

**AN ANALYSIS OF DECENTRALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY
PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: THE CASE OF PASSPORT PRINTING
SERVICE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP
SERVICES**

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT THESIS

MARIA ONGANIVE NAMPOTA - HOWAHOWA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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By

MARIA ONGANIVE NAMPOTA- HOWAHOWA

Bachelor of Social science - University of Malawi

Submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of
Social Science, in Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Public Administration and Management

University of Malawi

December, 2021

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other peoples work has been used acknowledgements have been made

MARIA ONGANIVE NAMPOTA-HOWAHOWA

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval

Signature:_____Date_____

TIYESERE MERCY CHIKAPA, PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Main Supervisor

Signature:_____Date_____

DAN BANIK, PhD, (Professor)

Second Supervisor

DEDICATION

To my husband, Montfort Mphatso Howahowa and my lovely three children; Mwaiwina, Tiyamike and Tadala Howahowa for their continual support and sacrifice.

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ABSTRACT

The Government of Malawi, like all governments, exists to provide social services to its people and to create a conducive environment for stimulating social and economic development. In order to achieve vision 2020, government has developed several developmental strategies to direct its efforts. An efficient public service is the medium term to achieve governments' objectives. One of Malawi's public service providers is the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services (DICS) where several action plans have been developed by the government of Malawi to ensure quality service to the citizenry. The decentralization of passport printing services, for example, was championed by the public sector reform agenda as one way to reduce congestion and corruption at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services and ensure that citizens get quality service they require. This study concerned itself with analysing the impact of Malawi's passport decentralized system on service quality improvement at DICS. Service quality analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis as provided by the Service Quality model (SERVIQUAL). The study established that the decentralized passport printing services have done little to reduce congestion and corruption. The Department's public image is still not good. There are so many challenges faced by the department which hamper smooth utilization of the decentralized services to ensure quality service to the citizenry. One of the practical implications of the study is that, there is need to address structural challenges inherent in the system. Government must always give enough funding to the department and procure adequate raw materials and consumables for making passports. The consumables must be supplied to decentralised centres according to need. New backup generators must be sourced to take up the operations in case of ESCOM power cuts in all regions. All decentralised passport printing regions must have their own servers to stop relying on head office. More importantly, employees must be trained to fix machines in case of breakdowns rather than waiting for Techno Brain network providers even in small breakdowns.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CRONYMS

ARDL	Autoregressive Distributive lag model
DICS	Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
PIS	Passport Issuance System
PSOs	Public Service Organizations
QUIRP	Quick Impact Reforms Program
RIOs	Regional Immigration Offices
SERVQUAL	Service Quality
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The delivery of various public goods and services is a basic responsibility of the state; however, many developing country governments continue to encounter problems in delivering essential public services (Evans, 1995). Although there are market expansions in delivering services, core services continue to be state's responsibility due to their nature (World Bank, 2006). Such services include the printing and issuance of security documents like passports, travel documents, residential and work permits, among others.

However, service delivery systems by governments in most African countries do not often function according to citizens' expectation and the public service is increasingly becoming non-functional (Khan, 2009, p.147). Generally, services by public agencies are synonymous with rigidity, unresponsiveness, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, mostly focussing on the process rather than results themselves and are mostly guided by out dated rules and regulations (PARC, 2000). This unfortunate scenario is mostly attributed to the inherited bureaucratic culture. It is also further affected by the associated weak institutions, non-motivating salary structures in civil service, and even more the mind-set of service providers themselves. Over a period of time, various print and electronic media have been reflecting citizens' dissatisfaction as far as public service delivery is concerned.

In general, civil society and people are relentlessly demanding for a new civil service culture that is more pro people and more effective in responding to the needs of the citizens and deliver appropriate public goods and services. This should, however, be done not only with efficiency, but also in a responsive and impartiality manner in order to achieve good governance (PARC, 2000). In this regard, governance reform is urgently needed in order to achieve better service delivery.

Efficient public sector management is a significant component of long-term development of countries struggling to lift their populations out of poverty. Hence, public sector reform ought to be a necessary and an on-going agenda for such countries. It should be done in the spirit of revamping the administrative systems in order to better meet the needs of both government and the general citizenry with high quality delivery of public services (Evans, 1995).

Since the past four decades, devolvement by central government functions to local jurisdictions has been a common talk in many developing countries. This inevitable shift has been orchestrated partly to respond to political pressures for local autonomy, and as a call towards efficient public services delivery. Although it has been argued that there is a positive coloration between decentralization and public service delivery through improved governance and increased locative and productive efficiency, decentralization has had mixed effects on public service delivery. Some studies show that decentralization results into improved service delivery, although, in some extreme cases, there is evidence of breakdown in public services in which case reverse decentralization or re-centralization has been prescribed as an option (Shah and Thompson, 2004). In several Asian countries, for instance, decentralization has emerged as a dominating paradigm since the 1990s. Despite having varying motivating factors, the underlying philosophy for decentralization has mainly been the improvement of public service delivery.

This study was aimed at examining the decentralization of passport printing in relation to improvement in public service delivery in Malawi. The study analysed decentralized passport printing services as a public sector reform effort in Malawi aimed at improving public sector performance and public service delivery. The study went further to assess the reform processes that brought changes in the passport delivery system, citizens' perceptions and expectations of the process, and the possibility of its room for further improvement. Thus, it examined the extent to which these reforms functioned over the years and explored gaps in citizens' expectations between the present and the expected service quality provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services (DICS).

1.2 Background

The domestic and external forces for states to free up political space in the 1990s brought about political, social and economic reforms in many states. These reforms were mainly aimed at improving the operating space of those countries and such reforms had mostly focused on increasing efficiency, competence, fairness and quality of service delivery (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004).

According to Tambulasi (2010), the first attempts to reform the public sector in Malawi took place immediately after independence. The objective of these reforms was primarily to reinforce and improve efficiency and effectiveness of all branches of government (the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) in the delivery of services to the general public (Malawi Government, 2008). Since then, Malawi has carried out a series of public sector reforms with an overall goal to improve public sector efficiency in service delivery (Tambulasi, 2010). The major reforms undertaken so far by the government includes; public sector management review, civil service pay and employment, the poverty alleviation programme, functional reviews of different government ministries, decentralization and sector investment programmes.

During the past seventeen years, Malawi has seen government renewing its commitment to public sector reforms. with the aim of addressing broad and specific institutional, policy and legal frameworks, systems and management challenges and constraints to poverty reduction and sustained economic growth and development. All the reform initiatives being initiated were in response to demands for quality services, sustainable democratic and good governance practices mostly focusing on enhancing accountability and transparency among others.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS, 2007) anchors all these initiatives as an overarching medium term policy. This policy directs development efforts towards sustainable economic growth and ultimately achieves the Malawi Vision 2020 (Malawi Government, 2007). It is believed that efficient public service will translate to successful achievement of the objectives of the MGDS as premised on the MGDS' thematic area of good governance. This thematic area encompasses sound economic environment, high quality service delivery, effective institutions and

rule of law, an efficient and effective public sector, and reduction in corruption (Malawi Government, 2007). In response, the Office of the President and Cabinet embarked in 2008 on a Quick Impact Reforms Program (QUIRP). Under this program, the government was to fast track improvement of service delivery in selected public sector departments and ministries, including the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services.

1.2.1 The Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services (DICS)

The Department of Immigration exists under the Ministry of Homeland Security. The overall responsibility for institutional management and development of the department lies with the Director General of Immigration and Citizenship services appointed by the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC). The Director serves a five year renewable contract. The Director General who was in office during the study period had served from 2015. The departments' headquarters is in Blantyre and for easy operation, the services are provided in four zones namely: Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Regions, which oversee various other Immigration Offices and border posts throughout the country (Malawi Government, 2008).

The mandate of the DICS is derived from Section 47 of the Republic of Malawi Constitution, the Citizenship Act (CAP 15:01), and the Immigration Act (CAP 15:03). The department was established to control people entering and leaving the country in order to uphold the security of the state; to issue travel documents to eligible people in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO); to process and issue Malawi Citizenship, Residence and Work Permits, and Visas in accordance with the existing policies; and to monitor, track, apprehend, deport and repatriate illegal immigrants in order to promote security of the country and safeguard jobs for natives (Malawi Government, 2008).

While the Department of Immigration and Citizenship services has over many years, offered enviable services, its performance began to decline in the middle 1990s, thereby carving itself a very poor public image in the way it delivers its services. The department has been infamous for its delayed issuing of passports to Malawians, issuing of Malawi passports to non-Malawians, as well as for its inability to

effectively manage illegal immigrants, consequently risking state security (Audit report, 2018).

The declining service delivery was attributed to poor capacity, including lack of appropriate systems, lack of procedures for issuing travel documents to eligible people, and poor human resources development and management systems. It was therefore, proposed that a quick reform package be introduced in the DICS under the name, Quick Impact Results Project. (QIRP) (Malawi Government, 2008).

The main objective of QUIRP was to take on quick win reforms in government institutions to improve delivery of essential public goods and services that would have a quick impact on the lives of people. Services assigned for immediate reform include passport services provided by the DICS, the Deceased Estates managed by the Administrator General, Urban Sanitation and Street Lighting managed by City Assemblies, Licensing (Selected: business, driving) managed by Registrar General and Road Traffic Directorate, Judicial Records Management managed by the Judiciary and Lands Registry managed by Department of Lands (Malawi Government, 2008).

The QUIRP at the DICS concerned itself more with reforms to improve passport issuance system (PIS). This was based on a belief that these reforms would have wide ranging impact on the other services rendered by the DICS. The goal was “to have an efficient DICS that will contribute to the attainment of the MGDS - whose objective is to reduce poverty through sustained economic growth and infrastructure development” (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 4).

The QUIRP helped the DICS to improve in its human resource capacity which among other things led to the recruitment and redeployment of officers. The Department registered a major stride when it successfully installed a new passport processing system. The system helped the Department in reducing the number of days for passport issuance from forty (40) days to twenty-one (21) days. It has also strengthened the scrutiny process at the district commissioner and at the front desk of passport office as well as doing away with police vetting through the police

headquarters. The police vetting process used to greatly delay the passport issuing process yet it added no value to it as well as to the automation of the passport processing system (Malawi Government, 2008).

The project also saw the improvement of information management system in the department which led to the installation of a computer network at each passport production station and the interconnection among Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu offices using a Wide Area Network. Following these initiatives, the government continued its reform agenda in the DICS in order to improve access to passport-related services. The final report of the Commission of Public Reforms (2015) recommended the decentralization of passport printing across the country and introduced the idea of one stop centres at strategic places in the country. All these initiatives were aimed at improving service delivery in the DICS.

Malawi's Public Sector Reform efforts, like those of many other African countries, were being triggered by continual poor performance of the public sector which in most cases had failed to meet the public needs. These reforms have changed over time and eventually are culminating into the type of operation re-engineering that is likened to what is known as New Public Management (Chiweza, 2010).

The New Public Management (NPM) aims at enhancing a performance based culture which looks at rebuilding the process operational environment in which public institutions work so that it brings more efficiency and effectiveness while ensuring client-focused, mission driven and driving quality services (Hope, 2001). NPM is designed to meet the needs of both government and the users of its services with improved public service delivery to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, and sustain good governance.

This necessitated most state's movement from the traditional public administration to the NPM (World Public Sector Report, 2005). The traditional public administration gave security of permanent status and based promotion on how long people served in the public sector instead of on performance review. It also involved the delivery of public services based on a routine chain of command, direct control and self-

sufficiency (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004). NPM was taken on board with the main focus towards proper management system in the public sector. According to Hood (1991), NPM was premised on several factors including disaggregation and decentralisation of the public sector to enhance management and service delivery.

Tambulasi (2010) argues that the NPM model that Malawi, like most African countries, implemented under the weight of donor supported institutions has not led to intended development. He examined decentralization, performance contracting, and public private partnerships as key features of the public reforms and arrived at the conclusion that the failures were due to poor implementation of the reforms.

As a result of this, the Malawi Government established the Public Service Reform Commission in 2014 with a mandate to provide strategic leadership in the implementation of Public Service Reforms to achieve the provision of a dynamic and high-quality services to the public at all times. Malawi's attempts to reform have in most cases failed on implementation phase due to lack of political will among other factors (Public Service Reforms, 2015).

The reform document aimed at implementing major reforms in order to catalyse development based on strong political commitment. The commission then in its recommendations provided for decentralisation of service delivery for efficiency and effectiveness, and in particular, it recommended the DICS in the Ministry of Homelands and Internal Security to decentralize the printing of passports that had been a challenge for many years (Public Service Reforms, 2015). As a response to these decentralisation reforms, the DICS, despite having undergone other reforms previously that saw the automation of passport issuance system, decentralised its passport printing services to Lilongwe and later to Mzuzu in 2015. Additionally, the DICS launched an SMS alert and passport application status checks in order to ensure that citizens were able to track their applications and to remain updated about them (Malawi Government, 2016). The DICS in 2018 also launched the Mangochi passport printing service as a response to the Public Service Reform report.

1.3 Problem statement

Public sector reforms by way of decentralization in any country are expected to bring service delivery nearer to the citizenry and to be delivered in a more efficient and effective manner (Haque, 2011). The results of such process improvement are reflected by the level of satisfaction that the citizens get from services offered, how public officials working in the decentralized sectors feel about new service delivery processes, and, generally by how the decentralized operations performs against its set goals in quality service delivery.

Dicker (2010), measuring performance of the decentralized institutions, reveals how service performance has progressed over time and gaps that need further improvement. Obviously, this requires a good measurement tool that, according to Aranda (2003), must be supported by the dimensions of operations strategy in place. Over the years, many authors have written on how decentralized services in Malawi operate in the face of the citizenry focusing much on decentralization in local government councils in the form of devolution. However, as evidenced from the literature reviewed, few authors have devoted on tracking how administrative decentralization on government institutions has performed over these years.

Despite the decentralisation of passport printing to other regions of the country, as well as the many reforms, media reports still show that the congestion and long queues of frustrated citizenry continue to exist at Immigration Offices (Achitabwino, 2017). The congestion is still apparent at its head office in Blantyre to the extent that some of the citizenry looking for a quicker and quality service have to use agents or bribe an officer in order to get quality service (Achitabwino, 2017).

Despite all initiatives undertaken by DICS, there still the general public and the media continue to lament poor service delivery (Achitabwino, 2017). There are still challenges in issuance of passports that are resulting in poor service delivery. Apart from having long unending queues, the actual application process still has many interruptions. For instance, after managing to submit an application, some citizens still have to wait longer than expected in order to get their passports (Performance Audit report, 2018).

An analysis of reports about passport issuing in Malawi clearly shows that much emphasis has been put on analysing factors that were put in place by previous projects. Little attention is given to how the decentralized services have impacted on passport delivery system and, let alone, citizen's expectations and perceptions. The transfer of Passport Issuance System (PIS) from the DICS to National Registration Bureau has been identified as an important recommendation for improving quality service delivery of PIS (Performance Audit report, 2018).

1.4 Research questions

- i. To what extent has decentralization assisted in improving the timely delivery of passports to applicants?
- ii. How do people perceive the level of service quality provided at the DICS?
- iii. How have the decentralized passport printing services impacted on service quality in passport processing and issuance between pre-decentralization and post decentralization periods?
- iv. What are the key challenges associated with decentralization of passport printing?

In evaluating the effectiveness of passport decentralized systems in improving passport delivery, this study explored citizens' perceptions on quality of service delivery at the DICS. The study engaged in an in depth understanding of challenges and weaknesses associated with access to passports by citizens and Immigration officers. The study went further to compare levels of service satisfaction with the emergence of decentralised systems in order to determine their effectiveness in improving passport delivery system.

1.5 Main objective of the study

The overall objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of decentralized passport printing services in the DICS on improving passport service delivery as well as citizens' expectations of the systems and further room for improvements.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- i. Critically examine changes in time frame for passport issuance between the pre-decentralization and post- decentralization periods.

- ii. To analyse quality of service provision at the DICS as perceived by people.
- iii. To evaluate the quality of service provision between pre and post decentralization periods
- iv. Identify challenges associated with decentralization of passport printing services.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

Public Sector Reforms in Malawi have taken a new dimension with the establishment of the Public Reform Commission in 2015. Through this reform commission, government has embarked on many reforms initiatives within the public service that have been failing in previous years.

In the face of political will, how are these decentralized reforms functioning? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What is the satisfaction level of citizens? The study is of great significance because it assessed existing reform factors as well as citizens' expectations and perception concerning service quality provided by the DICS in as far as passport delivery system is concerned. The identification of gaps concerning citizen expectations and present service has revealed areas that require policy change or modification in order to improve the quality of passport service delivery.

More importantly, this study significantly adds value to scholarly work on quality public service delivery evaluation by adding a component of immigration services in the evaluations. The study generates insight concerning the importance of paying attention to people's perceptions in service delivery as a catalyst for analysis of Quality Service Delivery in government institutions.

1.7 Organization of chapters

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction and background to passport reforms initiatives in the DICS. Chapter two critically reviews the literature on decentralization reforms as a form of public sector reform effort as well as the decentralized passport printing services and further discusses the conceptual framework that anchors the research study. Chapter three provides an overview of the

design and methodology of the research study while chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to reviewed literature and the theoretical model chosen. Lastly chapter five summarizes the research findings, outlines conclusions and implications of the study.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has introduced the study by offering the background to the study and highlighting the study's specific aim and objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Decentralization has been taken on board by both developed and developing countries in the same way as the public sector reform strategy (Phirinyane, 2009). Public sector reforms are “planned systematic changes to the structure, processes and operation of the public sector” (Tambulasi and Kayuni 2007a, p. 335) which, according to Tulner and Hulme (1997, p. 106), are sanctioned as the means to bring about the desired changes.

This chapter reviews the literature on decentralization vis-à-vis public service delivery and tackles on studies related to passport services and a measurement of quality service delivery. The chapter sheds light on the importance of decentralising passport services while at the same time presents decentralisation both under centralised and decentralised systems. Similarly, it defines the dimensions of decentralisation and discusses the merits and demerits of adopting a decentralised approach to service delivery.

The chapter also sheds light on the meaning of quality service delivery and explains why it is necessary to measure quality of service delivered by both government and private institutions by linking it to the theoretical framework of the study; it adopts the service quality model in evaluating the service quality delivered by DICS in the face of decentralised passport printing.

2.2 Decentralized Passport Service Delivery

There is scarcity of literature about passport services in Malawi hence limited specific literature when analysing the trends. Nevertheless, this chapter reviews the reforms implemented before 2020 and some isolated related studies linking the study with the necessity of undertaking reform projects in passport services. Rahman (2006)

observes that, in developed countries, the private sector and governments compete in the service delivery to meet the needs of their citizens. This has led to a kind of rearrangement of government services in order to improve the service delivery through introduction of performance-based and result-based management and development of institutions.

In its published White Paper of 1999 entitled “Modernizing Government”, the UK Government sets out a long-term program of improvement for the public service in the UK and one of the main themes was responsive public service (Haque, 2011, p. 18). The core thrust was that public services should be more responsive to consumers by delivering services that people need and at a convenient time and location.

The World Bank says that government is often more concerned with rules and processes at the expense of the outcome or result of its actions (cited in Haque, 2011). In such cases the real needs of citizens and better quality are not met or addressed fully hence the growing perception of public institutions as coercive and government functionaries as ‘rent seekers’. As argued by Haque (2011), decentralisation provides a developmental lesson that most successful program with a high degree of customer satisfaction are mostly realised in a more decentralized setting. The rule of thumb is simple; the fewer the layers, the better the services. Haque (2011) argues further that consumer satisfaction is the crucial test of any service regardless of the type of providers, therefore, public organisation should strongly prioritise consumers to achieve efficiency.

PARC (cited in Haque, 2011, p. 18), states that most governments, especially in developing countries, do not assess the delivery of public services according to their impact and usefulness to the target population. This is in sharp contrast to most private sector service providers where, for their survival, the customer is the king. The public service is, generally, mostly driven by inputs and compliance with rules. It is against this background that this study analyses the decentralisation of passport printing services at DICS. In focusing the extent to which decentralization has assisted in improving the timely delivery of passports to applicants as well as people’s

perceptions regarding service quality level, the study manages to assess the delivery of passport services as well as its impact to the citizenry.

Knox and Yasmin (2007) reviewed the existing passport delivery system and process, identifying the limitation, nature and extent of corruption and irregularities in passport delivery of Bangladesh. The study findings indicate that people who were illiterate and hailed from rural areas had to depend heavily on brokers. It also found that police and passport officials were involved in corruption and harassments of people. The worst sufferers of the passport delivery services were the unskilled laborers who brought precious remittance to the country.

