

IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

MASTER THESIS

**THE EFFECTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING
STRATEGIES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND
PURCHASE INTENTION AND THE MEDIATING ROLE
OF PERCEIVED VALUE AND BRAND AWARENESS IN
THE AVIATION INDUSTRY**

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THESIS SUPERVISOR
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ISTANBUL, 2024

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by

HADDY FAAL

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Air Transport Management**

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ISTANBUL, 2024

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion, it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Master of Science in Air Transport Management degree.

Thesis Jury Members

Title - Name Surname

Opinion

Signature

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

Date of Submission

Seal/Signature

ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name Surname:

Signature:



ÖZ

HAVACILIK SEKTÖRÜNDE DİJİTAL PAZARLAMA STRATEJİLERİNİN MÜŞTERİ MEMNUNİYETİ VE SATIN ALMA ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ VE ALGILANAN DEĞER İLE MARKA BİLİNİRLİĞİNİN ARACILIK ROLÜ

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Havacılık sektörünün dinamik gelişen ortamında dijital pazarlama stratejilerinin etkin olarak uygulanması daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, dijital pazarlama stratejileri, müşteri memnuniyeti ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki etkileşimi, marka bilinirliği ile algılanan değer aracılığına odaklanarak araştırmaktadır. Gambiya'da faaliyet gösteren havayollarını kapsayan ve Banjul Uluslararası Havalimanı'ndan seyahat eden 310 yolcuya yönelik yapılan bir anket aracılığıyla veri toplanmıştır. Veri işleme için Smart PLS yazılımı kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar, Gambiya'daki havayolu yolcularının satın alma niyetini etkileyen dijital pazarlama stratejileri ile müşteri memnuniyeti arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca bulgular, dijital pazarlamanın yolcuların davranışları üzerindeki etkisine aracılık etmede marka bilinirliği ve algılanan değer önemli rolü olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma sonuçları, Gambiya'da faaliyet gösteren havayolu şirketlerine dijital pazarlama stratejilerini geliştirmeleri için değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Pazarlama, Gambia, Havayolu Sektörü, Marka Bilinirliği, Müşteri Memnuniyeti, Sosyal Medya.

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND PURCHASE INTENTION, AND MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED VALUE AND BRAND AWARENESS IN THE THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

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In the dynamically evolving landscape of the aviation industry, digital marketing strategies has become increasingly important. This study examines the interplay between digital marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention, focusing on the mediating role of brand awareness and perceived value. The research covers airlines operating in Gambia. We collect data through a Google Form survey run to 310 passengers who fly at Banjul International Airport. We employ Smart PLS software for the analysis. The results show that there is a significant relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer satisfaction, influencing the purchase intention of passengers in Gambia. The findings also highlight the pivotal role of brand awareness and perceived value in mediating the impact of digital marketing on passenger behaviors. The study provides valuable insights for airlines operating in Gambia to enhance their digital marketing strategies, offering a localized perspective within the unique context of development in aviation.

Keywords: Aviation Industry, Brand Awareness, Customer Satisfaction, Digital Marketing, Gambia, Social Media.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late Mother, Jainaba Mundaw Jatta, who would have loved to witness my achievement, and to Binta Dibba, who raised and gave me the gift of education and nurtured my intellectual curiosity. Finally, I dedicate this work to my beloved husband, Mr. Fansu Bojang, and my son, Baboucarr Bojang, who has been my rock and motivation. Your unwavering support, patience, and understanding have been my inspiration throughout this journey.



