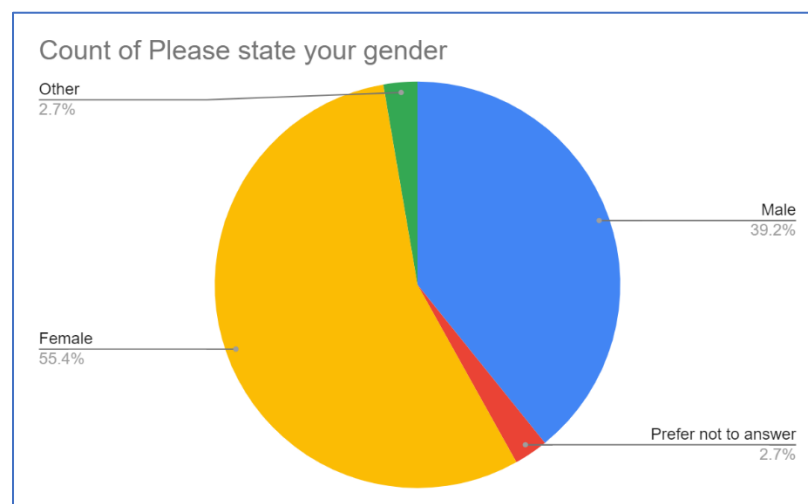
**The Shosholoza Meyl website did not have pricing on their website and pricing is estimated as per the Business Insider article.*

Travel by road is also very time consuming and costly. A trip from Johannesburg to Durban takes approx. 6+ hours and Johannesburg to Cape Town approx. 16 hours. The fuel price has also increased drastically.

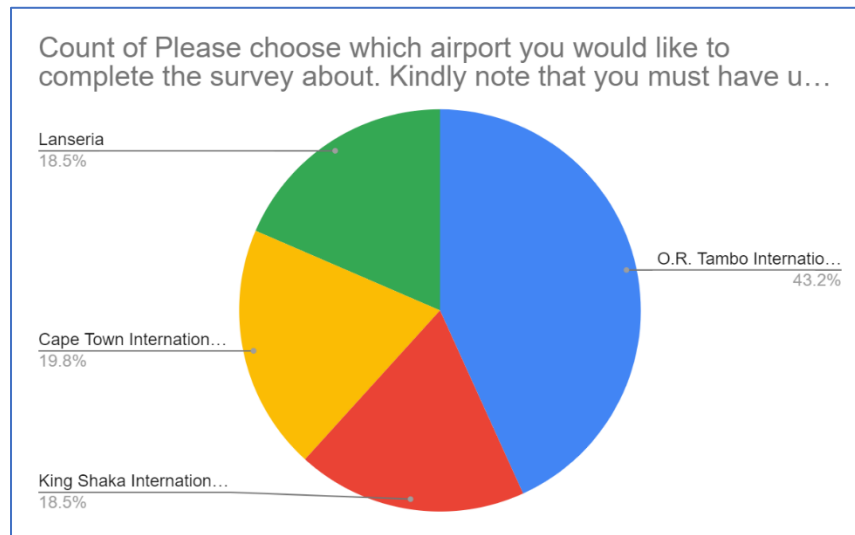


(StatsSA, 2021)

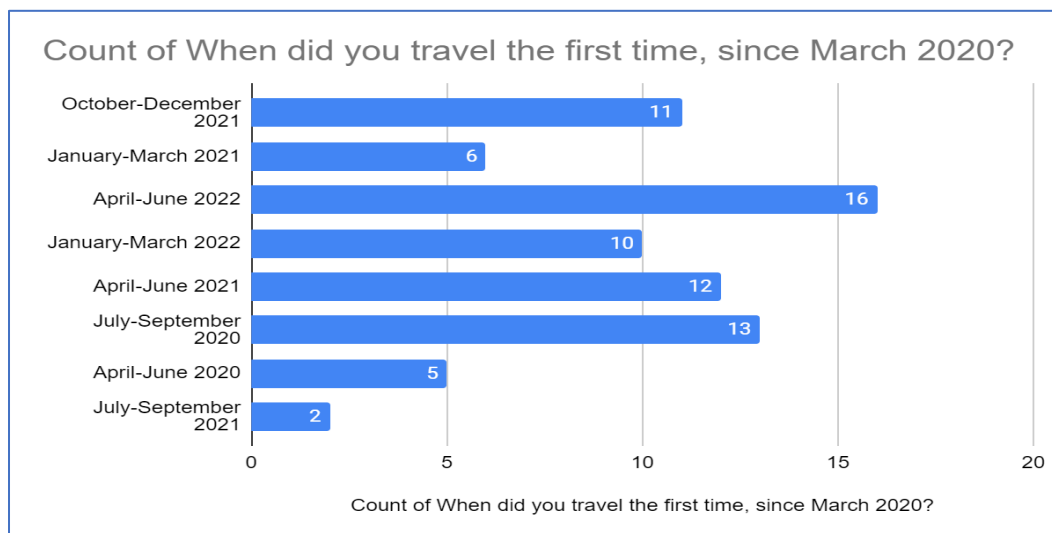
The majority of respondents who participated in the survey were female at 55.4%.



The majority of respondents chose O.R. Tambo International Airport. This aligns with the airport having the highest passenger numbers (Airports, 2022).



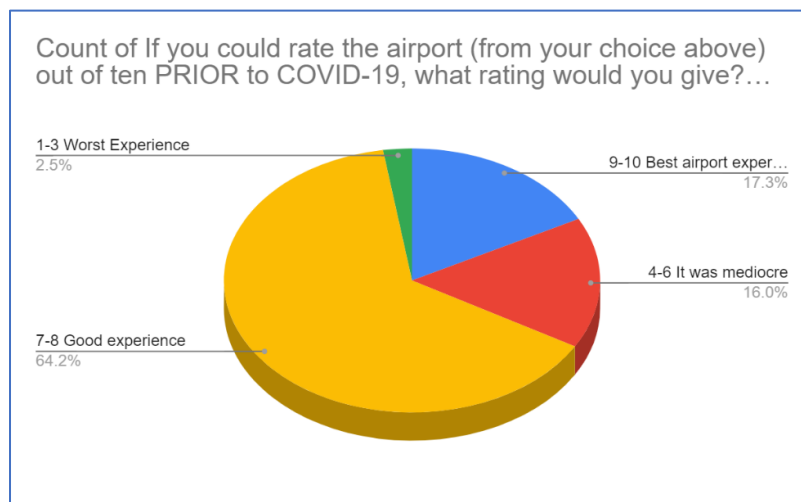
The majority of participants travelled recently between April-June 2022, since air travel restrictions and regulations were lifted. The least number of participants travelled from April-June 2020, when the pandemic was declared and air travel restrictions and regulations were implemented (Gov,2020). It is also interesting to note that air travel doubled when travel restrictions were eased during July-September 2020.



4.2 Impression of airports prior to COVID-19.

What was your impression of the airport premises prior to COVID-19 (prior to March 2020)? Please keep answers related to the following subjects: Airport cleanliness, ablution facilities, staff friendliness at information counters, parking, security boarding, gardens, airport processes. (Please be reminded of the specific airport you chose)

The majority of participants said that the airport experience prior to COVID-19 was a good experience at 64.2%. 17.3% advised it was a “Best Airport Experience.” 16% advised that it was a mediocre experience. Only 2.5 % advised that it was the “Worst Experience.”



We delve into the comments made by respondents about the state of the airports prior to COVID-19. Findings are below the graph of answers.

Answer key:

Positive answers	
Neutral answers/or both negative and positive	
Negative answers	

Cape Town International Airport	Excellent																								
Cape Town International Airport	More annoying than before, but ultimately pointless as the steps they have taken were executed with such little effect that they were likely to have equally as little effect																								
Cape Town International Airport	Clean																								
Cape Town International Airport	The airport has always been a well-run and efficient																								
Cape Town International Airport	Aside from crazy parking prices, the airport seemed clean, efficient and well-run. Security at doemstic has always been a bit casual, but international seems better.																								
Cape Town International Airport	Busy, clean, well-lit, well-organised.																								
Cape Town International Airport	Loved arriving early, sitting at a restaurant and waiting for a flight.																								
Cape Town International Airport	Very good																								
Cape Town International Airport	The airport was clean and I had a positive impression. The parking on the other side was not cost-effective.																								
Cape Town International Airport	FACT <table><tr><td>Airport</td><td>Cleanliness</td><td>-</td><td>10/10</td></tr><tr><td>Ablution:</td><td></td><td></td><td>10/10</td></tr><tr><td>Staff</td><td>Friendliness:</td><td></td><td>10/10</td></tr><tr><td>Information</td><td>counters:</td><td></td><td>10/10</td></tr><tr><td>Parking</td><td>:</td><td></td><td>10/10</td></tr><tr><td>Security</td><td>boarding:</td><td></td><td>10/10</td></tr></table>	Airport	Cleanliness	-	10/10	Ablution:			10/10	Staff	Friendliness:		10/10	Information	counters:		10/10	Parking	:		10/10	Security	boarding:		10/10
Airport	Cleanliness	-	10/10																						
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Staff	Friendliness:		10/10																						
Information	counters:		10/10																						
Parking	:		10/10																						
Security	boarding:		10/10																						

	Gardens: 8/10 Airport processes: 10/10 (due to non Covid19 regulations)
Cape Town International Airport	Acceptable standards of efficiency and cleanliness
Cape Town International Airport	Environment was clean and friendly, had no issues
Cape Town International Airport	Clean and organised
Cape Town International Airport	I have no complaints. Maybe parking prices could be cheaper and international departures could have a smoking section.
Cape Town International Airport	Good. Easy to navigate, clean, and plenty of restaurants and shops to choose from.
Cape Town International Airport	Airport was clean, well managed, working toilets, friendly staff.
King Shaka International Airport	Cleanliness-pass mark as it was clean and acceptable. Ablutions- average. Toilets were dated and look older than most of the other facilities. Staff Friendliness - average. Not remarkable but not bad. Info counters - n/a not used. Parking - n/a made use of rental car which has a separate parkade. Not much weather shelter though. Security- slow as there are only 2 or so points. Boarding- average. Airlines have skip the queue options which I was lucky enough to have. Gardens-n/a no garden areas seen Airport processes- pass mark. Security could be quicker by having more agents and check points available.

