AIR TRAVEL PROCESS AND REPEAT TRAVEL INTENTION AT THE PORT HARCOURT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	20th January 2024	This study sought to examine the impact of air travel processes on repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt International Airport, Nigeria. Specifically, the study how functional activities, service scape, flight scheduling and personal services influences repeat travel intentions. Thus the study was guided by four research questions and hypotheses. Population for the study comprised air passengers at the Port Harcourt international Airport while sample size was streamlined to 138 respondents using the Freud and Williams's technique for sample size determination for unknown population; consequently accidental sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. Data for the study was gathered via the used of validated questionnaire drawn on a 5point likert scale, while reliability of the research instrument was guaranteed with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.91. Pearson Moment Correlation Technique was used in testing the hypotheses at 95% level of confidence. It was found that air travel process have a strong positive relationship with repeat travel intentions with functional activities, service scape, flight scheduling and personal services having a predictive influence of 65.7%, 80.2%, 98.2% and 62.4% respectively on repeat travel intentions. Consequently it was concluded that seamless air travel process is a viable tool for improving the passengers 'satisfaction towards repeat travel intentions at Port Harcourt International Airport, Nigeria. Thus amongst other recommendations, air service providers are encouraged to design and implement their air operation processes in a seamless manner that would guarantee passengers' comfort without jeopardising best global practices and regulatory standard. In so doing, they should provide clean, spacious lobbies/waiting areas where intending travelers can wait while their service request are processed. Air operators should also provide e-ticketing facilities and platforms to enable stress free, less time consuming and responsive ticketing and flight scheduling services.
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INTRODUCTION

Today, airports play an important role in domestic and international tourism development through air transportation. Air passengers' patronage generates revenue and positive word of mouth about the Airport. It is not a gainsaying saying said that a happy passenger have the tendency to spends more than unhappy ones. This reality has shaped airport management's approach to ensuring satisfying customer experience and enhanced positive travel behavioral intention (Graham 2014). In addition to supporting airlines, contemporary airports are anticipated to provide passengers with unique travel experiences (Brilha, 2008; Graham, 2014; Zenglein & Miller, 2007). Travelers' experiences with airport services such as navigation systems, airline operations, paperwork, security, amenities, etc., may either encourage repeat

business or influence their decision to transfer. The assessment of passengers' travel behavioral intentions is greatly influenced by their air travel procedures and airport experiences. According to Wattanancharoensil et al. (2017), passengers' emotional and memory outcomes are strongly linked to experiences as processes, including functional, service scape, and service provision. Passenger airport procedure is the original name for this crucial step in determining passengers' travel behavior intentions.

Customer loyalty is the lifeblood of the tourism industry, as it reflects the quality of the service provided to visitors. For tourism-related businesses, returning customers mean more money in the bank, more opportunities to stand out from the competition, and even more unprompted growth. Both the overall economy and specific attractions benefit from tourists' desire to return. When looking at the tourism industry from an economic standpoint, research on repeat visits is crucial and cannot be overemphasised (Antwi et al., 2022; Miquel, 2020). Retaining current consumers is more cost-effective than finding new ones, as stated by Lewis and Soureli (2006). An important role of repeat visitation would be in international tourism flows. Given the critical role that air travel process plays in passengers experience which influence travel behavioral intention, many empirical studies have been conducted most of which have been focused on international airport in advanced counties like Finland, USA and China (Miquel, 2020; Kamau, 2018; Antwi et al., 2022). These studies consistently show a strong correlation between travel process and passengers experience and other variables such as: check-in process, service cape, flight scheduling, personal service, destination experience and repeat travel intention. However, there is limited knowledge regarding the role of air travel process in travel behavioral intention in the Nigerian context and Port Harcourt in particular thereby creating a gap in the literature. In the light of the foregoing, any study that examines the relationship between air travel processes in respect to travel behavioral intention in developing tourism in Nigeria (especially with emphasis on Port Harcourt International Airport) will deepen insight and make meaningful practical and theoretical contributions.

The problem of this study sprouted from the growing concerns of stakeholders in the tourism and travel industry regarding the quality of service available at the airport. Wattanacharoensil et al (2017) testify that most airports globally provide poor services which do not promote passenger positive memory. Although the problem is global, it appears to be more pronounced in many developing countries including Nigeria and has resulted into unpleasant travel experiences for passengers.

The delay in scheduling, flight cancellation, difficulty in check-in process, loss of luggage, ticketing problem, security conscious, bad transit route to the airport and poor in-flight services are few amongst usual glitches complained about by users of air travel and these factors have has enduring negative impacts on their repeat travel intention (Antwi et al., 2022 Kirk et al., 2014). The manifestation of this challenge is visible in the low patronage of travel operators' services. Passengers have become disengaged with the service provider and this has resulted to negative word of mouth. In recent years, many Nigerian airports were rated as deplorable with Port Harcourt International Airport as one of the worst (Enoma & Alle, 2007). The above opinion is a glaring manifestation of bad runway, ill maintained facilities and even ineffective communication apparatus. There is worry among stakeholders that if the unpleasant airport experience persists it will affect the aviation industry negatively.

Despite the yearnings of air travel experts that airport travel process such as check in process, in-flight services, scheduling, service capes, and security provided by the airport might influence repeat travel intentions, the extent to which it applies in the context of Port Harcourt international airport has not been clearly verified empirically. Most studies conducted on this debates are domiciled outside Nigeria, in countries fairly advanced in air travel like Helsinki Vantaa Airport, Finland (Miquel, 2020), Atlanta, USA (Kamau, 2018), Shangai, China (Antwi et al., 2022). Only a few studies have been conducted within Nigeria; and these studies were domiciled in other international airports in cities like Lagos and Abuja (Mukarren & Sullamon, 2014; Sofia, 2019). This study sought to champion the course to bridge this lacuna by empirically examining the efficacy of air travel process on repeat travel intentions of air passengers at the Port Harcourt international airport, Nigeria. To achieve this goal the research not only stated but also answered the following research questions and hypotheses:

Research Question1: *What is the relationship between functional activities and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport?*

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between service cape and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport?*

Research Question 3: *What is the relationship between scheduling and repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport?*

Research Question 4: *What is the relationship between personal services and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport?*

H_o1:   There is no significant relationship between functional activities and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport.