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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AM	Affiliate Marketing
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BA	Brand Awareness
BIA	Banjul International Airport
CM	Content Marketing
CS	Customer Satisfaction
DMS	Digital Marketing Strategies
DT	Digital Transformation
D-ULS	Squared Euclidean Distance
EM	E-mail Marketing
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDT	Information Diffusion Theory
IM	Influencer Marketing
IT	Information Technologies
MM	Mobile Marketing
NFI	Normal Fit Index
PI	Purchase Intention
PV	Perceived Value
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SMI	Social Media Influencers
SMM	Social Media Marketing
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TAT	Technology Acceptance Theory

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. An Overview of the Digital Marketing Strategies in the Aviation Industry

In recent years, the importance of digital marketing tactics in the aviation industry has considerably increased as airlines try to reach more people and improve customer interaction by employing various digital marketing strategies. Many airlines enhance digital abilities to grow their global presence, and to provide high quality services to their customers. Digital tools are favored by airlines due to its cost-effectiveness, ability to improve customer experience, and increase in brand visibility, resulting in higher perceived value (Heiets et al., 2022).

Due to the increase on online flight searches and bookings, digital marketing tools have shown a significant growth in the aviation industry. Therefore, understanding how these tools affect customer satisfaction and purchase intention as well as how perceived value and brand awareness mediate these factors is of growing interest. Perceived value and brand awareness may have a significant impact on customer behavior, and thereby is influential in analyzing the effects of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Personalized incentives, and promotions provided by digital marketing tactics may enhance the perceived value of a service or product, resulting in higher customer satisfaction. Similarly, brand awareness-targeted digital marketing efforts can boost consumer perception on brand

Airlines adopt digital marketing means to broaden their business coverage globally (Karağaoğlu & Çiçek, 2019). In the last decades, the aviation industry has shown a remarkable shift towards digital marketing, as many airlines focus on online platforms to reach customers. However, the impact of digital marketing on customer satisfaction and purchase intention is not adequately explored in the aviation industry although they are more successful than traditional strategies (Chatterjee, 2022; Kannan & Li,

2017). In fact, the implementation of these strategies has highly affected airlines in getting new clients (Moslehpour et al., 2021). Online search of customers and the duration of browsing e-commerce websites have a significant impact on their willingness to purchase (Dastane, 2020). When customers perceive a brand positively on social media and establish a strong connection with it, it increases their perception for that brand. This generates a favorable association between brand awareness and perceived value, resulting in improved service quality and a positive effect on the likelihood of customers to purchase. On this respect, exploring whether perceived value and brand awareness play a mediating role in the aviation industry is important to develop an integrated marketing strategy that will improve the performance of airlines (Ceyhan, 2019).

1.2. Motivation of the Study

As the aviation industry has significantly grown the interaction of airlines with customers has evolved. With the increasing prominence of digital technologies, airlines begin to employ digital marketing methods to engage with target groups. This is particularly important in emerging markets where we observe an increasing employment of digital technologies in service sector. This study intends to explore the effects of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase intention in the aviation industry with an emphasis on the mediating role of perceived value and brand recognition in Gambia. The findings would assist aviation companies to understand the power of digital marketing and to encourage them adapt these practices to better meet the needs of customers. In this sense, it provides insights for airlines that look for improving digital marketing efforts. The study has five focus areas:

i) *The importance of digital marketing*: Social media, internet advertising, and other digital platforms has provided airlines new opportunities. As the aviation industry become more competitive, airlines are increasingly relying on digital marketing methods to differentiate themselves and attract new customers. Thus, understanding the impact of these tools on customer satisfaction and purchase intention is vital for airlines that seek to create marketing campaigns and gain a competitive edge.

- ii) *Customer satisfaction as a competitive advantage:* In the aviation industry, customer satisfaction is a critical factor of business success. Satisfied people are more likely to become loyal customers, resulting in higher revenue and market share. This study seeks to cover digital marketing techniques that can improve customer satisfaction.
- iii) *The impact of perceived value:* Perceived value refers to the customers evaluation of the advantages gained in comparison to the costs incurred. It has a significant impact on consumer satisfaction and purchase intention. This study looks at how digital marketing tools influence perceived value in the aviation business, assisting airlines in tailoring digital marketing activities to increase the perceived value of their services, hence improving customer satisfaction and purchase intention.
- iv) *The significance of brand awareness:* Brand awareness is an essential component of effective marketing strategy. Building and maintaining a good brand image is important in the aviation industry to acquire new consumers. This study examines the role of brand awareness as a mediator on the relationship between digital marketing strategies, perceived value, customer satisfaction and purchase intention.
- v) *The influence of digital marketing on purchase intention:* The tendency of a consumer to make a purchase from a company is influenced by brand awareness. By raising this awareness, airlines may increase loyalty, and provide individualized offers by employing digital tools to shape the purchasing intention of customers.