King Shaka International Airport	Well kept, quieter and more efficient than other airports
King Shaka International Airport	Airport was clean but the staff have always been rude. Everytime. The staff lack respect for their passengers regardless of whether you're flying in or flying out.
King Shaka International Airport	Clean, efficient, friendly, nice gardens
King Shaka International Airport	Airport was clean, service was excellent, processes were fast, boarding fairly flawless. Information was easily available, ablution facilities were clean.
King Shaka International Airport	Adequate
King Shaka International Airport	Airport Process
King Shaka International Airport	Prior to Covid good. Post Covid lacking in cleanliness and attention to detail. Staff are mostly friendly. Garden maintenance have gone a lot.
King Shaka International Airport	Airport is clean and sanitized
King Shaka International Airport	Clean, friendly staff. Everything efficient.
King Shaka International Airport	It was probably one of the better airports in terms of infrastructure and cleanliness.
King Shaka International Airport	Impression was great and the buzz around the airport was great
King Shaka International Airport	King shaka airports are neat
King Shaka International Airport	Standards were always good at this airport
King Shaka International Airport	Good
Lanseria	Overall very positive. Very well run airport and I felt safe there. Never had concerns about stolen bags.
Lanseria	Clean, great staff, easy check in.
Lanseria	It was clean and functioned pretty well.

Lanseria	Always clean, parking available, easy to get around
Lanseria	Staff were friendly but the airport needed upgrading
Lanseria	Good
Lanseria	Professional and small. Lanseria is very efficient.
Lanseria	The airport was in a good state, and busy expanding.
Lanseria	Always good
Lanseria	Airport was always clean, staff friendly, seamless boarding, garden was clean.
Lanseria	Same as before Covid
Lanseria	Clean and easy yo navigate.
Lanseria	Everything was in order.
Lanseria	It was satisfactory. I think they could do better in apr parking
O.R. Tambo International Airport	The airport really looked great and everything was working perfectly. It was like a well oiled machine
O.R. Tambo International Airport	dated and shabby
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Easy access, information counters
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Efficient
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Ease of navigation, quick processing.
O.R. Tambo International Airport	I loved it. Parking great. Clean ablutions. Information counters great. Can't think of gardens. Police presence. Good flow of traffic to and from the airport.

O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Airport not clean, workers stand around doing nothing. Staff working for private companies (airlines) are friendly but staff working for ACSA (the airport) seem like they're doing you a favour acknowledging you by grunting in your direction
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Minimal - Just enough to be ok.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Clean facilities and friendly staff, but overpriced parking and too little seating.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Empty and understaffed, with a foul stench in the air and piles of luggage.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	More or less clean, the bathrooms would sometimes have tissues thrown on the ground but nothing major. The staff were very friendly and willing to help out
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Clean airport and ablutions, staff friendliness depends on who you got. Parking easy to use, security and boarding well run and efficient
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	I would say all of the above were excellent I flew many times from OR Tambo the only issue I ever had was the drop of and pick up was always chaos
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	It was much cleaner before Covid! The ablution facilities actually worked and the staff seemed more friendly. Overall state of the airport has dropped significantly since then.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Airport was clean but overcrowded. Staff always nice and professional. Parking is intimidating and insanely expensive. Ablutions conveniently located and clean. Boarding sometimes took long.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	No problems. Airport is clean, staff efficient

O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Clean, friendly and helpful staff. Ablutions were clean and satisfactory.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Friendly professional staff in all sections
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Satisfactory
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	It was well organised
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	World Class
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	They can spend more time cleaning airport staff not very helpfull and parking is a rip of
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Very neat
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	The airport was clean and of international standard.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Large. Clean. Busy. Confusing to get around though
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	It feels like everything has become dull, unfriendly and abandoned post covid. From staff engagement to facilitates management, it's bare bones effort to get the shift done. Not great.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	Positive, generally. South African airports tend to be a little chaotic, but functional. Everything was clean, functional, etc. I have not had any overwhelmingly negative airport experiences and generally enjoy the shops, staff and facilities.
O.R. Airport	Tambo	International	I've always found it be clean, with friendly staff and easy boarding

O.R. Tambo International Airport	Busy, so full. People milling around. Lots of activity. Free.
O.R. Tambo International Airport	The airport was busy and always crowded, clean and tidy bathrooms always in good condition, information counters depend on the company but airport staff mostly helpful. Security non existent really
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Chances of walking into dirty toilet was higher because toilets facilities were busy and staff couldn't keep up
O.R. Tambo International Airport	That it's so big and busy... I was fascinated!!!
O.R. Tambo International Airport	I didn't really travel around the time of COVID so I can't really say, but based off of the experience I had this year traveling during COVID the staff were okay in terms of service. The security was helpful and the airport processes were relatively quick.
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Clean but restrooms have an unpleasant ordour, the customer services was great and the airport is safe and secure.
O.R. Tambo International Airport	Shabby and lifts dont work and staff are rude and obnoxious

Findings: The majority of respondents had positive to neutral comments about the identified airports prior to COVID-19. The nine negative comments were localized at O.R. Tambo International Airport.

Findings:

Cape Town International Airport- most comments were positive stating that the airport is “world-class, efficient, well run, clean.”

Comments that were not positive stated that too few security points were open, absence of travelators (people movers), more restaurant options required and that that it is “not the best, but not the worst.”

King Shaka International Airport – most comments were positive stating that it is a “well run, friendly, clean, organized” airport.

Comments that were negative indicated that staff are rude and room for improvement with regards to sanitization.

Lanseria Airport – The majority of respondents had positive comments about the airport, stating that it is “a good experience, small, well-run, clean, efficient, great, easily navigation”. The negative comments spoke to service deterioration, always room for improvement, parking, and more destinations needed.

O.R. Tambo International Airport – 17 respondents had positive feedback about the airport stating that it is “efficient, well-run, friendly staff, fast processing, good lay-out and clean facilities.

Negative comments included that it is “nothing special, disgraceful, shabby, unkept, dirty, run down, facilities do not work, below par on a global scale, no leadership.”

These comments correlate with the social media reports for the ACSA owned Airports. There was overall 75% of positive sentiment and only 2% negative sentiment according to the ACSA Media Analysis report. Negative comments correlate with findings as stated above.

For Lanseria airport, we look at Hellopeter comments since 2020 for the airport. It must be noted that the below are all the comments pertaining to this airport since March 2020.



Dhivesh R
2 reviews | Active since Jun 2021



22 Jun 2021, 13:24

Poor Customer satisfaction

Today I got to the airport to drop my wife and kid, at the boom gates they advise that 0-30min free parking. I got to the ticket paying station within 26 minutes and was advised to pay so I spoke to the security guard who at the time was standing nearby and showed him that I still had time and was being asked to pay, he then showed me to the counter, so went to the Lady at the counter and advised her that I still have time, why should I have to pay, she (probably not knowing who to inform or query with) put the ticket in several times and then called the guard, by this time, the guard arrives and advises the lady that the machine is fine and that I must pay for the parking, failing to understand what I was trying to say, she tells me that I had gotten to her after the time had ran out, however, I had showed her the time on my cellphone when I approached her by then I still had 1 minute to spare, she advised that I was lying, with the time wasted, I then asked for my ticket and proceeded to the pay station, whereby I advised the security guard that he should advise them that the machine time was incorrect, I was then tol that nothing is wrong with the machine and that I was imagining things, if at the time, I was imagining things, that should clearly mean thatthe airport time and my time at the same time is incorrect, these staff clearly dont know how to communicate with Visitors at the airport.



James B
37 reviews | Active since Dec 2020



03 Dec 2020, 17:46

Beware the long term parking scam

Beware the long term parking scam. They display to take the left most gate at the entrance. If you do you are still not in long term parking. You need to drive all the way thru the parking lot and pass thru yet another gate to reach long term parking. Many don't realize that (both of our party) and end up paying a week on short term parking rates. You really get set-up for their scam.

Bad Service

Subject: Unfair practice at carpark . Incident on 07 June 2021.

Dear Thelma,

I am a retired gentleman - aged 63 whom was unfairly treated by your carpark staff. I do feel that I was wrongfully clamped and that I was discriminated against.

This is what happened:

I arrived at the car park (Pick up /drop off) section, at exactly 14h05 ,which is the time of arrival for a KZN flight, and parked my car in one of the marked parking bays. As I did not know who the persons were for collection I made a poster with the persons name on it . I then got out of my vehicle and walked over to the passengers approaching the car park with my poster . My passengers were of the last persons approaching the car park. This took about 10 -15 minutes. My passengers and I proceeded to my car , and this is when I noticed that my RF wheel was clamped. I approached the clamping staff and told them that this was not fair , but their attitude flared up against me. I took the document they gave me , left the passengers in the car and proceeded to the Parking office. I was helped by a policeman and he showed me where the office was.