H_o2:   There is no significant relationship between flight scheduling and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport.

H_o3:   There is no significant relationship between services cape and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport.

H_o4:   There is no significant relationship between personal services and repeat travel intention of air passengers at Port Harcourt international Airport.

Significance and Scope of the study

This study would be beneficial for the reformation and transformation of Nigeria Airport; especially the Port Harcourt International Airport as it will provide information on the state of the Airport. Airport management will find the study useful by providing information of the state of the airport with regard to passengers experience with its facilities such as ticketing and booking process service scape, check-in process, luggage movement, security, flight scheduling and compensation in the event of service failure. The study would as well help Airline operators to understand the importance of putting in place a convenience air travel process system that provide seamless travel procedure that optimize passengers' satisfaction for repeat business. It would provide meaningful evidence and insight on how sustained repeat patronage could improve airport revenue and expansion if well driven by positive customers' experience at the airport. Also, this study would add to repository of studies on air travel and would be of immense usefulness to future researchers who may wish to conduct further studies on the subject matter.

The scope of this study shall be discussed under three heading as follows: content scope, geographic scope and unit of analysis. The content scope is considered along the two construct of the study namely air travel process and air travel behavioural intentions and such dimensions as functional facilities, service cape, personal services and flight scheduling as well as repeat travel intention. Geographical scope of the study was streamlined to Port Harcourt International Airport. The unit of analysis constitutes the domestic and international air passengers that use the aircraft to move from Port Harcourt International Airport to other destinations within and outside the country. Specifically, the study was carried out on airlines that use Port Harcourt International Airport for their operation amongst which are Airik air, Air Peace, Dana Air etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theoretical Review

The foundation of this investigation was based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). The TPB, initially formulated in 1980 as the theory of reasoned action, was further developed by Ajzen (1991). Ajzen expanded the applicability of TPB beyond the prediction of an individual's intention to perform a particular behaviour at a specific time and location, to incorporate all behaviour over which individuals have agency. Initially developed to forecast behaviour involving restricted voluntary control, TPB has since gained widespread acceptance as a social psychology theory pertinent to numerous fields, including management, nursing, and marketing, among others. The underlying premise of the hypothesis is that behaviour can be predicted by comprehending the intentions of others. The explanation supplied emphasizes the significance of individuals' intentions as a fundamental predictor of human conduct.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a social-psychological framework proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1969. Its purpose is to provide insight into the cognitive processes that influence human behavior. The principal objective is to understand and forecast individual conduct, on the grounds that the effective implementation of human actions is primarily dictated by personal volition. The foundation of this theory lies in the notion that mere intention to exhibit a particular behavior will not materialize into that behavior itself if its implementation becomes practically unattainable or is hindered by unanticipated challenges. More precisely put, the intention to engage in a particular behavior will not materialize into actual conduct if that behavior is not feasible to execute. Within this particular framework, intentions encompass the fundamental elements that impact an action, functioning as gauges of the level of exertion that individuals are prepared to place forth. The probability of participating in an activity is frequently increased when there is a greater propensity to do so.

The urge to travel, according to Bamberg and Moser (2007), is the principal motivator behind intentional travel behavior. Nevertheless, the process of making a decision concerning travel can be conceptualized as selecting from a multitude of potential courses of action, as opposed to a simple binary choice of participating in a specific activity or not (Ajzen &

Fishbein, 1969). If this proposition is valid, then the propensity to engage in travel becomes an individual choice impacted by various alternatives, and this choice can be anticipated through the assessment of the personal value attributed to those alternatives. According to Ajzen (1991), the Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that an individual's perception of control over the behavior, attitude toward the behavior, and subjective norms all contribute to the determination of the activity's value or utility. Furthermore, behavioral intentions may also be impacted by an individual's past conduct (Kidwell & Jewell, 2008).

Drawing from this theory, air travel managers could sprout the intention of passengers for future travel behaviour by providing quality and suitable air travel processes that could form a memorable travel experience and intentions to repeat such travel experience. This theory was therefore adopted for this study in order to explain the relationship between Air travel process and Repeat travel intention.
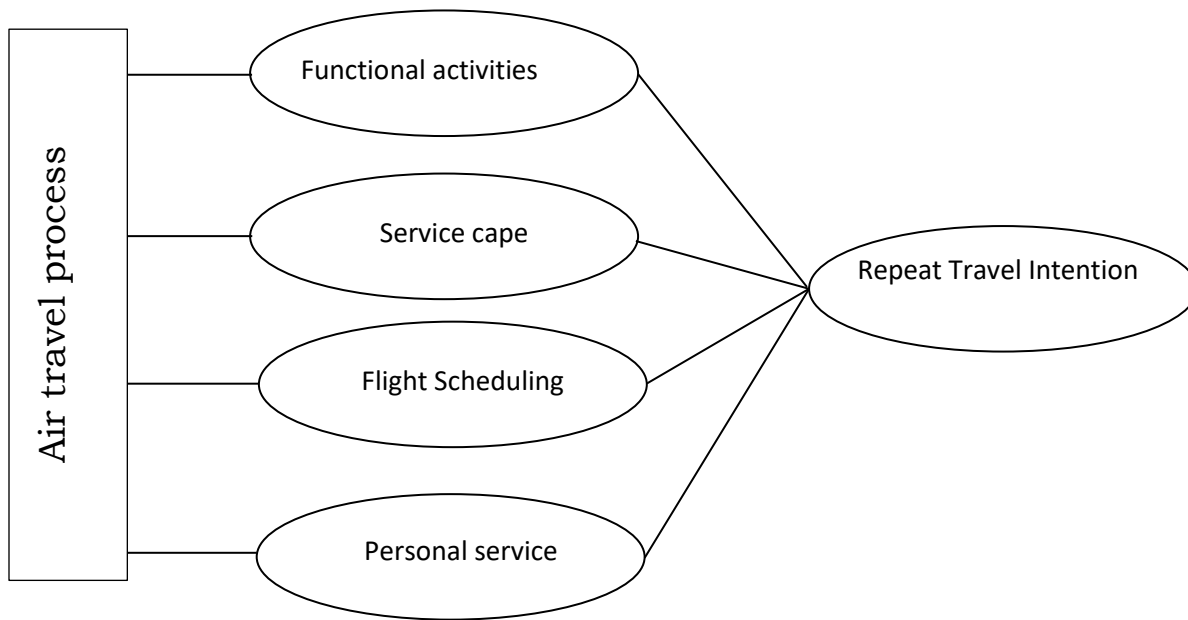
Conceptual Review

