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The Influence of Pre-Flight Service Quality, In-Flight Service Quality, Post-Flight Service Quality, Passenger Satisfaction, and Repeat Purchase

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Abstract: ***This study examined the effects of passenger satisfaction, pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight service quality on the intention of returning to Davao International Airport. A non-probability purposive sampling technique and online survey questionnaires were utilized to gather data for the study, which employed a quantitative research methodology. There were 391 respondents in the sample; most were female and between the ages of 28 and 37. A correlation matrix and linear regression were used to evaluate the data. The study's results demonstrated that the quality of the pre-and-in-flight services significantly predicted the intention to make repeat purchases. However, the service quality and passenger satisfaction of post-flight services were found to have no significant impact on the intent to make repeat purchases.***

Keywords: ***Pre-Flight Service Quality, In-Flight Service Quality, Post-Flight Service Quality, Passenger Satisfaction, and Repeat Purchase.***

1. INTRODUCTION

The airline industry has experienced significant growth in the number of passengers carried by 2.3 billion arrivals and departures increased to 24.2 million in 2021, which is expected to continue. Asia and Pacific Airlines contribute 27.1% of the world traffic, based on the report of ICAO, 2021. Also, according to the AITA report in 2023, the Asia-Pacific airlines had a 37.9% rise in November 2021, the capacity rose to 159.2%, and the load factor was up 35.9 % points to 79.2% (AITA, 2023). The country's air passenger traffic research in the Philippines is 76%, with a passenger volume reaching 22.50 million (Amojelar, 2023). Moreover, the Philippines' aviation industry has been experiencing rapid growth over the years due to increased domestic and international tourists and business sector growth. With such growth

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and competition, airlines in the Philippines have been focusing on improving their service quality to satisfy their customers and gain a competitive edge. Some airlines have invested in new aircraft, expanded their routes and destinations, and upgraded their in-flight services to improve customer satisfaction. Airlines also place importance on safety as a part of their service quality. Moreover, the country's Civil Aviation Authority has implemented measures to ensure the safety and quality of the country's aviation industry.

Service quality has become a key corporate strategy for decision-makers in the airline sector, as it directly affects passenger satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and retention (Hasan et al., 2019). Airline service quality involves the interactions between passengers and employees, the quality of customer service, and various aspects of the flight experience, such as safety, entertainment, seat comfort, and cleanliness (Atalik et al., 2019; Park et al., 2018). Also, flight safety, in-flight entertainment, seat comfort, the convenience of flight schedule, food quality, service attitude of cabin crew, and cleanliness are some of the quality evaluation criteria used in most studies. Finally, a friendly attitude and clean and comfortable cabins are highly important, while provisions of books, newspapers, neat and tidy apparel, and appearance are considered the least important (Hasan et al., 2019).

Furthermore, airline services are also perishable, as once the flight takes off, the opportunity to provide the service to that particular customer is limited. This adds to the complexity of managing airline service quality. Therefore, airlines must continuously monitor and improve service quality to remain competitive and meet customer expectations. Improving service quality can increase satisfaction and favorable outcomes such as repeat purchases. Thus, it is essential for airlines to continuously evaluate their service quality and address their customers' requirements to improve customer satisfaction and retain their loyalty. Although satisfaction is more influential than the quality of service in retaining customers, airlines should still strive to improve customer satisfaction by addressing their issues and being responsive to their requirements (Dursun & Durmaz, 2009). A positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been found in numerous studies, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of customers making repeat purchases (Park et al., 2018). This is because customers tend to have more positive perceptions of a company and its products or services when they receive high-quality service, which leads to increased loyalty and repeat business. Additionally, when customers are satisfied with their experiences, they are more likely to recommend the company to others, further boosting their customer base and profitability.

