Analyzing Consumer Cost Efficiency: A Quantitative Study of Travel Agency Bookings in Cabanatuan City

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Abstract— This study investigates the consumer cost efficiency of travel agency bookings in Cabanatuan City, addressing questions regarding price competitiveness, service quality, and consumer preferences. The research employs a cross-sectional design, utilizing a survey questionnaire to gather data from 100 travelers who booked through various travel agencies in the city. Purposive sampling ensures representation across demographics and travel preferences. Statistical analysis reveals insights into consumer behavior and cost efficiency. Findings indicate that most travelers in Cabanatuan City are young, educated, and primarily female travelers, with a preference for leisure trips and family packages. In-person bookings were favored, emphasizing value- added services like travel insurance. Regarding price competitiveness, respondents perceive travel agency prices as competitive and aligned with service quality, indicating a willingness to pay for value. The transparency of fees and charges is highly valued, and the highest satisfaction is clarity regarding booking fees. Customization options for travel packages are essential, particularly in accommodation, transportation, and activities. Customer service quality, especially responsiveness and friendliness, significantly impacts overall satisfaction. In conclusion, the study concludes that travel agencies must tailor their offerings and promotions to meet diverse consumer demands, focusing on transparency, price competitiveness, and service quality to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings underscore the importance of special offers, customizable packages, and excellent customer service in attracting and retaining customers in a competitive market. Recommendations include implementing a consumer cost efficiency plan that addresses these key factors to promote customer happiness and loyalty.

Keywords— cost- efficiency; travel agency; consumer; travel promotions, online booking; travel package; customer service; transparency; accommodation; and customer service.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality play an essential role in the Philippine economy. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023), the contribution of this sector to the country's gross domestic product in 2022 was 6.2%; this indicated an increase from just over five percent during the COVID- 19 pandemic years; however, it was still lower than the pre-pandemic GDP share. As the country recovered from the crisis, the hospitality and tourism industries have flourished steadily over the years. The sector encompasses many enterprises, including hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and tour operators.

The tourism and hospitality industry is a dynamic sector that constantly adapts to changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. Cabanatuan City, nestled in the heart of the Philippines, is no exception to this trend. With an increasing number of travelers seeking cost-efficient accommodations, travel agencies play a pivotal role in assisting consumers in organizing their trips, offering plenty of options ranging from flights and accommodations to tours and transportation. Cost efficiency encompasses not only the financial aspect but also the quality of service provided by a travel agency. In the context of this research cost efficiency entails not just minimizing expenses but also maximizing the value of

services received.

Tourism Notes (2018) explains that a travel agency is one of the most critical organizations in the private sector of tourism, which plays a significant and crucial role in developing and promoting tourism in the country or at a destination. It is a travel agency that packages and processes all the attractions, accesses, amenities, and ancillary services of a country and presents them to tourists. That's why a travel agency is known as the 'image builder 'of a country.

The Philippines is one of the most visited countries because of its unique tourist attractions, majestic sights, and picturesque views. According to Planner (2023), the country was the 15th most visited country in Asia in 2023. According to the monitoring data of the Department of Tourism (DOT), a total of five million four hundred fifty thousand five hundred fifty-seven (5,450,557) international visitors entered the country from January 1st to December 31st, 2023, of which 91.80%, or the bulk of international arrivals recorded at five million three thousand four hundred seventy-five (5,003,475), are foreigners. The remaining 8.20%, or four hundred forty-seven thousand eighty-two (447,082), are overseas Filipinos who choose to stay in the country.

Regarding local travelers, Filipinos are known for being thrifty and travel enthusiasts. As stated by the study of an e-commerce firm, Picodi (2019), Filipinos are the most frugal travelers in the world. Filipinos are so frugal that they prefer to arrange their travel plans by direct booking rather than relying on travel agencies.

As described by Altexsoft (Direct Booking, n.d.), a direct booking is a reservation made directly with a service provider (which usually refers to lodging but can also relate to air tickets, car rentals, etc.) without engaging a third-party intermediary like an OTA or travel agent. Such reservations are usually made via so-called direct booking channels like a brand's website, email, social media, messaging tools, phone, etc. Attracting direct bookings is the strategic goal of most travel service providers, as it allows them to avoid resellers' commissions and thus increase revenue. Another benefit is obtaining travelers' information to create personal and other marketing activities.

Based on Picodi's (2019) study found that Filipino travelers only spend an average of ₱13,171 ($252) per person on holiday, placing the Philippines at the 39th spot out of the 41 countries covered by the report in terms of travel spending.

According to the Picodi respondents from the survey, only three percent didn't try to save on their trips; the rest of the respondents would buy tickets and book their accommodations in advance to spend less on them. Meanwhile, some 10% of those respondents rely on travel agencies to plan their trip; the other 90% would self-organize because 50% of them said it was cheaper; 48% said that they could match everything according to their preference; and 32% said it was more comfortable.

Aside from being price-conscious for Filipino and foreign visitors, convenience and quality of service are also considered when booking accommodation. According to Travel Perk (2022), a few decades ago, if people wanted to book a trip, they'd need to wander down to their local travel agent's office. After brainstorming some ideas and perhaps looking through the travel agent's catalogs, the travelers would express their preferences to the agent, who'd organize hotel and transport bookings. But today, travelers are more likely to start their trip planning process by researching destinations online and then head to an online travel aggregator to make the bookings themselves.