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study
Source: Researchers' Conceptualisation

As depicted in the conceptual diagram in fig 1, the major concepts for this study include the concept of air travel process with four dimensions (functional activities, service cape, flight scheduling and personal service) and repeat travel intention.

Concept of Air Travel Process

Air travel process comprises all modes of conveyance with the ability to maintain a constant altitude, including parachutes, helicopters, aircraft, hot air balloons, gliders, and hang gliders. The incidence of air travel accidents has doubled since the mid-1980s, reflecting the substantial increase in global air travel consumption over the past two decades (Antwi et al., 2022; Graham 2014; Miquel, 2020). Commencing and concluding a significant portion of air travel occurs at a commercial airport, an establishment considered indispensable to international commerce due to its technological advancements and swift, efficient expansion. Due to this attribute, it is regarded as one of the most significant contributions to the advancement of modern society. The aviation industry has experienced remarkable exponential growth in its commercialization, which has surpassed that of all other modes of transportation. As a result, aviation has become an essential catalyst for economic progress (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Enoma & Alle, 2007).

Passengers' emotional states are intricately connected to their final encounters on airplanes (Wattanachearnensil et al., 2017). In addition, the growing proportion of affluent passengers has influenced the standards of anticipation regarding the in-flight experience. As the initial point of contact for air travelers upon their arrival, the airport is frequently regarded as an ambassador who influences visitors' initial and final impressions of the location. It is frequently acknowledged that the airport experience of travelers and tourists has a significant impact on their overall travel and tourism experiences (Wattanachearnensil et al., 2017). Through the strategic utilization of information technology and digital transformation, airports have the ability to significantly mitigate consumer dissatisfaction and enhance the overall airport experience. Perhaps offering internet connectivity to passengers at airports during their wait for their passports or to check in could be considered a strategy to increase their tolerance for lengthy lines. This study clarifies the process of air travel through an analysis of it from four distinct perspectives, which constitute the study's dimensions.

Concept of Functional Activities

Activity can be defined as the state or situation in which a series of actions are taking place. The pursuits that passengers partake in while at the airport are occasionally labeled functional activities. Passenger activities at an airport can be broadly categorized into two primary categories. Processing activities and discretionary activities are the two categories of activities. Processing procedures consist of the specific tasks necessary to obtain authorization to enter an aircraft in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Check-in, completion of departure documentation, security and identification checks, and ultimately boarding the aircraft at the designated gate are all components of the procedure. As opposed to actions specified in the processing protocol, "discretionary" denotes such actions. Processing duties, including queuing, occupy a negligible portion of the time that passengers spend at airports (Antwi et al., 2022; Wattanachearnensil et al., 2017). The instances provided serve as examples of functional activities that passengers are expected to perform in a particular sequence (Kirk et al., 2014; Loi et al., 2017):

Check-in: This process is concerned with how a passenger checks in for an airplane, selects a seat, and has their luggage brought to them. At the traditional check-in desk, a staff checks the passenger's identity, luggage, and ticket.

Bag drop: Barcode classification of incoming checked luggage according to flight is the standard operating procedure. Radio frequency identification represents an additional method by which commodities can be tracked and identified. Banhart et al. (2003) define the procedure as the radio antenna-based reading of individual devices affixed to each container by airlines.

Immigration: This is known as passport control. Step one is to show the immigration officer your passport and boarding pass in its unabridged form, free of any cover or other such attachment.

Security: involves searching individuals and their carry-on bags using metal detectors, X-ray machines, and human search teams in case anything out of the ordinary is found. As a means to reduce wait times, several airports have designated lanes just for business travelers.

Boarding for departure: One of the last things that happens at the airport is when passengers go on board the plane. Once passengers have used the system to verify their identification and boarding card, staff personnel will record the boarding status. The airplane will remove any checked-in goods belonging to passengers who did not show up during baggage reconciliation, which is the practice conducted just before departure. Airline companies owe it to their clients to conduct their operations smoothly, putting their comfort first and following all rules and regulations.

Concept of Service cape

Due to recent advancements in digital technology, modern airline consumers have become more discerning. Travelers take into account not only the atmosphere and amenities of the airport, but also how they might maximize their financial resources. The overall airport service quality was enhanced with the redirection of airport money towards terminal restoration and refurbishment. There are opportunities for improvement in the airport industry, namely in the domains of passenger service and the creation of an atmosphere that fosters the growth of a unique community spirit. Kotler (1973) argues that service providers might differentiate themselves from competitors by improving the ambiance of their establishments. This paradigm sparked novel concepts on the ecology of service settings.