1.3. Scope of the Study and Research Objectives

This study aims to examine how digital marketing strategies affect the satisfaction and purchasing behavior of customers in the airlines operating in Gambia. It merely analyzes different digital marketing tactics used in the aviation industry, including search engine optimization (SEO), affiliate marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, email marketing, content marketing, and mobile marketing, and the relationship between consumer satisfaction and perceived value and digital marketing tools. It also aims to investigate how customers are influenced by digital marketing campaigns to book flights, and get ancillary services. Finally the study explores how the perception of customers are shaped by personalized offerings, competitive pricing, superior service, or other value-adding factors, as well as how digital marketing activities help build brand awareness.

In this study, we developed a scale to measure the relationship between digital marketing strategies, perceived value, brand awareness, and purchase intention. During the scale development process, we conducted interviews with five experts who are familiar with customer interaction in the corporate framework of the Gambia Airport. Based on the information from the interviews, we structured survey questions. To assess the reliability of the scale, we conducted a pilot test using survey data collected from 70 passengers in Gambia Airport. After the necessary adjustments, the final scale was run to 300 passengers. We employed exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing. The findings provide valuable insights to the airlines in Gambia, assisting them in the formulation of effective digital marketing strategies to contribute to business growth.

1.4. The Structure of the Study

This thesis is composed of five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides the motivation and scope of the study and research objectives.

Chapter 2 gives the conceptual and theoretical background about the effects of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction, and purchase intention as well as the mediating role of perceived value and brand awareness in the aviation industry

Chapter 3 presents the data and methodology, and gives information on data collection process.

Chapter 4 provides the empirical findings, and identifies potential areas for improvement in the aviation industry in Gambia.

Chapter 5 concludes and discusses the implications of the study for the relevant parties. It also addresses the limitations of the study and proposes future research avenues.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Digital Marketing

There has been significant changes in marketing strategies in the last two decades due to technological and innovative advancements (Ahmad Wani & Wajid Ali, 2015). Digital marketing has replaced conventional marketing through social media, optimized websites, and blog entries, allowing marketers to more successfully reach consumers by using digital tools. The current trends in digital marketing favor quality over quantity, moving away from passive advertising towards active participation on social networking sites (Panchal et al., 2021). This is also the the case in the aviation industry. Airlines have the opportunity to boost customer loyalty by implementing digital marketing tools. They use strategies like loyalty programs, exclusive deals, and tailored messaging to improve customer relationship (Keke, 2023).

Many companies transmit information about their product and services to customers in digital format. In this context, digital media covers all materials by computers, smartphones, and other digital devices (Smith, 2012). Digital marketing provides tools for companies to harness the power of the internet to move their business in the direction they desire and to enhance brand awareness (Morris, 2009). Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Google, have shifted consumer attitudes, ultimately helping to revolutionize many businesses. In the aviation industry, digital transformation (DT) leads to the calibration of existing workflows and data-driven decision-making methodologies by using digital tools, particularly those related to the passenger experience (Kıyıklık et al., 2022). Therefore, many airlines and airports use digital marketing platforms as the most pervasive marketing means for promotional campaigns to empower their presence in the market (Mandal, 2017). Airlines have discovered that it is simpler and quicker to draw the attention of customers by digital

marketing tactics. They have the chance to increase consumer base and provide better prices by digital platforms (Basal & Suzen, 2023).