The study further found that corrupt practices existed in the process of passport delivery in Bangladesh. There was collusion amongst officials, middlemen and the police in passport department. The latter, for example, were paid bribes during the police verification process. The whole system of issuing passports lacked the adequate and necessary administrative and logistical support required (Knox and Yasmin, 2007, p. 22).

2.3 A Retrospective view of Passport Service Delivery Reforms in selected countries across the world

The dynamics of passport service delivery reform are country specific and at times, have been handled at different levels by scholars. While some countries are slow in reforming their service delivery systems, others are making strides in aligning their service delivery with contemporary standards. These dynamics are reflected in existing literature. Some scholars capture the dynamics of passport reform at the country level while some adapt to a global political approach. For some scholars, a comparative analysis is ideal in examining the passport service delivery. For instance, Phate (2017) employs a comparative analysis in assessing the implementation of the E-Passport System in Botswana and Lesotho. Like Phate (2017), Damianos (2019) also employ a comparative case study analysis of the Nansen Passport scheme of the 1920s and the Humanitarian Corridors initiative launched in 2015. However, unlike Phate (2017) who compares and contrasts counties, Damianos (2019) focuses on policies that facilitate refugee mobility.

Phate (2017) explains the legal framework governing the implementation of e-passport system in Botswana and Lesotho. S(he) expounds the rationale “for the adoption of the e-passport system in Botswana and Lesotho” providing insights to the on-going study. It highlights the challenges associated with the implementation of the e-passport system in Botswana and Lesotho. This enabled this study to compare and contrast the passport service delivery situation in SADC countries.

Improvement of public administration is a government’s central aim. The desire to improve service delivery leads governments into the adoption of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) that “does not only enhance efficient and effective public service delivery but regular upgrading of ICT systems” (Phate 2017, p.17). According to Phate (2017), there were benefits associated with the implementation of the e-passport system in Lesotho. For instance, the improvement of ICT services enhanced the issuance of e-passports. The observations made by Phate (2017) are central in ascertaining the prospects for the implementation and improvement of the e-passport systems in Malawi. This has potential to transform policy formulation and implementation, something that Bronk (2007) suggests. In an e-passport study Bronk (2007) expresses the significance of policy innovation in transforming service delivery in a country.

Damianos (2019) takes a refugee centered approach in examining the morbidity of refugees in the world and perceives passports are pathways to protection. Damiano’s (2019) study speaks to issues of global citizenship that resonates with issues tackled by Perdue (2014). In a qualitative study that uncovers the dispositions of undergraduate African American students regarding global citizenship, Perdue (2014) noted that people are living in a global village. Both Damianos (2019) and Perdue (2014) articles are important because they reveal the integration of nations into the global system. This facilitates a comparative analysis of improvements or lack thereof of the passport delivery system at country, regional or global level.

Bronk (2007) uses a United States of America Department of State based narrative in examining the influence of innovation on policy making. He examines “how a failed terrorist attack by a British national placed into doubt a convenience-oriented

international regime in which the citizens of the world's most developed countries travel between one another without the hassle and cost of obtaining specific permission in the form of a non-immigrant visa". However, the movement of people and the implementation of e-passport is subject to certain demands. Writing on policy implementation in South Africa, Koma (2014) observes significant factors in policy implementation. To Koma (2014, p. 43), the implementation of policies needs to consider financial, organizational and administrative requirements. Koma's views are in harmony with Brynard (2010, p. 194) who emphasizes four primary factors that influences policy implementation, namely policy process, institutional setting, and leadership capacity.

Haque (2011, p. 14) also compares how some Asian countries have adopted reforms in passport delivery. India for instance, has put in place a system 'to reform the front-end activities of passport issuance and dispatch of passports among others in order to ensure timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable manner' for passport issuance. Unlike India, Malaysia being the first country to implement biometric passports was the first also to install a technology to read and authenticate the data in the passport chip. However, with widespread adoption of ePassport technology around the world, international airports in the USA, the UK and other countries have installed the technology. According to Haque (2011, p. 14) The Singaporean passport is a popular target of counterfeits and thus the country adopted several measures to foil forgers including utilizing digital photos and adopting a biometric passport.

According to Passport Canada (2012, p. 11), the organization ensures that passports are provided for the benefit of all Canadians because they are also used as identity documents. Since 1990, Passport Canada has been a special operating agency that reports to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Unlike most federal government departments, Passport Canada does not generally receive government appropriations (taxpayers' money) from parliament. Passport Canada operates on a cost-recovery basis meaning that it funds its daily operations using the fees paid by passport applicants.

Unlike Canada, the Australian Passport Office, as a division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issues passports to Australian citizens, both in Australia and overseas. Its mandate is set out in the Australian Passports Act 2005 and related laws. While it does charge user fees, the Australian passport office is funded through government allocations and the modalities of which are set in the Passports Funding Agreement (Passport Canada, 2012, p.11).

2.4 Public Service Delivery under Centralized Systems

Centralization refers to the concentration of authority or power at the top most level of administrative hierarchy. This implies local or lower administrative authorities referring problems to the central unit for decision making and that the latter are exist only for implementation of the decisions. Centralization also means local authorities surrendering power, authority and autonomy to the central unit; the headquarters (Marume and Jubenkanda, 2016). This definition of centralization considers an organization and, therefore, public service delivery as the ultimate sphere in which the politics of centralization play.

Holzer et al (2009) argue that public service delivery can be centralized. By centralization, governments or government agents, departments take control of provision of the services. This implies that service delivery is done at one place. The problem with a centralized system of public service delivery is bureaucracies associated with government machinery. Mansoor and William (2008) note that public services are delivered through complex bureaucratic systems which often times hamper the effective and efficient delivery of public services. Bureaucracies tend to consume time and, therefore, inconvenience clients seeking the services (Heeks, 1999). Marume and Jubenkanda (2016) argue that centralization leads to inefficient delivery of public services because the local authorities have to refer to headquarters or central units in terms of decision making and that the central unit is overburdened with work from the local units.

Opponents of centralized system of public service delivery argue that the state or its agents have limited capacity to deal with problems that ordinary people face in their daily lives, hence, decentralization as the best way of delivering public services

(Urvikis, 2103). Holzer et al, (2009) argue that centralized system of providing public services leverages on economies of scale and therefore reduces the cost of production and delivery. Economies of scale improve the quality of services. According to Heeks (1999), in a centralized system, senior public managers control the costs, pervasive impacts and potential failures. The centralized system of providing public services works better in a country with a relatively small population as opposed to a country with a big population. It is possible for governments or government agents to manage expectations from the population in a small population as opposed to big population (Holzer et al, 2009, Okojie, 2009).

In a centralized system providing public services the state is the determining agent on where, when and how to deliver public services. Citizenry participation does not matter hence it second position. This approach assumes that it is the sole responsibility of government or government agents to provide public services (Okojie, 2009). Besley and Coates (2000) argue that in a centralized system, policy choices are determined by the state through elected representatives (the legislature). This corroborates with the observation by Okojie (2009) that government is mandated to provide public goods or services.

2.5 Public Service Delivery under decentralised systems

The debate as to whether decentralization is the best form of public service delivery has been ongoing without any conclusive evidence in the body of literature. Treisman, (2000, p 71) poses ask: whether “decentralized governments provide public goods and services more or less effectively than those in more centralized states” and the evidence is inconclusive. The concept of decentralization is used in different contexts; public service delivery, politics, management and governance to mention just a few (Marume and Jubenkanda, 2016). There are several dimensions and concepts of decentralization that ought to be systematically analyzed in order to achieve a more reorganized and workable financial, administrative, or service delivery systems. This also is country tailored, without losing the key message of the concept itself.

2.6 Definitions of Decentralization

According to World Bank (2005, p.1), decentralization refers to “the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations and or the private sector”. On the one hand, Steunenburg and Mol (1997, p.234) view decentralization as a “public sector reform conceived as changes in the distribution of tasks between different levels of government.” Rondinelli (2006, p.433), on the other hand, defines decentralization as the “transfer of responsibilities and authority to lower levels within the central government (Deconcentration), or from centre to local government units (devolution) and governmental organization (delegation) or from government to private sector involving deregulation and privatization.”

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of decentralization is drawn from the public service delivery perspective. The OECD (2005, p.1) defines decentralization or devolution as the “transfer of public functions from higher tiers to lower tiers of governance. It can be administrative (transfer of civil servants and public functions to local level)”. The transfer of public functions, in this context, can also be described as territorial where the central unit (headquarters) establishes administrative units in areas, regions and districts with decision making powers albeit having limits. This is motivated by the desire to create administrative efficiency, better decision making and quick problem solving (Marume and Jubenkanda, 2016).

The OECD further observes that the transfer of the functions can be intra-organisational or inter-organisational. The transfer of public functions implies transferring “decision making” from a central unit to a lower or local unit. Brosio (2014), explains that this does not consist giving up the power to collect or spend revenue to the local or lower units by the central units. Marume and Jubenkanda (2016) propound that view that decentralisation is about dispersing authority among the lower levels of administrative system. Oates (1972) corroborates that decentralisation of public service delivery is likely to improve service delivery because local authorities have superior access to information about the people.

Decentralisation also refers to the transference of obligation, duty and responsibility for the provision of public services to the locally elected authorities. It is argued in the literature that decentralisation has become a key benchmark on assessing countries' compliance to the Development Goals (DGs) since many of these goals are premised on outcomes that are increasingly within the realm of responsibility of local authorities (Robinson, 2007). Currently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide such a refocus towards that service delivery assessment.

Besley and Coate (2000) argue that in a decentralised system, the key to successfully deliver public goods or services is to let locally elected representatives decide which services are good for the population. As opposed to the centralised system of providing public services, proponents of decentralisation argue that governments or government agents do not have the capacity to meet the needs of the people and therefore must decentralise to achieve that (Okojie, 2009, and Heeks, 1999).

Furthermore, central governments decentralise provision of public services in order to allow for local participation of people in decision making as well as quelling regional discontent from provinces, which is political (Okojie, 2009). Heeks (1999) further argues that decentralisation may be motivated by the desire to remove control from central units to local units. All these seem to be political motivations for advancing the decentralisation theory. However, Clark (2012) argues that shifting power from central units to local units, including public service professionals, decentralisation sets the environment for sustainable growth, better public services and a stronger society.

2.7 Dimensions and Forms of Decentralization

This study explains four types of decentralisation as explained by Rondinelli, D. A., Nellis J. R. and Cheema G. S et al, (1983) and Schneider (2003). These are political decentralisation, administrative decentralisation, fiscal decentralisation and market decentralisation. Considering the various concepts highlighted is useful towards achieving a successful decentralization and also forms an opportunity to see how best they can be coordinated. However, the overlaps call for a more comprehensive approach in implementing them. The different forms of the political, administrative,

fiscal and market decentralization can be determined across countries, within countries and even within sectors (Hossain, n.d.).

2.7.1 Political decentralisation

Political decentralisation entails transfer of authority to a sub national body with the aim of giving citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is often associated with pluralistic and representative government, but it can also support democratisation by giving citizens, or their representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies (Islam, 2014). Political decentralisation expect that choices made with more prominent support will be better educated and more pertinent to different enthusiasm for society than those made distinctly by national political leaders. The idea suggests that the determination of needs by the local authorities' provides significant opportunity to know better their political jurisdiction and needs hence a better understanding towards the requirements of their communities (Islam, 2014).

Political decentralisation often requires that governments embark on constitutional or statutory reforms. These may include the development of more inclusive democratic processes where several political parties participate, the strengthening of legislatures, development of local political units, as well as the creation of an environment that encourages effective public interest groups' participation. Political decentralisation is manifested through devolution. This calls for a deliberate devolution of decision making which is the shift of authority for decision-making, finance and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status (Islam, 2014).

2.7.2 Administrative decentralisation

Administrative decentralisation seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government (World Bank, 2005). It entails transfer of functional responsibilities to the local level in full or partial. These responsibilities may include health care service, schools management, human resource and personnel management, and infrastructure development. There are three major forms of administrative decentralisation, namely deconcentration, delegation and devolution which have varied characteristics.

Deconcentration is usually considered as the weakest form of decentralisation and is associated with unitary states which need to redistribute decision making authority, financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government (World Bank, 2005). It involves the transfer of workload from one ministry to the other or from ministry to its field or local administration (Ali, 1995; Islam, 1997). Under deconcentration responsibilities shift from central government officials in the capital city to regional, provincial or district level offices. A number of countries, including Kenya, Tunisia, Tanzania, Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan, Philippine, and Thailand practise this type of decentralisation (Hyden, 1983; Rondinelli and Nellis, 1986; Islam 1997).

Delegation as a form of decentralisation entails the shift of responsibility for decision making and administration of public functions from the central government to semiautonomous organizations that are accountable to it but may not be solely controlled by the central government. This practice is mainly utilized by developing countries when creating boards, authorities, corporations or any other separate agencies as they carry their responsibilities (Islam, 1997).

Devolution entails the transfer of significant power, including law making and revenue raising, by law to the locally elected bodies (Conyers, 1986). Devolution involves transfer of power to autonomous units governed independently and separately without the direct control of central government (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983).

2.7.3 Fiscal Decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation involves the transfer of financial responsibilities to facilitate the decentralised functions. This may entail even the revenue-generating authority that enables the local governments to decide their own expenditures. The forms of Fiscal decentralisation include; self-financing or cost recovery through user charges, co-financing or co-production arrangements. In this regard, service users are actively involved in providing services and the needed infrastructure through monetary or labour contributions (Islam, 2005). It also involves the expansion of local revenues base where taxes levied on property, sales or indirect charges are collected. It further

empowers the local authorities to borrow and mobilize either national or local government resources through loan guarantees and inter-governmental transfers. This becomes a notable shift of general revenues from taxes collected by the government to local governments for general or specific uses (Islam, 2005).

2.7.4 Economic or Market Decentralization

Economic or market decentralisation involve passing over of the functions exclusively performed by government to the private sector and normally manifested through privatization and deregulation. Economic decentralisation promotes the engagement of businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, and other nongovernment organizations (Ahmed, 1990).

Privatization includes an allowance for private enterprise to perform functions that had previously been monopolized by government, contracting out the provision or management of public services or facilities to commercial enterprise and transferring responsibility for providing services from the public to the private sector through the divestiture of state owned enterprise among others (Islam, 2005).

Deregulation reduces the legal constraints on private participation in service provision and allows competition among private suppliers for services that have been provided by government or by regulated monopoly. In recent years, most developing countries have adopted privatisation and deregulation as more attractive alternatives to implement proper service delivery. Local governments are also privatising by contracting out service provision or administration (World Bank, 2005).

It is worth noting that the discussion about the forms of decentralisation has different implications for various organisational purposes especially taking into account the degree of power and authority to be transferred, but the forms are not mutually exclusive. In reality, however, most governments use a combination of the four forms in their policy (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). The area of the country size and distribution of its population is critical in determining the degree and types of decentralisation required. This also determines further the type of resource, and the

guilty of communications, the existing political and economic structure and the nature of the country's goals (Conyers, 1988; and Islam, 1997).

Looking at decentralisation from a developing countries perspective, is not only a reform policy but rather an essential part in the development process. Although political or fiscal decentralisation is not necessarily associated with New Public Management, managerial decentralisation is. NPM and decentralisation are both inclined to feature on any academic list of the reform strategy for the public services of developing countries. Drawing from the foregoing, it might be concluded that the two are closely linked although it may be shown that such a close link may not be straightforward as assumed.

Phirinyane (2009) posits that the drivers for decentralization vary and could include; a claim for local level democratic control and self-government, the supposed economic, administrative and political rewards of decentralisation, post conflict rebuilding, interests of local and national political elites, and demand from the World Bank and other donor agencies (Devas and Delay, 2006).

This study leans much towards administrative decentralisation in the form of delegation and deconcentration. Decentralisation in this study is understood to have been driven mostly by the supposed economic, administrative and political rewards expected to be gained by government in its effort to achieve good governance. The aim is to bring services closer to the Citizenry to enhance development (Mawhood, 1983). Whatever the reasons for decentralisation and the form it may take, the key point is to provide efficient and effective services for human development. Decentralisation is a multifaceted process and is a result of the framework within which it occurs (Smoke, 2003).

After attaining independence and, consequently, encountering economic problems, most developing countries, just like Malawi did, resorted to decentralising provision of public goods and services and therefore improve the efficacy and responsiveness of public services (Okojie, 2009). These developing countries devolve power and resources to local bodies that are increasingly assuming responsibility for managing

the delivery of essential services to the people (Robinson, 2007). Wunsch, (1999) observes that another justification for decentralisation is that development literature shows a highly centralised (top-down) approach to service delivery is expensive, cumbersome, inflexible and prone to abuse. ADR (cited in Okojie 2009) observes that the private sector has a role to play in public service delivery.

However, some of the public goods or services are unprofitable. It is only logical, therefore, to decentralise to local units. Heeks (1999) argues that decentralisation reduces the communication gap between the service provider and service consumer and therefore likely to meet the needs of the service consumer. Decentralisation reduces the time consumers take to access a service and the associated costs. Andrews, Boyne, Law, and Walker, R.M (2009, p.62), states that the objective of decentralization is premised on empowering service managers to improve service delivery “while effective strategizing is thought to make organizations flexible and fit for purpose.”

Proponents of decentralisation consider the concept as one of the most imperative vehicles that can be used to reform the public service. Okojie (2009), Hankla and Downs (2010), for example, contend that both donors and governments consider decentralisation to be a tool for bringing service delivery closer to the people and improve the central government’s responsiveness to public demands. This, consequently, enhances efficiency and quality of public services. Okojie (2009) argue that;

“Decentralization empower lower units to feel more involved and in control. In this association, decentralization is linked to the concept of subsidiarity that is, making decisions at the lowest feasible level. It is also meant to reduce overload and congestion at the centre and speed up operational decision-making and implementation. Decentralization does this by minimizing the bottlenecks associated with powers concentrated at just one or two points in the hierarchy of a public service organization or ministry. In other words, proponents argue, it will bring about greater efficiency of public management, through improved coordination and shorter decision-making hierarchies”.
(p. 52).

Just as with any system for delivering public services, decentralisation has negative effects. Heeks (1999) argues that decentralisation duplicates effort in the sense that system operations, maintenance and support are duplicated. Wolfe (1999) adds that decentralised methodologies constrain the central unit's ability to plan and control, leading to some decentralised systems tendency by to be developed and used without due care. In this regard, therefore, decentralisation is likely to promote factions thereby, threatening organisational order. Decentralization also leads to maladministration that cannot deal with emergencies (Marume and Jubenkanda, 2016).

2.8 Empirical literature on merits and demerits of Decentralisation

Empirical literature on the merits of decentralisation express mixed views about the value of Decentralisation, with some authors arguing that it is good for effective and efficient public service delivery and with others arguing that it makes very little positive contribution to public service delivery (Ahmad et al, 2005; Treisman, 2000). Shah, Theresa, and Heng-fu, Z (2004) conducted a study about the empirical literature about decentralisation. The study employed a form of meta-analysis that basically looked at the available literature and drew conclusions from it. The analysis established that there is no conclusive evidence in the body of literature that supports the efficiency and effectiveness of decentralisation over centralisation; regrettably, the literature provides little guidance to inform this debate. This is because some studies found positive impacts of decentralisation while others found negative ones and yet others were inconclusive.

From a political view of power, the devolution reform agenda has offered very little incentive to continue with the program because it has been implemented on an *ad hoc* basis and in s disjointed manner (Chinsinga, 2008).

2.8.1 Decentralization in Malawi

In an attempt to reduce poverty through efficient and effective public service delivery as well as strengthening democratic institutions, the Government of Malawi adopted decentralisation at the dawn of multiparty democracy. Consequently, the new constitution created two levels of government: central and local. Prior to that, during

the one-party era, there was one level of government; the central government (Chinsinga, 2008; and Chiweza, 2010). The decentralization of power was thus premised on the belief and thinking that poverty reduction would be achieved through efficient and effective public service delivery. As a result, local governments were deemed proper vehicles for achieving this (Chinsinga, 2008).

During the early stages of democratisation in Malawi, local governance never took off. This is attributed to the unwillingness of donors to continue with the process albeit starting it (Chinsinga, 2008). Consequently, this crippled the drive to devolve the provision of basic public services and therefore bring decision makers and the ultimate beneficiaries closer. It was not until district assemblies were formed that local governance somehow took off.

However, even after the formation of the district assemblies, the provision of public services has been elusive due to the fact that district assemblies are poorly funded and have very weak financial bases (Chiweza, 2005). In any case, literature seems to suggest that the devolution of political power from central government to local government has done very little to reduce poverty through improved public service delivery. According to Chinsinga (2005a, 2008) and Chiweza (2005), one of the causes of failure for local governments to improve public service delivery is the power struggle that has also consequently contributed to failures to reduce poverty at large.