A company's "servicescape" encompasses its physical premises, including its layout, visual appeal, and interior embellishments. As to Bitner's (1992) definition, the "cape" of a service encompasses not only the service itself, but also its development environment, the interactions between the supplier and the user, and any physical resources involved in delivering or comprehending the service. The term "servicescape" refers to the constructed surroundings that include artificial elements, which might originate from social or natural sources. Bitner (1992) argues that the "services cape" paradigm provides a thorough examination of the service environment, emphasizing its impact on both staff and customers.

Concept of Flight scheduling

Due to the critical importance of the schedule to an airline's business operations, the scheduling team is always a smaller part of the larger commercial department. An airline's principal purpose is to facilitate the transportation of people and cargo between different locations. The service's parameters are determined by the timetable, including the service's availability, the prerequisites for establishing connections, and the particularities of the onboard product, since various

aircraft kinds have distinct onboard merchandise. The flight schedule efficiently arranges air travel destinations and departure times. Flight schedules have a direct influence on airline revenue optimization, operational planning, and customer loyalty. They provide detailed information on the arrival and departure times of flights carrying paying passengers. The airline schedule is crucial to the strategic approach of any airline. The primary objective of airline schedule planning is to develop a flight schedule that optimizes an organization's resources. Given its pivotal position in an airline's corporate planning system, it has a substantial effect on profitability and shapes almost all operational decisions (Barnhart et al., 2003; Barnhart & Talluri, 1997; Teodorovic, 1988).

Several issues have emerged about the coordination of flight schedules at hotels in Port Harcourt. Frequent occurrences of flight disruptions, such as cancellations and delays, are common in this environment. One of the reasons why these challenges remain unresolved is due to their sequential handling rather than simultaneous resolution. This may be attributed to constraints in computer technology and solution approaches. Concurrent solution approaches are chosen over sequential ones due to their lack of incompatibilities and potential for cost-effectiveness. In 2005, the global number of passengers transported by scheduled airlines surpassed two billion for the first time (International Civil Aviation Organizations, 2006).

The outcome of task planning in an airline's schedule might be the optimal schedule, which refers to the most efficient and effective use of resources while simultaneously satisfying the anticipated demands of potential passengers (Etschmaier & Mathaisel, 1985). Passengers prioritize the well-organized flight schedule as the first consideration when selecting an airline. This schedule is prominently shown to prospective consumers and serves as the major service provided by the corporation (Gopalan & Talluri, 1998). The choice of flight also impacts the evaluation of the passenger's airfare. The primary goal of airline schedule optimization is to determine the most profitable operating schedule. This role is both crucial and intricate for an airline's planning.

Concept of Personal Service

Personal service refers to interactions with airport staff or customer service representatives for the whole course of an airport journey, with a particular focus on important or practical duties. The term "airport personnel" include transportation security officers (LEOs), authorized airport workers of the authority, contractors, and the Federal Aviation Administration Technical Center, as well as other persons involved in the management, maintenance, and service of the airport. Aviation service workers must have a high level of customer orientation and be easily accessible to handle customer inquiries and help resolve disagreements and problems.

Frontline aviation staff are comprised of individuals who are responsible for customer interactions and the ongoing management of airport facilities. Factors like as expenses, ambiance, environment, treatment by service personnel, and management procedures impact travelers' sense of fairness and their rationales for their airport encounter. The acknowledgment of the importance that airport industry managers attach to customer assessments of service quality is substantiated by aviation trade magazines and airport press releases (Aeroporti di Roma S.p.A., 2004; Bomenblit, 2002; Gooding, 1999).

Academic and industry researchers regularly evaluate passenger opinions on airport service quality to establish performance standards using customer feedback. This helps identify areas for service improvement and prevent the loss of valuable passenger traffic. This highlights the need for airport travel administrators to provide air customers with exceptional customized services (Yeh & Kuo, 2002). During the whole duration of a passenger's journey at the airport, airport management must prioritize the smooth integration of every activity, beyond the concept of separate service activities. The management problem related to the passenger experience involves several aspects, including interactions between service professionals, important airport operations, and technology improvements. Therefore, the successful handling of passenger experiences requires careful planning, understanding of conversations, and cooperation among all key parties involved.

Concept of Repeat Travel Intention

The readiness or propensity of an individual to revisit a specific location is referred to as "visit intention." As a result of the increasing reliance of many locations on recurring economic activity, there is a greater emphasis on the study of the urge to revisit a location. Over the past decade, there has been considerable scholarly attention given to investigating the propensity of visitors to revisit, specifically in the realm of travel and tourism literature (Antwi et al., 2022; Graham, 2014; Loi et al., 2017; Miquel, 2020).

A key determinant is that frequent visitor retention results in reduced marketing and advertising expenditures (Ali et al., 2016; Loi et al., 2017). As an example of post-consumption behavior, the act of revisiting a tourist destination can be defined as a visitor participating in the same activity or revisiting a specific location (Baker et al., 1992). Furthermore, it concerns the visitor's evaluation of the location's appeal, their likelihood of revisiting, and their propensity to recommend it to others (Chen & Chen, 2010). The travel decision-making process is multifaceted and impacted by various components, such as social and psychological factors (e.g., subjective norms), attitudes, and perceived behavioral control (Ali et al., 2016). The recognition of the significance of consumer satisfaction in cultivating loyalty is not limited to tangible products but extends to the tourism industry as well (Som & Badarneh, 2011). According to Um et al. (2006), the intention to revisit is a progression from contentment. Positive emotions experienced by tourists during their visit to a

tourism destination are indicative of their satisfaction with the area and, consequently, enhance their propensity to revisit. Furthermore, in comparison to the costs incurred in attracting and retaining initial visitors, the expenditures related to retaining repeat visitors are considerably diminished (Ali et al., 2016). Therefore, through the cultivation of a positive perception among travelers and the encouragement of frequent visits, it is possible to significantly reduce costs related to marketing and promotion. Consequently, this can yield a substantial cost advantage, a critical factor in attaining triumph in the realm of destination marketing. The tourism industry is greatly influenced by the quality of travelers' experiences and their assessments of the facilities and services provided, owing to its service-oriented character. Frequently, travel enjoyment is an immediate and vital precursor to the desire to return. According to research presented by Loi et al. (2017), a greater level of gratification strengthens the desire to revisit a location in the future.