The lady in the office was not very helpful and demanded I do the payment. I did just that. The same 3 guys were at my car and I showed them my payment receipt , after which they then un clamped my car - speaking in their language.

The reason for my letter is as follows:

1. I was not in the car park for more than 25 minutes - your staff wrote on their form 45 minutes + .
2. The dates of the form and the receipt does not correspond - this tells me that your guys used an old form for my incident.
3. I saw no cameras around that could prove my time parked in your car park - I would love to compare the camera time with that of your attendant.
4. I feel that your fees of R500.00 to unclamp my vehicle was very extreme for a not busy park area.
5. I feel that I was targeted as there were other taxis there at the time of my arrival , and the same vehicles were still there when I left - and yet no clamps on these vehicles?

I therefor ask humbly for a rebate on my fine , and an apology from your car attendants for embarrassing me in front of my clients.

How can Lanseria International Airport assist me in resolving this dispute.

My Tax Invoice/ receipt number : 119843 dated 07/06/2021.

Awaiting your soonest reply.

Best regards.



James B
37 reviews | Active since Dec 2020



03 Dec 2020 at 17:49pm

Quick when not busy

Smaller airport. It wasn't busy and hence security check was quick. Free coffee on the way to the gate. Checkin was fast too.


Etienne V
1 review | Active since Jun 2022



27 Jun 2022 at 20:16pm

Lanseria Safair flights
It is a sad day in the life of any organization when they don't understand the basics of running a successful business. After talking to various of my staff and multiple other frequent flyers, it is quite evident that very few wants to fly at 20h20 on a Friday evening to Cape Town. I've sen variois mails ...

 Business has not replied


Kevin
6 reviews | Active since Feb 2013



05 Oct 2022 at 19:17pm

I lodged a formal complaint about the airport Manger Trishna anf her behavior of zero customer ethics and no one from the Airport has bothered to call me back or even an apology via email. It seems that they don't care about their passengers. So it's busi
Trishna has zero care for customer service

 Business has not replied


Darren
25 reviews | Active since Oct 2010



14 Nov 2021, 17:02

Carful where you park at Lanseria and rude Staff!!!!
I had the misfortune of having to use Lanseria, when usually I use ORT. I had to park to collect my mother who was coming in from Durban. Picked up the ticket after checking with Security that it was a short term stop and parked and went in. Collected Passenger Who was in a wheel chair went straight back to the parking lot and on exiting the ticket machine said ticket invalid.....? First time ever had this the attendant pushing the wheel chair said oh well problem they will sort it out at the gate. So all good after spending 15 minutes looking for another machine and all said invalid. So eventually say stuff it and proceed to the gate. Where I was met with total incompetency and rudeness and had to pay R21 for exceeding the 30 mins free. might I have to add Had the indignity of being stared at by numerous people after I closed up one lane..... Where the hell must I go reverse and go back to the parking to extend my stay for even more money. I will not be using Lanseria again. Idiots I deserve an apology!!!!!!!!!


Kgotso Thako Cant Get
4 reviews | Active since May 2016



15 Jul 2020 at 18:54pm

Good
I've used Lanseria Airport serval times, I was impressed the service

 Business has not replied


Sam R
7 reviews | Active since Apr 2020



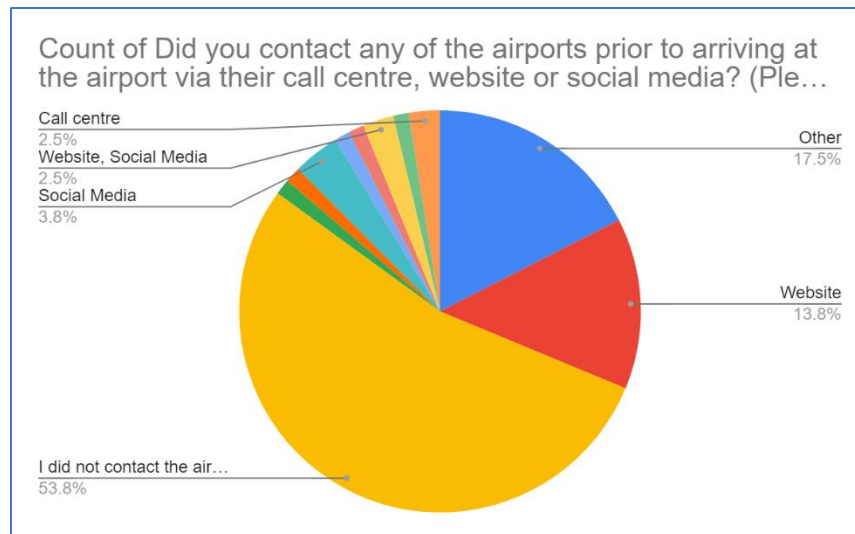
27 Apr 2020 at 13:14pm

Unpatriotic during the Covid-19 lockdown
I parked my car at the Lanseria longterm parking with the intention to pick it up later on return from my trip. While I was away the national coronavirus lockdown was implemented. My car has since been packed at their parking and they continue to charge parking fees irrespective of the lock down. This is..

4.3 COVID-19 Communication

It was very interesting to note that the majority of all respondents did not obtain information about COVID-19 regulations from the airport's websites. Only 12 respondents in total obtained information from the airport's websites. 27 respondents relied on social media for information. 24 respondents advised that the airline's website was their "go to" for information.

We can also link this question to information received in question 9, where respondents stated that the staff were not well informed and that there was poor signage and information discrepancies on their website. This displays poorly on the customer experience at the airport (Lemon, Katherine N. and Peter C. Verhoef. Journal of Marketing 80 (2016): 69 – 96).



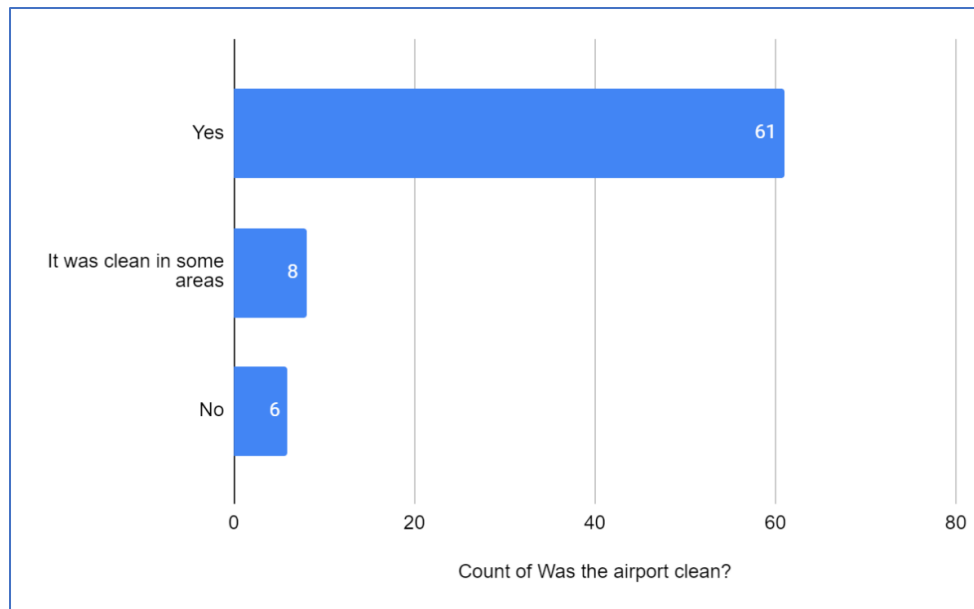
However, the majority of respondents claim that they felt that the airport's did communicate the regulations implemented by the government. 53 Respondents claims that all regulations were communicated by the airports. Six respondents claimed that the regulations were not clearly communicated, and 14 claimed improvements could have been made. Only two respondents stated that the regulations were communicated too much.

4.4 Findings of experiences, since COVID-19

4.4.1 Airport cleanliness

While the majority of respondents claimed that the airport was clean, it is concerning that 8% of respondents claimed that the airports were not clean, and 11% stating that it was clean in some areas. As the airports are very high traffic areas, frequent cleaning and sanitising should be taking place to ensure that passengers are kept safe.

O. R Tambo International Airport dominated in this regard, receiving five of the six comments that the airport was not clean. A further six comments stated that it was only clean in some areas.