A 2022 survey from Travel Perk has shown that 41% of travelers now prefer using online travel agencies or aggregators to book hotels, with a further 29% booking directly and just 29% using a traditional travel agent. However, using a travel agent still has some unique benefits. Travel agents can find you exclusive fares, offer specialist expertise, and help you plan and coordinate your trip. Even today, many people seek them out for a more personalized travel experience.

In this topic, the researchers would like to quantitatively analyze consumer cost efficiency in booking travel agencies in Cabanatuan City. The study will assess consumer demographics, price, convenience, customer service, and overall satisfaction and travel agency experience in Cabanatuan City.

Objectives Of The Study

This study aims to know the cost efficiency of consumers in travel agency bookings in Cabanatuan City. The respondents of this study will be 100 travel agency consumers in Cabanatuan City.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How may the demographic profile of the consumer be described in terms of:

   1.1 Age

   1.2 Gender

   1.3 Civil Status

   1.4 Educational Attainment

   1.5 Current Occupation

   1.6 *Average Monthly Income*

2. How may the cost efficiency of the travel agency consumer be describe in terms of:

2.1 *Booking Preferences*

2.2 *Type of Trips Typically Book*

2.3 *Type of Travel Package*

2.4 *Type of Travel Trip Typically Book*

2.5 *Travel Booking Frequency*

2.6 *Value Added Services*

2.7 *Customization of Travel Packages*

2.8 *Customers Decision*

2.9 *Travel Promotions*

3. How may the price competitiveness and service quality of the travel agency be describe in terms of:

3.1 *Travel Promotions*

3.2 *Price Competitiveness*

3.3 *Transparency of fees and Charges*

3.4 *Customization Options for Travel Packages*

3.5 *Customer Service Quality*

4. Is there any significance relationship between the profile of the respondents and the consumer cost efficiency of travel agencies**?**

5. What may the consumer cost efficiency plan be proposed?

II.   METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes a cross-sectional research design. Stefan Hunziker and Michael Blankenagel defined cross-sectional research design in their 2021 book Research Design in Business and Management as a research design that simultaneously involves collecting data from many different people.

According to Research, cross-sectional research observes variables without being influenced. Life (2023), a cross-sectional study is a time-saving, cost-effective, and straightforward approach for gathering preliminary data, wherein a researcher collects data at a single point in time and observes variables without influencing them. The prevalence of an outcome at a given point in time can be determined in this manner. The data collected will be through a survey questionnaire. The reason for utilizing this design is to have a clear understanding and to capture a snapshot of consumer behavior and cost efficiency at a specific time, enabling efficient comparisons across different groups and providing immediate insights into the

factors influencing travel agency bookings in Cabanatuan City.

Locale of the Study

This research will specifically focus on understanding and analyzing consumer cost efficiency in the context of travel agency bookings within the geographic area of Cabanatuan City. The study encompassed visits to eight travel agencies, including Travel Agency 1, Travel Agency 2, Travel Agency 3, Travel Agency 4, Travel Agency 5, Travel Agency 6, Travel Agency 7, and Travel Agency 8. This study will target 100 consumers who have used travel agency booking services. This study aims to provide insights into how consumers in Cabanatuan City engage with travel agencies and the cost- related factors associated with their bookings.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consists of 100 customers who booked travel services through travel agencies within Cabanatuan City. This limitation was chosen to focus on understanding consumer perceptions of cost efficiency, value for money, and quality of service in the context of city travel agency bookings. These individuals will include residents and tourists who have made bookings on the travel agency. A purposive sampling method will be used to choose the respondents because it will specifically involve travel agency consumers. According to Crossman (2020), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is selected based on a population's characteristics and the study's objective. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The sampling procedure will involve visiting various travel agencies within Cabanatuan City to interact with and personally ask customers who have booked travel services. Total Population Sampling will be employed to choose participants from this sampling frame. Total population sampling means that a researcher examines the entire population with one or more shared characteristics. This kind of purposive sampling technique is commonly used to generate reviews of events or experiences, which is to say, it is expected to study particular groups within larger populations. (Crossman 2020) Using this sampling method ensures the representation of various demographics and travel preferences. It allows for a diverse representation of individuals in different travel agencies, comprehensively understanding their experiences and perspectives. Data collection will involve surveys with the selected participants to gather insights into their booking experiences, expenses, satisfaction levels, and perceptions of cost efficiency. This data will then be analyzed using statistical techniques to analyze the trends, patterns, and factors influencing consumer cost efficiency in travel

agency bookings in Cabanatuan City.