Empirical Review
Functional activities and Repeat travel intentions
There is a lack of research in Nigerian academic literature about the air travel procedure and the desire to return. Nevertheless, Miquel (2020) has provided empirical data on the efficacy of digital technologies by investigating passenger impressions during an airport travel and doing a comprehensive research on the matter. The aim of this qualitative exploratory single case research was to determine the viewpoints of passengers using Helsinki Vantaa Airport (Finland) on the digital support tools available on the airport premises, which are designed to enhance their travel experience as airport customers. The study was focused on analyzing a group of eight people who matched the criterion for participation by using the airport at least four times in the last year. Due to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we were had to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with the eight participants online. Based on the survey, travelers are negatively impacted by chores that lack functionality. They promote the use of modern technologies to streamline operational activities via automation.

Wattanacharoensil et al. (2017) performed a research that empirically analyzed how air passengers view the airport experience. The study use the phrase "Airport Experience as a process" to refer to the processes that cover the essential duties carried out by those who travel by air. These services include transportation to and from the airport terminal, with a specific focus on in-town check-in (if possible). This feature is important since it is one of the main reasons why passengers go to the airport. The process of AE is categorized into five sub-categories, with functional experience being the most dominant (15%) among them. The results of AE "as a process" in connection to the outcome suggest that functional experience is the most common occurrence. The result is similar to that of Kirk et al. (2014), whose empirical investigation focused on the attributes of functional experience, including the most basic and necessary operations inside airports. A study has identified four aspects - emotion, perception, memory, and fairness - in which elements linked to a diverse range of bad consequences are found. Functional experience is the most common feature that influences the repeat travel intentions of airline customers (Kirk, 2014).

Services cape and Repeat travel Intention
Park and Ryu (2019) performed a research to investigate the influence of airport service limitations on the behavioral intentions of airport users. Gender acts as a moderating factor in this study examining the influence of limitations on physical and social services on cognitive and emotional satisfaction, as well as airport image. A total of 294 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 283 were included in the final analysis. The data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling with the assistance of SPSS 18.0 and AMOS 21.0. The data indicate that emotional satisfaction strongly influenced the perception of the airport image. Additionally, it was shown that only the physical service scape had a notable impact on both cognitive and affective satisfaction.

Kamau (2018) examined the impact of airport service costs on customer happiness. The study was conducted among customers at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to examine the effects of cape lavatory services on passenger satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and perceived service quality. Six hypotheses were assessed using SMART PLX and structural equation modeling to analyze the dimensions of the environment. The study differentiates between the tangible and interpersonal elements. The aforementioned factors were also separated into four sub-dimensions: cleanliness, functioning, upgrades, and custodial presence. An analysis was conducted to assess how these sub-dimensions influenced passengers' assessment of the service quality of the Cape. The study revealed that enhancements and cleanliness have a positive impact on passengers' perception of the service quality offered by capes. However, the functionality and presence of custodians do not affect passengers' satisfaction or their intention to revisit the airports.

The research titled "I am here to fly, but better get the environment right" (Antonwi et al., 2022) examined how passengers reacted to the airport servicescape. This study examines the effects of the way airport services are presented and communicated on the emotions and behaviors of passengers. The impact of substantive and communicative staging of airport services presentations (SSoS and CSoS) is examined using environmental and positive psychology frameworks. At Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport, 387 people were surveyed throughout their boarding or disembarking processes. In terms of passengers' emotions and satisfaction, the findings show that the airport's physical environment is crucial. This effect is particularly strong for self-service options. As a result, passengers are more likely to have intents to return the airport, recommend it to others, spend more money, and partly raise their overall spending.

The results of the interaction effects indicate that those who travel often get more happiness from joyful customer service on board, while individuals who fly seldom enjoy more contentment from pleasant seat service on board. Furthermore, it seems that happy mood has a more important role in predicting the behavioral intentions of infrequent travelers to repurchase, refer, and spend more. The importance of passenger pleasure seems to differ across passengers based on their degree of familiarity, depending on the precise sort of behavioral response being studied. The findings of their research are consistent with those of other scholars (Ali et al., 2016; Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Park et al., 2018), who also observed that passenger satisfaction is important for different passengers depending on their level of familiarity and the specific behavioral response under investigation.

Flight scheduling and Repeat travel intentions

A critical obstacle encountered by the aviation sector in Nigeria is the lack of client loyalty, shown in the insufficient dedication demonstrated by commercial airline operators in the country. The aviation industry faces recurring challenges such as overcrowding and traffic congestion, obsolete and malfunctioning air navigation equipment, inefficient purchase processes for airline tickets (both online and offline), frequent flight delays, unannounced flight cancellations, and recurrent plane crashes (Connor & Davidson, 2010).