According to Giresunlu (2023), the number of Internet users worldwide is 5.3 billion by the end of 2022, and this number is expected to double by 2030. This indicates that more firms will use digital marketing in the future to boost their business. Firms that digitize their operations would be able to better compete in the market by satisfying customers. To increase client satisfaction and loyalty, airlines develop a membership card system in digital settings. Passengers may access digital airline ticket pricing, and discover more about the services they can use from the beginning of the journey until its end. Moreover, guests may receive services like transportation to the airport, leasing a car, and paying for lodging services through mobile applications. The following subsections provide information about the different features of digital marketing that may help companies to figure out their strategies.



Figure 2.1. Evolution of Digital Marketing

Source: www.apu.edu.my

2.1.1. Search Engine Optimization

The process of optimizing websites to appear higher on search engine is known as search engine optimization (SEO) (Berman & Katona, 2013). It increases the visibility of a website for users. Content, and off-page optimization techniques are combined in the SEO. These techniques include keyword research and optimization, website structure and navigation, content generation and optimization, link building, and social media marketing. Search Engines like Google use Page Ranking Algorithm rank web pages in accordance with the value of the content and the extent to which they are present on the Internet (Seo & Itoh, 2020). The goal is to increase a website's likelihood of showing up on the first page of the search results. Since consumers give a keyword in searching for information online, search engine uses that keyword to discover the most pertinent web sites and displays them in a list with the most pertinent page at the top (Sharma et al., 2019).

Customers-focused inbound marketing includes SEO as a key component. This is the most significant distinction from conventional outbound marketing that include casual calling, television advertising, junk mail that disturb consumers. The search engine plays a vital role in marketing for firms that use Internet to set up close ties with the customers, gain potential new users, and enhance brand loyalty (Shih et al., 2013). It also helps increase sales. Airlines during the COVID-19 period have employed all strategies to survive. Many of them have invested time and money in creating SEO strategies and optimizing their websites to attract more customers and bookings (Roumeliotis et al., 2022).

2.1.2. Content Marketing

Content marketing involves the creation and sharing of media and publishing content to attract and retain customers. The information can be presented in a variety of forms like news, videos, white papers, e-books, infographics, case studies, question and answer articles, photos (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2018). The effectiveness of a firm's online communications highly depends on its content marketing (Baltes, 2015). Social media content marketing is important for spreading information to consumers and making it appealing for them.

For producing unique and creative content, firms should conduct research on the target audience. They should pay attention to social media to understand what the brand means for customers (Kim, 2020). Airlines should concentrate their digital marketing efforts on producing unique and interesting content. By conveying a story through written and visual content, brands may help customers establish emotional relationship with the products (Keke, 2023). Since effective marketing depends on reliable information the marketing research of firms and the behavior of existing and potential customers are closely related. In this sense, the interests of consumers serve as the main driving factor for companies to decide on the right marketing strategies to catch up sophisticated and intelligent consumers. By producing and disseminating useful and interesting information, airlines employ content marketing to develop consumer loyalty, and increase sales (Shankar et al., 2022).

2.1.3. Social Media Marketing

Social media offers companies the chance to introduce goods and services to potential customers. It encompasses a number of programs that let users "post," "tag," "digg," and "blog". Some examples are Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, Digg, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, and Google+. Information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the Internet and social networks, have altered market dynamics, and increased consumer power, creating challenges for firms across industries. Social media platforms have remarkably changed consumer consumption patterns (Zhang, 2010). Airlines use these platforms to strengthen their ties with customers. Airlines, particularly those in the North America, i.e., Southwest Airlines, JetBlue, embraced social media management rapidly to broaden customer base and better understand international markets (Koch & Tritscher, 2017). Moreover, social media has altered how customers obtain information, and make purchases (Seo et al., 2020). Koch and Tritscher (2017) claim that, in international travel, social media have segmented the range of options for travel destinations, hotel bookings and flight ticketing.