In most district assemblies, power struggle exist between and among ward counsellors and members of parliament, and also between counsellors and chiefs. This fragile situation has the potential to stifle the already strained progress. Chinsinga (2005a) and Chiweza (2005) attribute this fragility to the prevailing thinking that ward counsellors are threats to members of parliament in the sense that the former vie for the latter's candidacy in the subsequent general elections.

2.8.2 Positive impacts of Decentralisation

Alderman (1998) concluded that decentralisation does help in improving the wellbeing of the poor. His study conducted in Albania observed that decentralisation has a positive impact on social assistance. Alderman's work was premised on the thinking that decentralising the responsibility for monitoring poverty and managing anti-poverty programs to local authorities should be able to reduce the cost of getting information about people's income and needs (Alderman, 1998).

The study used regression analysis to test the statistical significance of information. The results found that the poorer the family, the more social assistance it received. Similar results were reported in Argentina for a study that was conducted on the impact of decentralisation on social sector outcomes for a period ranging from 1970-1994 using regression analysis (Habibi, 2001). The Argentinian study found a positive correlation between education, health services intra-regional disparities and fiscal decentralisation. Thus, fiscal decentralisation is associated with improved education as well as health services and it reduces intra-regional disparities. Vazquez (2011) reported that decentralisation in Bolivia resulted in a positive relationship between public investments in education and other services on the one hand, and local needs. Habibi et al (2003) observed that revenue decentralization in Argentina led to reduced infant mortality rate.

Using Autoregressive Distributive lag model (ARDL), Abdur, Khan, Ali, Qureshi, Ahmad and Numera (2017) found that, although the results were insignificant, there is a relationship between fiscal decentralisation and school enrolment to the extent that devolved expenditure increased enrolment in primary schools in Pakistan. Galasso and Ravallion (2001) using regression analysis, found that in a decentralised targeting anti-poverty program in Bangladesh, the poor as opposed to the better offs are the ones that indeed access help.

2.8.3 Negative impacts of decentralisation

The theory of fiscal decentralisation holds that devolution of the fiscal leads to efficient provision of government services at the local level (Azfar and Livingston, 2007). A study in Uganda revealed that there is little evidence to support the

decentralisation theory. As a matter of observation, the Uganda study revealed that local officials do not know the needs of the people (Azfar and Livingston, 2007). . Bodman et al (2009) in Australia recorded similar results to Azfar and Livingston (2007). In the study, although much emphasis was positioned on Fiscal decentralisation, Macroeconomic Conditions and Economic Growth in Australia, negative results for decentralisation were observed. Specifically, the results showed that there is no relationship between fiscal decentralisation and economic growth let alone improving public service delivery and no relationship was found with the size of the public sector. Azfar et al (2000) also conducted studies in Uganda and the Philippines about the impact of fiscal decentralisation of public service delivery that found that decentralization impacted public service delivery negatively. Ravallion (1998) found that in Argentina decentralization also had a negative impact on the public service delivery because it generated substantial horizontal inequality in public spending on poor areas.

Another study by Khaleghian (2003), on the impact of political decentralisation on childhood immunization in low and middle-income countries, found that decentralisation had different effects. The study used a time series data set of 140 countries from 1980 to 1997 and results showed that decentralisation in low income countries had “higher coverage rate” for child immunization as opposed to the centralised countries. As opposed to centralised states, decentralisation had lower coverage in middle economies, Pepinsky and Wihardja (2009) conducted a study on the impact of decentralisation on national economic performance in Indonesia. The study employed a synthetic case control methodology using sub-national data and its results indicate that decentralisation had no effect on Indonesia’s economic performance.

2.9 Observations from the empirical literature

One outstanding feature of the studied literature is the commonality in political and fiscal decentralisation. Almost all the studies focused on the impact of fiscal and political decentralisation on public service delivery. In this regard, there exists a research gap about the impact of decentralisation on public service delivery within an organization (vertical decentralisation), which needed to be addressed. Marume and

Jubenkanda (2016) observes that decentralisation is of two types: political and administrative.

Furthermore, decentralisation is subdivided into territorial, functional and administrative categories. Broadly, administrative and territorial decentralisation speaks to the same objective: establishment of area administrative units (field offices) by the higher authority (headquarters). The formation of regional, district and area public service delivery points are among the examples. These are vested with decision-making powers within specified limits and thus function in an independent manner.

Mintzberg (1979) observed that vertical decentralisation is about the dispersal of formal decision-making authority to lower levels in the hierarchy of an organisation. It is this aspect of vertical decentralisation that is lacking in the studied literature. Ironically, most studies reviewed employed econometric analysis that is extensively used in determining the impact of a policy. Econometric analysis is a better tool for determining causality between independent variables and dependent variables. Decentralisation mainly dwells on improving service quality; there is also need to look at service quality in the literature.

2.10 Service quality

Zeithmal (2000) argued that service quality is very crucial in the modern environment and has been rated as an enhancing aggressive advantage and increasing satisfying relationship with users of services. In many economies of many countries, the service industry has a pivotal role and its importance cannot be overemphasized. In today's global competitive environment delivering quality service is considered an essential success and survival strategy (Parasuraman et al, 1985; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Betty, 1990).

Additionally, some public sector institutions have encountered increasing public pressure to deliver quality services with improved efficiencies (Randall and Senior, 1994). The needs and expectations of the public regarding quality requirements of services the government offers to the public have evolved significantly. Service

quality is the overall measurement of a service by its users (Eshghi, Roy and Ganguli, 2008). It is the extent to which a service meets users' needs and expectations. Service quality is the ability of the organisation to meet or exceed customer expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty, 1988). It is the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Betty, 1990). Customers' expectations when compared with their perceptions normally determine the perceived quality of service by suppliers. In a case where the customers' expectations are greater than performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory, hence customer dissatisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty, 1985; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

A service is deemed to be of quality when it consistently meets the expectations of its consumers (Wisniewski and Donnelly, 1996). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty (1988) observes that service quality is a type of approach that could be connected to satisfaction but the two are not the same; quality arises from an evaluation of expectations with perceptions of performance. Quality of service is an abstract and indefinable expression due to its intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production and consumption. Consumers' assessment of overall service quality depends on the gap between their expectations before a service, and perceptions about the actual level of service delivery (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty, 1988). It is reasoned that the consumers' perception of service quality is formed from making and delivery stages all the way up to the receiving stage of the service at hand. The notion of service quality from a consumer's viewpoint includes both what the consumer expects and how such a consumer is serviced (Gronoroos, 2001).

After reviewing various sets of literature, it is clear that several efforts have been made by researchers to arrive at models that should be used to evaluate quality of service. One of such researchers Kang and James (2004) came up with two main positions of thought about measuring service quality, namely American and European perspectives.

The American perspective hub on functional quality is attributable to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty (1985, 1988) who developed this model to measure service

quality through functional quality dimensions. The model revealed that consumers appraise service quality over ten closely related proportions, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding consumer and accessibility to services. From these ten dimensions, the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) scale was derived.

There are five components that defines the model and these are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, which are redefined after combining earlier service quality dimensions

2.10.1 Tangibility

Parasurama, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), described tangibility in SERVQUAL model as a solid service evaluation tool especially on quality. However, Santos (2002) defines tangibles as the physical elements of a service especially bordering on the aspects such as the appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipment, personnel, and communication material.

2.10.2 Reliability

The component of reliability is one of the key service quality dimensions. In this dimension, the customers make use of measuring the quality of services being offered by the providers. It refers to, in other words, the ability to deliver the promised services consistently and correctly. Lovelock (1996) explains that studies on service quality, to some extent, have shown that most customers significantly value reliability on service delivery. However, Davis and Heineke (2005) go further to explain that, in service provision, reliability is associated with the capability to carry out the promised service consistently and accurately.

2.10.3 Responsiveness

Responsiveness concerns itself with public officers' willingness to help the citizenry and deliver timely service. Markland, Vickery and Davis (1998) conceptualise responsiveness as the readiness and willingness of a service provider to assist their customers in the course of providing timely services.

2.10.4 Empathy

Empathy refers to the helpful, individualised attention that an institution gives its consumers. Empathy determines the extent to which specific attention is given to individual customers (Markland, et al., 1998). In this same line of thought, Kotler and Keller (2009) describes empathy as the capability to demonstrate considerate and individualised attention to customers.

2.10.5 Assurance

Assurance analyses the awareness and politeness of public officers and their capability to encourage the needed trust and in the process develop the confidence. Davis and Heineke (2005) narrow down the concept to politeness of a service provider's employees and their capability to express confidence, customer safety, and calmness. Therefore, assurance, generally, centres on confidence, customer safety, kindness, and courteousness or respect of service providers. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty (1988) propound the view that the SERVQUAL model could be taken on board to fit specific research needs of particular institutions because in his reasoning he realises the important challenges in the forms and nature of services in different sectors.

The European perspective argues that there are other vital aspects key to measurement of service quality. This view originates from the work by Gronorooos (1984) who put up a technical and functional model of measurement. This model picked out three major elements to defend the service quality of an institution, namely technical quality, functional quality and institutional image. The combination of these three elements, make a positive attitude towards service delivery. Gronorooos (1984) also demonstrates that consumers' assessment of perceived performance against their perceived service quality result in a measure of service quality.

Technical quality dimension refers to service outcomes from a service provider to a consumer. It is the quality of what consumers in reality benefit as a consequence of their transactions with the service providing institution and is fundamental to them and their assessment of quality of the service. The functional quality element concerns itself with the practice of service delivery to consumers, i.e. how the consumers get

the technical outcome. Institutional image refers to how the consumers view the institution offering services.

The analysis of literature on service quality clearly testifies that studies done so far concerning quality service delivery did not focus much on determining the service quality in the face of decentralised services. This study, therefore, fills a knowledge gap by analysing customer satisfaction in terms of quality of government services.

2.11 Theoretical framework

The main thrust of this study was the analysis of the impact of decentralisation on service quality in the public domain. Therefore, its theoretical context is based mainly on the SERVQUAL model. The SERVQUAL model recommends that customers evaluate the quality of services on five discrete dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The SERVQUAL tool is made of 22 statements for assessing consumer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of a service. Perceived service quality results from consumers comparisons of their expectations with their perceptions of service delivered by the service providers (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Betty, 1990). Therefore, this study argues that the aspect underpinning the delivery of perceived good quality service should in fact be by meeting the expectations of the customers. Consequently, outstanding service quality equals going beyond the customers' expectations. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) proposed that customer expectations are beliefs about a service that act as standards beside which service performance is reviewed.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty (1988) outlined that customer expectations are what the customers feel a service should bring rather than what might be on offer. Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Betty (1990) recognized four factors that persuade customers' expectations; word-of-mouth communications, personal needs, past occurrence, and external communications. A gap is, thus, created when the perception of delivered service is different from customer expectations. Such a gap is filled by identifying and implementing courses of action that affect perceptions or expectations or both (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

In their findings, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) went further to explain that SERVQUAL had been put across to be “applicable across a broad spectrum of services” and the applicable format could be changed to fit specific needs, and that it might be best valuable when put in use to follow service quality trends from time to time. They suggested that the SERVQUAL model could be extended to measure gaps in quality hence the possibility of using it as a problem-solving tool for assisting institutional leadership in identifying service quality shortfalls.

2.11.1 Functioning of the SERVQUAL Model

SERVQUAL represents service quality as the gap between the expectations of the customers from the offered service and the customer's perceptions of the received service. Analysing this, requires respondents to answer questions about both their expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al, 1988). The SERVQUAL measure is deemed an attitude measure because of its perceived usage as opposed to actual service received which is not considered as being the same as, satisfaction (Parasuraman et. al, 1988). The difference between expectations and perceptions is called the gap which is the determinant of customers' perception of service quality. This study analysed this gap in terms of the difference between passport applicants' expectations and perceptions of service.

2.11.2 Critique of the SERVQUAL Model

Notwithstanding its growing popularity and widespread application, SERVQUAL has been subjected to a number of theoretical and operational criticisms (Buttle, 1996). The theoretical criticisms include paradigmatic objections, the gaps model, the process orientation, and the dimensionality view (Daniel and Berinyuy, 2010).

The paradigmatic objections school of thought views SERVQUAL as being based on a disconfirmation paradigm rather than an attitudinal paradigm, hence its failure to draw on established economic, statistical and psychological theory. In contrast, the gaps model argues that there is little evidence that customers evaluate service quality in terms of P – E gaps (Daniel and Berinyuy, 2010).

The Process orientation also views SERVQUAL as focusing on the process of service delivery as opposed to outcomes of the service encounter. Lastly, concerning

dimensionality, SERVQUAL's five dimensions are viewed as not universal; the number of dimensions comprising service quality is contextualized; items do not always load on to the factors which one would expect; and there is a high degree of inter-correlation between these five dimensions of **reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy and responsiveness** (Daniel and Berinyuy, 2010).

The operational criticisms views the term *Expectations* as polysemic. Under this concept, Consumers use standards other than expectations to evaluate service quality; and SERVQUAL fails to measure absolute service quality expectations. It argues that the item composition of four or five items cannot capture the variability within each service quality dimension and that the Moments of Truth (MOT) customers' assessments of service quality may vary from MOT to MOT. Furthermore, it argues that the reversed polarity of items in the scale causes respondent error, the seven-point linker scale is flawed, the two administrations of the instrument (expectations and perceptions) cause boredom and confusion, and that the variance extracted results in the over SERVQUAL score that accounts for a disappointing proportion of item variances (Daniel and Berinyuy, 2010).

2.11.3 Application of the SERVQUAL Model in different contexts

In one of their studies, Kumar, Kee, and Manshor (2009), used the SERVQUAL model to determine the relative importance of critical factors in delivering service quality of banks in Malaysia. As a modification of the SERVQUAL model, they considered six dimensions; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance empathy and convenience which collectively are med of 26 statements. Convenience was included because it was "an important determinant of satisfaction for banking customers in Malaysia and contributes very highly in the customers' appreciation of the quality of services offered by the bank" (Kumar et al, 2009, p.214).

In their findings, tangibility, reliability, convenience and competence were revealed to be the critical factors. These variables had significant differences between expectations and perceptions with tangibility having the smallest gap and convenience the largest gap. It was, therefore, recommended that "banks need to be more

competent in delivering their services and fulfilling the assurance of customers and providing the banking services more conveniently” (Kumar et al, 2009, p.211).

Another study by Curry and Sinclair (2002, p. 197) was conducted in an effort to assess the quality of physiotherapy services. The study used the SERVQUAL model in three physiotherapy services in Dundee, Scotland. Their focus was to consider the ten original criteria for evaluation and combine them into five; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance (including competence, courtesy, credibility, and security) and empathy (including access, communication, and forty five understandings). The five dimensions were used to measure the quality gap with the application of an adaptable 22 item survey instruments. The study was mainly about the customer expectations and perceptions. They sought to measure five gaps developed by Parasuraman et al (1985). They found that despite having a negative perception gap, people still appreciated the services being offered and had hope that service could still improve. The findings, hence, proved that assurance and empathy were very important in their research. This was a confirmation on the applicability of the SERVQUAL model in public sector service quality in spite of the criticisms of the model (Curry et al., 2002p. 197).

In an effort to measure service quality in the information technology sector, Badri Abdulla and Al-Madani (2003), made an assessment and application of the SERVQUAL model. For their research gap they used a larger sample that differs from other studies that address the dimensionality problem of the IT centre-adapted SERVQUAL instruments. The study was also aimed at identifying the gaps in service quality in the IT centres in the three institutions of higher education in the United Arab Emirates. The study's findings revealed that there was an inadequacy of dimensions for a perfect fit. However, based on their feedback, respondents felt that SERVQUAL is a useful indicator for IT centre service quality in institutions of higher education (Badri et al., 2003).

The model has also been used in the telecommunication and the hospitality industries. In a quest to measure service quality in the telecommunication sector, Negi (2009) used the model to determine customer satisfaction through perceived quality in the

industry. The study revealed that “reliability, empathy and network quality proved to be significantly effective in contributing to overall service quality and overall customer satisfaction with mobile services” (Negi, 2009, p. 38). In the hospitality industry, Akan (1995) sampled four stars hotels and found that “competence and courtesy combined with assurance were most important attributes influencing the perception of quality” (p.43).

The SERVQUAL Model has been adopted by many government research projects to measure the quality of public services. In Scotland, for instance, Wisniewski and Donnelly (1996), while analysing the key issues public sector institutions needed to deal with in their search for an adequate measure of service quality, assessed the potential of the SERVQUAL instrument to transform the public sector.

In considering its applicability, the present study employed the instrument in the context of passport delivery and subjected its dimensions to measuring the service quality and customer satisfaction. This enabled the researcher to identify service quality gaps and to, in turn, come up with dimensions with which consumers are satisfied.

The study recognised criticisms concerning the applicability of the SERVQUAL model by some researchers (Buttle, 1994; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). However, it proceeded to adopt the model because of its great relevance to the context of passport delivery. The study was also fully aware that the instrument is weak due to the abstract and elusive nature of service quality concept resultant from services that are intangible, heterogeneous and inseparable from production and consumption.

The present study, therefore, evaluated the service quality as offered by the decentralised services by using the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model. With the aid of the model, the study was able to determine the extent to which the decentralised reforms have improved the service quality and level of citizen satisfaction from the services offered.

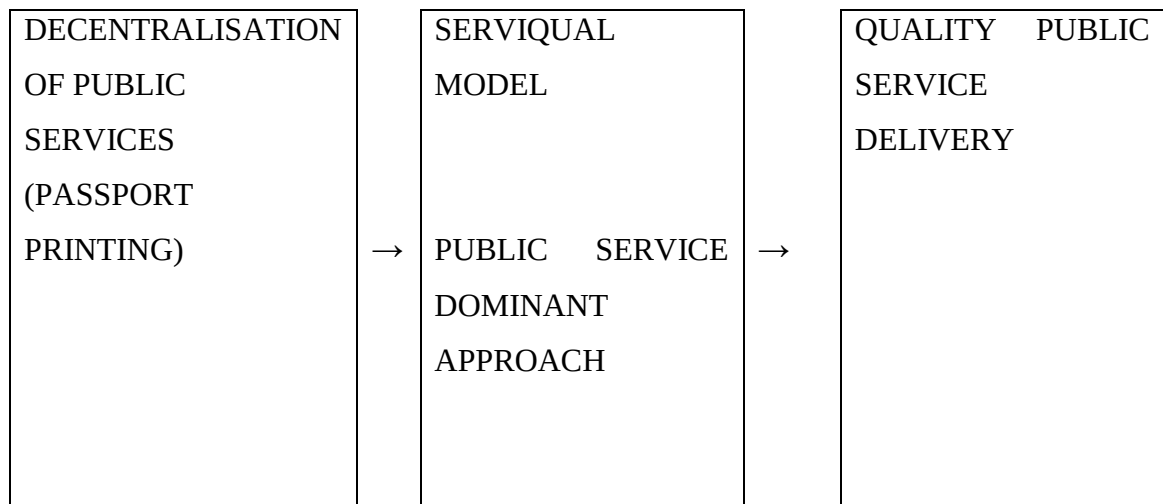


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Source; researcher's construction showing relationship between theory and research topic.

Figure1 above illustrates the connection between the study and the theory. The study analyses how decentralised public service delivery using a SERVQUAL Model measure impacts on quality service delivery at DICS by employing the case of decentralised passport printing service.

2.11.4 The Public Service-Dominant Approach

Since this study focuses on public service delivery, it was in the researcher's interest to also consider the public service–dominant approach. This approach emphasises the distinctive characteristics of services and their impact upon their management. It takes a holistic and systemic approach to the delivery of public services and acknowledges the central role of service user expectations and experience to the performance of public services (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012).

The public service dominant approach is significant in a number of areas in public management and public services delivery. These areas are; the strategic orientation of public service organizations (PSOs), the role of marketing in the delivery of public services, the coproduction of public services, and the operational management of these services (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012).

Proponents of the public service dominant approach to service delivery developed four propositions as the basis of a new public service-dominant paradigm. The first proposition states that by adopting a public service-dominant approach to public services delivery both the citizen and user are situated as essential stakeholders of the public policy and public service delivery processes and their engagement in these processes adds value to both (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012). It is worth noting that this study situates both the citizen and users as essential stakeholders in the delivery of passports. Their views and opinions about the service shape the image not only of the DICS, but the public sector as a whole in delivering services to citizens.

The second proposition states that a public service-dominant marketing approach is essential both for turning the strategic intent of a public service into a specific service promise or offering and for shaping the expectations of this service by their users and the role of staff in delivering it (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012). This proposition occupies a central role in this study as the study examines how staff at the DICS have embraced the decentralized services and establish their role in meeting specific intention of the reform process. This proposition also offers a robust framework for developing trust within public service delivery both between PSOs and with service users in an effort to build public trust with government services.