Research Instruments

The researcher utilized a structured survey questionnaire based on Sarah Jane M. Roldan's (2023) study on online booking purchase decisions to gather data. This questionnaire, which can be distributed through various channels and emailed to participants, was validated by travel agencies post-presentation. Participants were assured confidentiality and instructed to complete the survey calmly, with the online platform incorporating validation checks to ensure data accuracy. However, the instrument's reliance on prior travel agency experiences might exclude individuals without such experiences, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The survey consists of three parts: Part I gathers demographic information (age, gender, civil status, education, occupation, income); Part II explores cost efficiency in booking preferences, types of trips, value-added services, and influential booking factors; Part III assesses consumer perceptions of travel agency price competitiveness and service quality, including travel promotions, fee transparency, customization options, and customer service quality.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure for the study, "Analyzing Consumer Cost Efficiency: A Quantitative Study of Travel Agency Bookings in Cabanatuan City," employs purposive sampling, precisely a total population sampling technique, to understand consumer preferences and behaviors. Initially, specific demographic characteristics such as age, income levels, and frequency of travel are used to identify distinct segments within the population of travel agency service consumers in Cabanatuan City. This categorization allows for a targeted selection of participants representing different demographic groups, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of consumer preferences and behaviors. The next step involves developing a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data, including questions about demographics, travel preferences, factors influencing travel agency bookings, cost considerations, and overall satisfaction. A pilot test is conducted with a small sample of respondents to identify and address any issues with the questionnaire's clarity, length, or format, and the revisions are made based on the feedback received. Major travel agencies operating in Cabanatuan City are selected to ensure the representation of different types and sizes, capturing diverse consumer experiences. To ensure validity and reliability, the findings are cross-verified with industry experts or relevant stakeholders. The survey questionnaires are administered to selected respondents using various methods, such as in-person or online surveys, based on respondent preferences, with assurances of confidentiality. Quantitative data is collected on factors influencing travel agency bookings, cost efficiency, and consumer satisfaction, with an emphasis on accurate recording and consistency in data collection methods. The collected data is analyzed using statistical tools to explore correlations between variables, identify patterns, and draw conclusions. The findings are compiled into a comprehensive report, presented with charts, graphs, and tables, and recommendations are provided based on the study's results.

Data Analysis Technique

In this research, various statistical methods will be employed to analyze the collected data. Frequency distribution tables will be used to establish the demographic profile and cost efficiency of travel agency consumers, representing the number of individuals in each category. The Likert scale will measure respondents' opinions or behavior toward factors related to travel agency bookings, providing quantitative data on consumer perceptions, preferences, and satisfaction levels. Mean scores will describe the price competitiveness and service quality of travel agencies. Spearman Rho will assess the significant relationship between respondents' profiles and cost efficiency. The Chi-square test will analyze categorical data, such as demographic details and perceived cost efficiency, to determine significant associations between these variables. These analyses will offer valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences, aiding in the tailoring of marketing strategies.

The weighted mean was verbally describe using the the following scale:

Weighted Mean	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
3.26 - 4.00	4	Very Likely Strongly Agree Very Satisfied Excellent
2.51 - 3.25	3	Likely Agree Satisfied Good
1.76 - 2.50	2	Unlikely Disagree Dissatisfied Poor
1.00 - 1.75	1	Very Unlikely Strongly Disagree Very Dissatisfied Very Poor

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part presents the findings of the study, including textual and figurative results and discussion, which involve presenting the data gathered from the survey.

1.   *Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Table 1.1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
18-24 years old	30	30%
25-34 years old	27	27%
35-44 years old	17	17%
45-54 years old	17	17%
55+ years old	9	9%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.1 shows the social-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, which shows that the majority of the respondents are between 18 and 24 years old, with 30%, followed by 25–34 years old with 27%, 34–44 years old with 17%, 45–54 years old with both 17%, and lastly, 55 and older with 9%. Overall, the results indicate that the majority of travelers in Cabanatuan fall within the age range of 18 to 24 years old.

Table 1.2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	33	33%
Female	64	64%
Non-binary	1	1%
Prefer not to say	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.2 shows the social-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, which shows that the majority of the respondents are female, with 64%, followed by male with 33%, prefer not to say with 2%, and lastly, non-binary with 1%. Overall, the results indicate that

females are the ones who traveled the most in Cabanatuan City.

Table 1.3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Single	55	55%
Married	42	42%
Separated	0	0
Divorced	1	1%
Widowed	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.3 shows the social-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of civil status, which shows that the majority of the respondents are single with 55%, followed by married with 42%, widowed with 2%, and lastly, divorced with 1%; no respondents selected the separated option. Overall, the results indicate that the majority of travelers in Cabanatuan City are single.

Table 1.4 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Elementary	0	0%
High School	21	21%
Bachelor's degree	65	65%
Master's degree	11	11%
Doctoral degree	2	2%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.4 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of educational attainment, which shows that the majority of respondents are bachelor's degree holders at 65%. This is followed by high school graduates at 21%, master's degree holders at 11%, and doctoral degree holders at 2%. Additionally, 1% of respondents chose the "other" option, specifying hospitality management as their educational background. Overall, the

results indicate that the majority of travelers in Cabanatuan City hold a bachelor's degree.

Table 1.5 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Current Occupation

Current Occupation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Employed full-time	53	53%
Employed part-time	8	8%
Self-employed	13	13%
Unemployed	5	5%
Student	13	13%
Retired	8	8%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.5 shows the social-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of current occupation, which shows that the majority of the respondents are employed full-time, with 53%, followed by self-employed with 13%, students with 13%, employed part-time with 8%, retired with 8% and lastly, unemployed with 5%. Overall, the results indicate that most travelers in Cabanatuan City are employed full-time.

Table 1.6 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Average Monthly Income

Average Monthly Income	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Below Php 3,000	11	11%
Php 3,000- 5,000	6	6%
Php 6,000-10,000	14	14%
Php 11,000- 15,000	22	22%
Php 16,000 - 20,000	7	7%
Php 21,000 - 25,000	6	6%
Php 26,000 - 30,000	12	12%
Above Php 31,000	22	22%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.6 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of average monthly income, which shows that the majority of the respondents earn between

Php 11,000 and Php 15,000 monthly, comprising 22%, followed by those earning above PHP 31,000, also at 22%. Other income brackets include Php 6,000–10,000 at 14%, Php 26,000–30,000 at 12%, below Php 3,000 at 11%, Php 16,000–20,000 at 7%, Php 21,000–25,000 at 6%, and Php 3,000–5,000, also at 6%. Overall, the results indicate that most travelers in Cabanatuan City fall into the income brackets of above Php 31,000 and Php 11,000–15,000.