4.4.2 Airport maintenance

When respondents were asked to comment on the current maintenance within the airports, the following responses were received:

Cape Town International Airport	Maintained very well
	Some areas closed and cleaning teams had clearly been cut. Self help counters were only half operational
	Unchanged
	Excellent
	It seemed as good as always.
	Fine, as far as I could see.
	Everything is fine
	Well maintained in spite of challenges
	The building is in good maintenance - the building is clean and everything is in working condition.
	Air circulation systems must be improved, with the movement of pax during the morning peak was stuffy.
	Lack of travellers between furthest parking bays and baggage claim. Escalators not working. Carpets dirty. One car hire company

	closed prior to vehicle collection time and no after hours contact details provided on door
	Didn't notice issues
	There have been lots of renovations.
	Not bad
	I found it to be the same. It just felt a bit weird because of all the covid regulations in place.
	Poor
Lanseria	On par with pre covid maintenance
	Clean and safe as before
	It was ok
	Excellent
	Since the pandemic levels have deteriorated.
	Poor
	Operations were effective
	Shoddy and a bit unkept
	Everything seemed well maintained
	Not very clean. Shabby.
	BAD
	Great
	Airport was neat and clean. Majority of staff was friendly and helpful
	Good
	Good
King Shaka International Airport	Overall still positive but not quite as well maintained
	Currently getting a major upgrade, so far it's looking excellent and even with the renovations o would still use the airport.
	It was being upgraded so was a little disrupted.
	Always well maintained
	Was sufficiently clean
	Fair

	Good
	The airport was clean and very organised.
	The airport is well kept. Everything is neat. This is why I like using the airport.
	Still the same as before.
	Clean, sense of place. If you compare this to any of the ACSA airports, Lanseria is world class!
	It was fine.
	Maintenance was good. Orderly and neat.
	It is okay.
O.R. Tambo International Airport	The airport has not brought back to life some important infrastructure since COVID and as an end user this is frustrating.
	Poor grubby dirty, staff bored and unwilling lighting very poor esp in pick up area windows and glass covered with perm and finger marks lack of general cleaning new coat of paint would do wonders. Parkade staff dispicable bord and uninterested in the client. ORT is an embarrassing welcome to SA. ACSA should fire the general manage and then the board should resign and pass onto non cadre appointed proffesionals
	Clean
	Poor
	Maintenance seemed fine, no issues experienced
	Good
	Multiple facilities visibly broken and in a state of disrepair. I shudder to think what international tourist must think of us as a country.
	Poor, not clean, needs to be clean regularly and on demand. Trim gardens
	Satisfactory. Could not identify any issues.
	Seemed better than before.

	Everything was much cleaner and it seems there were more staff dedicated to cleaning all the areas
	Parts of airport blocked off, poor communication, ineffective service, conveyers not working
	Good
	Bad! Like it's been neglected completely. Dirty walls, chipping tiles, elevators not working. Abultions are disgusting. Dirty air vents. A lot of lights are broken.
	It was just much less crowded. It was so nice.
	No problem at all.
	I didn't notice a difference pre and post COVID
	Clean, neat, bathrooms currently cleaned etc
	Housekeeping up to standards
	Fine
	Fine
	No
	Always been clean
	The maintenance has remained the same
	All seems to be in tact and functioning well
	The bathrooms were horrendous, the escalators non functional and the floors grimy, international parking lights don't work and absolutely did not feel safe.
	The airport looked a little more run down than usual- but not substantially. The Covid temperature station looked quite shoddy and didn't inspire confidence.
	From what I saw, all was in good order except for one bathroom stall
	Really clean. I think with less people it was easier to clean
	Or my has been well maintained

	The building inside was more cleaner, toilets, floors etc maybe because it was less busy
	A lot of room for improvement. They can improve in a lot of areas.
	It was decent, could be better
	Good
	Terrible maintenance

Findings per airport:

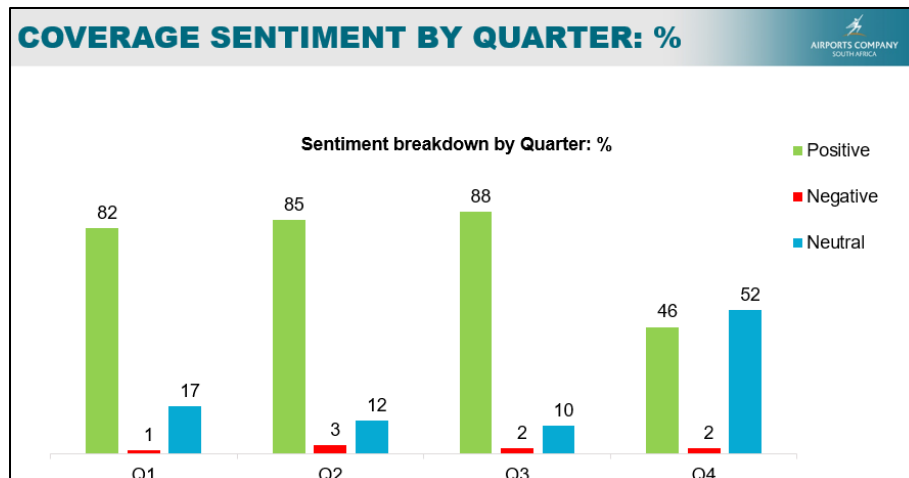
Cape Town International Airport – Only two negative comments were received relating to “poor and dirty carpets and escalators not working.” The rest of the comments stated that the airport was in “excellent condition and unchanged.”

King Shaka International Airport – Only three negative comments were received stating that the airport was “shoddy, has deteriorated and bad.” The majority of comments stated that the airport was the same as before and excellent.

Lanseria Airport – The majority of respondents agreed that the airport was well maintained, clean and organized. One comment stated that compared to ACSA owned airports, Lanseria Airport is world class. Only three comments pertained to the airport not being “as well maintained as before” and referring to current upgrades being disruptive.

O.R. Tambo International Airport – 19 respondents claimed that the airport maintenance was good, neat and the same prior to Covid-19. Thirteen respondents claimed that the airport was in “disrepair, poor, grubby, filthy, infrastructure not working, ablutions dirty, broken lights, bored staff and poor lighting.

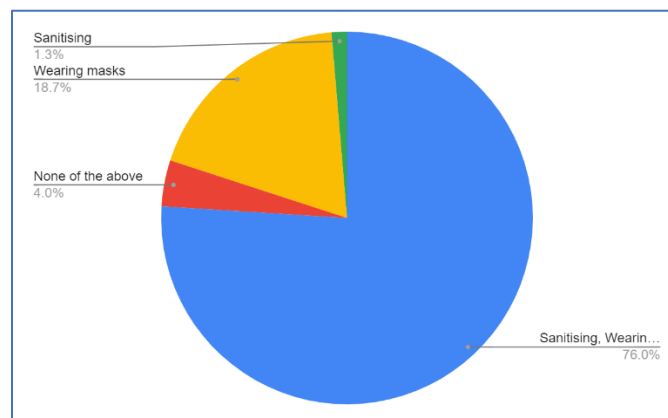
These comments correlate with the social media reports for the ACSA owned airports and a distinct drop in positive sentiment was experienced in the 4th quarter to only 46%.



(ACSA Media Analysis report 2021)

4.4.3 COVID-19 protocols

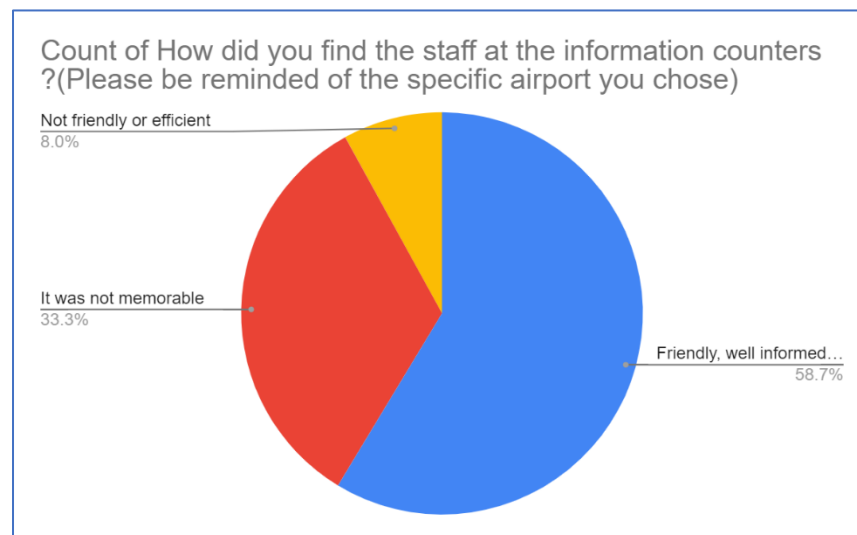
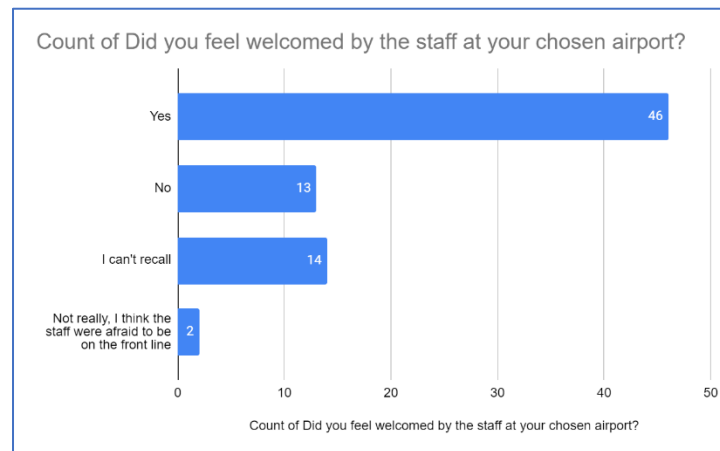
The majority of staff adhered to COVID-19 protocols, with only 4% of respondents claiming that regulations were not adhered to, 1 at Cape Town International Airport and 2 at O.R. Tambo International Airport.



4.4.4 Customer Experience

The majority of participants stated that staff were welcoming. It must be noted however that a high number advised no at 13 respondents, and 14 respondents stated that they could not recall, which again speaks to airports not being customer centric and needing to improve. Deloitte's article "How COVID-19 is challenging orthodoxies in airport customer experience" discusses how customer experience and expectations from customers have changed since the pandemic. Consumers want a client centric

experience as other options have become available, such as meeting virtually or by taking other modes of transport (Deloitte, 2020).