The third proposition propounds that “by taking a public service-dominant approach, coproduction becomes an inalienable component of public services delivery that places the experiences and knowledge of the service user at the heart of effective public service design and delivery” (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012, p.149). Last but not least, the fourth proposition states that “in the absence of the public service-dominant approach, the public service operations and management will only lead to more efficient but not more effective public services” (Ibid). In other words, services rendered in the absence of public service dominant approach do not serve the consumers in the best manner possible. This preposition clearly justifies why the researcher has chosen a service dominant approach to guide the research in trying to establish how the decentralized services have met the desired outcomes or the promise in delivering quality services to the citizenry.

The service dominant approach offers the essential elements of effective public management practice within the new public governance. It recognizes and responds to the external, inter-organizational reality of this mode of public management as well as the need to embrace the processes and systemic character of public services delivery within it. It is only through such an approach as has been argued by its proponents, that genuinely sustainable models of public services delivery can be understood and developed (Osbornel, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012).

2.12 Summary

This Chapter has reviewed literature which informs the present study. It has, particularly, highlighted the critical existing literature and it has identified knowledge gaps that the study fills. The Chapter has also discussed the theoretical frameworks of the study and their applicability to it. Chapter 3 builds on the discussion in this Chapter to craft the study's research methodology that addresses the study's central research questions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's methodological approach. The chapter describes the mixed methods approach used by the study and outlines its population and sample of the study, its data-collecting and analysis methods, its ethical considerations, and its limitations.

3.2 Brief history of mixed research approach

The mixed methods approach gained recognition, use and acceptance as an alternative method of research for social sciences in the late 20th Century. The period preceding that was predominantly using the quantitative approach and qualitative approach. However, both quantitative and qualitative methods have shortcomings when used separately hence the advent of mixed methods (Doyle et al, 2009). The mixed methods approach is very pronounced in the health profession and regarded as the third major approach to research (Whitehead & Schneider, 2013; Doyle et al, 2009).

Uncertainty characterises the definition of the mixed methods approach. Since it is a new paradigm, researchers are yet to agree on the definition and literature is just inconclusive on the same. Giddings & Grant (2007) contend that researchers are working towards getting a definition for mixed methods. This raises the question of whether the methodology is adequate considering that users and proponents for the same cannot even agree on the definition.

Whitehead & Schneider (2013) and Tashakkori & Creswell (2007) argue that the question of the necessity of the definition is unclear in the literature and since the field is still evolving, the question and resultant discussion of the definition should be left open. Thus, for purposes of this research, the paper adopts a definition by Almalki, (2016) which view mixed research method as an empirical research that involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Despite the

inconclusiveness of literature concerning the definition of the mixed methods approach, some common understanding exists concerning its basic principles. When using the mixed methods approach in research, it is, for example, important to select the philosophical assumptions underpinning the methodology used. This is a world view through which the researcher envisages the research problem and the solutions. This thesis adopts the pragmatic and transformative philosophical underpinnings. The pragmatic approach is primarily concerned with the results of the research and not necessarily the means or the process involved (Halcomb, 2015).

The theory holds that the success of a research does not only depend on the exclusiveness of the theory and data used but also the moving back and forth between induction and deduction (Doyle et al, 2009; Halcomb, 2015; Whitehead & Schneider, 2013). Since this research involves critically analysing the performance of the DICS regarding passport issuance pre and post decentralisation, it was imperative that inductions and deductions be made hence the need to adopt the pragmatic approach. However, a transformative approach was also considered suitable due to cultural differences of the respondents.

Halcomb (2015) observes that a transformative approach takes into consideration the “cultural differences and injustices throughout the research process”. Combining the pragmatic and transformative approaches entails a multiple worldview. Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) posit that multiple worldviews can be used in research design. For instance, one can use interviews (qualitative) alongside numerical analysis (quantitative).

3.3 Mixed Methods Approach Design

Almalki (2016) contends that research design is a very important step in research. The research design reflects the researcher’s ideas that in turn inform the entire research. Creswell (2014) argues that researchers must question their knowledge and strategies that will inform the methods used and how data will be collected and analyzed.

This thesis has adopted the approach of looking at literature (qualitative) first before conducting data capturing (quantitative) and analysing both by linking them to

theories of decentralization. Following Creswell & Clark, (2007), the research design for this study is as follows:



Figure 2: Research Design model

Source: Author's construction based on the model of Creswell & Clark, (2007).

3.4 Rationale for a Mixed Research Approach

To properly analyse decentralisation and its effect on service delivery, there was need to measure the service quality provided by the DICS and carefully investigate people's expectation and perceptions with regard to passport delivery service. A comparison of systems operation from the pre-decentralisation and post-decentralisation periods must be critically analysed. To properly tackle all these, the study adopted a mixed research approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis is used. The adoption of a mixed research approach will bring in the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Almalki, 2016).

As explained above, a mixed research method is an empirical research that involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Almalki, 2016). It is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (Johnson et al, 2007, p. 120). Using the mixed research method enriches the study by enabling the researcher to formulate a greater degree of understanding of the impact of decentralization of passport printing services than if a single approach was adopted.

The fundamental principle of mixed research method is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of the problem

than either approach can use alone (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Although people tend to primarily associate case studies with qualitative research, such identification is not always correct (Bryman, 2008). Advocates of the case study design often favour qualitative research such as participant observation and unstructured interviewing because these methods are viewed as particularly important in the generation of an intensive, detailed examination of the case (Bryman, 2008). On the contrary, “case study designs are a home of quantitative research too; recognizing that both methods have limitations, researchers feel that biases inherent in many single methods could neutralize or cancel the biases of the other method” (Creswell, 2009;14). Therefore, a mixed method is ideal for case studies.

3.5 Study population

Creswell (1994) defines study population as the total of all individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher. This study sampled immigration officers who had been with DICS services during the pre and post-decentralisation periods, citizens who obtained passports prior and after decentralization and the media and interested individuals who wanted to speak out their views.

3.6 Population sample

Edriss (2003, p.) defines a sample as a set of elements taken from a larger population while sampling is a process of selecting representative number of elements from a population. Sampling is of much significant because it helps the researcher to get quality data unlike collecting data from the whole population. The study used purposive sampling technique to determine the sample size for passport beneficiaries in the citizenry. This technique enabled the researcher to target questionnaires at the right people. The study also used systematic random sampling to get a sample of immigration officers on which to target questionnaires and in depth interviews.

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method that works well with a small sample focusing on research participants who have knowledge on the topic (Saunders et al, 2009). Systematic random sampling, in contrast, is a probability type of sampling that selects only the first unit randomly, and picks the rest of the

units at fixed intervals. This sampling method is preferred because it is easier and less costly method of sampling and works better even in cases of large populations (Kothari 2004, p. 62).

The study used the DICS data base to draw the sample of passport beneficiaries and employees to be targeted with questionnaires. It targeted a total of eighty (80) respondents with questionnaires. Of the eighty, (74) were passport beneficiaries drawn purposively from the population of seven hundred and seventy thousand and nine hundred eighty two people (770 982). Out of the 74, forty (35) were from headquarters, twenty five (25) from the Regional Immigration Office Centre and fourteen (14) from Region Immigration Office North. The quantities differ due to the size of population in each region as shown below. The remaining six respondents were drawn systematically from the data base of immigration officers.

Table 1: Issued passport statistical Report

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Blantyre										
Passport Type	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Total Count	Grand Totals
Ordinary Passport	26,934	61,419	50,198	65,080	64,336	21,458	33,839	40,226	20,697	384,187
Diplomatic Passport	77	27	14	21	57	81	92	58	44	471
Service Passport	220	287	100	79	76	32	41	56	19	910
Temporary Passport	1,398	299	680	703	342	47	53	108	200	3,830
Minor Passport	1,172	2,350	2,342	2,691	3,465	1,752	2,525	2,559	1,300	20,156
Total Count Blantyre	29,801	64,382	53,334	68,574	68,276	23,370	36,550	43,007	22,260	409,554
Lilongwe										
Passport Type										
Ordinary Passport	14,815	32,550	21,554	28,866	30,794	14,438	20,567	23,064	12,017	198,665
Diplomatic Passport	31	37	19	29	116	123	163	129	65	712
Service Passport	409	474	110	76	167	104	95	138	72	1,645
Temporary Passport	351	95	25	45	6	6	77	170	151	926
Minor Passport	565	1,253	1,199	1,259	1,692	1,069	1,535	1,787	904	11,263
Total Count Lilongwe	16,171	34,409	22,907	30,275	32,775	15,740	22,437	25,288	13,209	213,211
Mzuzu										
Passport Type										
Ordinary Passport	7,102	21,642	15,326	20,398	23,069	8,736	17,615	19,150	5,118	138,156
Diplomatic Passport	1	1	-	6	4	2	4	3	3	24
Service Passport	28	21	13	7	11	3	5	4	1	93
Temporary Passport	1,177	61	-	1	2	6	287	347	19	1,900
Minor Passport	341	1,034	904	900	1,333	634	1,163	1,330	415	8,054
Total Count Mzuzu	8,649	22,759	16,243	21,312	24,419	9,381	19,074	20,834	5,556	148,227
Total Count Nationwide	54,621	121,550	92,484	120,161	125,470	48,491	78,061	89,129	41,025	770,992

Source; Researcher's own construction using immigration database

Six key informant interviewees were then selected from the sample of six hundred and eighty four (684) Immigration employees selected systematically from headquarters, RIO (C), and RIO (N) respectively.

3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 Use of literature

The study began with the review of various documents on decentralisation as general in Malawi and then evaluated documents in relation to reforms at the DICS. There after it proceeded to check the DICS data base in order to develop the sample for the population and to, in turn, analyse it.

3.7.2 Questionnaires

The study employed both self-administered and face-to-face questionnaires to respondents. Self-Administered questionnaires with both structure and semi-structured questions were administered to a sample population of passport beneficiaries. A self-administered questionnaire is a questionnaire designed specifically to be completed by a respondent without intervention of the researcher in collecting the data (Lavrakas, 2008). The questionnaires were hand delivered to respondents and collected thereafter.

The self-administered questionnaire was chosen basically because of its simplicity in administering as it could be administered to a larger sample within a short period of time and enable respondents to respond to questions anonymously thereby providing room for flexibility (Cohen and Marion 1983, and Bryman, 2008, p. 217). Bryman (2008) points out that, an important setback of the self-administered questionnaire is low response rate as well as the fact that it involves no probing of respondents. However, semi-structured questions offered respondents an opportunity to express more thereby mitigating the risk of non-probing effect.

Face-to-face questionnaires were also administered to six systematically selected DICS employees in order to allow the researcher probe more on officers depending on responses obtained from the other passport beneficiaries. Face-to-face questionnaire was chosen in this research because of its ability to allow an interviewer to ask

questions to a respondent in person, thereby giving the interviewer opportunity to explain and probe out questions (Cohen and Marion 1983; Bryman, 2008). The method also allows respondents to ask questions and get clarity on questions there by building good rapport for the research. It, furthermore, allows more complex questions as interviewer is present to clarify wording and probe for more information. Bryman, 2008, argues that face-to-face questionnaires can be arranged in such a manner that they are convenient for the participant to take part in the study and generally generate a higher response rate than that of other methods.

Face-to-face questionnaires, however, have their drawbacks as participants may have concerns about privacy and anonymity when answering questions face to face, and are less likely to give honest answers to sensitive questions. Additionally, participant's responses may be affected by interviewer's bias (Bryman, 2008), which was minimized in this research by assuring respondents of their anonymity.

3.7.3 In-depth Interviews

During face-to-face interview, respondents were probed more on semi-structured questions to generate more detailed data for the researcher. Interview guide was prepared by the researcher and had similar questions as those of the semi-structured questionnaires to enable the researcher generate an in- depth understanding of the challenges concerning decentralised passport printing services and how they can be addressed according to their perspective.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the application of logic and reasoning to refine the collected data (Zikumd et al, 2010). Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that data analysis is an activity based on data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. Therefore, the practical goal of data analysis is to find answers to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). Neuman (2011) views data analysis as the search for patterns in data. These patterns can be behaviour, objects, phases or ideas. Data can be organised and presented by the application of tables and diagrams.

The quantitative data collected through the above-mentioned methods required reduction, categorisation and interpretation in order to make sense out of it. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Excel was used to help the researcher develop frequency tables and charts respectively. Qualitative data was analysed by identifying themes and categories that would form patterns. The discussion of the findings are presented according to the generated themes identified and their relationship to the literature reviewed.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study employed mechanisms for making sure that everyone involved in the research was treated ethically with uttermost respect for human dignity. The study made sure that informed consent was collected from each and every one involved in the research. Any person with diminished autonomy was not coerced to participate in the research. Furthermore, the researcher maintained confidentiality of all interviews. The study also observed that some of the information that the researcher accessed was as a result of her privilege as an employee of the DICS. As such, extreme caution was exercised in presenting and sharing the obtained information. The following section highlights some of the ethical considerations and the manner in which the researcher adhered to them.

3.9.1 Respect of intellectual property

The researcher was professional in her conduct. She respected copyright by not reproducing any researched material by other individuals or organisations; academic or otherwise. In adhering to the respect for intellectual property, the researcher acknowledged and properly referenced all primary and secondary sources used in this study.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

The researcher upholds informed consent as a research ethic worth considering. The Ethics Code of Conduct (2003) gives participants the choice to make decisions that include opting either to be part of a study or not. In this research, informed consent was obtained through the use of language that is understandable to interviewees/respondents which, in turn, boosted the confidence of respondents and

enhanced their responses. The permission granted by the responsible authorities from the DICS also gave the research credibility.

3.9.3 Privacy/ confidentiality

This study observed confidentiality as a research ethic. Confidentiality is defined by Paul J. Lavrakas (2018) as the method of protecting the collected data. In this research, confidentiality was achieved through preserving the identity of respondents. The research accorded informants the treatment they requested. For instance, informants who refused to be identified by name were not opposed. This nuanced the research's adherence to research ethics and enabled it to reach a wider audience including those who were not comfortable to be identified by name. By reaching to wider audience, the research broadened its opinion base.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The researcher noted that several limitations characterised the study. Firstly, the study would have been more effective if it was conducted in all Regional Immigration Offices (RIOs) where passport printing was taking place. Due to limited resources and time, the study was limited to Blantyre Head Office, Lilongwe and Mzuzu Regional Offices.

Another limitation of the study is that it focuses on passport delivery itself in order to determine the quality of services offered by the DICS. Although this approach outlines the nature of passport delivery system in Malawi, an examination of all the services would have offered a holistic view of service delivery. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the study findings lay the foundation for further academic research. Most importantly, the focus on passport printing depicts the central aspects of service delivery or lack thereof in DICS.

The study envisaged a non-respondent rate considering that some of the people sampled were not willing to participate. Issues of privacy and confidentiality of the information they submit at the DICS was an issue to some, which had potential to create low turnout rate of respondents. However, the generated results are a good representation of public service delivered by the DICS. The results reflect service

delivery by Malawi Public Service. The insights from these findings are critical in shaping public policy and areas of reform that the Government of Malawi, in general, and the DICS, in particular, may consider to focus on.

3.11 Summary

The chapter has discussed the study's methodological approach by outlining and highlighting the manner in which the study was conducted and the merits thereof. The chapter has also reflected on the study's shortcomings and ethical considerations. A discussion about the ethical considerations revealed the researcher's responsibility in the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, interprets and analyses the study's findings. It begins by highlighting demographic characteristics of the data used followed by the analysis on the findings corresponding to each objective. The analysis is in two stages; firstly as a general analysis and, secondly, by comparing the periods before and after decentralisation. A comparison of the two periods accounts for the changes which occurred over time. The comparison is done using the SERVQUAL model, which recommends that customers evaluate the quality of services based on five discrete dimensions; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These dimensions review capture service delivery in a relatively fair manner. In this study, the GRONOROOS model (1984) on the expanded factors is also adopted. This chapter also engages and examines the applicability of existing literature to the Malawian case study.

4.2 Socio economic profile of respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents show the demographic information of research participants. This information is very essential as it helps in the determination of whether the individuals in that particular study are a representative sample of the target population for generalisation purposes (Salkind, 2010). The study chose various age groups in order to deduce the dynamic views of respondents pertaining to the effectiveness of DICS in service delivery. A dynamic age group nuanced the research's SERVQUAL approach through giving agency to dynamic voices and their interpretation of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The age group of respondents is shown in the table below.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

Table 2: Applicants by age bracket

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24years	4	5	5
25-34years	32	40	45
35-44years	33	41.2	86.2
45-54years	11	13.8	100
Total	80	100	

The table shows that the age groups were representational. The representativeness of the respondents minimised research bias that may have arisen from the use of a single age group. More importantly, the different age groups widened the research scope by incorporating the representative perceptions of all affected age groups. The age distribution is a normal trend of passport applicant ages in Malawi. Malawi immigration reports have revealed that the productive age of 25 to 44 years of age commonly do apply for passport mostly for economic reasons (Malawi Government, 2013, Malawi Government, 2016 and Malawi Government, 2018). This is also further revealed in the summary of the reasons most respondents had applied for the passport as summarised in table 4.

4.2.2 Gender of applicants

The study considered the gender of applicants interviewed. Gender is one of the key factors in any study, and hence a well proportional gender-balanced sample provides balanced opinions. Table 3 provides the summary of respondents by gender.

Table 3: Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	40	50	50
Female	40	50	100
Total	80	100	

The study considered 40 male respondents representing 50% of the sample and 40 female respondents representing also 50% of the sample. A balanced gender analysis gave women the opportunity to share their lived experienced. The ability to maintain an equal distribution of respondents benefited the research through tapping on the responses of women which, in most cases, are not taken on equal footing (as those of men) by existing scholarship. As argued by Mansoor and William, (2008) public services are delivered through complex bureaucratic systems that often times hamper the effective and efficient delivery of public services. As such, a gendered approach to respondents enabled the research to tap on the experiences of both men and women. The consumption of time and inconvenience caused to clients as explained by Heeks (1999), therefore, differs with gender as evident in this research.

4.2.3 Reasons for applying for the passport

The study also considered the reasons for applying for a passport in order to determine the socio-economic profile of the respondents. Several reasons were provided as to why passport was applied for. The study established that economic motives were the most cited reasons for applying a passport. The reasons for applying a passport are summarised in table 4. These reasons differed with age and gender. They also ranged from tourism and business to academic studies and political considerations. However, the underlying factor was the economic situation of the time; the economic urgency in possessing a passport explains the reason why citizens perceived the efficacy or lack thereof of DICS.

Table 4: Reasons for passport application

Reasons for passport application	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Tourism	11	13.8	13.8
Personal business travel	38	47.5	61.2
Corporate, NGO, Govt travel	13	16.2	77.5
Medical treatment travel	4	5	82.5
Academic studies	9	11.2	93.8
Other reasons	5	6.2	100
Total	80	100	

As shown in the table, the majority of passport applicants had been driven by economic reasons. About 47.5% of the respondents cited personal business travel as the reason for applying for a Malawian passport. This contrasts with the 4% (the lowest figure) which indicated seeking medical treatment as the reason for applying a passport. The disparity between the reasons for applying for a passport reveal that people are motivated by a wide variety reasons to apply for a passport. The majority of movements in Malawi are driven by economic factors, especially, search for greener pastures abroad. The other reasons were work related and these was followed by those that cited tourism as their reason for passport application.

4.2.4 Highest Qualification of Applicants

The study also considered the educational qualifications of applicants on an understanding that the qualifications have an effect on the applicant's perception as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Highest qualification of applicants

Highest Qualification	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
JCE	6	7.5	7.6
MSCE	39	48.8	57
DEGREE	26	32.5	89.9
OTHER	9	10	100
Total	80	98.8	

In the table provided, more than 50% had attained the Malawi School certificate of Education, an equivalent of GCSE O-levels by the time of their first application while 32% had attained a university degree.

4.2.5 Economic status of the applicants

Concerning the economic status of applicants, the study found that that more than 50% were either working or doing business as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Economic status of applicants

Economic Status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Student	13	16.2	16.2
Working	32	40	56.2
Doing business	25	31.2	87.5
Not working	9	11.2	98.8
Other	1	1.2	100
Total	80	100	

The data shows further that only 9% of the applicants were not working while 13% were students. The findings buttress the position of decentralisation advocates who emphasise the significance of such a policy in the public sector. For instance, Okojie (2009) and Hankla and Downs (2010) treat decentralisation as a vehicle for reforming public service, a factor which enhances efficiency. Given the composition of passport applicants in Malawi, decentralisation has positive implications for the country. It implies increased service delivery levels and fostering better business operations

which, in turn, will boost the country's economic fortunes. This will be a result of the elimination of passport application bottlenecks which have adverse effects doing business in Malawi.