2. *Cost Efficiency of Travel Agency Consumers*

Table 2.1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the travel Agency Consumer in terms of Booking Preferences

How do you prefer to book your travel arrangements?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Online platforms (websites, apps)	28	28%
In-person at a travel agency (walk-in)	38	38%
Over the phone	17	17%
Combination of the above	17	17%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.1 shows the cost *efficiency of travel agency consumers* in terms of how they prefer to book their travel arrangements, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer in-person bookings at a travel agency (walk-in) with 38%, followed by online platforms (websites, apps) with 28%, over the phone with 17%, and a combination of the above with both 17%. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers of travel agencies in Cabanatuan prefer to book in person (walk-in). Although phone reservations are less usual, online platforms are still widely used.

Table 2.2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the travel Agency Consumer in terms of Type of Trips Typically Book

What type of trips do you typically book?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Leisure/Vacation	50	50%
Business	23	23%
Adventure (Trekking, Diving, Hiking, etc.)	17	17%

Cultural/Heritage	8	8%
Other (please specify)	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.2 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what types of trips they typically book, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer to book for leisure or vacation with 50%, followed by business trips with 23%, adventure trips like trekking, diving, hiking, etc. with 17%, cultural or heritage trips with 8%, and lastly, 2% prefer other types of trips, which are educational tours and visiting relatives. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers of travel agencies in Cabanatuan prefer to book leisure or vacation trips.

Table 2.3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Type of Travel Package

What package or combos do you typically book?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Solo (Individual)	10	10%
Couple	12	12%
Family	57	57%
Barkadas (Friends)	8	8%
Group	10	10%
Other (please specify)	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.3 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what packages or combos they typically book, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer to book family packages with 50%, followed by couple packages with 12%, solo or individual packages with 10%, group packages with 10% also, barkadas or friends packages with 8%, and lastly, 3% chose the ''others'' option and answered all of the above, meaning they book mostly all types of packages. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers preferred family packages.

Table 2.4 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Type of Travel Trip Typically Book

What travel trip do you typically book?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Local or Domestic Travel Trip	47	47%
Foreign or International Travel Trip	53	53%

Total	100	100%

Table 2.4 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what travel trips they typically book, which shows that most respondents prefer to book foreign or international travel trips at 53%, followed by local or domestic travel trips at 47%. Overall, the results indicate that most customers of travel agencies in Cabanatuan City prefer to book foreign or international travel trips

Table 2.5 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Travel Booking Frequency

How often do you book travel Arrangements in a year?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Once a year	34	34%
2-3 times a year	38	38%
4-6 times a year	17	17%
More than 6 times a year	11	11%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.5 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of how often they book their travel arrangements in a year, which shows that the majority of the respondents traveled 2-3 times a year with 38%, followed by once a year with 34%, 4-6 times a year with 17%, and lastly, more than six times a year with 11%. Overall, the results indicate that most customers of travel agencies in Cabanatuan City book their travel arrangements 2-3 times a year.

Table 2.6 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Value Added Services

What value-added services do you find most appealing when booking with /a travel agency	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Travel insurance	49	49%
Airport transfers	15	15%
Special amenities (e.g., Breakfast, free parking)	30	30%

Other (please specify)	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.6 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what value-added services they find most appealing when booking with a travel agency, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer travel insurance, with 49%, followed by special amenities such as free Wi-Fi, complimentary breakfast, free parking with 30%, airport transfers with 15%, and lastly, 6% choose the ''others'' option and mentioned other value-added services such as restaurants, airfare, hotels, and tours, all in a package tour, service of the staff, customer service, and tour complete package. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers preferred travel insurance as the most appealing value-added service when booking with travel agencies in Cabanatuan City.

Table 2.7 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Customization of Travel Packages

What aspects of a travel package are you most likely to customize?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Accommodation	48	48%
Transportation	19	19%
Activities and Excursions	21	21%
Dining options	11	11%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.7 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what aspects of a travel package they are most likely to customize, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer accommodation with 48%, followed by activities and excursions with 21%, transportation with 19%, dining options with 11%, and lastly, 1% chose the ''others'' option and answered all of the above, meaning they are likely to customize all aspects of a travel package when booking. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers preferred accommodation as an aspect of a travel package they were most likely to customize when booking with travel agencies in Cabanatuan City.

Table 2.8 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the

Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Customers Decision

What factors influence your decision to choose a travel agency for bookings?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Price competitiveness	29	29%
Reputation of the travel agency	15	15%
Past experiences with the travel agency	16	16%
Recommendations from friends/ family	18	18%
Availability of travel promotions	20	20%
Other (please specify)	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.8 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what factors influence their decision to choose a travel agency for bookings, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer to book because of price competitiveness 29%, followed by availability of travel promotions with 20%, recommendations from friends or family with 18%, past experiences with the travel agency with 16%, reputation of the travel agency with 15% and lastly, 2% chose the ''others'' option, which mentioned other factors such as convenience and accommodating customer service to all inquiries. Overall, the results indicate that most consumers preferred to book with a Cabanatuan City travel agency because of price competitiveness.