16 respondents at O.R. Tambo International Airport claimed that the experience at the information counter was not memorable, and 3 claimed that the staff were not friendly or efficient.

Four Respondents claimed the experience was not memorable at Cape Town International Airport, and one claimed that the staff were not friendly or efficient.

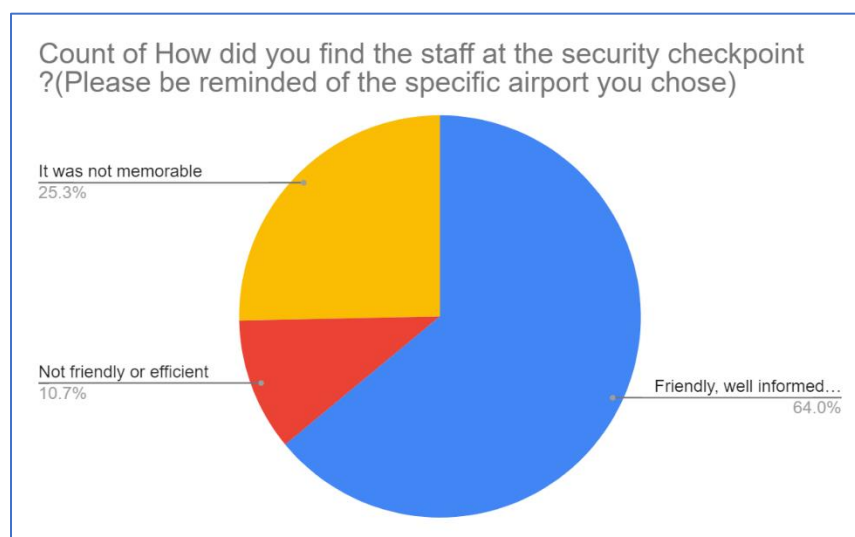
Four respondents at King Shaka International Airport claimed the experience was not memorable, while only one claimed that the staff were not friendly or efficient.

At Lanseria Airport however, only two respondents claimed that the experience was not memorable.

Respondents may not remember the experience if they were in a hurry, however customer experience should be memorable to the customer in a service-based industry, which does surmise that the customer experience was not great, but barely memorable. The airports must focus on their customer experience to ensure that a better experience is delivered to their customers. This also displays a shift in customer experience at O.R. Tambo International Airport as many respondents claimed that the airport had good service and friendly staff prior to COVID-19.

It must also be noted that none of the airports participated in the ASQ (Airport Service Quality) program during COVID-19, citing budgetary constraints. This program measures passenger experience with the aim to improve service levels provided by airports (ACI, 2022). This program is used as a control measure to effectively measure the customer experience and airports had to second guess what the passenger needed during the pandemic and where they needed to improve, which could have led to satisfaction dropping.

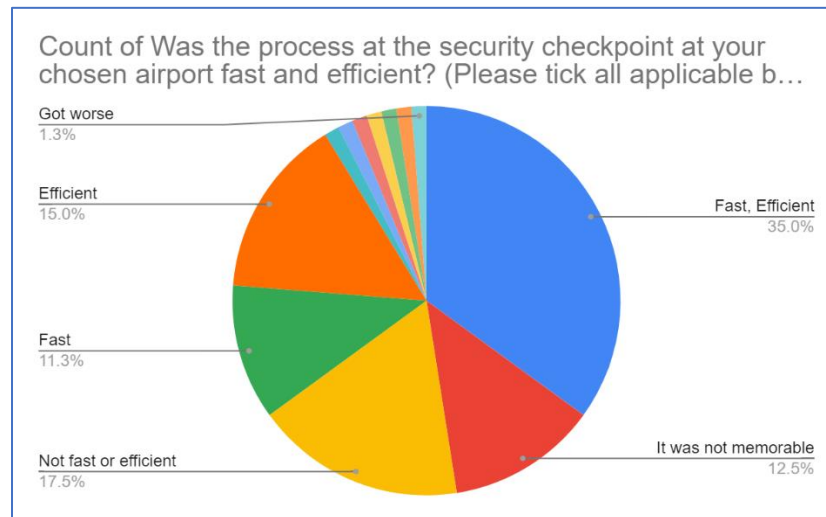
4.4.5 Security



While the majority of respondents advise that the security was well informed and efficient, a high number of 10.7% stated that the service was not friendly or efficient. A high number

of respondents also claim it was not a memorable experience, which may indicate that the processing was fast and that no delays or queues were experienced.

The number for “not memorable” is high again, with 32.1% of participants. The Customer Based Brand Equity Model from Keller must be relooked here, to ensure that customers receive a memorable experience, to ensure that air travel again becomes first choice when it comes to travel Keller, 2001)

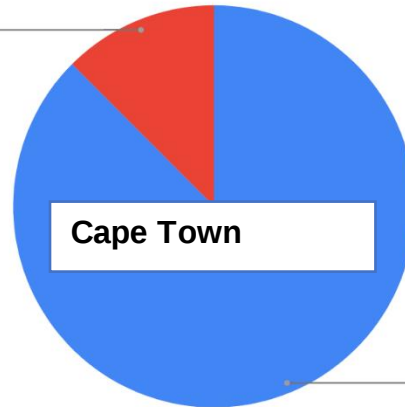


Only 35% of respondents claimed that the security process was fast and efficient. This correlates with longer processing times due to retrenchments in aviation following CAPEX and OPEX reductions due to the airports not making revenue. ACSA retrenched a third of their workforce during 2021/22. This negatively impacts the passenger experience as less staff are available to process air travelers. It will also affect the mood of the staff as they are understaffed.

Nearly 20% of air travelers claim they did not feel safe at their chosen airport's. This is extremely concerning as airports are considered a National Keypoint with both private security and SAPS on site. Lanseria Airport was the airport with the least responses stating that the respondent felt unsafe at the airport.

Count of Did you feel safe at the airport? (Please remember to use the airport identified at the beginning of the survey)

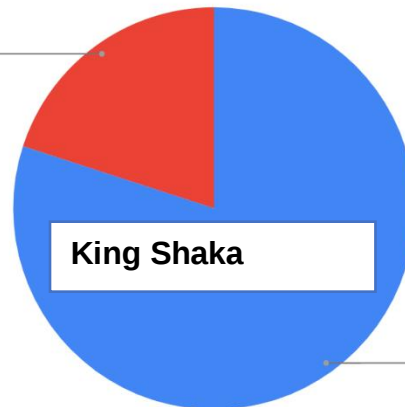
No
12.5%



Yes
87.5%

Count of Did you feel safe at the airport? (Please remember to use the airport identified at the beginning of the survey)

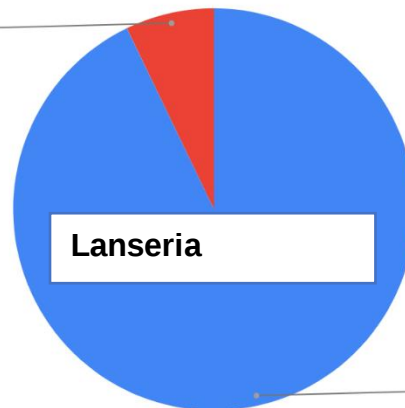
No
20.0%



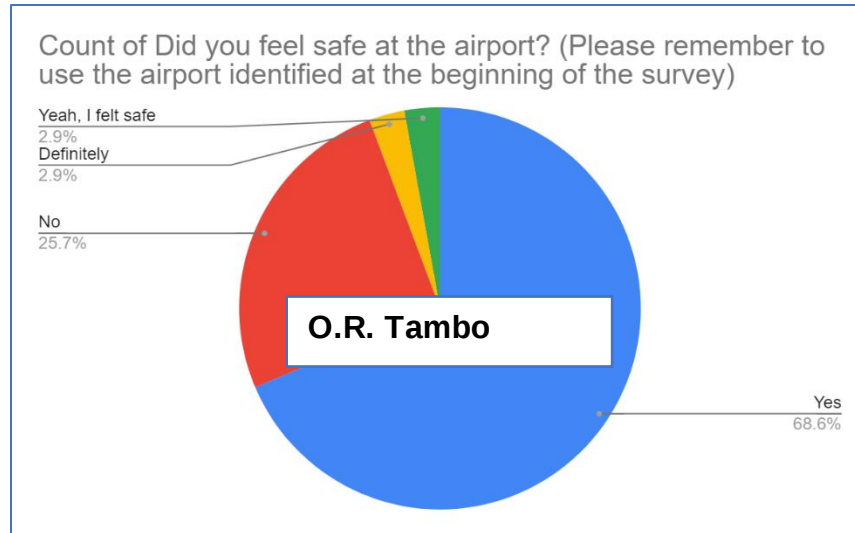
Yes
80.0%

Count of Did you feel safe at the airport? (Please remember to use the airport identified at the beginning of the survey)

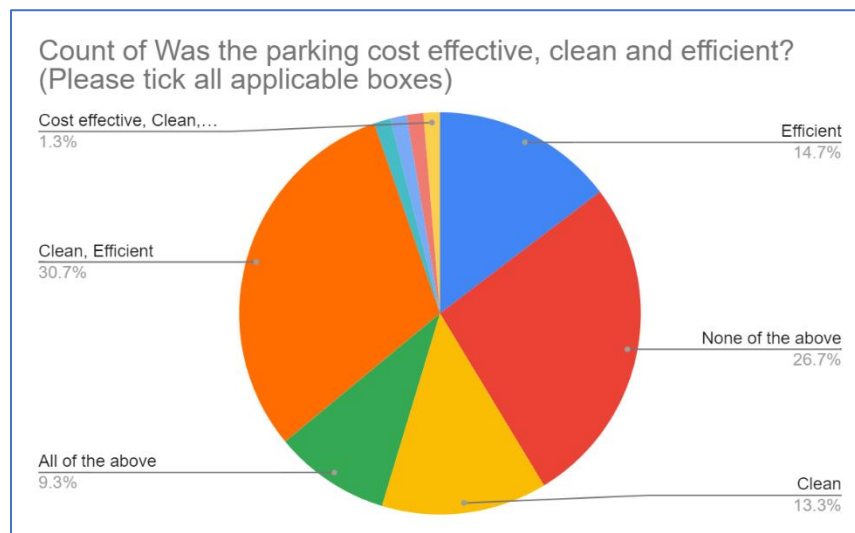
No
7.1%



Yes
92.9%



4.4.6 Parking



The majority of respondents at 30.7% stated that parking was clean and efficient. A very high number of respondents at 26.7% stated that the parking was not clean, cost effective or efficient. Less than 10% of respondents claimed that they felt the parking was cost effective, clean and efficient which is exceptionally low.