Additionally, research suggests a strong relationship exists between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the airline industry. Customers who are satisfied with an airline's service quality are likelier to exhibit loyalty and repeat purchase behavior, which can significantly impact an airline's profitability and market share (Dursun & Durmaz, 2009). Furthermore, service quality is a crucial factor differentiating airlines in a highly competitive industry and can be a critical determinant of an airline's success or failure in the marketplace. Therefore, it is essential for airlines to continually monitor and improve their service quality to meet the expectations of their customers and remain competitive in the market (Sajadi et al., 2016).

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The quality of airline services is essential as it involves numerous contact points and interactions between customers and airline employees. Studies have shown that airline service quality, including pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight services, is among the critical factors affecting customers' airline selection decisions and behavioral intentions. Different measurement models, such as SERQUAL and AIRQUAL, have been developed to assess service quality from customers' perspectives. Understanding and improving service quality is crucial for airline companies to satisfy their customers and gain a competitive edge in the market (Elvina et al., 2023; Hasan, Khan, & Farooqi, 2019).

Literature Review

Service Quality

Airline services must be high quality because there are many contact points and interactions between passengers and airline staff. Research has indicated that customers' airline selection decisions and behavioral intentions are significantly influenced by the quality of airline services, which include pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight services. Several measuring models, including SERQUAL and AIRQUAL, have been created to evaluate service quality from the consumer's viewpoint. In order to maintain a competitive advantage in the market and please clients, airline firms must comprehend and enhance service quality (Elvina et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2019).

Pre-flight Service Quality

Pre-flight services refer to the services provided by the airline industry and other service providers before the passengers board the flight (Dursun & Durmaz, 2009). These services include the check-in process, ticket booking, boarding gate, and transit services. The quality of pre-flight services significantly impacts passenger satisfaction, which is the passengers' cognitive and emotional response (Anggrayni et al., 2020). The airport's infrastructure, such as lounge areas, food and non-food retailers, washrooms, signage, and amenities, also shapes the passenger experience (Hasan et al., 2019). While some pre-flight services are under the direct control of the airline industry, others are not, such as parking facilities, restaurant and shuttle services, and ticket purchases through third-party providers (Sajadi et al., 2016). The airline can enhance the passenger perception of pre-flight service quality by providing essential pre-flight services and communicating any flight delays or changes to enhance the passenger perception of pre-flight service quality (Elvina et al., 2023).

In-flight Service Quality

The services an airline offers its customers while in flight are called "in-flight service quality." In-flight entertainment options, crew politeness, food quality, comfortable seats, and language proficiency are all included (Hasan et al., 2019; Elvina et al., 2023). The quality of an airline's in-flight amenities significantly impacts its reputation, and customers' satisfaction can influence their intention to use the airline again (Anggrayni et al., 2020). To enhance the quality of in-flight service, airlines should prioritize both core product performance and encounter service performance. As "moments of truth" in airline services, the caliber of in-flight services can impact customer satisfaction (Atalik et al., 2019).

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Post-flight Service Quality

Post-flight services refer to the services provided by an airline company to passengers upon arrival at the destination airport, including timely baggage transport, disembarkation, services provided by employees, facilities, ground services, and baggage services, which are positively related to passenger satisfaction. As such, it is plausible that post-flight services can also impact passenger satisfaction (Anggrayni et al., 2020). After passengers disembark from the aircraft, post-flight service quality is the last stage of the flight service process. That includes the Frequent Flyer Program (FFP) and precise and timely baggage handling. The post-flight service quality in building good customer relationships can ultimately affect passengers' travel experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Elvina et al., 2023). Further research may be needed to better understand the relationship between post-flight services and passenger satisfaction. Factors such as the specific post-flight services offered by airlines, the quality of these services, and how passengers perceive them could all be essential considerations (Anggrayni et al., 2020).