4.3 Assessment of service quality

Since the study was aimed at analysing the effectiveness of decentralised passport printing services in the DICS on service delivery, quality assessment of service delivery was conducted by the researcher using the SERVQUAL model. As argued by Zeithmal (2000), service quality is very crucial in the modern environment and has been rated as an enhancing aggressive advantage and increasing satisfying relationship with users of services. In today's global competitive environment, delivering quality service is considered an essential strategy for success and survival (Parasuraman et al, 1985; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Betty, 1990). Using the SERVQUAL model dimensions, the study analysed the quality of passport service delivery at the DICS in the face of reforms undertaken.

4.3.1 Year of passport application

In assessing the quality of service delivery at the DICS, the data was grouped to see how people were perceiving services offered by the Immigration Department. The table below shows years the research was focussed on.

Table 7: Years of passport application

Year for passport application	Respondents
2004 – 2013	28
2014 – 2019	52

The table above indicates two periods in which 80 respondents applied for passports. From 2004-2013, 28 respondents applied for passports while between 2014 and 2019, 52 respondents applied for passports. Although the period 2004-2013 has a 9 year time frame, it had fewer respondents compared to the period 2014-2019 which although it represents only 5 years it registered 52 respondents. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Betty (1988), consumers' assessment of overall service

quality depends on the gap between their expectations before a service, and perceptions about the actual level of service delivery. In this study, it was observed that owing to their different circumstances, customers had higher expectations of the passport delivery system. This resonates with Gronroos's (2001) argument that the notion of service quality from a consumer's viewpoint includes both what the consumer expects and how such a consumer is serviced.

4.3.2 Place of passport application

The DICS Head Office is in Blantyre and it has four operating regional offices, namely Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Mangochi. The Head Office houses the top management and policy formulation team and was the only place where passports were printed before the decentralisation. Decentralisation enabled all these regions to print passports to serve customers. The Mangochi region has, however, not been captured as it came in operation in 2017. A summary of offices where the applicants had their passport processed is provided in Figure 3 below as follows:

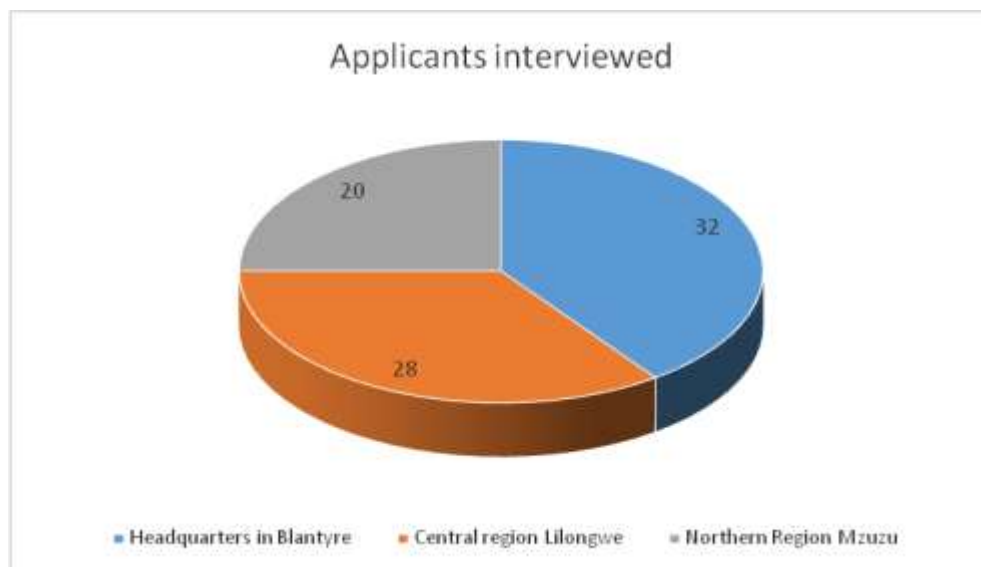


Figure 3: The applicants on regional basis

Source: Researcher

The figure shows that 32 of respondents representing 40% of the sampled applicants had their passport processed at the headquarters, 28% at Central Region office and 20% in the north. The composition also represents the distribution of applications in the country and that the Headquarters handles most of the applications done in the

country. These regions were focussed in order to have a clear picture of service delivery at DICS. The findings reveal that the headquarters still receives the largest number of passport application. They also show that although the number of passport applicants is tilted in favour of the headquarters, other passport processing centres are utilised. This is an attempt to decentralise passport printing services in Malawi. However, such efforts can be enhanced by introducing a results based management approach which will encourage efficiency and productivity.

4.3.3 Type of passport applied for

The study also considered another critical aspect on passport applications specifically the type of passport printing services people choose to apply for. The types of passport printing services applied for include ordinary passport, urgent passport and express passport. Further details regarding these passport services are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Type of passport application

Type of application	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Ordinary passport	49	61.25	60.8
Urgent passport	13	16.2	77.5
Express passport	18	22.5	100
Total	80	100	

As presented in the table, the ordinary passport applications were the largest followed by the express ones and the urgent one as the least type of application with 16.2% of applicants. The ordinary passport application forms the largest backlog of passport applications as it is the cheapest and, normally, takes twenty-one (21) days to come out. The urgent passport application takes five (5) days while the express one is the quickest and the most expensive and takes a day or two to be issued.

4.3.4 Timeliness in passport delivery

This section feeds into and engages with literature by advocates of decentralisation. It benefits from Besley and Coate (2000)'s argument that in a decentralized system, the key to successfully deliver public goods or services is to let locally elected representatives decide which services are good for the population. The study observed that the time taken for passports to be issued to applicants after an application is one of the critical factors in shaping public opinion on performance of immigration services. The time taken for passport to be issued out determines value for money as well as underlying the efficiencies of the system. The immigration service charter stipulates that normal, urgent and express passport applications should be processed and printed within 21 working days, 5 working days and 2 working days respectively (Immigration Service Charter, 2010). This study has established that passports were not being processed in time as stated in the service charter. Passport printing was taking much longer owing to various factors. Figure 4 provides the summary of timelines taken to print passports.

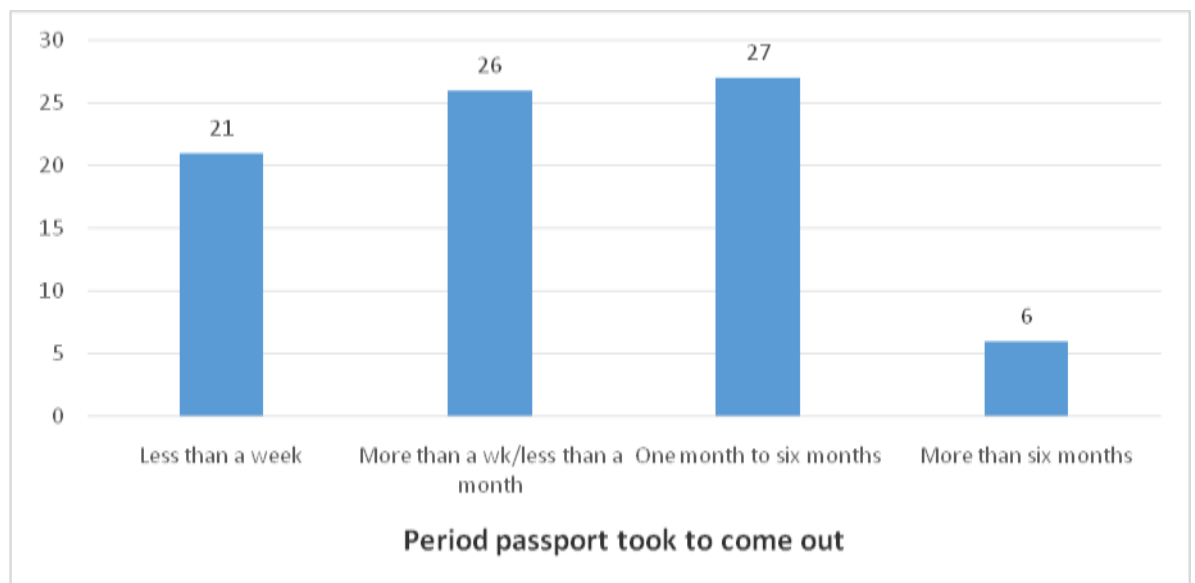


Figure 4: Period taken for passports to come out.

Source: Researcher

Figure 4 shows that 21 respondents indicated that their application took less than a week to be issued, representing 26.25% of the sample size. This is against 38.7% of the applicants as indicated in table 3.5 that had applied for either urgent or express type of passport which is supposed to take less than a week to come out (Immigration

Service Charter, 2010). The data also shows that 32.5% of the applicants had their passport issued in less than a month but more than a week, and that 33.75% had their passport taking between one to six months. There were also almost 8% of applicants whose passports took more than six months. The results show that most of the applications took more time to be issued as compared to the time anticipated as well as prescribed by the immigration service charter.

As shown in Figure 5, in normal circumstance, 39% of the applications were to be processed in less than a week.

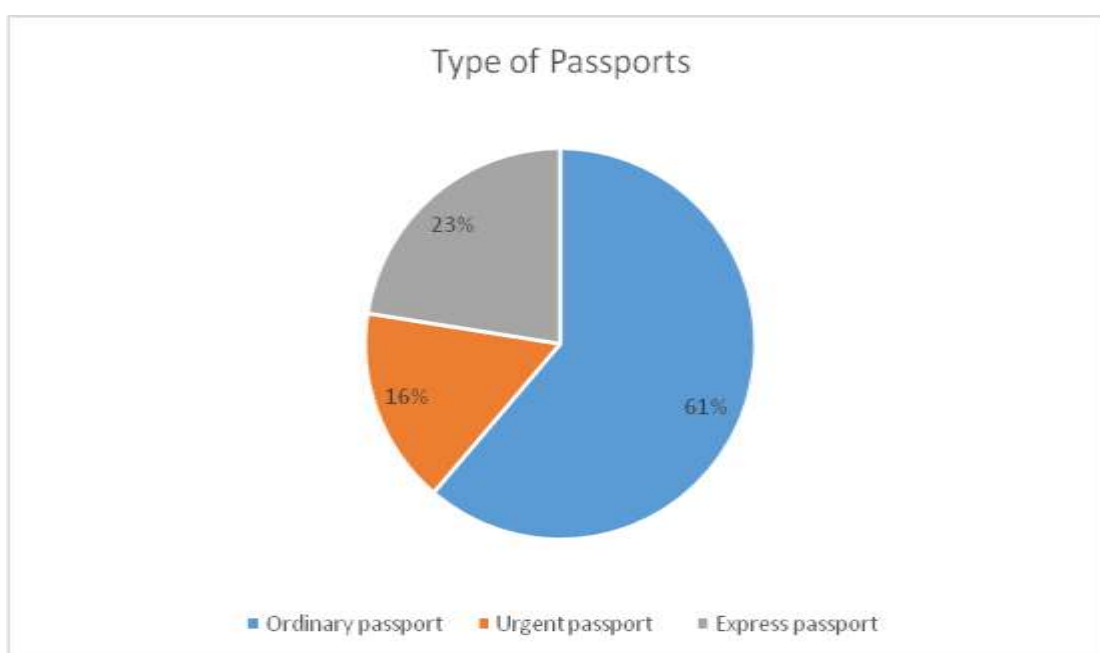


Figure 5: Type of passport vs. printing time

Source: Researcher

In the same way, 61% of the applications were to be processed in less than a month. The delayed printing of passport has always been attributed to lack of resources, failure to print passports on first come first service, absence of internet network, printer breakdowns, server breakdowns and electrical power disruptions among others.

These results correspond with findings of the audit report of 2018 conducted at the DICS. In their analysis of 3,278 printed ordinary passports sampled for three financial years, 2014/2015 – 2016/2017 showed that on average 65%, 30% and 9% of the printed

normal, urgent and express ordinary passports respectively were not processed in time (Malawi Government, 2018).

A review of normal applications for ordinary passports revealed that over the 3 year period only 35 % of the normal applications for ordinary passports were processed within 30 days while 54% took more than a month to 6 months, 7% took more than 6 months to 1 year and 4% of the sampled normal ordinary passports took more than a year to process (Audit Report, 2018).

Despite these system delays, people still feel there is an improvement in DICS's delivery when compared to periods before decentralization reforms. The time factor was further considered especially looking at the applicant's perception of the time taken for the passports to be printed. Figure 6 below shows how people rate timeliness in passport delivery currently.

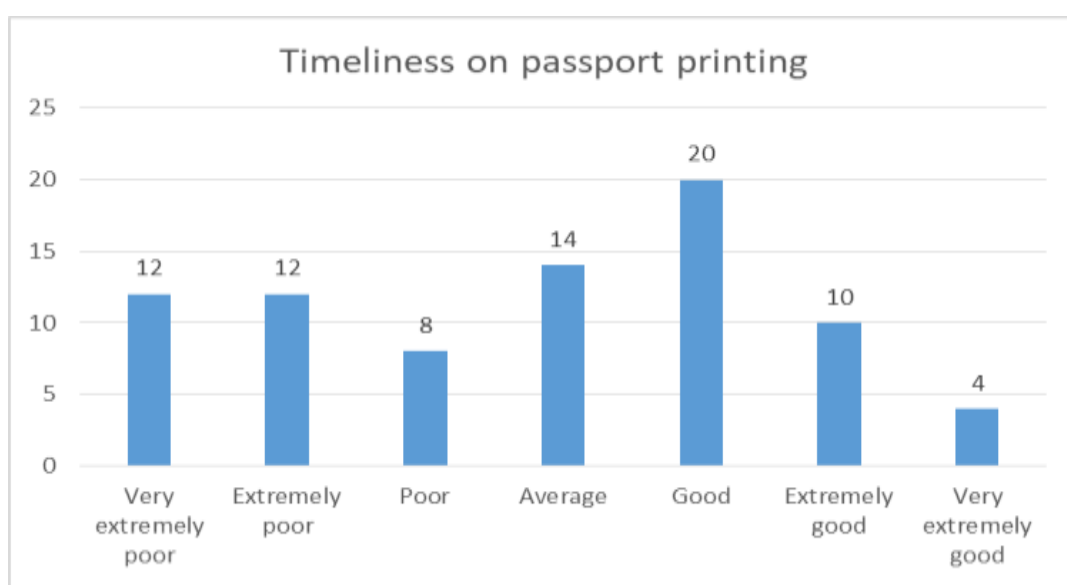


Figure 6: Timeliness on passport printing

Source: Researcher

The summary shows that 34 of the respondents which represent 42.5% of the sample felt that the timeliness in printing the passports by the DICS is better with the decentralisation reforms though not perfect. This is against 32 of the respondents who represents 40% of the sample and feels that the timeliness is still poor.

Further analysis of results reveals that despite the reforms undertaken by the DICS, the service delivery is still not that standard as expected by the citizens. There still exists a gap between the expected and the actual. However, comparing with pre-decentralisation, notable changes in service delivery can be observed. Figure 7 illustrates how people rate service delivery in pre-decentralisation period compared to the post-decentralisation period in terms of timeliness.

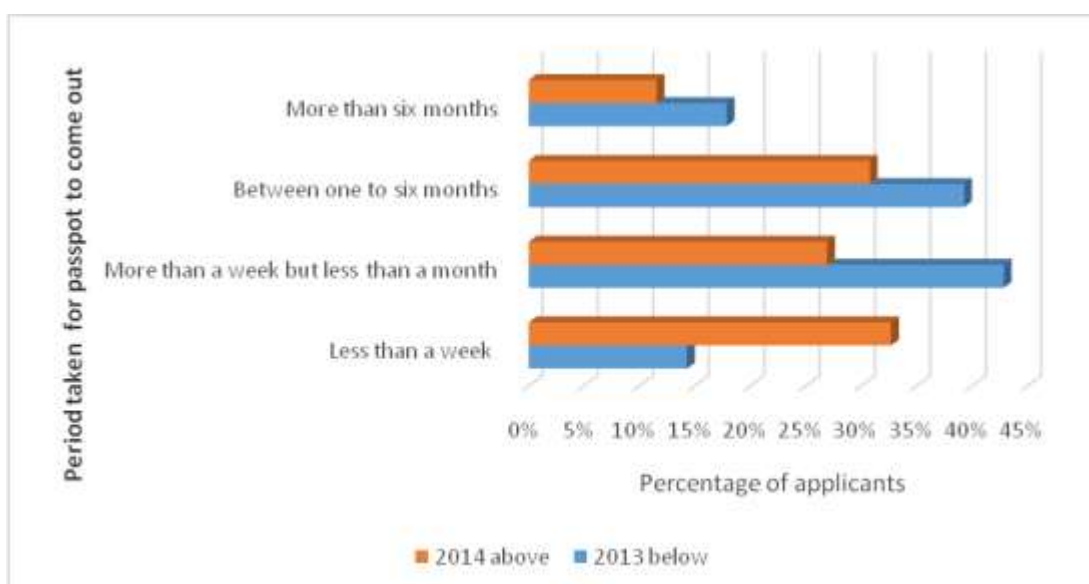


Figure 7: Time taken for passport to come out

Source: Researcher

The results show that the period after decentralisation has more passports that were being processed in less than a week as compared to the same category for the period before decentralisation. In terms of processing time hence, the study shows that time delays have been reduced significantly during the period after decentralisation as compared to pre-decentralisation period.

4.4 Decentralized passport printing ‘Vis-à-vis quality passport service delivery: SERVQUAL Model

In order to deeply understand service quality at the DICS, consumers’ expected service delivery **Vis-à-vis** the actual service delivery was analysed using SERVQUAL Model Dimensions. SERVQUAL model represents service quality as the gap between the expectations of the customers from the offered service and the customer's

perceptions of the received service (Parasuraman et. al, 1988). The difference between expectations and perceptions is called the gap which is the determinant of customers' perception of service quality.

Haque (2011) mentions the importance of analysing service delivery by focusing on peoples expected service against the actual service received in order to determine how the service delivered meets the intended purpose.

4.4.1 Tangibility of passport delivery

The Figure 8 shows how citizens rate the tangible aspects of the DICS.

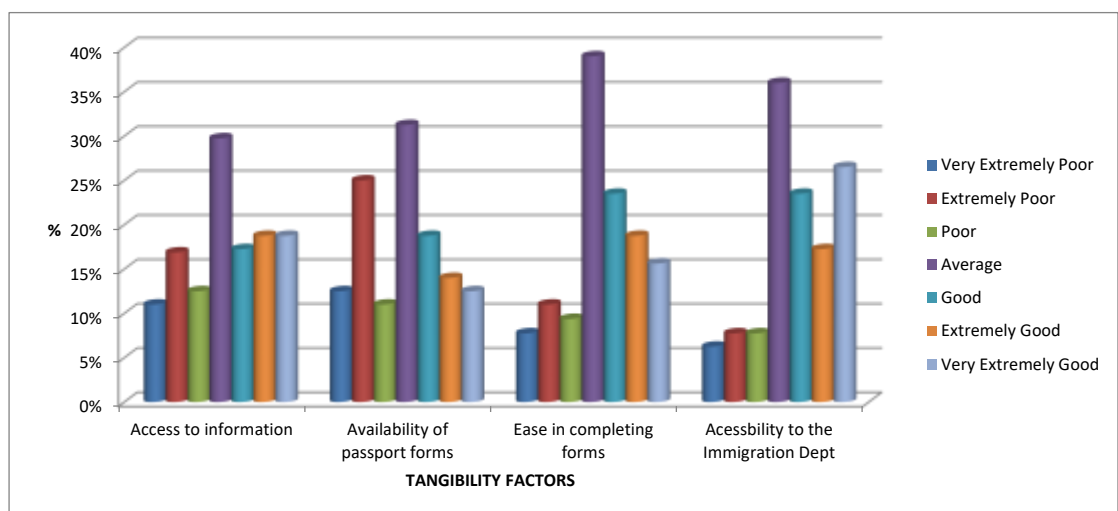


Figure 8: Tangibility of passport service delivery. Source: **Researcher**

In the study, the analysis of tangibility considered factors such as access to information about passports, availability of passport forms, easiness in completing those forms and accessibility to the Department of Immigration. As described by Parasuraman et al. (1988), tangibility in SERVQUAL model is a solid service evaluation tool especially on quality. Similarly, Santos (2002), refers to tangibles as the physical elements of a service especially bordering on aspects such as the appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipment, personnel, and communication material. The factors analysed in Figure 8, therefore, depict service quality evaluation on tangibles.

The results, therefore, show that respondents ranked average the DICS tangible aspects, namely access to information (28%), availability of forms (30%), easiness of completing the forms (37%) and accessibility to the Immigration Department (35%).