According to Socialbakers' statistics on social media usage in the aviation industry based on Facebook fans, Qatar Airways had the most fans in the world with 14 million, followed by KLM with roughly 13 million as of June, 2019. The relevance of social media in airline marketing and the use of social media by passengers are projected to

grow over time (Seo et al., 2020). Social media can be used in the promotion, marketing intelligence, sentiment analysis, public relations, marketing communication, product and customer management. It is important to understand the relative significance of each social media platform and how it is related to marketing performance as it ultimately affects business success. Therefore, marketing experts should incorporate social media into the marketing toolkits to survive (Constantinides, 2014). Social media also plays a key role in boosting sales, raising brand awareness, driving traffic to online platforms, cutting costs associated with marketing, and increasing user engagement on platforms by encouraging users to post or share content. Airlines can use social media marketing in a reactive and proactive manner. For instance, they can listen to and analyze social media conversations to learn how customers feel about their actions (Felix et al., 2017).

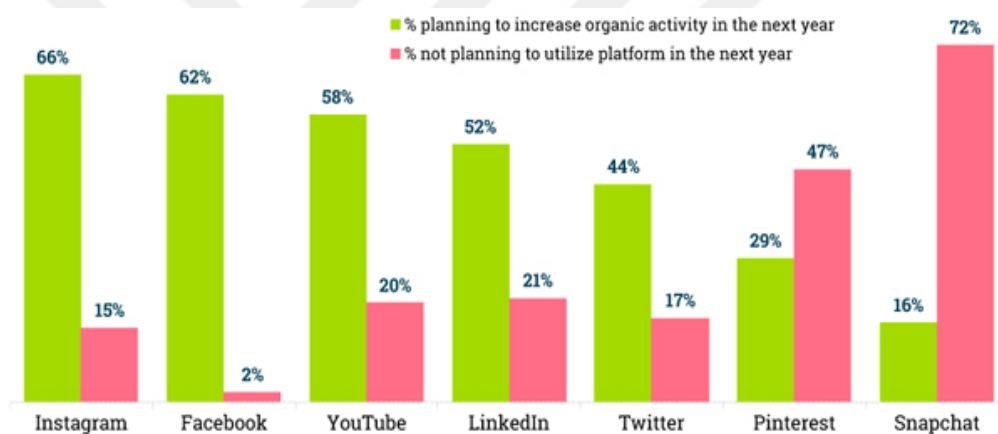


Figure 2.2. Social Media Usage Trends

Source: <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>

2.1.4. E-mail Marketing

Email is the most cost-effective marketing medium for communicating with customers. E-mail gives companies a channel of contact that allows the development of client relationship and in-person interactions with clients. Consumers do not have to initiate the connection because the channel is push rather than pull, and response rates are high. High response rate and low cost quickly transform email marketing into an important tool, enabling firms to increase customer retention rate. Email marketing has an instant impact on sales and brand loyalty (Budac, 2016). In the aviation

industry, email marketing helps establish and sustain customer relationship, promote products, and improve travel experience (Basal & Suzen, 2023). More than 30% of the travelers are likely to purchase ancillaries within a 2-day window, that can be reached by email marketing, and app notifications (Avram, 2017).

Email campaigns are another method of digital marketing. The needs of target audience are considered in creating content, brochures, texts, and any other images (Giresunlu, 2023). Airlines heavily rely on getting consumer feedback during the email marketing campaigns. Numerous studies and industry reports have demonstrated that marketers in the tourism and hospitality sectors actively use email marketing to draw new customers, even though it is treated less important in the modern era due to emerging technologies like social media and mobile applications (Leung & Tsou, 2019).

2.1.5. Affiliate Marketing

An affiliate advertises the goods or services of a firm to the audience in exchange for a fee if a member of that audience makes a purchase. E-commerce-related businesses heavily consider affiliate marketing in their strategies. It is essentially a personal sales channel in the online business world. For instance, the global affiliate promoting market income from the retail sector accounts for 43% of it, while the telecom and media, travel, and leisure sectors contribute 24% and 16%, respectively (Gan & Wang, 2017). Affiliate marketing is a tactic used by airlines to improve their internet visibility, increase website traffic, and enhance ticket sales. Partnering with affiliates (publishers or marketers) that market the services of airlines on their websites, blogs, or social media platforms is known as affiliate marketing. The affiliate receives a commission when customers use special links to make a purchase or carry an action.