We compare a 2019 article displaying rates at the airports and compare it to pricing today (November 2022).

2019 pricing:

	One hour	Long weekend
OR Tambo	R30	R290
Cape Town	R20	R774
King Shaka	R16	R275
Lanseria	R20	R503
Bram Fischer	R15	R379
Port Elizabeth	R15	R250
East London	R15	R250
Upington	R15	R379
George	R15	R379
Kimberley	R15	R575

(Businessinsider, 2019)

Lanseria Airport-November 2022

TIME	RATE
0 – 30 Min	Free
31 Min -1 Hour	R21.00
1-2 Hours	R32.00
2-3 Hours	R35.00
3-4 Hours	R44.00
4-5 Hours	R51.00
5-6 Hours	R57.00
6-7 Hours	R64.00
7-8 Hours	R70.00
8-9 Hours	R76.00
9-10 Hours	R83.00
10-11 Hours	R89.00
11-12 Hours	R95.00
12-13 Hours	R102.00
13-14 Hours	R108.00
14-24 Hours	R148.00

(Lanseria, 2022)

O.R. Tambo International Airport – November 2022

Airport	Parking Area	Tariff	Parking Interval	Unit of Measure	Tariff Increment	Increment Interval	Increment Unit
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	0	30	Minutes	N/A	N/A	N/A
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R30	1	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R48	2	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R55	3	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R75	4	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R190	12	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
O.R. Tambo International Airport	MSP1 - P2	R210	24	Hour	110	12	Hour

(Airports, 2022)

Cape Town International Airport – November 2022

Airport	Parking Area	Tariff	Parking Interval	Unit of Measure	Tariff Increment	Increment Interval	Increment Unit
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R26	1	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R55	2	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R80	3	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R110	4	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R170	12	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
Cape Town International Airport	Parkade (P1 and P2)	R225	24	Hour	140	12	Hour

(Airports, 2022)

King Shaka International Airport – November 2022

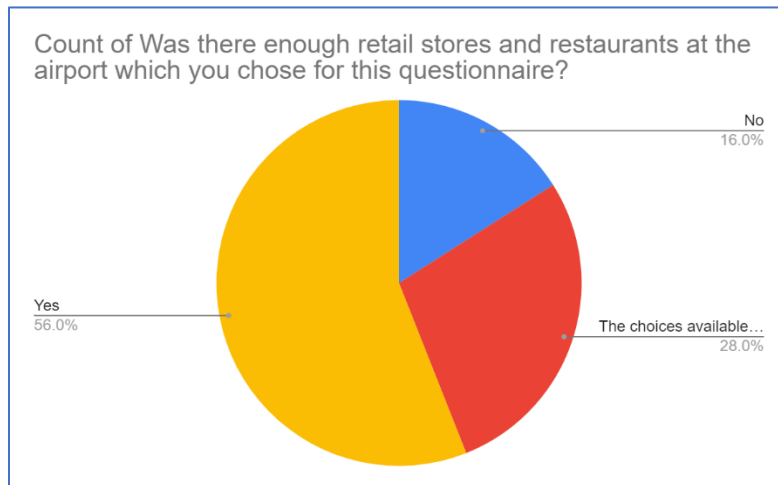
Airport	Parking Area	Tariff	Parking Interval	Unit of Measure	Tariff Increment	Increment Interval	Increment Unit
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R15	30	Minutes	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R24	60	Minutes	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R28	2	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R40	3	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R48	4	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R158	12	Hour	N/A	N/A	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	R190	24	Hour	100	12	Hour
King Shaka International Airport	Multi Storey	0	15	Minutes	N/A	N/A	Hour

(Airports, 2022)

Findings: Based on the above rates, for a 3-day weekend (long weekend) one would pay R444 at Lanseria Airport, R630 at O.R. Tambo International Airport, R675 at Cape Town International Airport and R570 at King Shaka International Airport. There is no change for short term parking, however once a person parks at the airports for a longer period, the rate increases significantly. The only airport that has lower costing since 2019, is Lanseria Airport.

4.4.6 Retail

It is also interesting to note that only 56% of respondents were happy with the retail options provided to them. 28% of respondents had to settle and 16% claimed there was not enough stores or restaurants.



4.4.7 Experience post-Covid

Based on your experience since the pandemic, has the airport you chose, changed at all?
Please specify why?

Answer key:

Positive answers	
Neutral answers/or both negative and positive	
Negative answers	

Cape Town International Airport	I don't know
	No
	Unchanged
	No it has not. And I don't know why not.

	No
	No, I still live in Cape Town. I am emigrating soon, partly due to Covid, so will fly out of Cape Town.
	Yes, in terms of restaurants and their offerings
	Yes - more travelers brings more income to attend to any issues caused by covid - mainly maintenance
	The systems in place (such as where pick up and drop off is) has changed according to my knowledge. They have also requested that you arrive earlier than normal due to Covid procedures.
	I can be certain to give a 100%, however I would say average as I havnt traveled since April '21 and have been in the facility on the day day Mask implementation was removed.
	Standards have dropped. A tourism gateway which has chosen staff not renown for proper /exceptional customer care
	Not really
	Yes, the parking and drop off zone is a nightmare- they should never have split between parkade one and two
	No
	Not really, other than the protocols put in place
	Yes, more run down.

King Shaka International Airport	Yes. No liquor licenses for any restaurants once through security.
	Not really
	Nope. I experience the same level of rudeness and incompleteness every time I use King Shaka
	Not really, just less people. Life goes on
	Not changed at all. Still that not memorable service.
	N/a
	Yes, more staff allocation
	A bit unattended to it would seem.
	They are more cleaner
	Less customer focused. Not maintained. It felt like a mediocre experience.
	Yes, less staff meant more queues. Just less efficient in general.
	Staff much more visible
	Except for the sanitizing it still is the same
	Not that I can recall. Except all the Covid protocols
	No
Lanseria	No
	No, still excellent
	Yes for the better because all rules are gone but standard has stayed the same
	No, not noticeably
	Not changed at all
	Some shops are closed
	Not at all, except for regulations.

	No, it is still the same.
	No
	Not qt all.
	Na
	No
	No change. Just quieter.
	NA
	No, it's worse.
	Become worse and uses covid as an excuse not to perform
	Not really, just reverted back to prior Covid
	Yes, poorly maintained now.
	No real change except for the additional requirements to be completed due to the pandemic
	Covid is easily blamed for anything that goes wrong
	Yes, every process is less efficient (if that's even possible)
	Gotten worse, staff are rude, bribes appear to be a currency.
	Less travelers and fewer ques.
	It got cleaner, but that wasn't hard.
	The staff at the bag check in and security check were all very clearly tense - my transfer was longer than anticipated which resulted in the staff being stressed and not very kind to me and some of the other passengers. It was understandable but with the stress of the regulations, having to rush

	to catch the connecting flight and the staff being borderline rude, it was a terrible experience
	Yes, poor communication, international blocked off no signage where to go, customs understaffed, walkway conveyers not working
	Other than the temporary measures, no
	Yes, degraded
	It was just less crowded which was great
	No, not really
	No
	Slightly longer lines when queuing, even more professional and strict
	Environment seems to be back to normal (before the pandemic)
	Layout of check ins is different
	Many shops have closed in the duty free area
	No
	No hasnt changed
	Yes. The parking is super expensive. Level 10 extortion.
	It became a bit bare and quiet due to covid regulations and people weren't allowed to open shops. But this year (2022) everything is back to normal
	Lack of knowledge of where shops are, general unfriendliness, in fact you're lucky to

	be greeted. Made to feel like cattle in a ranch. Terrible
	I did the same flight again in July (ORT-CPT) and it was much less scary. The staff seemed more relaxed and the airport seemed largely back to "normal"
	Not really except that the Covid regulations have been dropped
	Yes, it's gotten busier again which is good but when you're not a lover of crowds not so much lol
	No it's the only one close by
	Yes, much more strict with rules
	Not as busy but neither too empty too.
	It's just dirtier in my opinion
	No not really except for covid regulations
	Got worse

Findings per airport:

Cape Town International Airport – 7 respondents claimed that the airport has not changed compared to their experience pre-covid.

6 respondents said that changes such as restaurant offerings, standards dropping and the airport being “more run down”.