4.4.2 Reliability of passport delivery

The Figure 9 shows how reliable is the DICS in passport issuance and delivery

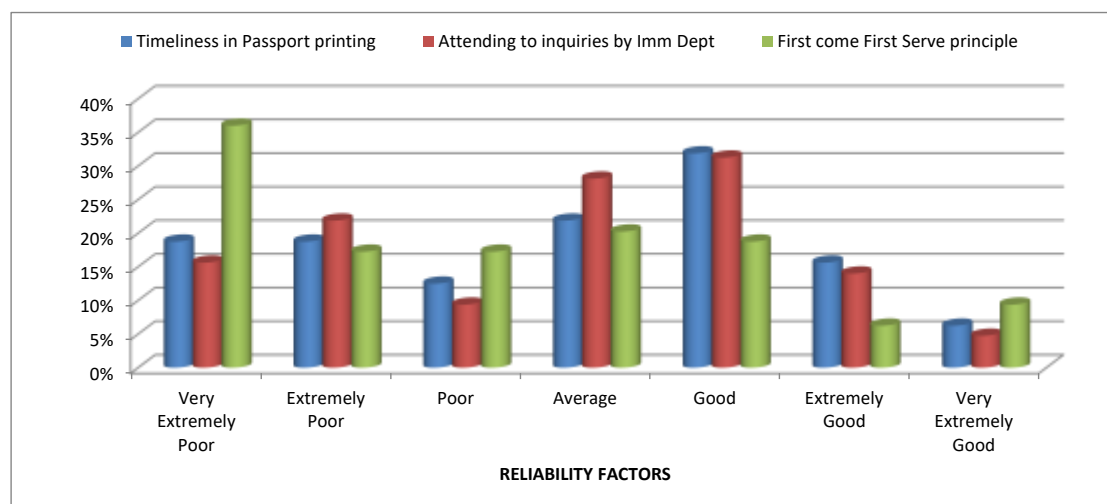


Figure 9: Reliability of passport delivery.

Source: Researcher

On reliability, the study focused on timeliness in passport printing. This includes the Department's capacity in attending to client's inquiries and whether the service is being offered on first come first served basis. Heeks (1999) places the time taken by consumers to access a service and the associated costs as factors that make decentralisation as opposed to centralization favourable. As explained by Lovelock (1996), most studies on service quality, have shown that most customers significantly value reliability on service delivery. Davis and Heineke (2005), on the other hand, explains that in service provision, reliability is associated with the capability to carry out the promised service consistently and accurately.

Based on findings of the research, the majority of respondents find the DICS to be extremely poor in as far as attending to clients on first come first served basis. As much as 30% of the respondents felt that the department was trying its best to print passports on time and to attend to client inquiries. Timeliness was perceived as improved, albeit not much. However, the improvement was regarded as significant by

respondents. On average, despite the introduction of decentralised passport printing, respondents have ranked the DICS passport services on reliability aspect poor.

4.4.3 Responsiveness of DICS

In considering the aspect of responsiveness, Figure 10 explains how responsive officers at the DICS are when delivering passport services to clients.

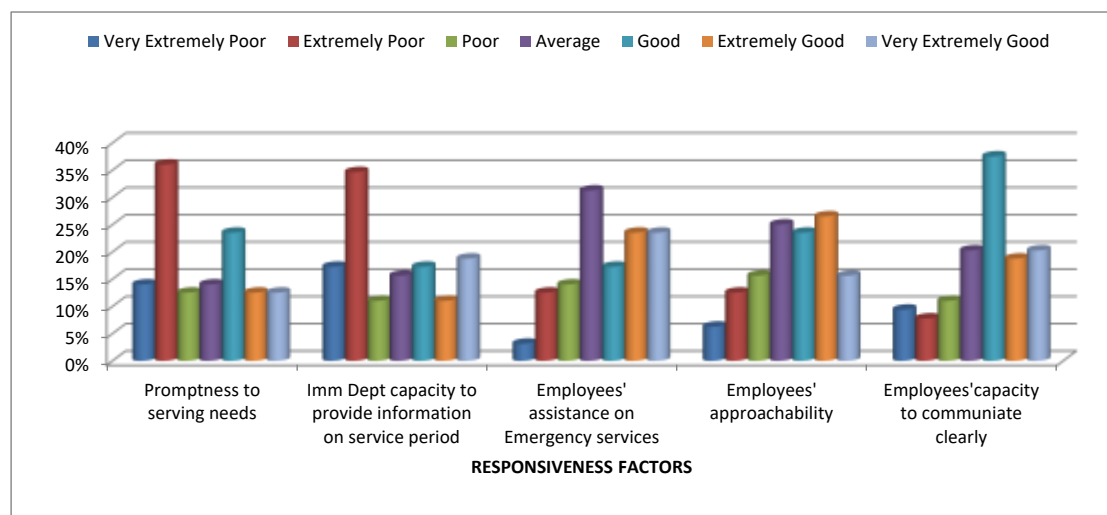


Figure 10: Responsiveness of DICS.

Source: Researcher

In an effort to analyse the responsiveness of immigration staff, the study focused on factors such as promptness of staff in serving needs of clients, the capacity to provide information on service period, assistance rendered on emergency services, their approachability and their capacity to communicate clearly. Markland, Vickery and Davis (1998) characterized responsiveness as the readiness and willingness of the service providers to assist their customers in the course of providing timely services.

In general, the results show that the Immigration staff were not prompt to serving clients needs as most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with how they get served by ranking extremely poor. Similarly, respondents felt that the Department was extremely poor in explaining to clients how long it will take to issue the passport, such that clients kept on inquiring about the status of their applications. However, the department's assistance under emergency emerged as average meaning it was neither

good nor bad in this factor. On the other hand, employee approachability and capacity to communicate clearly was been ranked good respectively.

The study's findings resonate with the discourse of pro decentralisation proponents who argue that when locals make decisions, it increases the quality of service delivery.

4.4.4 Assurance

Analysis of assurance in service delivery looked at factors such as satisfaction of clients regarding information provided on Immigration website concerning passports, sincerity and patience in solving complaints from clients, Immigration staff behaviour in delivering passports in relation to clients' confidence on the service and skills and knowledge or skills that they demonstrate in responding to questions.



Figure 11: Assurances

Source: Researcher

The results in Figure 11 ranked the DICS assurance to service delivery average. Client satisfaction on website information on passports and sincerity in resolving client's complaints was ranked average while employees' behaviour in instilling confidence to clients and their level of knowledge and skills is ranked good. These results indicate that the Department was neither good nor bad in as far as assurance factors are concerned.

As summarised by Heineke (2005), assurance deals with the politeness of service providers' employees and their capability to express confidence, customer safety and calmness. It generally centres on confidence, customer safety, kindness, and courteousness or respect of service providers. This study, therefore, by focusing on the factors shown in figure 11, fully analysed the assurance factors far as passport delivery is concerned at DICS.

4.4.5 Empathy

Empathy factors were analysed by this study by focussing on establishing the appropriateness of operating hours to clients, attention given to clients, effort to understand specific needs of clients and if at all apologies are given to clients in case of service delays caused to customers.

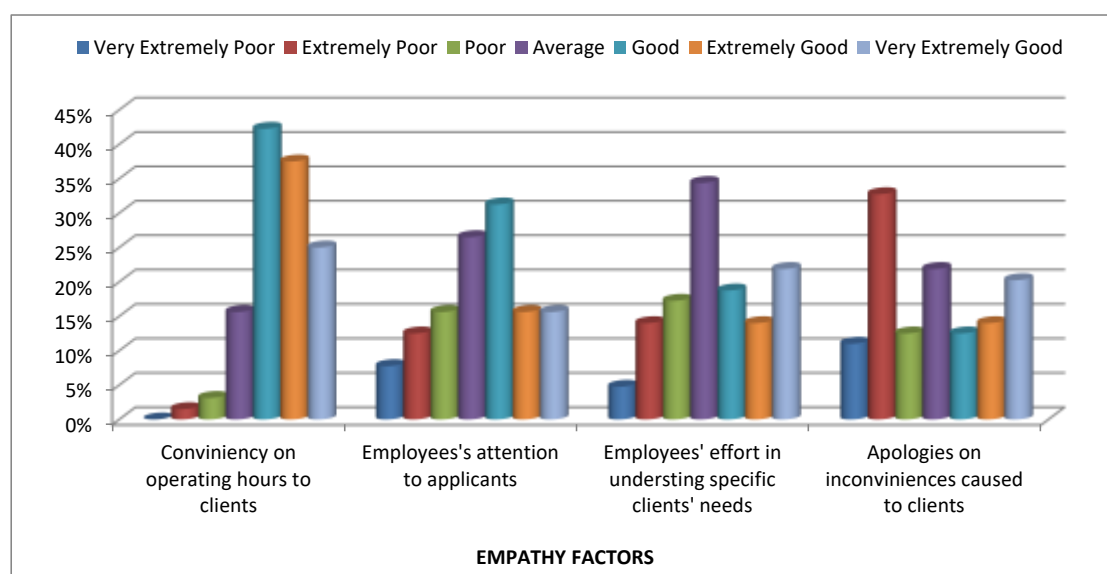


Figure 12: Empathy

Source: Researcher

Results in Figure 12 shows that despite the Immigration staff being extremely poor in giving apologies to clients in cases where services were delayed as well as in their attention to applicants, convenience on operating hours and employee attention was been ranked as good by a majority of respondents while employees' effort in understanding specific needs of clients was given an average score.

Markland, et al. (1998) view empathy as referring to the helpful, individualised attention that an institution gives to its consumers. Empathy determines the extent to which specific attention is given to individual customers and in summary the results from the study show that DICS was still poor on empathy factors in providing quality services to clients.

4.4.6 Economy

To analyse the economy on quality service provision, the study focused on clients' satisfaction with passport application fees and whether the decentralised services gave proper service as compared to when it was not decentralised. The factors basically looked at satisfaction clients in relation to the amounts they are charged for the service. The results are summarised in Figure 13 as follows:

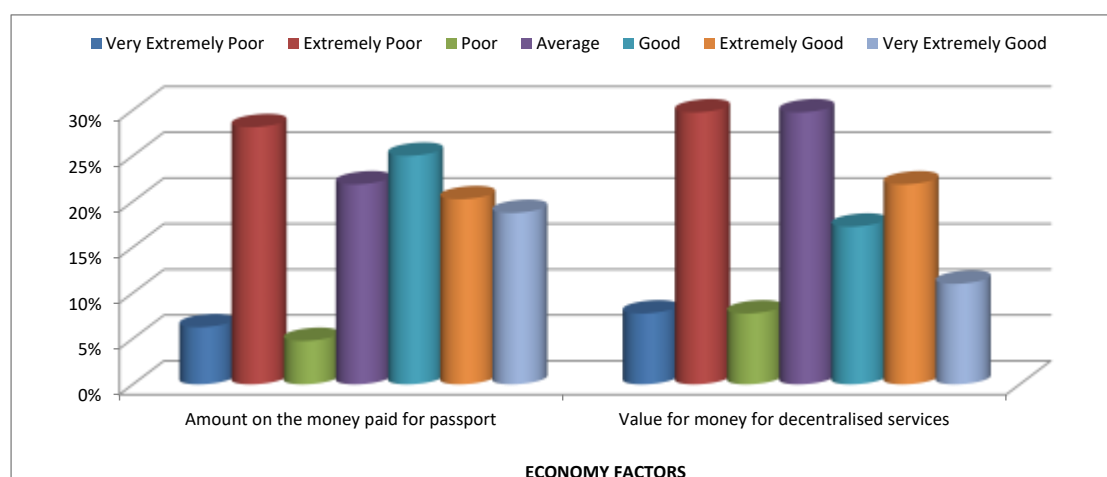


Figure 13: Economy Factors.

Source: Researcher

Results in the table show that most respondents felt dissatisfied with the amount of money they pay for passports and did not see the decentralised services as value for money. So many factors can attribute to this, however, clients said that they thought that the decentralised services were going to reduce the normal time frame for processing a passport. Most respondents interviewed were not economically stable to rank the monetary value as good. Nevertheless, on economic factors, the passport service provision has not been ranked highly.

4.4.6 Technical quality

The study assessed technical quality of technical skills and ability to solve problems possessed by the immigration staff, innovativeness of DICS in line with technological developments as compared to other countries, and whether clients are able to get timely service without any technical challenges. Technical quality according to Gronoroos (1984) entails the outcomes from the service to the consumers. It is the quality of what consumers in reality benefit as a consequence of their transactions with the service providing institution and is fundamental to them and their assessment of quality of the service (Gronoroos, 1984).

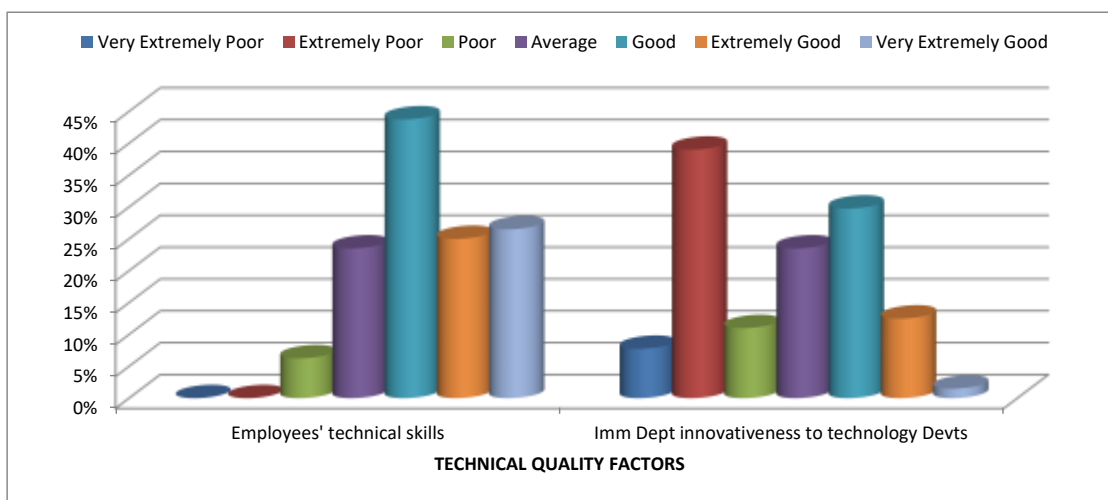


Figure 14: Technical quality.

Source: Researcher

Results in Figure 14 of the study show that employee's technical knowledge was perceived as good while the innovativeness to technological developments as compared to other countries was been ranked extremely poor. Thus, DICS innovativeness to technological development was ranked as average in general as compared to the fairly good employees' technical skills which were perceived as good by 50% of the respondents.

4.4.7 Network quality

Network quality in the study focused on satisfaction of clients with services and the speed of network for fingerprinting and taking pictures. The results are shown in Figure 15:

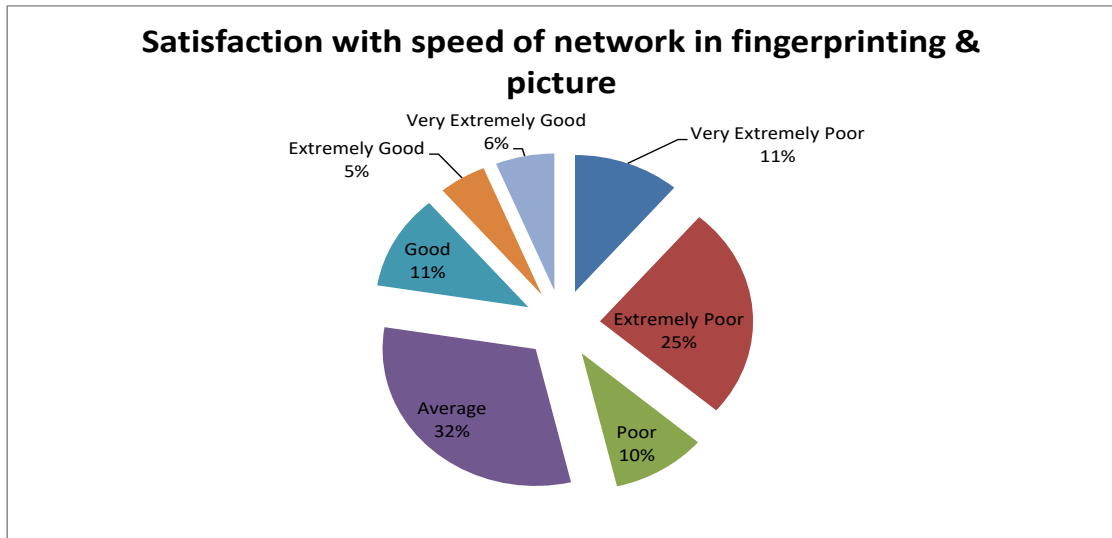


Figure 15: Network quality

Source: Researcher

Results in the figure ranked network quality at the DICS as average with 32% of respondents getting average satisfaction with network quality against 25% of respondents who feel that the network quality is extremely poor.

4.4.8 Image of the DICS

The study went further to analyse the DICS image to the public by focusing on how clients rated the success of the department and whether the department was appealing to customers and the public at large. Gronoroos (1984) view the institutional image to refer to how the consumers view the institution offering services and figure 16 shows a summary of how respondents evaluated DICS image.

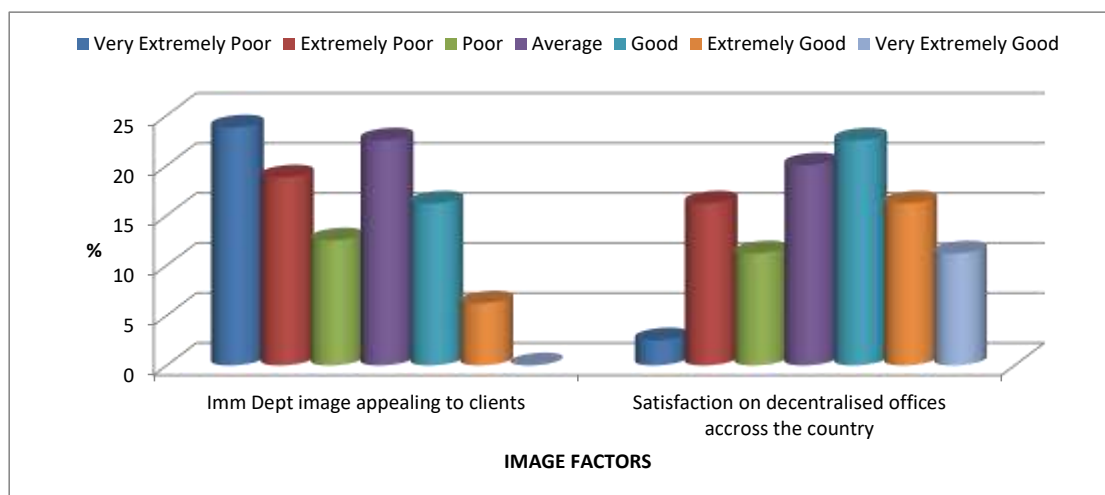


Figure 16: Image of the DICS

Source: Researcher

Results in the figure show that the DICS's image was extremely poor despite innovative changes and reforms undertaken. People still felt the department has a long way to clean its image to the public as issue of network quality still affects them. However, it is worth noting that 25% of the respondents were satisfied with decentralised services in the country.

4.5 Comparative analysis and discussion: Pre and Post Decentralization periods on quality service delivery

The comparative analysis is presented in a comparison with selected outputs between the periods before decentralisation (2013 and below) and after decentralisation (2014-2018). This was done by splitting the data according to the year the passport was applied in the questionnaire. The analysis enabled the study to analyse any significant changes on the selected factors. The study compressed the scale into three categories of poor, average and good. The 'poor' scale is an average of extremely poor, very poor and poor; the average remains the same while the 'good' scale is an average of good, very good and extremely very good scales. This was made for easy presentation in the study.

4.5.1 Tangibility of services

Figure 17 shows an analysis of tangible aspects of service quality between periods before and after decentralisation.