The airline industry is advantageous for the creation of affiliate marketing programs. The travel sector is quite competitive due to the numerous market participants vying for the attention of small customer base. Moreover, the introduction of aggregators like Aviasales and Booking make comparison easy to access consumers. Therefore, competitors frequently experiment with affiliate marketing tactics to draw clients. Affiliate programs are a vital component of the airline marketing plan since they provide new opportunities to advertise at a particular segment.

2.1.6. Mobile Marketing

The mobile channel has evolved into an ultimate marketing vehicle that enables entities to establish a pervasive electronic presence alongside customers anytime, and anywhere by the advancements in mobile technology (Varnali & Toker, 2010). The term "mobile" has rapidly changed over the last decade, moving from describing the landscape of mobile phones to encompassing a variety of portable computing devices i.e., tablets, smart speakers, mobile services, virtual assistants and mobile applications. Airlines use mobile apps to improve in-flight experience (Avram, 2017). They offer customized content across mobile channels based on the customer context of location, time, and environment, (Tong et al., 2020).

According to a SITA study titled “Air Transport Industry Insights- The passenger IT trends survey 2017”, nearly 90% of passengers use self-service technologies like apps to book their flights, and 64% use a mobile app to track their bags in real-time. The satisfaction of technology users is 8% higher than that of passengers who board or purchase flights in person. According to the same study, 87% of passengers use mobile apps for booking, 54% for check-in, 47% for bag tags, 18% for bag drops, 21% for passport, 16% for boarding, 61% for on-board, and 15% for bag pickup (Avram, 2017). Thus, mobile phones, personal digital assistants, and laptops are used for flight search and booking, itinerary changes, retrieval of up-to-date arrival and departure information, speedy check-in, and seat selection (Shankar et al., 2022). Figure 2.3. shows the impact of mobile applications across the travel lifecycle.

2.1.7. Influencer Marketing

Online influencers are people, groups of people, or virtual avatars that have amassed a following on social media and are recognized as digital opinion leaders with significant social influence. Some influencers amass large internet fan bases that they become celebrities. The primary distinction between influencers and celebrities is the source of their renown (Koch & Tritscher, 2017). Influencer marketing (IM) has become increasingly common in business strategies due to the exponential growth of social media influencers (SMIs). Especially among young generations, influencer marketing can be a successful strategy for expanding brand exposure and attracting

new audiences. By partnering with travel and lifestyle influencers, airlines can enhance brand recognition and have the chance to reach target customers (Keke, 2023). However, airlines should assess and select influencers carefully, and they should disclose any agreements to ensure transparency with their audience.