Table 2.9 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Cost Efficiency of the Travel Agency Consumer in terms of Travel Promotions

What types of travel promotions are most appealing to you?	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Percentage discounts	29	29%
Buy one, get one free	15	15%
Exclusive package deals	52	52%
Loyalty rewards	4	4%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 2.9 shows the cost efficiency of travel agency consumers in terms of what types of travel

promotions are most appealing for them, which shows that the majority of the respondents prefer exclusive package deals with 52%, followed by percentage discounts with 29%, buy one, get one free with 15%, and lastly, loyalty rewards with 4%. Overall, the results indicate that exclusive packages are the most appealing travel promotions for consumers of travel agencies in Cabanatuan City.

3. Price Competitiveness and Service Quality Of the Travel Agency

Table 3.1 Perception of the Respondents in terms of Travel Promotions

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. How likely are you to be influenced by travel promotions when choosing a travel agency?	3.42	VL	3
2. How likely are you to consider a travel agency's promotions when planning your trip?	3.46	VL	2
3. How likely are you to consider booking through a travel agency that offers exclusive promotions and discounts?	3.53	VL	1
Total Mean	3.47	Very Likely	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Very Likely; 2.51 – 3.25 Likely; 1.76 – 2.50 Unlikely; and 1.00 – 1.75 Very Unlikely

Table 3.1 shows the significant impact of exclusive promotions and discounts on the likelihood of respondents booking through a travel agency, with a mean score of 3.53 indicating a "Very Likely" response. The strong inclination to consider travel agency promotions, with mean scores of 3.46 and 3.42, also falls under the "Very Likely" category. These scores demonstrate that promotional offers are crucial in the trip-planning phase and significantly influence the decision-making process. The overall average mean of 3.47 underscores a consistently high likelihood of respondents being swayed by travel promotions. This emphasizes the importance of promotional strategies in attracting customers and shaping

their choices, indicating that travel agencies should prioritize exclusive deals and discounts in their marketing efforts to capture and retain customers effectively.

Table 3.2 Perception of the Respondents in terms of Price Competitiveness

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I compare prices across different travel agencies before making a booking.	3.34	SA	3
2. The prices offered by travel agencies are competitive and worthy compared to other booking options.	3.36	SA	1
3. The prices charged by travel agencies align with the quality of the service they provide.	3.35	SA	2
Total Mean	3.35	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree; 2.51 – 3.25 Agree; 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree; and 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree

Table 3.2 reveals that most respondents perceive travel agency prices as competitive and worthwhile compared to other booking options, with a mean of 3.36, which indicates "Strongly Agree." This suggests consumers find these prices attractive and influential in their decision-making. Additionally, the statement "The prices charged by travel agencies align with the quality of the service they provide," with a mean of 3.35 ("Strongly Agree"), indicates consumers see a correlation between price and service quality, valuing higher prices for better service. The statement "I compare prices across different travel agencies before making a booking," with a mean of 3.34 ("Strongly Agree"), shows a strong tendency among respondents to compare prices before booking. Overall, the average mean of 3.35 across all statements reflects a consistent and strong agreement on the competitiveness and quality alignment of travel agency prices. This underscores the significance of competitive pricing and service quality alignment in shaping customer decisions and highlights the positive perception of travel agencies' pricing strategies.

Table 3.3 Perception of the Respondents in terms of Transparency of Fees and Charges

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Travel agencies' transparency in disclosing hidden fees during the booking process.	3.28	VS	3
The clarity of information regarding booking fees provided by the travel agency.	3.47	VS	1
The transparency of the travel agency regarding additional charges such as service fees, taxes, and insurance.	3.42	VS	2
Total Mean	3.39	*Very Satisfied*	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Very Satisfied; 2.51 – 3.25 Satisfied; 1.76 – 2.50 Dissatisfied; and 1.00 –1.75 Very Dissatisfied

Table 3.3 illustrates the price competitiveness and service quality of the travel agency with respect to the transparency of fees. The statement "The clarity of information regarding booking fees provided by the travel agency" achieved the highest mean score of 3.47, indicating "Very Satisfied" and suggesting respondents are highly satisfied with the clarity of booking fee information. Following this, the statement "The transparency of the travel agency regarding additional charges such as service fees, taxes, and insurance" received a mean score of 3.42, also categorized as "Very Satisfied," reflecting a positive perception of transparency in additional charges. The statement "The transparency of travel agencies in disclosing any hidden fees during the booking process" scored 3.28, still within the "Very Satisfied" range, indicating general satisfaction but with potential for improvement in disclosing hidden fees. The overall average mean of 3.39 falls under "Very Satisfied," highlighting a positive perception of fee transparency among respondents. These findings suggest that while there is high satisfaction with clarity on booking fees and additional charges, enhancing transparency regarding hidden costs could further improve customer satisfaction and trust in travel agencies.

