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The path to loyalty in the airline industry

In this study, [Dr Nadine Itani](#) and colleagues examine the relationship between service quality and consumer repurchase intention in the airline industry, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of customer citizenship behaviour.

Repeat purchases are essential for the sustained growth of airline brands, as they foster customer loyalty and offer a higher return on investment than new customer acquisition. For airlines in recovery, developing strategies to encourage repeat purchases is critical due to its significant impact on financial performance. In this context, understanding the factors that drive



passenger repurchase intentions is essential. Although the importance of repurchase intentions for airline recovery and growth is well recognised, research on this topic, particularly in the post-pandemic landscape, remains limited. Drawing on the Expectation Confirmation Theory and the Social Exchange Theory, this study operationalises customer citizenship behaviour as a multidimensional construct to highlight its mediating effect between service quality and repurchase intention.

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About the author

Dr Nadine Itani is a lecturer and programme leader for Air Transport Management at Surrey Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Her research focuses on how emerging trends drive innovation and enhance competitive advantage and corporate performance in the aviation sector.

SERVICE QUALITY AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY: A MULTIPLE MEDIATION ANALYSIS THROUGH CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Dr Nadine Itani

In the highly contestable airline industry where services are delivered to a large number of customers simultaneously, customer citizenship behaviour becomes relevant for creating a contagion effect that encourages other customers to engage in constructive behaviour.

The study adopts a conceptual framework derived from the Expectation Confirmation Theory and the Social Exchange Theory, where customer citizenship behaviour is categorised into multiple dimensions namely: feedback, advocacy, helping and tolerance. Utilising data from 260 air passenger respondents in the United Kingdom, partial least squares structural equation modelling is employed for the analysis. The findings indicate that service quality has a direct positive effect on customer citizenship behaviour and repurchase intention.

Advocacy and tolerance exert a significant positive impact on consumer repurchase intention, while feedback and helping do not play this role. The findings emphasize the need for airlines to adopt a holistic approach to service quality, as it influences repurchase

intentions both directly and through tolerance and advocacy. Enhancing passenger tolerance during service disruptions, such as delays, is essential; airlines can mitigate negative responses by transparently communicating recovery steps and offering compensations. Advocacy, especially through electronic word-of-mouth, has become fundamental in the digital age. By encouraging satisfied customers to share positive experiences online, airlines can foster advocacy, reduce perceived risks for future travellers, and strengthen customer loyalty through a more robust digital presence.

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