The research "Why Do Airlines Systematically Schedule Their Flights to Arrive Late?" was undertaken by Mayer and Sinai in 2003. The writers underlined their dissatisfaction with the airlines' inclination to assign air traffic delays to external factors, such as adverse weather conditions or airport congestion. Although these elements are often predictable, airlines often fail to include them in their schedule-making procedures. By analysing data from over 67 million flights conducted by airlines from 1988 to 2000, researchers found that the duration of planned flights is much less than the expected travel durations. The research provided suggests that airlines base their scheduling choices on the performance of flights during very favourable days, even if such days are rather few on average. The experts have determined that the most likely reason is that airlines cut labour costs, which negatively impacts their passengers. Nevertheless, there is also compelling data suggesting that airlines should endeavour to achieve greater aircraft utilization. Hence, their study suggests that the arrangement of flight schedules significantly affects the individual experiences of passengers and their inclination to revisit.

Personal service and Repeat travel intentions

An empirical investigation on consumer satisfaction in international air travel was conducted by Michael et al. (2008). The present study examines the factors that influence service quality in international air travel in a positive manner, along with the dimensions that airline customers rate as having the most and least significant impact on service quality. The information was collected from a convenience sample of individuals who satisfied the following requirements: they were at least 18 years old and had to have travelled on an international aircraft within the 12 months prior to the data collection period. The aforementioned sample comprised 428 participants, representing 85.6% of the entire population. A positive correlation is established between seven distinct dimensions of perceived service quality in international air travel and the following variables: safety and security, comfort, meals, promptness, assurance, expediency, and helpfulness. It is determined that safety and security constitutes the most crucial element among these dimensions. Further, there was a significantly strong positive correlation between the level of service quality and the attribute of helpfulness (with regard to personal service). The results obtained from this inquiry were consistent with those documented by Luzar et al. (1995) and Lynne et al. (1994).

Based on the preceding examination of empirical data, it is apparent that the number of scholars who have examined passenger satisfaction in the air transportation industry is limited. Furthermore, there is a lack of sufficient research examining the physical environments of airports (Moon et al., 2017). Furthermore, scholarly investigations examining the physical and social dimensions of airport infrastructure and travel protocols as they pertain to passenger satisfaction and behavioural intentions, specifically within the context of Nigerian airports, are scarce. The primary objective of this study is to address the current gap in the literature by conducting an empirical inquiry into the influence of air travel procedures on the likelihood of repeat visits to Port Harcourt International Airport in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design survey research method which is a quasi-experimental technique because the study elements are not under the control of the researchers. The target population of the study comprised air passengers in Port Harcourt international airport. Since the population of the study is infinite because it is practically not feasible to determine in absolute terms the numbers of air passengers, the Freud and Williams (1992) Formula for unknown population was adopted to determine the sample size of the study and this resulted to a sample size of 138 air travel passengers who subsequently served as the respondents for the study. Accidental sampling technique was used to select the respondents because the researcher only considers passengers that were present at the airports at the time of study. Data for the study was gathered via the use of survey instrument (questionnaire) administered to the respondents. Experts in the field reviewed copies of the instrument and provided input on its validity in a variety of areas. To guarantee

the instrument's face and content validity, these recommendations were evaluated and included into the final draught. To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, A Cronbach Alpha score of 0.91 was obtained, indicating the reliability of the instrument. Pearson Moment Correlation Technique, a parametric statistical method for testing hypotheses with a 95% level of confidence; yielding a significant level of 0.05, was used to examine the data collected for the research. This analysis was aided with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
Questionnaire Administration and Response Rate
Table 1: Below was used to analyse the questionnaire in terms of distribution and demographic profile of respondents respectively.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed Questionnaire	138	100%
Not retrieved	5	3.6%
Retrieved	133	96.4%
Useful response	129	93.5%
Not used	4	2.9%

Source: Survey Data 2023

The distribution and retrieval of questionnaires to respondents are detailed in the table above. One hundred thirty-eight (138) respondents comprised the study matrix. Therefore, a total of 138 duplicates of the research instrument (questionnaire) were distributed, accounting for 100% of the sample size. One hundred thirty-three (133) copies, or approximately 96.4%, of the 138 distributed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved; four (4) of these retrieved copies were not completed by the respondents and were therefore deemed useless for the study. Due to this, the study utilised a mere one hundred twenty-nine copies (129) for analysis, which accounted for approximately 93.5% of the total sample size. The information gathered from these 129 respondents will comprise the data utilised in the analysis of this study.

Table 4.2: Demographic Data of Respondents

S/No	Demographic variables	No	Percentage
1	**Gender**		
	Male	69	69.0
	Female	40	31.0
	Total	**129**	**100.0**
2	**Age**		
	18-25years	11	8.5
	26-35years	37	28.7
	36-45years	41	31.8
	46-55 years	24	18.6
	55 Years and Above	16	12.4
	Total	**129**	**100**
3	**Academic Educational**		
	Primary Education	13	10.1
	Secondary Education	38	29.5
	Tertiary Education	78	60.4
	Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Survey Data 2023

Table 4.2 shows the demographic details of the respondents. It showed that 60% of the respondents were male while the remaining 40% were females. Another notable insight that could be derived from this analysis is the respondents' level of academic qualifications. The result revealed the respondents are predominantly comprised of elites as majority of the (up to 60.4%) have tertiary educational qualifications. This assured the researcher the confidence that respondents are knowledgeable enough and would provide objective response to the questionnaire items.