Table 3.4 Perception of the Respondents in terms of Customization Options for Travel Packages

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
The option to choose specific accommodation types (e.g., hotels, resorts, Airbnb) in my travel package is important.	3.59	SA	1
The ability to customize the transportation mode (e.g., flights, trains, buses) in my travel package is important.	3.59	SA	1
The option to choose specific activities and excursions in my travel package is important.	3.59	SA	1
Total Mean	3.59	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree; 2.51 – 3.25 Agree; 1.76 – 2.50 Disagree; and 1.00 – 1.75 Strongly Disagree

Table 3.4 demonstrates the travel agency's price competitiveness and quality of service, focusing on customization options for travel packages. All three statements regarding customization options received an identical mean of 3.59, indicating unanimous "Strongly Agree" responses from respondents. The statements emphasized the importance of choosing specific accommodation types (e.g., hotels, resorts, Airbnb), customizing transportation modes (e.g., flights, trains, buses), and selecting particular activities and excursions, all with a mean of 3.59. This consistent agreement highlights the respondents' strong preference for tailored travel experiences, suggesting that offering diverse customization options significantly enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 3.5 Perception of the Respondents in terms of Customer Service Quality

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
The ease of finding relevant travel options on the agency's website or platform.	3.44	E	3
Availability and responsiveness of customer support and the staff to	3.54	E	1

inquiries.			
The friendliness and courtesy of staff during the booking process.	3.48	E	2
Total Mean	3.49	Excellent	

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Excellent; 2.51 – 3.25 Good; 1.76 – 2.50 Poor; and 1.00 – 1.75 Very Poor

Table 3.5 examines respondents' perceptions of customer service quality in three key areas, categorized as Excellent, Good, Poor, and Very Poor, with weighted means and rankings. "Availability and responsiveness of customer support" received the highest mean of 3.54, indicating

prompt and effective service. "Friendliness and courtesy of staff during booking" followed with a mean of 3.48, highlighting professional and warm interactions. "Ease of finding travel options on the website" ranked third with a mean of 3.44, suggesting an efficient and user-friendly platform. The average mean of 3.49 falls under "Excellent," reflecting consistently high ratings for the travel agency's customer service. In conclusion, Travis Vu (2021) asserts that service quality and customer satisfaction are key drivers of purchase intentions, with excellent service enhancing customer loyalty and long-term relationships.

4. Significant Relationship Between The Profile Of The Respondents and the Consumer Cost Efficiency of Travel Agencies

Table 4.1 Findings of the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the consumer cost efficiency of travel agencies

Profile	Chi-Square	Preference	Booking	Package	Travel Trip	Frequency	Value Added	Customized	Decision	Promotions
Age	2	16.39	23.64	24.99	**23.83**	19.60	**23.72**	25.22	11.89	30.31
	p	.174	.098	.202	**.000**	.075	**.022**	.066	.455	.065
Sex	2	5.65	11.87	20.63	4.391	6.03	13.95	14.51	9.62	4.16
	p	.774	.456	.149	.222	.739	.124	.269	.843	.901
Status	2	14.93	9.68	23.81	**19.49**	15.28	6.45	11.50	13.52	5.15
	p	.093	.644	.068	**.000**	.084	.695	.489	.562	.821
Education	2	8.97	13.24	12.61	**13.14**	**21.95**	17.04	13.50	13.97	10.42
	p	.704	.655	.893	**.011**	**.038**	.148	.636	.832	.578
Occupation	2	20.24	**40.94**	20.27	**21.62**	9.88	23.62	25.67	17.646	22.575
	p	.163	**.004**	.732	**.001**	.827	.072	.177	.857	.094
Income	2	**34.56**	25.34	44.67	**21.96**	32.53	**35.12**	35.34	44.19	22.79
	p	**.032**	.609	.127	**.003**	.052	**.027**	.160	.137	.355

A comprehensive analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between respondents' profiles and the consumer cost efficiency of travel agencies. The analysis utilized Chi-square tests across various demographic variables, including age, sex, status, education, occupation, and income, in relation to respondents' preferences for different aspects of travel agency services.

The results revealed several noteworthy findings. First, concerning age, statistically significant associations were observed with travel trip frequency (p = .000), indicating that different age groups exhibit varying frequencies of travel. Additionally, age showed potential

associations with preferences such as booking (p = .098), package deals (p = .202), and customized trips (p = .066), although these associations did not reach statistical significance at the specified threshold.

According to Ismail et al. (2021), age has no significant impact on the selection of Langkawi as a tourist destination. This suggests that promotion strategies can be diversified to cater to various age demographics, as younger and older tourists exhibit similar evaluations of the destination.

Second, the analysis of sex demonstrated few significant associations, with only package deals (p = .149) showing a potential association that did not reach statistical

significance. This suggests that gender may not strongly influence preferences for travel agency services.

In the analysis study of Berić et al. (2019), it was observed that there is no statistically significant correlation between gender and perceived image when it comes to traveling, and the perception of Serbia did not show any statistically significant variations in how men and women view these images. Additionally, the association's impact on image did not significantly differ between men and women, but differences were noted in scores related to positive, negative, and neutral associations. Another study by Li & Yang (2014) further affirms that gender does not play a role in tourists' selection of destinations. The study revealed no significant disparities based on gender in the connections between destination image, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions.

Third, respondents' status displayed significant associations with several preferences, including travel trip frequency (p = .000), package deals (p = .068), and decision-making processes (p = .084). This suggests that individuals' status may influence their preferences for various aspects of travel agency services.

According to Kara, N. & Mkwizu, K. H. (2020), a study revealed a slight variation in intellectual travel motivations among solitary leisure tourists. The research found that single leisure travelers showed a strong inclination to travel for philosophical reasons. Similarly, Fan et al. (2015) conducted a study comparing the motivations and intentions of cruise passengers with different demographic backgrounds in China. Their findings indicated that travelers from diverse demographic backgrounds have differing travel motivations. For instance, singles exhibited higher average values for travel motivations such as nature discovery and exploration than married individuals. The researchers suggested that singles may have more time and freedom to engage in new, thrilling experiences than married travelers. This underscores that the marital status of respondents could impact their travel choices.