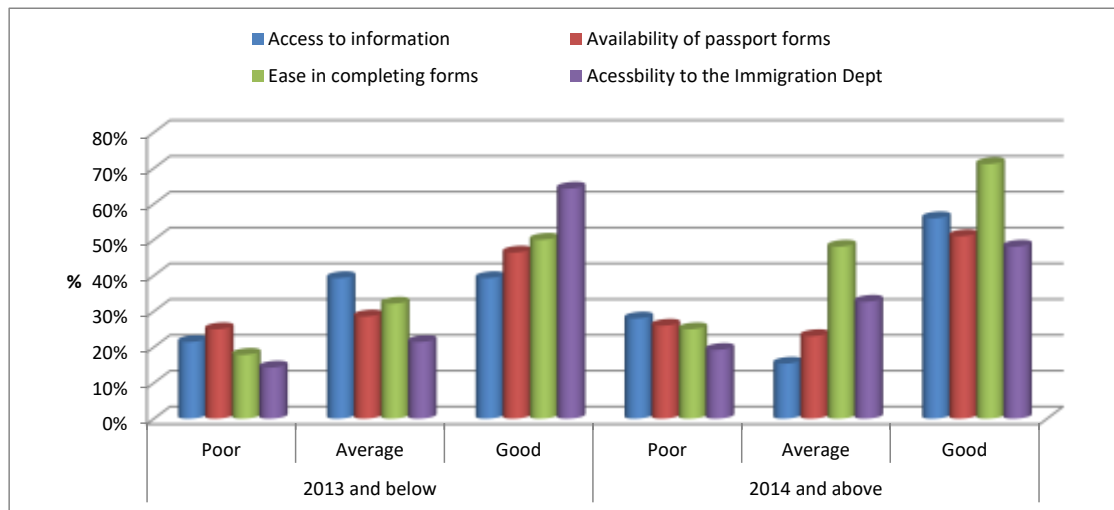


Figure 17: Tangibility of services

Source: Researcher

The results in the figure show improvement in service quality on tangible aspects of service quality in the period of decentralisation as compared to pre decentralisation. All aspects of tangibility except accessibility to the immigration department show improvement with decentralisation though not much significant. For example, 56% of the respondents perceived access to information good in the period after decentralisation as compared to the 39% in the pre-decentralisation period. The same applied to ease in completing the forms whereby 71% perceived it as good which is a huge contrast to the 49% registered in the period before the DICS. However, for the accessibility to Immigration Department, 64% considered it as good in the period before the DICS as compared to the 45% in the period after the DICS. This may be due to the new passport management aspects whereby the applicant were not allowed to visit the department to follow up their passport application until they were notified that the passport was ready.

4.5.2 Reliability of services

The comparative analysis of reliability in service provision at the DICS has been presented in the Figure 18 as follows:

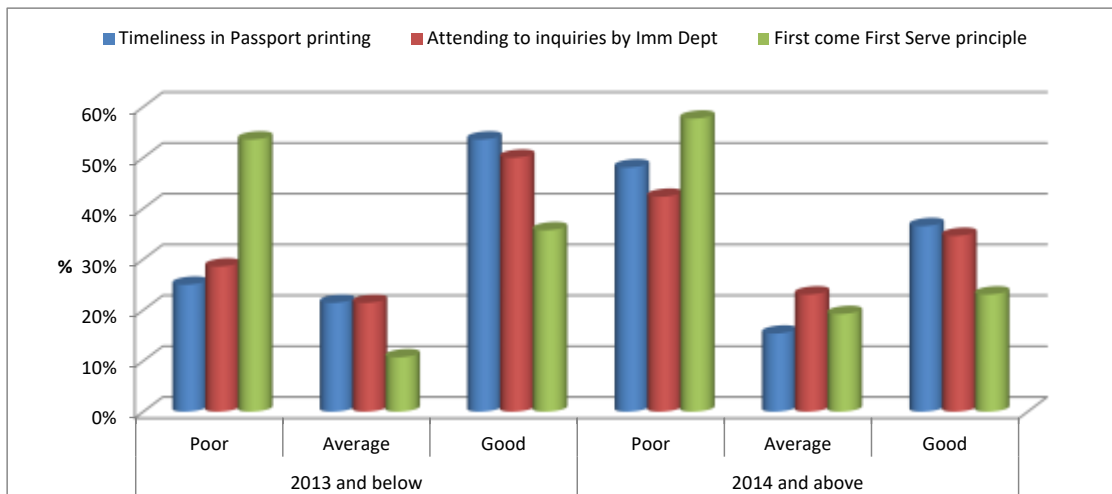


Figure 18: Reliability of services

Source: Researcher

The results in the figure show that clients still saw Immigration services as being poor even in the period of decentralisation. A high percentage of respondents regarded DICS services as not being reliable even in the face of decentralisation. This, however, must be due to challenges being faced at the DICS despite decentralising its service.

4.5.3 Responsiveness in service provision

The responsiveness aspect is shown in Figure 19 which captures the employee's responsiveness in delivering service to the clients.

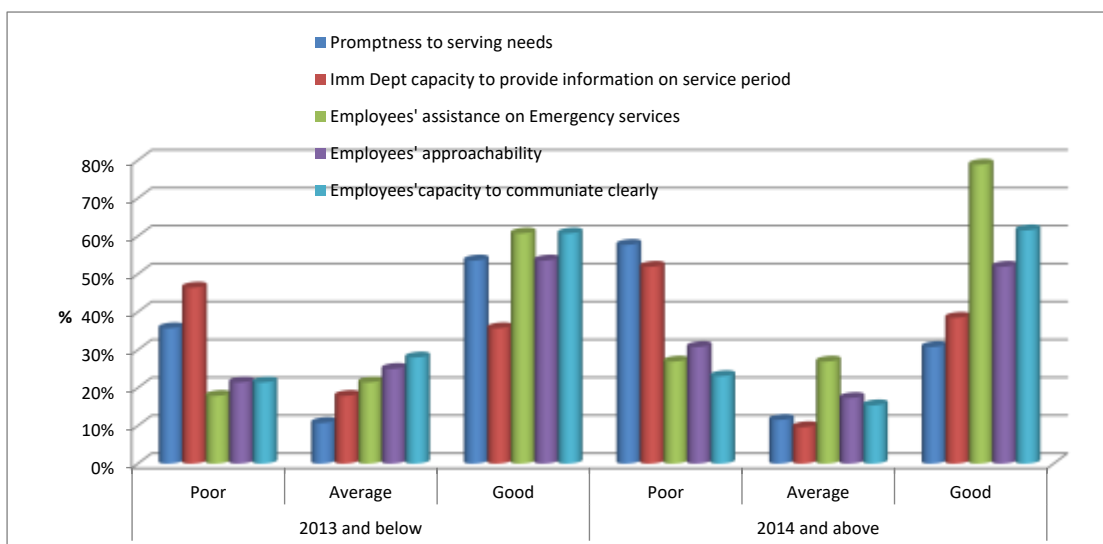


Figure 19: Responsiveness in service provision. Source: Researcher

Though results show improvement in some factors of employee responsiveness to clients during decentralisation period, the results are not such significant. Some factors such as employee approachability, promptness in serving clients needs appear to have been much better before service decentralisation. The results show that decentralisation has done less to improve employee responsiveness to clients in delivering service. The outstanding factor in the period after decentralisation however, was the assistance during emergency services which 79% of the respondents considered as good when only 61% did the same got the period before decentralisation. This can be explained by the mere fact that decentralised services tend to generate a close relationship with people as services are localised making it easy for applicants to be easily understood by the officers in such emergency scenarios.

4.5.4 Assurance in service provision

The Figure 20 shows a comparative analysis of assurance factors at the DICS during the pre and post decentralisation.

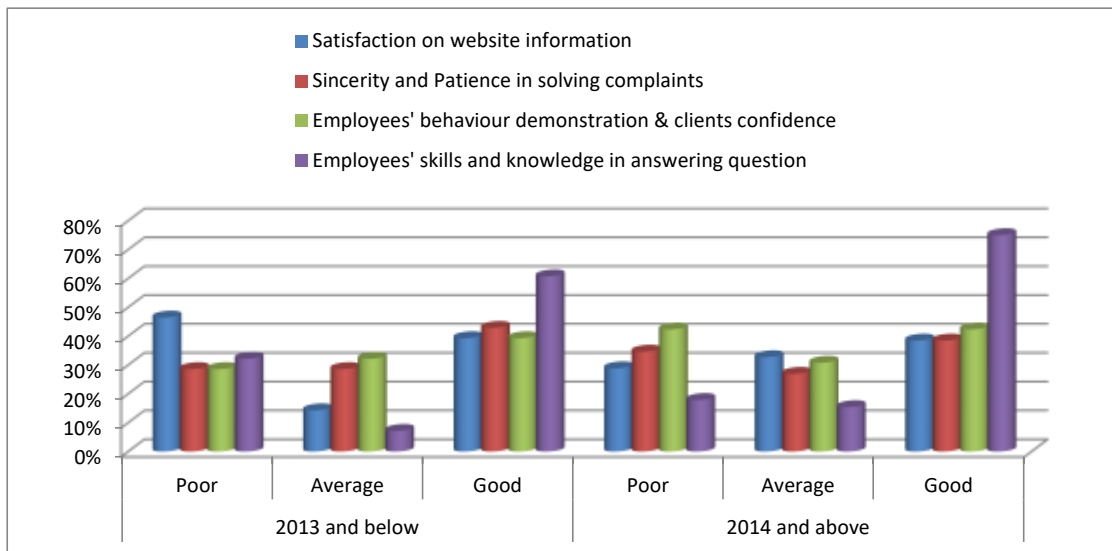


Figure 20: Assurance in service provision.

Source: Researcher

The results in the figure show that clients got quality assurance in service provision at the DICS. This could be attributed to improvements in technological factors and level of education on both clients and employees which makes it possible for employees to explain things to clients clearly and for clients to understand the things easily. The results show an improved applicants' perception of employees' skills and knowledge in answering questions, with 75% considering it good as compared to 61%. The behaviour of employees for clients' confidence registered 42% which was considered good against 39% who deemed it good in the period before decentralisation. However, there was still a perception that sincerity in solving complaints was ranked better during the period before decentralisation.

4.5.5 Empathy in service provision

The Figure 21 shows empathy factors for pre and post decentralization period.

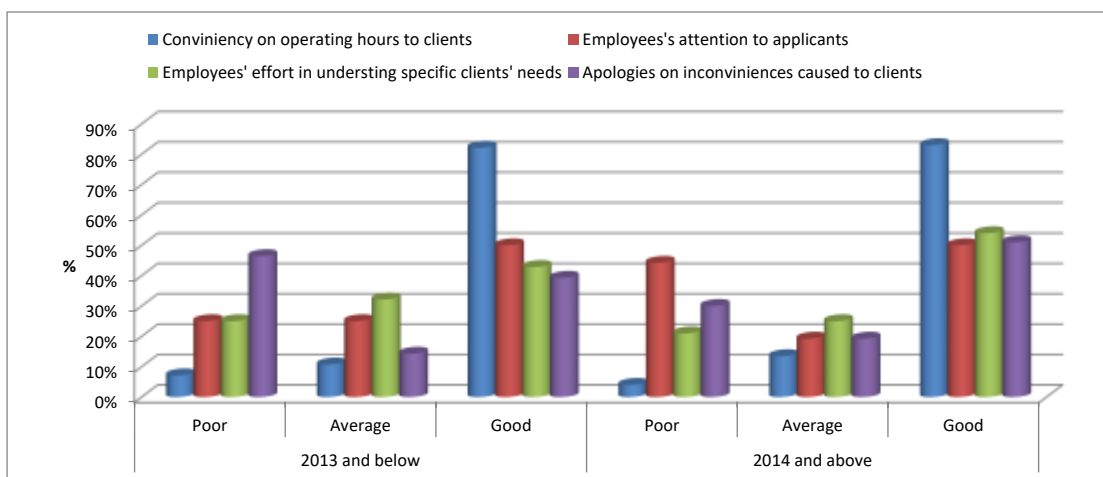


Figure 21: Empathy in service provision.

Source: Researcher

Results in Figure 21 show that there is not much difference between empathy factors for the periods before and after decentralisation. Convenience on operating hours has been ranked almost the same for both periods basically because decentralisation did not have any changes on operating hours for the DICS. Employees' attention to applicants, their effort to understand specific clients' needs and apologising for inconveniences caused were perceived significantly as better in the decentralised period as compared to the period before. However, the general attention was as good as it was in pre decentralisation.

4.5.6 Economy of service provided

Figure 22 analyses the economy factor in services provision. Amount of money paid to acquire a passport was assessed to see how clients feel about the money they pay in accordance to service that they get.

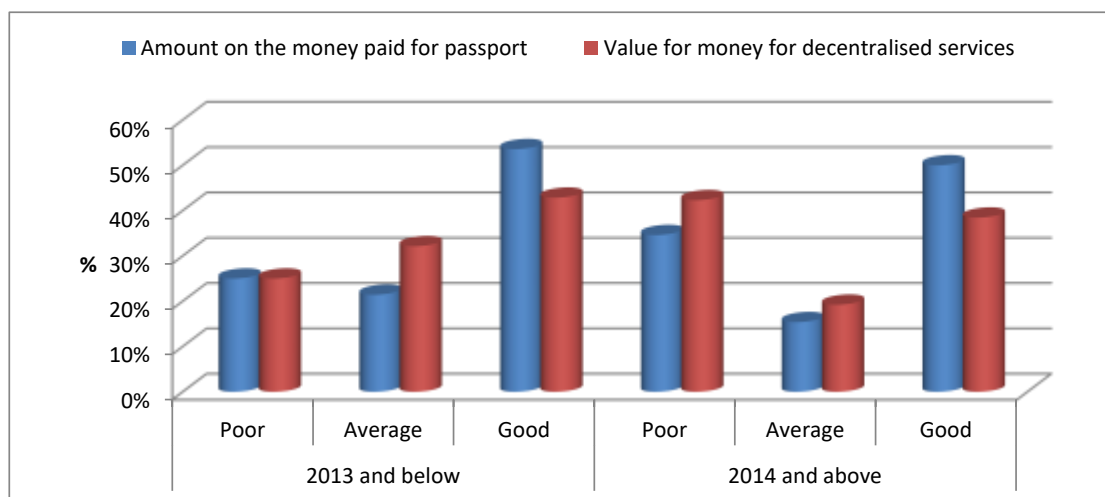


Figure 22: Economy of service provided

Source: Researcher

The results show that the highest percentage of clients felt they got value for money in the service they got from DICS. However, some expressed dissatisfaction with the money value compared to what they got, especially, looking at time factor. They felt that the passport was too expensive to not be issued in time thereby offering less value for money. This can be attributed to the income earning levels of most Malawians; the majority of Malawians live below poverty line.

One of the key issues that also came clearly was corruption. Respondents were requested to respond to whether they had paid more money than the prescribed price during the time they were applying and accessing their passports. The summary of the results is presented in Figure 23.

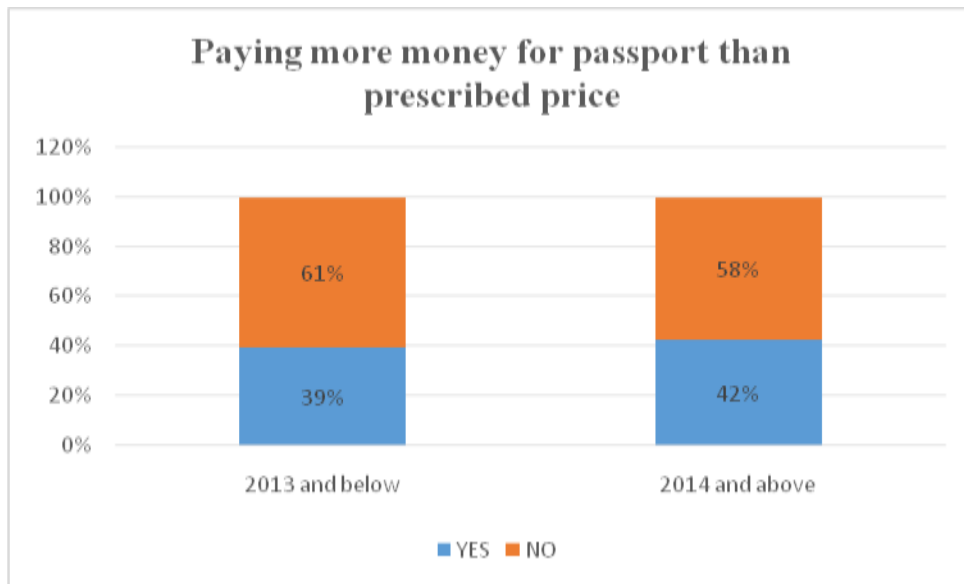


Figure 23: Paying more than prescribed passport price

Source: Researcher

As seen in the figure, there is less difference in percentage between applicants who paid more money than the prescribed passport fee and those who did not. As much as 61% of the sample, indicated that during the pre-decentralization period, they did not pay more money than what was prescribed. This is against the 58% in the post decentralization period. However, 42% in the decentralization period had paid more than the prescribed passport price. This is against 39% in the pre-decentralization period. This phenomenon can be explained by the existence of corruption even in the well decentralized systems of public services.

4.5.7 Technical Quality

Figure 24 displays technical aspects of service provision at the department of immigration. Employee technical skills and innovativeness of the department in terms of technological developments were taken on board to give an analysis of technical quality.

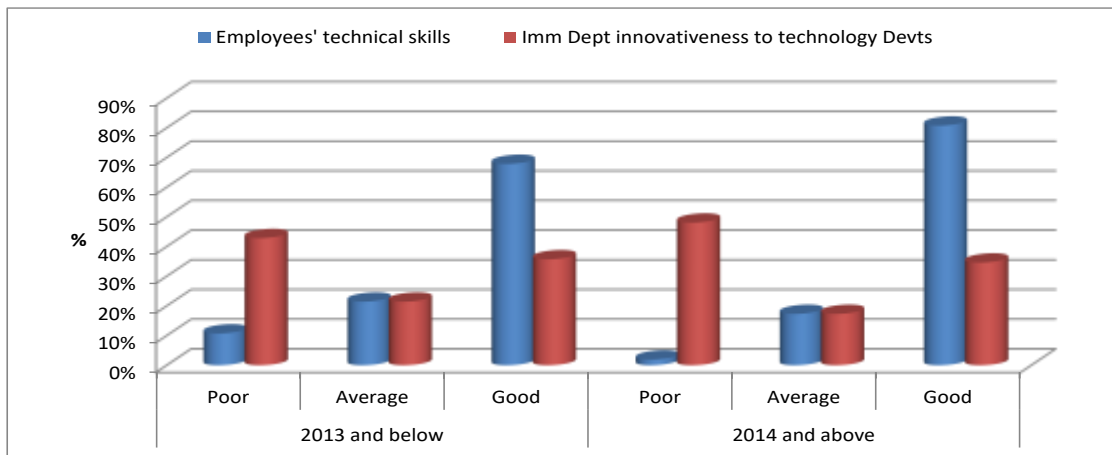


Figure 24: Technical quality

Source: Researcher

Results in the figure show that, on average, employees' technical skills were good even in the pre decentralisation period while the innovativeness of the department regarding technological developments was still poor even in the face of decentralisation. The respondents felt that the department had not done much to align itself with technological developments in passport delivery system compared to other countries.

4.5.8 Network Quality

The Figure 25 shows the networks quality aspect in the two periods under consideration.

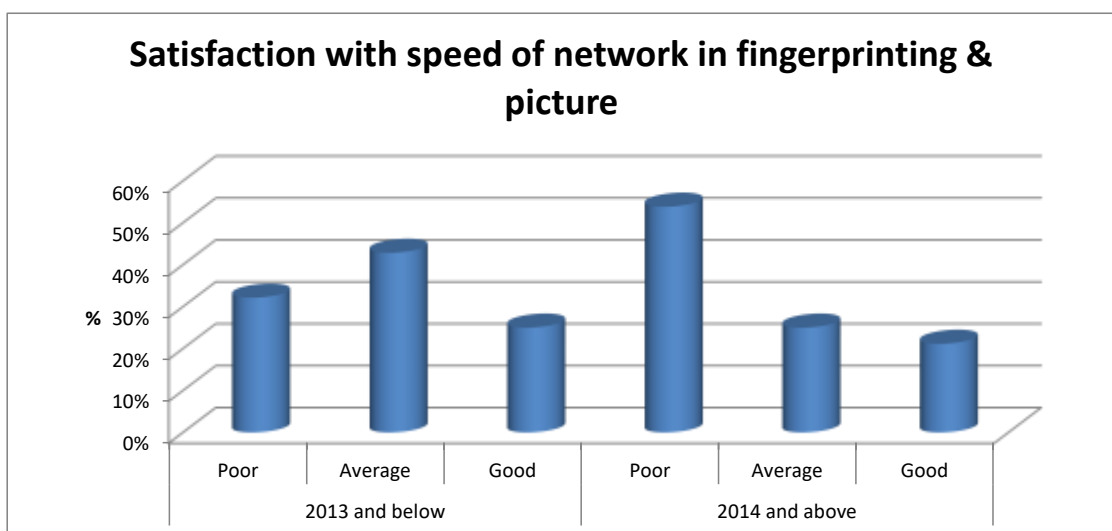


Figure 25: Network Quality

Source: Researcher

Results in the figure show that network quality had become poor with decentralisation. Clients in most cases had to wait for Immigration to regain its internet signal for them to resume service. Sometimes when the network was available, the signal was too slow for efficient operations. There is, therefore, need for the DICS to look at how the decentralised printing services affects network quality at the department.