Passenger Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is critical to business success, particularly in the airline industry, where customers are carriers' only assets. Understanding and managing satisfaction through service quality are essential for airlines to remain profitable and grow. Customer satisfaction is a post-decision experience defined as a feeling of pleasure or disappointment from comparing a product's performance to prior expectations. It is a crucial focus area in behavioral studies and a key driver of customer loyalty, repurchase intentions, and positive word-of-mouth. In the airline industry, multi-dimensional aspects of service quality affect customer satisfaction, including baggage handling, pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight services. Passenger satisfaction has become critically important in airline operations, and airlines must focus on understanding and meeting their customers' expectations to succeed (Mohideen & Rajak, 2016; Jiang & Zhang, 2016; Tolpa, 2012).

Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is critical to understanding customers' satisfaction and commitment to a particular brand or service provider. It is the subjective probability that a customer will continue to purchase products or services from the same supplier in the future. Service providers invest substantial resources in identifying and capitalizing on factors that predict repurchase intention, such as service quality and customer satisfaction. Retaining current customers is often more profitable in the long run than attracting new ones, making repurchase intentions a strategic imperative for service marketing. Cognitive dissonance and customer satisfaction are among the antecedents of repurchase intention. Repurchase intention is critical in determining an organization's profitability and business success (Arif, 2019; Saleem et al., 2016; Nikbin et al., 2011).

Theory of the study

SERQUAL is a widely used measurement model of service quality in the airline industry. It consists of three dimensions: pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight services. These dimensions are used to evaluate the quality of services the airline provides from the passengers' perspective,

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and they help identify areas where improvements can be made (Hasan et al., 2019). Additionally, understanding consumer behavior theory is essential for researching passenger airline choices, as it can help explain consumers' decision-making process when choosing an airline. The decision to purchase an airline ticket is a high-involvement decision that can be complex and involve research and planning processes. By understanding the core issues of the consumer decision-making process, airlines can better understand how to market their services and meet the needs of their customers.

On the other hand, customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality play a significant role in their purchase decisions and repurchase intentions. The expectancy-value theory proposes that customers make purchase decisions based on their expectations and perceptions of the product or service's value. In contrast, the expectancy-disconfirmation theory suggests that customers evaluate their satisfaction based on the degree to which their expectations are met or exceeded. The performance of a service provider can also directly impact customers' repurchase intentions and overall satisfaction with the service. Finally, high quality and customer satisfaction are typically achieved when a company's performance exceeds customer expectations (Leong, 2008).

2. METHODOLOGY

Based on the hypotheses developed, this study utilized a descriptive correlational research approach. Underpinned by the SERQUAL theory (Parasuraman, 1982), consumer behavior theory, and expectancy-value theory. The researcher adapted a questionnaire from the literature. Pre-flight service quality (8 items) (Dursun & Durmaz, 2009), in-flight service quality (8 items) (Hasan et al., 2019; Dursun & Durmaz, 2009), post-flight service quality (Dursun & Durmaz, 2009), satisfaction (Hasan et al., 2019) and repurchase intention (Bulut & Karabulut, 2018; Wijaya et al., 2018). To increase the validity and reliability of the research questionnaire, 30 respondents were selected to answer the survey form, and the data were subjected to the Cronbach alpha test.

Based on the primary data collected, the researcher analyzed the data to examine the relationships between pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight service quality, satisfaction, and repurchase intention. A total of 391 passengers participated in answering the survey questionnaire. The respondents were limited to 18-year-old airline passengers who traveled from October to December 2022 at Davao International Airport. The survey questionnaire was distributed online using the non-probability purposive sampling technique. The survey questionnaire was measured using the 5-point Likert scale range from 5- most important, 4-important, 3-neutral, 2-slightly important, and 1- not much important. The data was subject to analysis of the hypothesis using linear regression and correlation.