Univariate Assessment of measurement instrument

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	Item Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Functional Activities	I am satisfied with the experience I get from this airline	2.64	.869	**0.812**
	The responsiveness of this airline in service delivery makes sure there is no queue	2.50	.850	
	The security system of this airline is very satisfactory	2.93	.866	
	This airline engages their clients while waiting with relaxing activities	3.00	.819	
Servicescape	How satisfied are you with the airport's facilities (e.g. shops, restaurants, waiting areas)	4.81	.498	**0.879**
	Do you find the airport environment conducive and attracting	4.79	.402	
	Do you find the airport environment conducive and attracting	4.37	.470	
	The office of this airline is very clean and spacious	4.40	.318	
Flight Scheduling	We handle customer complaints swiftly	4.79	.408	**0.881**
	Cancelled flights attract no extra cost	4.68	.470	
	We offer the best price	4.68	.470	
	We offer maximum value for our fares	4.84	.367	
Personal Services	The personnel here are friendly	4.83	.374	**0.792**
	The staff of this airline cared about my needs	4.79	.408	
	I am impressed to the warm reception the staff of this airline gave me	4.68	.470	
	The personnel of this airline are all smartly dressed and polite	4.84	.367	

Repeat Travel Intentions				
	I enjoyed using this airport	4.83	.403	**0.806**
	This airline meet my expectation	4.70	.460	
	I will mostly choose this airline again	4.48	.502	
	I will recommend this airline to my friends and family	4.85	.381	

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2023.

The descriptive analysis of the research instrument is shown in table 4.2. The result unveiled the mean score and standard deviation of the items comprising the questionnaire for all the identified constructs. The outcome demonstrated a high mean value, suggesting that the majority of respondents concurred with the questions. Additionally, the standard deviation accurately assessed the variability or spread of the responses, which was deemed satisfactory. This suggests that the selected samples sufficiently reflected the entire population under investigation (Dauglas and Marting, 2005; Mary, 2008).

Furthermore, to assess the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach alpha values provided further evidence of the study instrument's internal consistency, since the entire alpha values were over the minimal level of 0.7. Therefore obtained outcome demonstrates that the research instrument is reliable, as it meets the minimum threshold requirement of 0.7.

Test of Hypothesis

H_0:1 there is no significant relationship between functional activities and repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt international airport.

Correlations

		Functional Activities	Repeat Travel Intention
Functional Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.811*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	129	129
Repeat Travel Intention	Pearson Correlation	.811*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	129	129

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table showed the correlation result for hypothesis one. The result revealed that a significant and high positive relationship exists between functional activities and repeat travel intention. The correlation showed a statistic (P=0.811, p<0.005) which indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the (r^2) value of .657 shown in the result indicates that functional activities can predict repeat intention of passengers at Port Harcourt international airport to the tune of 65.7% while the remaining 35.3% could be associated with factors outside the scope of this study. Since p calculated (0.01) is less than 0.05 which is the significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected while the null hypothesis was upheld. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between Functional Activities and Repeat Travel Intention.

H_0:2 there is no significant relationship between Service cape and repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt international airport.

Correlations

		Services cape	Repeat Travel Intention
Services cape	Pearson Correlation	1	.896*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016

	N	129	129
Repeat Travel Intention	Pearson Correlation	.896*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
	N	129	129

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table showed the correlation result for hypothesis two. The result revealed that a significant and high positive relationship exists between services cape and repeat travel intention. The correlation showed a statistic (P=0.896, p<0.005) which indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the (r^2) value of .802 shown in the result indicates that functional activities can predict repeat intention of passengers at Port Harcourt international airport to the tune of 80.2% while the remaining 19.8% could be associated with factors beyond the scope of this study. Since p calculated (0.016) is less than 0.05 which is the significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected while the null hypothesis was upheld. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between Services cape and Repeat Travel Intention.

H_0:3 there is no significant relationship between Flight scheduling service and repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt international airport.

Correlations

		Flight scheduling	Repeat Travel Intention
Flight scheduling	Pearson Correlation	1	.991*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.027
	N	129	129
Repeat Travel Intention	Pearson Correlation	.991*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	
	N	129	129

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table showed the correlation result for hypothesis three. The table revealed that a significant and strong positive relationship exists between Flight scheduling and repeat travel intention. The correlation showed a statistic (P=0.991, p<0.005) which indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the (r^2) value of .982 shown in the result indicates that Flight scheduling can predict repeat intention of passengers at Port Harcourt international airport to the tune of 98.2% while the remaining 1.8% could be associated with factors outside the scope of this study. Since p calculated (0.027) is less than 0.05 which is the significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected while the null hypothesis was upheld. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between personnel service and Repeat Travel Intention.

H_0:4 there is no significant relationship between personal services and repeat travel intentions of air passengers at Port Harcourt international airport.

Correlations

		Personal Service	Repeat Travel Intention
Personal Service	Pearson Correlation	1	.790*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	129	129
Repeat Travel Intention	Pearson Correlation	.790*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	129	129

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table showed the correlation result for hypothesis four. The result revealed that a significant and strong positive relationship exists between personal service and repeat travel intention. The correlation showed a statistic (P=0.790, p<0.005) which indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the (r^2) value of .624 shown in the result indicates that functional activities can predict repeat intention of passengers at Port Harcourt international airport to the tune of 62.4% while the remaining 37.6% could be associated with factors beyond the scope of this study. Since p calculated (0.01) is less than 0.05 which is the significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected while the null hypothesis was upheld. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between personal service and Repeat Travel Intention.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this investigation are evaluated in light of the hypotheses that were developed and tested. According to the initial hypotheses, there is no correlation between functional activities and the intention to return for future travel. A statistical analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r = 0.811) between the aforementioned variables and the intention to return for future travel. According to the coefficient of determination (r2), functional activities account for 66% of the variance in repeat travel intention, while other conditions account for the remaining 44%. A significant relationship is indicated by the p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that a correlation exists between engaging in functional activities and travelers' intention to travel again. This discovery is consistent with the results reported by Miquel (2020), which suggest that functional amenities found in airports can be extremely beneficial for travelers. This study further corroborates the conclusion drawn by Wattanacharoensil and Graham (2017) that in-town check-in and other transportation-related activities at airport terminals are significant factors influencing travelers' visits to the airport.