Fourth, education exhibited potential associations with travel trip frequency (p = .011) and value-added services (p = .038), indicating that individuals with different educational backgrounds may have distinct preferences in these areas.

As per the research conducted by Zhao and Yuan (2023), the educational level is a crucial element and a commonly utilized measure of population quality. The configuration of residents' educational levels can indicate the distinct features of the local populace. On an individual level, educational experiences substantially shape living habits and cognitive processes, potentially resulting in variations in travel behaviors and preferences among different educational strata. Consequently, educational background may significantly affect individuals' choices regarding travel destinations.

Fifth, occupation showed significant associations with booking (p = .004), customized trips (p = .072), and decision-making processes (p = .177), suggesting that occupation may play a role in shaping preferences for these aspects of travel agency services.

According to Ferreira et al. (2017), it is conceivable that self-employed individuals predominantly travel internationally to participate in business events, while retired individuals travel internationally to partake in family events such as weddings and family gatherings, for instance, when a grandchild is born, or their children celebrate their fiftieth birthday. The individual's employment profile influences their destination choice and the specific attributes they seek. These findings guide travel agents in tailoring destination marketing strategies based on the tourist's employment profile.

Finally, income demonstrated significant associations with booking (p = .032), travel trip frequency (p = .003), value-added services (p = .027), and decision-making processes (p = .160). This suggests that income level may significantly impact various preferences related to travel agency services.

According to the research conducted by Veternik and Gogola (2017), household income level plays a significant role in influencing the travel behavior of the population. Numerous studies have demonstrated that individuals or households with lower incomes tend to allocate less money for travel than those with higher incomes. This implies that individuals or families with higher incomes can travel more frequently and for longer durations due to their ability to invest more money. Thus, the income acquired by individuals directly impacts the travel patterns of consumers.

In summary, the analysis highlights the nuanced relationship between respondents' profiles and their preferences for different aspects of travel agency services. Understanding these associations can be crucial for travel agencies in tailoring their services to meet the diverse needs and preferences of their clientele.

Table 5.1 Consumer-Cost Efficiency Plan: Enhancing Travel Agency Services

Objectives	Key Strategies	Timeline	Person Involved	Budget Allocation	Implementation Plan
Increase Promotion Awareness	Implement targeted marketing campaigns highlighting exclusive promotions and discounts.	3 months	Marketing Team, Social Media Manager	PHP 30,000	✓ Run social media ads and email campaigns: Utilize social media platforms and email marketing tools. ✓ Collaborate with influencers and local media: Identify and partner with relevant influencers and media outlets.
Improve Customer Service Quality	Enhance training programs for staff to improve responsiveness, friendliness, and courtesy.	1-2 months	HR Manager, Training Coordinator	PHP 10,000	✓ Conduct customer service workshops: Hire external trainers to conduct sessions. ✓ Monitor and evaluate staff performance regularly: Implement feedback and evaluation systems.
Optimize Travel Packages	Provide more customization options for travel packages, including accommodations, transportation, and activities.	1-2 months	Product Development Team	PHP 10,000	✓ Survey customers for preferred package components : Use online surveys and feedback forms. ✓ Develop flexible package options: Design packages based on survey results. ✓ Launch new packages: Promote through all marketing channels.
Increase Transparency in Pricing	Ensure clear communication of booking fees and additional charges to customers.	1-2 month	Finance Team, Customer Service Team	PHP 5,000	✓ Update website with detailed pricing information: Ensure all fees and charges are clearly listed. ✓ Train staff on transparency protocols: Conduct training sessions focused on clear communication.
Promote Value-Added Services	Highlight appealing value- added services such as travel insurance, special amenities, and airport transfers.	5 months	Marketing Team, Sales Team	PHP 30,000	✓ Create informational materials: Develop brochures, flyers, and online content. ✓ Train staff on upselling techniques: Conduct upselling workshops. ✓ Run promotional campaigns: Highlight value-added services in all promotional activities.

Enhance Customization Options	Offer a wide range of customizable options for travel packages to meet individual preferences.	1-2 months	Product Development Team	PHP 10,000	✓ Research market trends: Continuously analyze market data. ✓ Develop and test new customization options: Prototype and pilot new features. ✓ Launch new features: Promote through all available channels.
Monitoring and Evaluation:					
✓ Regularly track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as customer satisfaction, booking rates, and revenue growth. ✓ Conduct quarterly reviews to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. ✓ Gather continuous feedback from customers to refine and improve strategies.					

The Consumer-Cost Efficiency Plan for enhancing travel agency services is a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving various facets of the agency's operations to provide better value and experiences for customers. The plan's objectives include increasing promotion awareness, improving customer service quality, optimizing travel packages, increasing pricing transparency, promoting value-added services, and enhancing customization options. Each objective is supported by key strategies, a timeline, responsible personnel, budget allocations, and a detailed implementation plan.

To increase promotion awareness, the agency will implement targeted marketing campaigns over three months, with a budget of PHP 30,000. The marketing team and social media manager will run ads and email campaigns on various platforms. Additionally, the agency will collaborate with influencers and local media to boost reach and engagement. To improve customer service quality, the HR Manager and Training Coordinator will enhance training programs within 1-2 months, allocating PHP10,000 for customer service workshops and regular performance evaluations.