King Shaka International Airport – 8 respondents claimed the airport is still the same as pre-covid. One respondent advises that “I experience the same level of rudeness and incompleteness every time I use King Shaka”. Five respondents noted that the airport had changed in terms of less staff being available, that the airport was “unattended,” not maintained, mediocre and that there were queues due to less staff being available.

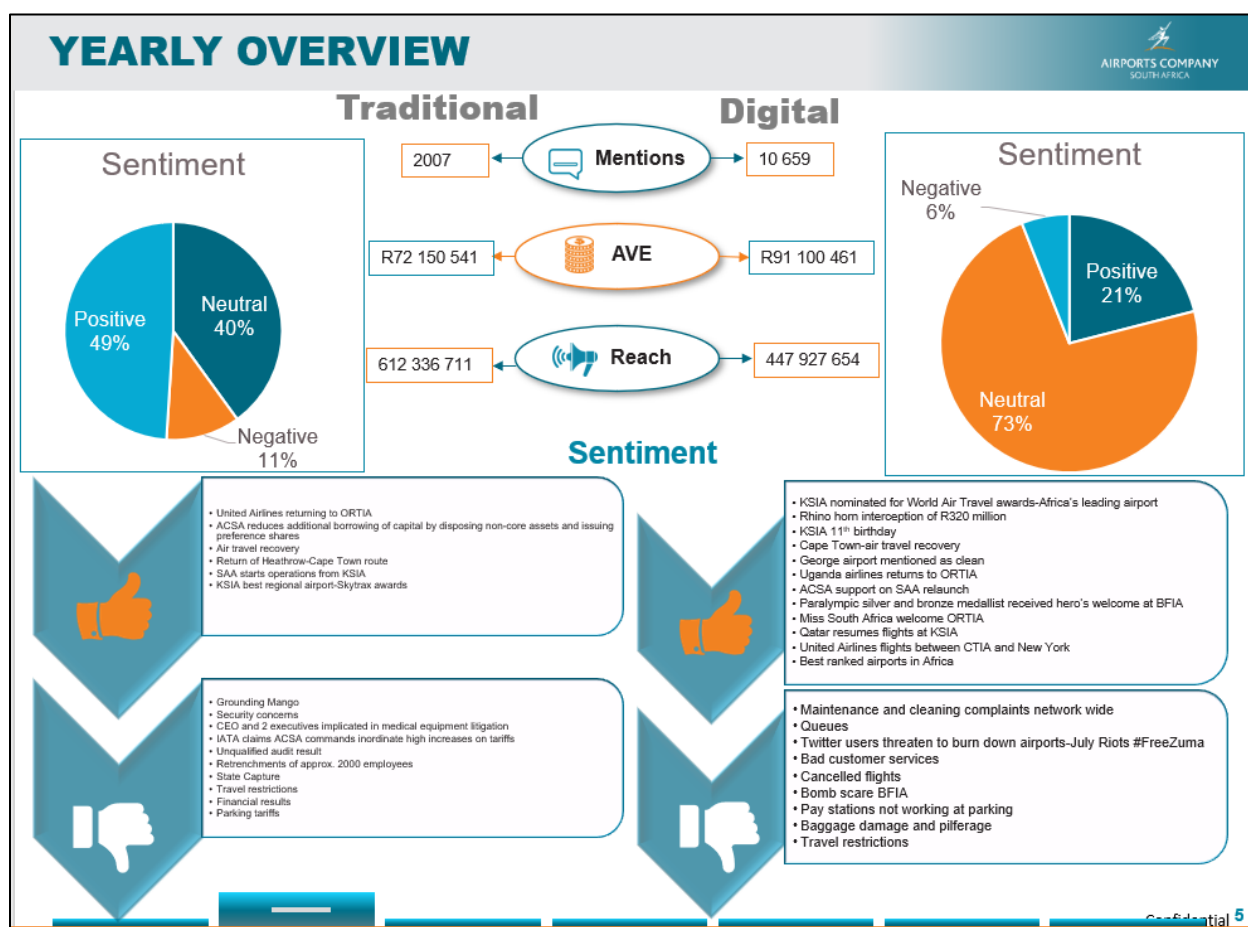
Lanseria Airport – One respondent claimed that the airport was better “because all the rules were gone but the standards stayed the same. The rest of the respondents advised

that the airport was the same and the only other note is that some of the retail shop had closed.

O.R. Tambo International Airport – 15 respondents claimed a negative change in the airport with comments stating that the airport was “degraded, many shops closed, got worse, dirtier, general unfriendliness, made to feel like cattle in a ranch, parking super expensive, longer queues, poor communication, tense staff, understaffed customs points, walkway converters not working, not enough signage, more bribes requested, and poorly maintained.

Only 11 respondents claimed that there was no change to the airport compared to pre-covid.

Social Media findings:



(Airports Company South Africa sentiment report, 2022)

4.4.8 Preferences of respondents

Would you prefer to choose a different method of travel compared to air travel?

58.7% stated they would not prefer another option.

22.6% advised that no other options are available. 17.7% stated they would prefer other options.

The majority of airports are perceived as a monopoly in South Africa. There are also limited options available for long distance travel, as discussed in findings below when asking participants to clarify. The traveler's airport journey needs to be relooked to ensure that travelers feel that they are getting a valuable experience. As using air travel is a costly expense, the feedback from some of the participants state that they would like more from their experiences at the airports. Do the airports deliver on their value proposition thoroughly, or are consumers using the airports because no other options are available?

The following comments must be noted per airport, stating reasons.

Cape Town International Airport:

- Time and fuel cost
- European destinations are too far for any other method
- No viable train system in South Africa
- Would prefer high speed rails

King Shaka International Airport:

- Distance
- Time and efficiency
- Cost of uber/taxi and other transport agencies
- Airport is shabby
- Not a pleasant experience

Lanseria Airport:

- Cost and time

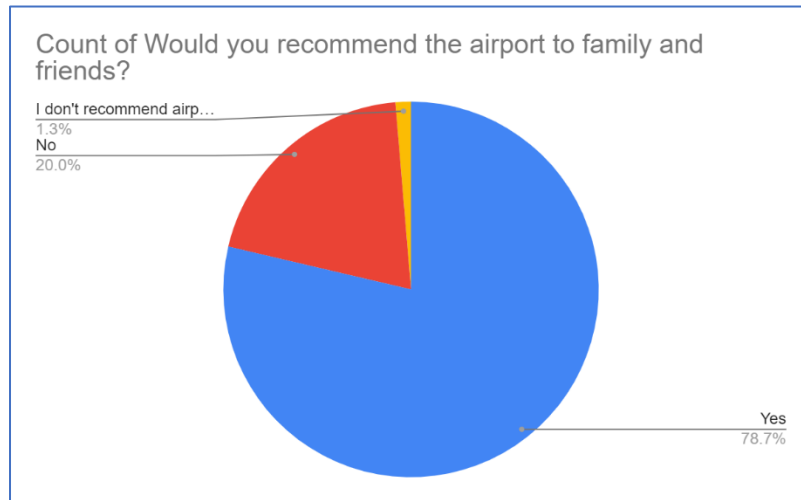
- Faster than road travel
- No long distance trains
- Costly, but fast and efficient
- Road travel too slow

O.R. Tambo International Airport:

- Limited to air travel for overseas
- Concerned about crime and police
- Distance
- Prefer trains
- Petrol price too high
- Too far to drive
- Dangerous to drive

The main finding is that travelers prefer to use airports as air travel is fast and saves them time. However, 40.3% of respondents may use another transport option if there was available, such as high-speed trains.

4.4.9 Recommendations



The majority of respondents advised that they would recommend their airport of choice to family and friends.

We look at why respondents would not recommend the airports.

Cape Town International Airport:

Three respondents advised that they would not recommend the airport.

- Worst airport in SA
- Not relevant, there is only one airport in Cape Town
- The only airport available but hardly worthy of a recommendation

King Shaka International Airport:

Three respondents claimed that they would not recommend the airport.

- General bad experiences there
- Well it's the only airport in Durban. Not much choice
- It has gone down. No other options.

All respondents claimed that they would recommend Lanseria Airport.

O.R. Tambo International Airport:

- At this stage and the state it's in I would not. There is a lot of room for improvement.

- Its a cess pit and nobody cares
- Dirty, poorly maintained, less staff
- I mean at least at Lanseria there's none of these entitled government rubbish employees
- Needs to managed in a better fashion
- I don't go around recommending airports, you go where you need too.
- Degraded infrastructure
- You see my answers did not feel welcome
- If I could fly from lanseria I probably would. Ort leaves much to be desired.
- It's Shabby and just not international standards
- I don't recommend airports

4.4.10 Do you have any other comments for the airport?

Cape Town International Airport:

- Very good overall
- The only negative aspect of my chosen airport is that there are no smoking areas after you have passed security since the pandemic. If you are a smoker, you will need to pay to get access to a lounge where there are smoking areas.
- The construction of another runway and terminal to handle growing traffic for the airport. My team & I would most certainly volunteeraly assist with this development, ACSA Cape Town can discuss with my committee members the way forward.
- People need to know walking distances etc if they are required to walk significant distances

King Shaka International Airport:

- Not bad, not great. Just fairly average
- It's a place I dread going each time I need to fly. You either have staff at the desks who don't know what they're doing, constantly calling on their supervisors or friends for help. Staff that just want to bully you at the gates, have no patience and aren't helpful at all.
- Restaurants are good

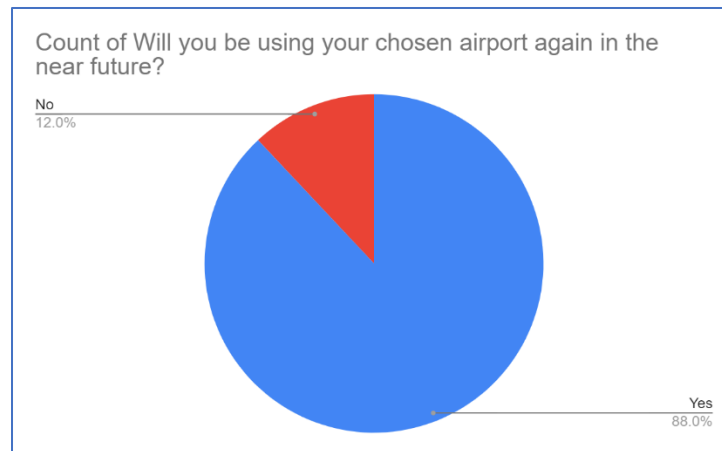
- Feels like it has deteriorated over the years. No pride.
- Airport in general seems non-interested in anything.