4.5.9 Image of DICS to clients

The appealingness of DICS and the perception on the overall success on decentralisation were considered as key factors under the Image Factor. The results are shown in Figure 26 below

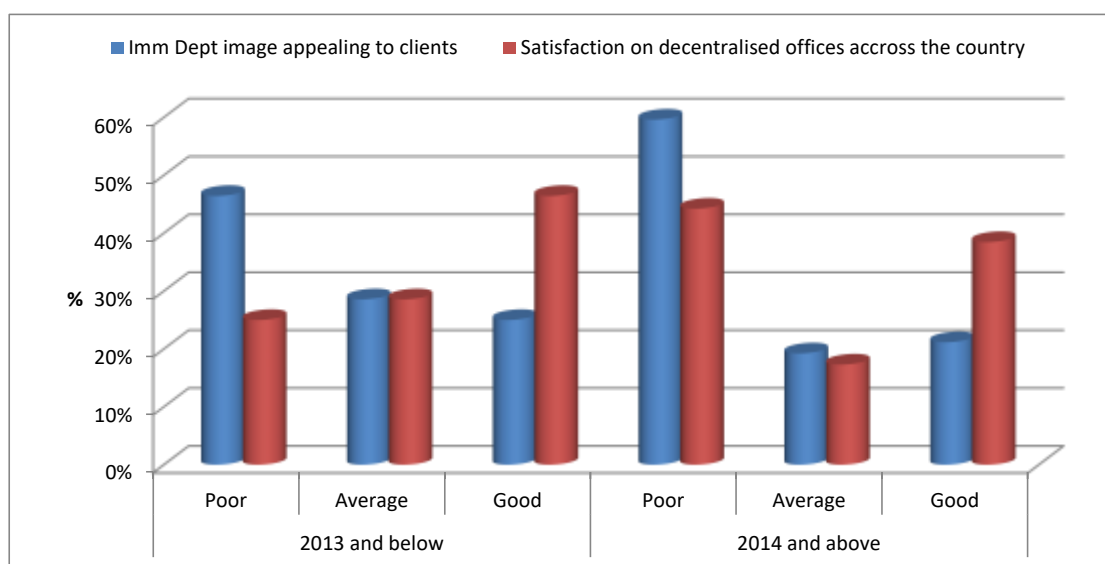


Figure 26: Image of DICS to clients

Source: **Researcher**

Results in the figure indicate that the DICS had poor image among its clients and the general public. Delays in passport delivery due to factors such as corruption continued to negatively impact on the department's image. Clients pay bribes to officers to have their passports printed out on time as it was in the period before decentralisation. Concerning satisfaction of decentralised services, a larger number of respondents showed that they were not quite satisfied with the decentralised services, as they still had to expose themselves to long queues despite having many regions printing passports. Most expressed the need for the department to rectify its problems so that the decentralised services could begin to function effectively.

4.6 Challenges being faced by the decentralized passport printing services

The study went further to examine common challenges encountered by the decentralized passport delivery services that led to delays that affect service quality. Challenges outlined by respondents were associated with delays when placing applications and also when accessing the passports.

Interviews with six (6) DICS key informants revealed that delays in passport processing and delivery were caused by; failure by the DICS to provide services on first come first served basis, network unavailability, printer breakdowns, server technical faults, electricity supply challenges and lack of resources such as consumables to produce a passport.

4.6.1 Failure to Process Passport Applications on a first- Come, First-Served Basis

An examination of the passport system workflow established that the system had no specific procedures to ensure that passports were processed on a first-come first-served basis. This affected the flow of applications since processing was not being according to application sequence thereby causing unnecessary delays in the passport processing system especially concerning passports that were applied first. Responding to failure to produce passports on a first come first served basis, the respondents reviewed that priority is given to applicants that present themselves at the counter than those that apply and wait at home. As such, the respondents suggest the DICS should come up with a system that supports the principle of first come, first served.

4.6.2 Network Unavailability

It was also established during interviews that network failure was one of the factors that contributed to delays in timely processing of passports. The Passport decentralized systems continued to base its operations at the headquarters as such failure to ping their services with Blantyre implied operation shutdowns. Due to unstable internet services provided by Malawi's internet service providers, mostly the decentralised systems experienced network failure challenges to connect themselves with the headquarters where the main server was placed. Additionally, any network challenge at the headquarters affected all immigration offices. This greatly hampered

proper functioning of decentralised services. From this point, one can clearly point out the need to place decentralised services under NPM independent from the central control.

4.6.3 Printer Breakdowns

Interviews with immigration officers revealed that there were delays in printing passports due to printer breakdowns. Immigration Regional Offices in Lilongwe and Mzuzu had only one passport printer each while Immigration Headquarters in Blantyre had two printers and whenever a printer developed a faults printing processes either slowed down or got suspended until the fault was rectified which, normally, takes a long time as the immigration officers were not trained how to rectify the faults, This led to their over-reliance on network service providers such as Techno Brain to address even simple technical challenges.

4.6.4 Server technical faults

The study revealed that delays in processing passports were partly caused by server technical faults which in some cases resulted in complete system shutdown of the system or failure to perform key functions. For instance, Mzuzu office once suspended passport processing applications for a period of over 3 months due to breakdown of a passport issuing system local server.

4.6.5 Electricity supply disruptions

The study results reveal that delays in issuance of passports was also caused by electricity power supply disruptions. Whenever there were power outages, all activities in the passport processing system were stalled. The study found that despite having power generators for the three passport printing stations in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu to address the problem, that the generators were characterised by various challenges such as lack of battery chargers that would enable automatic charging of batteries, and inadequate maintenance.

4.6.6 Lack of resources to produce passports

This study also found that lack of consumables to produce a passport was one of the factors contributing to poor service delivery. The DICS is mostly underfunded by government when actually the procurement of passport production consumables is the responsibility of government and not the department. There were times when services had to be rationed due to lack of passport production consumables such ribbons or tapes that disrupts timely processing of passports. The problem of lack of resources was more eminent in decentralized regions of Lilongwe and Mzuzu because these offices were not a priority during times of scarcity of resources. When the resources are scarce, the few available are always directed to Blantyre, it being the Head Office. A practice that clearly ended up hampering service operations in the decentralized regions.

4.7 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has presented, interpreted and analysed the present study's findings. The chapter answered and engaged the research questions, the research aim and the research objectives. The chapter has converted some of the information collected from key information from respondents and presented it in tables, charts and graphs for easy and quick understanding by readers. The tabulated information formed the study's thematic concerns. The chapter highlighted the concerns of citizens regarding service delivery in Malawi. The highlighted concerns offered critical insights into policy formulation and implementation. This chapter feeds into chapter 5 which summarises the research and offers recommendations that the DICS can consider in order to increase reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The recommendations will expand DICS' performance and customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study findings. It also unpacks the implications of the research findings on the performance of decentralised reforms in the DICS. The study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of decentralized passport printing services in improving service quality. The main research questions that guided this thesis were;

- i. To what extent has the decentralised passport printing services helped in improving service quality at the DICS?
- ii. What are the challenges and weaknesses being experienced with the decentralisation reforms?

The research questions mentioned above were critical in determining the efficacy of DICS in service delivery in Malawi.

In trying to understand this, the study critically examine changes in time frame for passport issuance between the pre-decentralization and post- decentralization periods. The analysis paid attention to the quality of service provided by the DICS. The study employed a comparative approach in evaluating the changes and continuities in policy reformation and indicates how the service provided with inception of decentralisation reforms differ or correlate with the type of service provided prior to the reforms. The study has also established challenges associated with decentralisation reforms.

The study has used service quality model (SERVQUAL) that inclines reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as dimensions of SERVQUAL. The dimensions of SERVQUAL were analysed in an attempt to account for the differences between the expectations of customers and the perceptions of service deliverers. As such, SERVQUAL gave a comprehensive analysis of service delivery and its quality. In this study, the SERVQUAL model collated with quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategies and allowed the study to critically analyse service quality at the DICS.

5.2 Summary of research findings

The study established that despite the many reforms initiated by government to improve quality of service provision in many government ministries and departments, services have not been improving much. The findings of this study has brought forth a need to address many factors for the Immigration Department to be able to improve service delivery. This has been expressed by service quality analysis conducted at the DICS in the face of many reforms, including the decentralisation reform adopted in 2014. Below is a summary of main findings of the study.

5.2.1 Timeliness in passport service provision before and after decentralisation

The study has established that despite the many reform processes undertaken at the DICS, especially in the passport section, timeliness in passport delivery has not significantly changed. There are still delays in passport processing and still congestion at the DICS. However, the decentralised services have managed to increase access in passport services as applicants no longer expect for their passports to be printed in Blantyre at the headquarters, as was the case before decentralisation. Decentralisation has enabled the department to respond to emergencies quickly when compared to days before the reform. Nevertheless, decentralisation, despite not being able to improve much on timeliness of passport service delivery, has made it easy for clients' to access passport services within their regions.

5.2.2 Quality of passport delivery

The quality of passport delivery as a service to the general public has been analysed in this study using SERVIQUAL model factors of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy alongside other models such as the Gronoroos model which includes economy, technical quality, network quality, and image.

On Tangibility aspect, the DICS scored highly as respondents expressed they had access to information on requirements for applying a passport. Passport forms were also considered to be easily available to applicants and most expressed easiness in feeling passport forms and accessibility to Immigration facilities.

Reliability and responsiveness has, however, been ranked low at the DICS. The issue of timeliness in passport printing is still a problem. Passports still take longer time to be issued for most respondents. The department still has a long way to go to improve its attitude towards attending to clients' inquiries and the issue of first come first served service. Most expressed dissatisfaction with how the department manages passport applications as some get their passports quicker than others. There is little customised service in the DICS and employees provide false information to customers pertaining to timeframe of clients applications. Most employees are not approachable and do not communicate clearly or precisely on when a service is expected to be delivered. However, despite all that, the department is able to respond to clients in times of emergencies.

A majority of respondents in the study on the other hand has ranked assurance average. Many find information provided on DICS website to be reliable and are of the view that employees' possess the required knowledge and skill to respond to questions. Other factors pertaining to sincerity and patience in resolving customer complaints and instilling confidence in clients have been ranked low but an overall assessment ranks assurance average.

Empathy has scored very low too despite a high percentage of respondents finding operating hours to be convenient to them. Services that provide attention to clients and understanding their specific needs are still poor at the DICS. It is rare for employees to apologise to customers for the delays in issuing passports.

Passport charges have not been ranked highly too. Most respondents still feel not satisfied with the amount of money they pay for passports and do not see decentralised services as value for money.

On technical quality, employee's technical knowledge has been perceived as good while the innovativeness of the DICS concerning technological developments, especially when compared to that of other countries is ranked extremely poor. However, the DICS technological innovativeness in general is ranked average.

Network quality has been perceived as average while the image is very poor despite innovative changes and reforms undertaken. Clients do not find the image appealing.

However, it is worth noting that a certain percentage of the respondents show satisfaction with decentralised services in the country. A summary analysis of service quality at the DICS shows that the type of service quality provided does not meet clients' expectation of the service.

5.2.3 Comparative analysis of service quality between pre and post decentralization periods

The comparative analysis of service quality between the pre decentralisation era and the decentralisation era shows little improvement of a few factors with some being better before the decentralisation era. Tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy were employed in the comparison with other factors such as the economy, technical quality, network quality and image.

Results show that the decentralisation of passport printing into regions only improved access to passport services. People are now able to access passport services within their regions but, in terms of quality service provision, decentralisation has not achieved much mainly because there is no autonomy in the decentralised services such that whatever happens at the head office affects the decentralised regions. These decentralized services also do not receive enough government resources to meet their financial needs; priority still goes to Head Office. This, coupled with other challenges explained below impact smooth utilisation of decentralisation services thereby affecting quality of service provision.

5.2.4 Challenges and weaknesses associated with decentralization of passport printing services

There are numerous challenges and weaknesses associated with decentralised passport printing services. Though the systems have been decentralized, machines and network services still tap from the head office's server. Any challenge at the head office also affects the regions. There is no autonomy in system functioning for decentralised services. Other challenges are failure to provide services on first come first served basis, network unavailability, printer breakdowns, server technical faults, electricity challenges and lack of resources such as consumables to produce passports still impact service delivery.

5.3 Implications of the study findings

Based on the discussion about the research findings, the study concludes that decentralisation of passport printing services has not impacted much in improving service quality at the DICS. Still a majority of the citizenry have to wait for longer periods than the stipulated time to have their passports issued to them. The process of application itself is still cumbersome due to network failures, electricity power cuts and low funding (just to mention a few) which result in long unending queues and increased corruption.

In this study the DICS has been labelled as the second institution with the highest corruption incidences. The delays in accessing ones' passport and long unending queues compel people to bribe officers to have quick service. One of the implications of the study in practice is that there is need to address structural challenges inherent in the system.

Based on critical analysis, this study makes the following recommendations. Government must always provide enough funding to the department and procure adequate raw materials and consumables for making passports. These consumables must be supplied to decentralised centres according to need. New backup generators must be sourced to take up the operations in case of ESCOM power cuts in all regions. All decentralised passport printing region must have their own server to end over reliance on Head Office server. More importantly, employees must be trained on how to fix machines such as printers in case of breakdowns instead of waiting for Techno Brain network providers to fix even small breakdowns. There is need to trickle down skills to the employees on how these machines must be maintained and fixed.

The DICS now has educated members of staff such that, with proper trainings, the department might not require all time presence of network providers in the system which will also save government funds. Thorough analysis of the study's findings reveal that once these challenges disappear all other factors will flow creating an Immigration that is free from corruption, and possessing excellent service provision that meet the standard as stipulated in the New Public Management.

5.4 Areas for further research

The study concentrated on finding answers to why the decentralised services have not impacted positively on quality service delivery at the DICS by focusing on passports only. A thorough analysis of all services provided would give a comprehensive picture of the department as a whole. For instance, currently the department is implementing e- passport, E-Visa and E-permits in order to provide quicker and quality services to the general citizenry and these developments creating minefield for research. The DICS has also introduced one stop centres for quick endorsement of work permits to improve service quality. A conclusive analysis of how all these are performing in the citizenry perspective might be of great importance for the Department and the government as a whole.

5.5 Summary

This Chapter has provided a thorough conclusion of the study. It has summarised the study findings and had unpacked the implications on the performance of decentralised reforms in the DICS. The chapter has also provided recommendations that if implemented can increase efficacy of DICS as a public service provider. Lastly, it has recommended potential areas of research which may build on the present study's methodology and findings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Malawi Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services Questionnaire

Introduction

In 2014, the Malawi government introduced reforms in passport printing by decentralizing the process to other regions of the country. However, despite the decentralization of passport printing to other regions as well as the many other reforms, the media reports still show that the congestion and long queues of frustrated citizenry continue to be seen at Immigration offices. The congestion is still apparent at its Head Office in Blantyre to the extent that some of the citizenry looking for quicker and quality service have to use agents or bribe an officer in order to get quality service delivery. There are still big challenges in issuance of passports which has resulted in poor service delivery. Added to the long unending queues, the actual application process still has so many interruptions. Even after managing to submit an application people have to wait longer than expected in order to get their passports.

This has led to many unanswered questions such as: Is it the immigration officials themselves or the system in use that is responsible for poor delivery of passports? Why are the citizens facing the same challenges in accessing quality services despite implementation of public reforms which were deemed as quick wins by the public reforms commission in 2015? Are there other critical issues that have not been addressed by the commission on reforms which continue to negatively affect service delivery to the citizenry?

This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of passport decentralized systems in improving passport delivery. The study explores citizens' expectations in order to identify gaps and room for improvement.

The questionnaire is designed to generate an in depth understanding of challenges associated with accessing passports and possible solutions from a citizen perspective and that of officers working in the department of Immigration and Citizenship Services. The study goes further to compare levels of service satisfaction with the emergence of decentralized systems in order to determine their effectiveness in improving passport delivery system. The information collected in the survey is purely for academic purposes and will not be identified with you personally.

PART A- DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Guide: Tick where applicable

Questionnaire ID

Demographic characteristics

1. Gender

A. Male

B. Female

C. Other

C. Prefer not to

say

2. Age

Years old	18 -24 years	25 – 34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	Over 55 years
Tick					

3. Your first reason for applying a passport was related to:

Tourism travel

☐

Personal business travel

☐

Corporate, NGO, Govt travel

☐

Medical treatment travel

☐

Academic studies

☐

Other

(specify)

.....

4. Highest education qualification during your passport application

- A. JCE B. MSCE C. DEGREE D.
OTHER.....

5. Economic status during the passport application

- A. STUDENT B. WORKING C. DOING BUSINESS D. NOT
WORKING E. OTHER.....

PART B- ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS

1. When was the passport applied for? Month.....
Year.....
 2. Where did you apply your passport?

A. CENTRA REION IN LILONGWE, B. NORTHERN REION IN
MZUZU.

C. HEADQUARTERS IN BLANTYRE
 3. Which passport service did you applying for?

A. ORDINARY PASSPORT SERVICE, B. URGENT PASSPORT
SERVICE

C. EXPRESS PASSPORT SERVICE
 4. How long did it take for your passport to be issued to you from the day of
application?

A. .LESS THAN A WEEK B. MORE THAN WEEK BUT LESS
THAN A MONTH C. BETWEEN ONE TO SIX
MONTHS

D. MORE THAN SIX MONTHS.
- Did you have to pay more than the prescribed passport application fee?
1. YES 2. NO

Guide: For each table of questions, provide a score (within the range 1-7) on the level of your assessment of The Malawi Immigration & Citizenship Services' performance. Please circle where appropriate.

Scale Key: 1=Extremely Poor; 2 = Very Poor; 3=Poor; 4=Average- neither Poor nor Good; 5=Good; 6=Very Good; 7=Extremely Good

A. TANGIBILITY <i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Extremely Poor			Average		Extremely Good
Access to information on what needs to be done before applying for a passport	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Availability of passport forms	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
The forms can easily be completed	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Accessibility to the Department of Immigration' offices.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

B. RELIABILITY <i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Extremely Poor			Average		Extremely Good
How is the timeliness of printing passports and other documents?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
How would you assess the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services in attending to your inquiries?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Is the Department of Immigration able to provide services right on first come first served basis?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

C. RESPONSIVENESS <i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Extremely Poor			Average		Extremely Good
Is the Department of Immigration able to give prompt customized services and attend to citizenry needs/ problems?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Is the Department of Immigration able to inform clients exactly when services will be performed or						

provided?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are employees able to help to provide assistance to clients in time of emergency?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are employees approachable and easy to contact?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are employees able to communicate clearly to clients?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

D. ASSURANCE <i>Since decentralisation of services</i>	Extremely Poor			Average			Extremely Good
Are you satisfied with the information provided on the online website of the Immigration Department?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Does the Immigration Department show sincerity and patience in resolving customer complaints/problems?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do employees demonstrate behaviour that instils confidence in you as users of their services?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do employees have the required skills and knowledge to answer your questions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E. EMPATHY <i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Extremely Poor			Average			Extremely Good
Are operating hours convenient to clients?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do employees give individual applicants the attention needed?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do employees put in efforts to understand specific needs of clients?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Are apologies issued for any inconvenience or delays caused to clients?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F. ECONOMY	Extremely Poor			Average			Extremely Good
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<i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Poor	Average				Good
Are you satisfied that you are paying the right amount for the passport services?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Do the decentralized offices and their services offer value for money?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

G. TECHNICAL QUALITY <i>Since decentralisation of service</i>	Extremely Poor	Average				Extremely Good
Do you think Immigration Department employees have the right technical skills and ability to solve your problems?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Has the Department of Immigration become more innovative in line with technological developments when compared to other countries?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Are you able to get your services timely without any technical challenges?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

H. NETWORK QUALITY	Extremely Poor	Average				Extremely Good
Are you satisfied with the decentralized offices across the country?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Are you satisfied with the speed of the network for finger printing and taking of pictures?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

I. IMAGE	Extremely Poor	Average				Extremely Good
How do you rate the success of the Immigration Department?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Is the Immigration Department's image appealing to clients and the public at large?	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
J. Outline key challenges that you have faced since the decentralised passport printing services were introduced?						

	
K. Do you think it is easier now to apply for a passport and to obtain is compared to the pre-decentralization period (period before 2014)?	
L. In your opinion, has Department of Immigration fully utilised the opportunities associated with decentralizing the passport printing and delivery systems? Any other suggestions	

ANY GENERAL COMMENT THAT YOU MAY HAVE

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for the Officers at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services

1. What are the key challenges that you have faced since the decentralised passport printing services were introduced?
2. Do you think it is easier now to apply for a passport and obtain it compared to the pre decentralization period (period before 2014)?
3. In your opinion, does the Department of Immigration fully utilise the opportunities associated with decentralizing the passport printing and delivery systems?
4. Do you have any other suggestions