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3. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Demographic

Table 1 provides an overview of the profile of the passengers. It was observed that most of the travelers were female in an age bracket of 28-37 years old, traveled with their family, friends, or colleagues, and traveled to visit their family, friends, or relatives.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

PARTICULAR	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gender	Male	151	38.6%
	Female	240	61.4%
	Total	**391**	**100%**
Age	18-27 years old	74	18.9%
	28-37 years old	149	38.1%
	38-47 years old	112	28.6%
	48-57 years old	44	11.3%
	58- years old	12	3.1%
	Total	**391**	**100%**
Travel Companion	Alone	74	18.9%
	Family/Friends/Colleagues	207	52.9%
	Special Someone	110	28.1%
	Total	**391**	**100%**
Reason of Travel	Vacation	74	18.9%
	Business	25	6.4%
	Seminars/Conferences/ Meeting	115	29.4%
	Visiting Family/Relatives/Friends	177	45.3%
	Total	**391**	**100%**

Validity and Reliability Result

Table 2 shows the reliability test using Cronbach's alpha for each question in the questionnaire—the value ranges from 0.853 to 0.884, which indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questions. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.80 or higher is acceptable for a reliable questionnaire, as it suggests that the questions measure the same underlying construct.

Table 2. Validity and reliability of constructions

Construct	Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Pre-flight quality	PFQS1	The airline check-in process was efficient	4.48	0.688	0.860

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service (PFQS)	PFQS2	The airline check-in queuing was efficient	4.55	0.572	0.859
	PFQS3	The airline check-in crew is courteous and helpful	4.38	0.622	0.863
	PFQS4	The airline check-in crew explains baggage regulations	4.38	0.677	0.861
	PFQS5	The airline had an efficient boarding process	4.41	0.682	0.857
	PFQS6	The airline crew in the boarding area was helpful	4.41	0.628	0.855
	PFQS7	The airline embarking process was efficient	4.17	0.805	0.853
	PFQS8	The airline's embarking was efficient	4.24	0.689	0.855
In-flight quality services (IFQS)	IFQS1	The aircraft had clean interiors	4.28	0.649	0.859
	IFQS2	The aircraft had comfortable seats	4.10	0.673	0.861
	IFQS3	The aircraft lavatories are clean	3.24	0.739	0.880
	IFQS4	The crew are kind and helpful	3.38	0.561	0.869
	IFQS5	The food in the aircraft was fresh and delicious	3.17	0.711	0.884
	IFQS6	The air condition in the aircraft was comfortable	3.52	0.509	0.869
	IFQS7	The aircraft had magazines, newspapers, and other entertainment facilities	3.59	0.501	0.868
	IFQS8	The crew members were well dressed and had a meat appearance	3.55	0.572	0.876
Post-flight quality services (POFQS)	POFQS1	The airline disembarking was efficient	3.62	0.494	0.873
	POFQS2	The airline was prompt and accurate in the delivery of baggage	4.31	0.761	0.869
Satisfaction (S)	S1	I am satisfied with my overall experience with this airline company	4.52	0.634	0.863
	S2	My choice to use this airline was a wise one	4.52	0.634	0.860

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	S3	The service delivered was worth the price I paid for the ticket	4.38	0.622	0.857
Repeat purchase (RP)	RP1	I will repurchase a ticket with this airline	4.17	0.805	0.857
	RP2	I will recommend this airline to my family, friends, and colleagues	4.38	0.728	0.856
	RP3	I expect to purchase a ticket again from this airline in the future	4.14	0.789	0.856

Correlation Matrix

Table 3 shows the correlation between pre-flight service quality, in-flight service quality, post-flight service quality, satisfaction, and repeat purchase. This means that higher levels of pre-flight service quality, in-flight service quality, post-flight service quality, and satisfaction are associated with a greater likelihood of repeat purchase behavior among passengers. Therefore, airlines and other travel providers must focus on improving the quality of their services throughout the entire travel experience to encourage repeat business from their passengers.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