Lanseria:

- Overall very good.
- More restaurants would be nice.
- Fast and efficient
- More restaurants and things to do would be nice.

O.R. Tambo International Airport:

- The airport can still be improved and a lot more effort has to be placed.
- Get rid of current acsa board and the lazy management team
- Poor
- Processes were longer due to the COVID requirements
- Get your FOD trimmed on the airport taxiways
- The stores there take liberties on pricing, by this I mean they charge way more than thirty counterparts outside of the airport. E.g. Sim cards do not cost R150
- Since COVID airport seems on the back foot, longer lines, slower processing, utilities clean but staff pester you for tips for using the bathroom
- Get your operational act together! It's the small things like cleaning, that would make a huge difference!
- I did have a security guard stop us and ask why my 2 year wasn't wearing a mask. I said 2 year olds do not have to wear masks. He just said oh and let us go. I did not get the impression that he knew what the mask regulations said about kids and masks.
- The staff at home affairs were horrid, disorganised security, closed stores, chaos
- I just think they should get people that is friendly and know how to speak to people
- It was great.
- Not really, I don't really like airports, I feel like the add stress to the travel day



Reasons People will not use the airport again in the near future:

Cape Town International Airport:

- N/a. No other airport available

King Shaka international Airport:

- Because I have to
- Not traveling authentic moment and I would rather drive to Durban.
- Honestly it would be better to drive.

Lanseria:

- I am traveling anytime soon. It's too expensive.
- I am only traveling again next year probably.
- Not traveling anytime soon.

O.R. Tambo International Airport:

- No plans to travel
- I said yes but just because I have no choice
- I am out of the country indefinitely
- The staff at home affairs were horrid, disorganised security, closed stores, chaos
- It is not a nice place
- No longer have a reason to visit South Africa for now

The majority of participants stated they would be using the airport again in the future. If we look at the results available in question 28 and 29, it is found that other options are limited to most participants and that the answer may have been different if there were other options available. The ACSA Social Media Report supports these findings and show that Cape Town International Airport and King Shaka International Airports were nominated and won awards since COVID-19 landed on our shores.

- King Shaka International Airport:
- 2021 Skytrax World Airport awards-Best Regional Airport
- Cape Town International Airport:
- 2021 Skytrax World Airport Awards- Best Airport in Africa (sixth consecutive year) and Best Airport Staff in Africa
- 2021 World Travel Awards
- O.R. Tambo International Airport:
- 2022 Trazees Award Nomination-Favourite Airport in Africa
- There is a small decline in results with respects to the 2020 Skytrax World Airport Awards, where four awards were won by Cape Town International and King Shaka International Airports.
- On the negative end, we look at Skytrax reviews where travellers rated the four identified airports.
- The Skytrax website show an overall 4/10 rating from 3 reviews for Lanseria Airport on their website (Skytrax 2022). These reviews were completed prior to COVID-19 and does not give a recent view of reviews. Similarly, O.R. Tambo International Airport received a 4/10 score from 154 reviews (Skytrax, 2022). Cape Town International Airport received a 6/10 rating.

5. Contribution, Ethical Considerations and Limitations

5.1 Anticipated Contribution

This study will provide insight as to how the consumer feels about air travel since COVID-19. Air travel as well as the passenger has changed significantly since the pandemic. The research aims to find understanding in how the brand experience has changed for the air traveler and why. Air travel is struggling to recover, the research aims to understand why and what is hampering growth of air travel. Has the experience at the airports changed and what other options do consumers prefer and why? The information obtained from this study will assist in informing the air travel recovery strategy, in order for airports to adapt and ensure that the needs of the consumer is being fulfilled.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

- Underage respondents will not be considered
- Informed consent must be given
- Clear details as to what the research is about must be given prior to the respondent taking part in the survey (clear brief)
- All surveys must be voluntary
- Surveys are confidential and the information will not be used for anything but the research study, without prior consent given. Confidentiality must be kept at all times as well as data protection of the subjects (POPIA)
- All survey respondents are anonymous
- Data must be interpreted correctly, and findings not skewed towards the objective of the research
- All findings must be accurately and clearly displayed
- All research must be completed independently, with no conflict of interest
- Disclosures must be made should any conflict of interest during this study arise
- All participants must be treated equally at all times

- No incentives will be given to participate in this study
- Researcher must ensure that sign the consent form
- No information will be falsified
- Results must not be distorted at any time
- Only appropriate research methods must be used
- Researcher must protect all participants from intended or unintended harm

5.3 Limitations

It has previously been established that the passenger may not identify between the airport brand and the stakeholders operating at the airports such as the airlines, Immigrations/Emigration (Department of Home Affairs) and other vendors.

The air traveler may perceive the entire experience at the airport of being that of the airport brand, whereas many different brands operate within the airport community.

A notable negative experience may have an impact on how the air traveler perceives one of the identified airports, which may negatively skew all perception of that brand.

A participant may prefer one brand such as Lanseria International Airport over O.R. Tambo International airport due to Lanseria being closer to the respondent's home and therefore being more convenient.

Respondents may not be truthful when answering the survey, this is a risk that must be noted.

The questionnaire may not be answered by any airport employees of ACSA or Lanseria International Airport.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Research Question, Problem, Hypothesis/Objectives Addressed

It has been hypothesized that air travelers do not have confidence using the identified airports since COVID-19, as the brand experience has changed negatively.

The majority of respondents at 62.2% rated the airport 7-8 “Good Experience” prior to COVID-19. 17.3% percent advised that it was a 9-10 “Best Airport” experience, making 79.5% of participant responses positive prior to COVID-19.

Based on your experience since the pandemic, has the airport you chose, changed at all? Please specify why?

We establish findings per airport, based on the respondents’ answers:

Cape Town International Airport:

- Eight respondents said that there has been no change.
- One respondent said in terms of restaurant and retail offerings.
- Four respondents referred to COVID-19 processes and parking changes.
- Two respondents were uncertain.
- Two respondents noted that standards have dropped.

Lanseria Airport:

- 11 respondents advised that there was no change
- 1 respondent advised other than COVID processes, no change
- One advised it has changed for the better
- One respondent noted only in terms of the shops that were closed

King Shaka International Airport:

- Seven respondents claimed there were no change
- One respondent said the airport was cleaner
- Three respondents claimed it has changed negatively citing that the airport was less maintained, mediocre, less customer focused and unattended
- One respondent said staff were more visible

O.R. Tambo International Airport:

- Fifteen respondents advised that the airport is worse than before, stating the airport is dirtier, degraded, not maintained, unfriendliness, expensive parking, bribery, poor communication, understaffed.
- One respondent claimed that it is cleaner, “but that wasn’t hard”
- Ten respondents stated that they did not find any change, except for COVID-19 regulations and the airport being quieter.

The findings from the social media reports indicate that an increase in negative sentiment pertaining to cost of parking, maintenance, unfriendly staff and poor leadership has been experienced. Complaints about cleanliness at O.R. Tambo International Airport has been a concern since before COVID-19.

These findings can attest that the brand experience have changed negatively at the ACSA network airports, O.R. Tambo International, Cape Town International and King Shaka International Airports, and may be contributing to a slow air travel recovery. The reasons are that the airports have not been adequately maintained due to less revenue, more queues and rude staff due to retrenchment which is also due to reduced revenues, as well as an increase in parking charges. The respondents have also stated that no other airports are available, forcing them to use the current airports. The only airport out of the three ACSA owned airports that has a form of brand resonance and affinity is Cape Town International Airport, which is the least affected in terms of negative change. From the responses, it can be ascertained that this airport is likely to recover faster as it provides a better brand experience. From the data gathered it can be established that O.R. Tambo International Airport has faced a slow decline since before COVID-19, and that travelers do not have a good perception of the airport with regards to safety, maintenance and parking facilities. King Shaka International Airport has deteriorated with regards to customer service and maintenance.

The brand experience at Lanseria Airport have not changed and respondents gave this airport good comments overall. The airport is currently upgrading, which addresses the comments that users would like more facilities and experiences.

It can be hypothesized that economic factors may influence the slow recovery. It must also be noted that geographically, it may be less convenient for users in Gauteng to access Lanseria Airport due to location and using O.R. Tambo International Airport due to its convenient location and diverse route offering.

Another contributing factor for the slow recovery can relate to two airlines folding during this time, affecting flight availability.

Finally, the Russian/Ukraine war have had an enormous impact on oil prices, affecting the price of fuel. This has attributed to higher fares, making air travel more expensive and less viable for lower income citizens.

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