Optimizing travel packages involves offering more customizable options for accommodations, transportation, and activities. The product development team, with a budget of PHP 10,000, will survey customers and develop flexible packages based on their preferences. Transparency in pricing will be improved within 1-2 months by the finance and customer service teams, who will update the website with detailed pricing information and train staff on clear communication protocols. Promoting value-added services such as travel insurance and exceptional amenities will take five months, with the marketing and sales teams developing informational materials and running promotional campaigns with a budget of PHP 30,000. Enhancing customization options will also be a 1-2 month effort by the product development team, focusing on researching market trends,

developing new features, and launching them with appropriate promotion.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to the plan, involving the regular tracking of key performance indicators such as customer satisfaction, booking rates, and revenue growth. Quarterly reviews will assess progress, and continuous customer feedback will be gathered to refine and improve strategies. By focusing on these strategies, the travel agency can enhance cost efficiency for consumers while maintaining competitive pricing and high service quality, ultimately fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty.

IV.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Through a quantitative study, this paper explored the consumer cost efficiency of travel agency bookings in Cabanatuan City. The study concludes that young, educated, and primarily female solo travellers dominate the modern travel scene. This pattern is becoming more popular as it emphasizes the growing significance of educational experiences in influencing travel behaviour and a shift toward solitary exploration.

Secondly, the study also emphasizes travel agency consumers' diverse tastes and booking behaviours, revealing a strong preference for leisure trips and family packages and an affinity for in-person bookings. It shows the importance of value-added services such as travel insurance and the impact of pricing competitiveness on consumer choices. Travel agencies must grasp these dynamics to appropriately tailor their offerings and promotions to their clients' diverse demands and boost consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

A comprehensive analysis of respondent profiles

and preferences reveals that demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, income, and status significantly influence travel preferences. While age plays a significant role in travel frequency, demographic factors also affect booking behaviours, package preferences, and customized travel choices, though with varying statistical significance. Moreover, there are notable correlations between respondents' income, occupation, and education levels and specific preferences, emphasizing the importance of considering socioeconomic factors when catering to a diverse clientele. This study underscores the importance of a forward-thinking approach for travel agencies, particularly in personalizing services using demographic data to enhance client satisfaction and adapt to evolving consumer needs.

The Consumer-Cost Efficiency Plan outlines a coherent strategy for enhancing travel agency services while reducing consumer costs through meticulous analysis and strategic planning. To meet the demands of Millennial consumers and remain competitive, the travel agency will leverage digital transformation, customization enhancements, promotional offers, price competitiveness, transparency, and exceptional customer service. Implementation within the proposed six-month timeframe, with ongoing review and adjustments, ensures agility in response to shifting market trends and customer preferences. The plan anticipates significant increases in online bookings, customer satisfaction, and overall service quality, supported by key stakeholders or business partners and allocated financial resources. The travel agency can secure a lasting competitive advantage by employing a research-based approach while achieving immediate success.

The study concludes that the importance of travel agencies being transparent, competitively priced, and providing high-quality services affects consumers' perceptions of them. It highlights how consumers are drawn to special offers and discounts and need a reasonable price consistent with high-quality service. The study also emphasizes the importance of customizable travel packages and the necessity for charge disclosure openness.

Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of delivering high- quality customer service, particularly in responsiveness, friendliness, and availability of relevant information. Travel firms must identify and address these aspects to promote customer happiness and loyalty in a competitive market.

Recommendations

Given the findings above, the most promising recommendation for future research is to conduct a follow-up study emphasizing the success of different marketing techniques and service improvements in Cabanatuan City's travel agencies. This study should evaluate the effects of customized marketing campaigns, such as exclusive package deals and open pricing structures, on acquiring and retaining customers. Input from travelers and travel agencies should be gathered to enhance the day-to-day operations of Cabanatuan City's travel agencies.

The Local Government Unit (LGU) should focus on customized marketing approaches, occasional events, improved customer service delivery, and technology integration for smoother booking processes and personalized interactions. Investigating cutting-edge methods to improve the influx of consumers in the city, such as utilizing technology to create seamless booking experiences and tailored customer interactions, can also increase customer visits and loyalty. This will help inform future business decisions and promote sustainable growth in the industry.

The Department of Tourism should assist the LGU in promoting Cabanatuan City and collaborating with travel agencies to develop and implement cost-efficient consumer strategies. This may involve forming partnerships with local businesses, implementing off-peak pricing models, adapting successful strategies from other cities, and organizing seminars or training sessions on adopting cost-efficient practices.

According to the results of this research, travel agencies in Cabanatuan City should strategically target two critical demographic groups: young people and female solo travelers. Targeting these specific demographic groups with tailored services and promotions is advised, including offering immersive cultural experiences, adventurous activities, gender-neutral accommodations, and addressing safety concerns.

Furthermore, prioritizing transparency, affordability, and top-notch customer service across all demographics is crucial for building trust and loyalty. Travel agencies should offer more promotional discounts, special offers, and exclusive packages to help consumers save money on their vacations. Creating a monthly evaluation or feedback form can also help travel agencies assess what they need to adjust to improve their services. By evaluating the results of these initiatives, travel agencies can gain critical insights into the best ways to cater to local travelers' changing needs and preferences.

It will become easier for consumers to find a travel agency worth spending their money on and entrusting their vacation plans to. Implementing these recommendations can help Cabanatuan City travel agencies position themselves for success and sustainable growth in a competitive market.

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