Variables	Measures	Pre-flight	In-flight	Post-flight	Satisfaction
Pre-flight quality service	Pearson-r	—			
	df	—			
	p-value	—			
In-flight quality service	Pearson-r	0.648***			
	df	388			
	p-value	< .001			
Post-flight quality service	Pearson-r	0.652***	0.694***		
	df	389	388		
	p-value	< .001	< .001		
Satisfaction	Pearson-r	0.695***	0.663***	0.780***	
	df	389	388	389	
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	
Repeat purchase	Pearson-r	0.559***	0.576***	0.570***	0.559***
	df	389	388	389	389
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Assessment of Measurement Model

Table 4 shows that the adj. R-squared of 0.416 indicates that the model explains 41.6% of the variation in aggression, which is relatively high. The p-value of <0.001 for the model overall indicates that the model is statistically significant, meaning that the independent variables (pre-

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flight service quality, in-flight service quality, post-flight service quality, and satisfaction) as a group have a significant effect on the dependent variable (repeat purchase). This suggests that the model has a good fit and can be used to make predictions about aggression based on the values of the independent variables.

Table 4. Model Fit Measures

					Overall Model Test			
Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**RMSE**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
1	0.650	0.422	0.416	0.404	70.3	4	385	< .001

On the other hand, Table 5 presented the Model Coefficients in determining if pre-flight service quality, in-flight service quality, post-flight service quality, and satisfaction predict repeat purchases among travelers. The two predictors are hypothesized to be positively associated with a repeat purchase. The result shows that the 42.2% variance is explained by the two predictors, F (4, 385) = 70.3, p <.001). Specifically, pre-flight services (B =20, t= 3.63, p = <.001) and in-flight services (B =20, t= 4.14, p = <.001) are positively associated with repeat purchase behavior. On the other hand, post-light services (B =14, t= 2.55, p = .011) and satisfaction (B =11 t= 1.74, p = .083) are not significantly related to the outcome variables. The study found that pre-flight and in-flight services were strong predictors of a traveler's repeat purchase behavior, indicating the importance of providing quality services during these stages of the travel experience.

This suggests that airlines and other travel providers should prioritize the quality of their pre-flight and in-flight services to increase the likelihood of passengers making repeat purchases. It is also important to note that repeat purchase behavior is complex and may be influenced by factors beyond post-flight service quality and satisfaction. A comprehensive evaluation of post-flight services and passenger satisfaction should consider these factors to provide a complete picture of the factors that affect a traveler's decision to make a repeat purchase.

Table 5. Model Coefficients

Hypothesis	Estimate	SE	t	P-value	Analysis
Intercept	1.632	0.1736	9.40	< .001	
H1: Pre-flight service quality has a significant influence on repeat purchase behavior	0.198	0.0544	3.63	< .001	Accepted
H2: In-flight service quality has a significant influence on repeat purchase behavior	0.203	0.0490	4.14	< .001	Accepted
H3: Post-flight service quality has a significant influence on repeat purchase behavior	0.143	0.0563	2.55	0.011	Rejected

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H4: Satisfaction has a significant influence on repeat purchase behavior	0.106	0.0609	1.74	0.083	Rejected

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

These limitations provide scope for future research to address and improve the overall quality of the study. Here are some suggestions that could be included in future research:

1. Future studies can collect data on variables such as airline carrier ride, type of seats selected, frequency of travel, and income. These variables can provide a complete understanding of the passenger's profile and purchasing behavior.
2. The study was conducted on only those who flew to Davao International Airport; the results may only be generalizable to some populations. Future studies can collect data from different population segments to verify the model.
3. While pre-flight and in-flight service quality were good predictors, post-travel quality service and satisfaction were not associated with a repeat purchase. Future research could explore other factors influencing a traveler's decision to make a repeat purchase, such as the overall travel experience, brand reputation, loyalty, and external factors such as economic conditions and travel restrictions.
4. A larger sample size can provide more accurate and representative data, increasing the reliability and validity of the study findings.
5. A longitudinal study can track passengers over a more extended period and provide a better understanding of the factors that influence their repeat purchase behavior.

By addressing these limitations, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing passenger repeat purchase behavior and help airlines improve their services and increase passenger loyalty.

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