The second hypothesis posits that no correlation exists between the intention to return to a particular service cape and repeat travel. A statistical analysis revealed a weak correlation coefficient (r = 0.896) between the aforementioned variables and the intention to return for future travel. The coefficient of determination (r2) suggests that service capacity accounts for approximately 20% of recurrent travel intentions, while the remaining 80% is influenced by other factors. A significant relationship is indicated by the p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that a notable correlation exists between the level of service and the intention to engage in recurrent travel. This result is consistent with the findings of Park and Ryu (2019), who concluded that affective satisfaction had a significant impact on airport image and only physical servicescape had a significant impact on cognitive and affective satisfaction. This study provides further support for the conclusions drawn by Kamau (2018), which suggest that improvements and cleanliness positively influence the perceived service quality of the servicescape. However, neither functionality nor the presences of custodians have a significant impact on passengers' satisfaction or behavioural intentions, specifically in terms of returning to the airports.

According to the third hypothesis, there is no correlation between the intention to return and personnel service. A statistical analysis of this data revealed a weak correlation coefficient (r2 = 0.991) between the intention to return and the level of service provided by personnel. The value of (r2) suggests that personnel service can predict 98% of repeat travel intentions, leaving approximately 2% for other factors. A significant relationship is indicated by the value of 0.000 (p < 0.05); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that personnel service and the intention to return travel are related. This research concurs with the conclusion drawn by Lin et al. (2018) that airlines schedule flight durations significantly shorter than anticipated travel time. Additionally, they asserted that discrepancies in travel duration between seasons or years result from factors such as fluctuations in average push-back delays, delayed aircraft departures from terminals, and airlines' failure to incorporate push-back delays into their schedule formulation. Conversely, the scheduled travel time of an airline is virtually equivalent to the median duration elapsed between the gate push-back during departure and the gate pull-up at the destination.

According to the fourth hypothesis, there is no correlation between the intention to return and personnel service. A statistical analysis revealed a weak correlation coefficient (r = 0.790) between the intention to return and the level of service provided by personnel. According to the coefficient of determination (r2), approximately 38% of repeat travel intentions remain to be determined by other factors, while 62% can be predicted by personnel service. A significant relationship is indicated by the p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that a notable correlation exists between the quality of personnel service and the intention to engage in recurrent travel. This discovery is consistent with prior research (Micheal et al., 2008; Lynne et al., 1994), which affirms that the five most significant determinants are staff courtesy, lavatory sanitation, staff availability, wayfinding indicators, telecommunications accessibility, and staff courtesy. This study further corroborates the results reported by Michael et al. (2008), which indicated a statistically significant and positive correlation with service quality as assessed through the dimensions of safety and security, convenience, timeliness, and assurance. More specifically, they posited that there existed a substantial positive correlation between service quality and helpfulness (personal service). The findings of this research were similarly consistent with those reported by Lynne et al. (1994) and Luzar et al. (1995).

CONCLUSION

The aviation sector has considerably contributed to the global economy, resulting in substantial benefits for Nigeria. By enabling the movement of individuals and goods from their origin to their final destination or designated spot, the sector has significantly contributed to the growth of the tourism industry. To ensure a smooth and enjoyable journey, protocols were implemented with the purpose of generating a lasting impression on the passengers. Recently, however, passengers have become intrigued by a variety of operational bottlenecks and obstacles: flight cancellations, scheduling delays, check-in complications, lost luggage, ticketing problems, security concerns, unfavourable transit routes to the airport, and inadequate in-flight services. The objective of this research endeavour was to confront these worrisome challenges. The primary aim of this empirical investigation was to assess the influence of air travel protocols on the probability of subsequent visits to Port Harcourt International Airport in Nigeria. The results of the analysis clearly indicated that a customer-centric and streamlined air travel process would significantly influence passengers' inclination and desire to participate in repeat travel experiences.

The principal aim of every enterprise is to achieve profitability. Nevertheless, this aim can only be accomplished by ensuring that passengers and travellers are satisfied with the necessary processes they are expected to undergo, including ticket reservations and check-in. In summary, drawing from the findings of this research, it is reasonable to conclude that repeat travel is reliant on the contentment of the passengers. This is consistent with the theory of planned behaviour, which suggests that passengers' propensity to book additional flights with the same airline in the future can be substantially anticipated based on their behaviour or response during the service encounter. On the basis of this study's results, which supported and validated both the adopted theory and the reviewed literature, it was possible to conclude that the intention to return is significantly and positively correlated with the air travel process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has conducted an empirical analysis of the air travel process concept and its impact on the intention to repeat travel. In order to assess the stated objectives of the study, this investigation underwent statistical analysis; the results indicated a robust and positive correlation between the air travel process and the intention to return for future journeys. To this end, the researcher suggests the following in an effort to increase the likelihood of future travel:

i. To improve their functional activities, the researcher suggested that more walk ways be built to relieve travellers' lines during check-in, and that airline operators provide e-ticketing facilities and platforms, as well as build more outlets to enable stress-free, less time-consuming, and responsive ticketing services. This will make booking easier for travellers and may promote repeat business and unsolicited excellent recommendations.

ii. On the issue of service cape, airlines should offer clean, roomy lobbies/waiting spaces where passengers may wait for their service requests to be handled.

iii. On flight scheduling, it was suggested that airlines maintain punctuality in their travel schedules and provide advance notice to passengers regarding any delays or cancellations; this would allow passengers to effectively organise their subsequent itineraries.

iv. On Personnel service, the study suggests that airline personnel ought to receive training on effective client interaction, given their pivotal role in the service encounter. Staff training will provide them with a competitive advantage by enabling them to enhance their internal and external communication capabilities. This will enable them to manage customer complaints with promptness, empathy, and the necessary skills to fulfil travelers' requests.

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