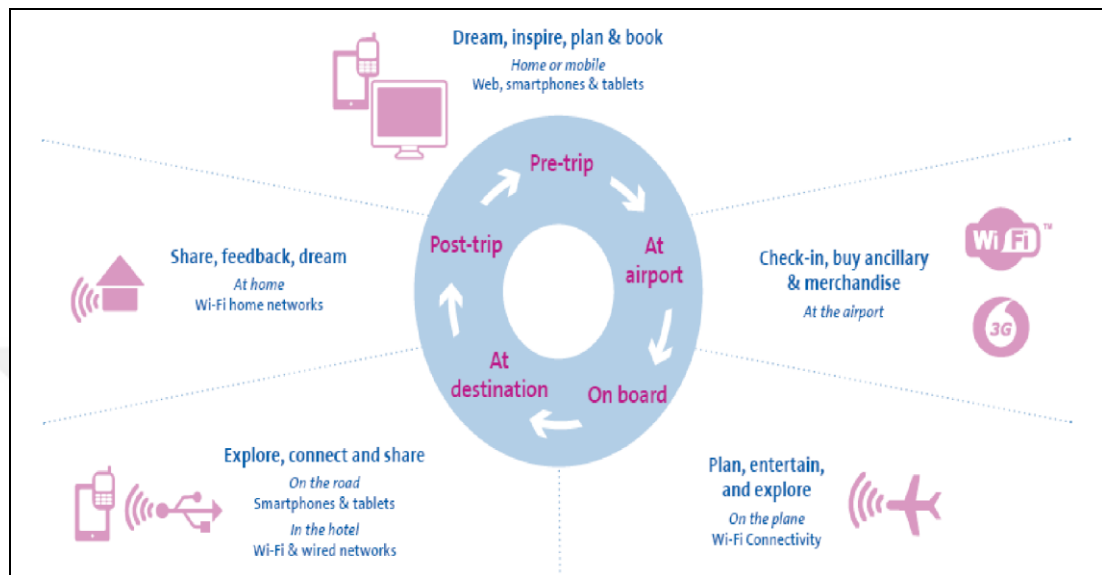


Figure 2.3. The Impact of Mobile Applications Across the Travel Lifecycle

Source: Amadeus (2011)

2.2. Perceived Value

Customers are inclined to buy a product or service if they believe that the value outweighs its price. If the perceived value is less than the price, they might decide to hunt for another option. This literature on services marketing has begun to include the concept of perceived value since 2004 (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011). The idea of value creation represents the growing understanding of perceived value as one of the most important strategies in a competitive environment (Chen et al., 2019). Firms can affect perceived value through product features, pricing policies, customer service policies, and marketing initiatives. Anh et al. (2020) show that perceived value has an impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, making it crucial for airlines to retain the patronage of frequent flyers to increase customer satisfaction through brand image, perceived value, and pricing policy. The performance of airlines mostly stays on their capacity to recognize the demands of consumers in providing high-quality services (Law et al., 2022). When airlines uphold the perceived value of passengers, they are likely to

repurchase its services. On the other hand, perceived value is dynamic. It should be measured prior to, during, and after purchasing (Sánchez et al., 2006).

2.3. Brand Awareness

Companies aim to boost sales and revenues to have a sustainable growth. In an ideal world, they can do it by increasing brand awareness to attract new clients. Brand awareness is the degree to which existing and potential customers are aware of the company and its offerings. People are more inclined to purchase from firms if they are aware of the brand value (Gustafon & Chabot, 2007; Rossiter, 2014). Brand recognition is the first step of assessing brand awareness. It measures the capacity of consumers to retrieve the brand from memory when given a product category. The capacity of consumers to validate prior exposure to the brand is reflected in the brand awareness (Hafernik et al., 2021). Since brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize a brand in the presence of alternatives, companies execute awareness campaigns to win the loyalty of customers. The airline industry is not an exception. By giving clients an unforgettable experience through brand components like slogans, promotions, brand recognition is increased (Anh et al., 2020).

In the aviation industry, brand awareness is a vital component of brand equity and consumer purchase decision. Due to brand knowledge, the perception of customers for risk are affected (Widayati, 2020). The leading multinational airlines, like Emirates spent hundreds of millions of dollars to sponsor cultural, and artistic events to promote their name and services in 2018. Moreover, full-service carriers spend money on offering the most luxurious cabin amenities to keep the premium passenger and improve brand positioning in the tourism industry. These efforts pay off. For instance, Emirates is well-known brand on the international arena, and this influences the purchase intention of passengers (Gao & Choy, 2019)

2.4. Customer Satisfaction

The level of enjoyment a consumer feels with the goods, services of a firm is called customer satisfaction. Leninkumar (2017) described satisfaction as an attitude, evaluation, and emotional reaction of a customer following purchasing process. It is

important for firms since happy clients are more likely to come back. Consistent, repetitive purchasing behavior is a sign of client loyalty (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Leninkumar, 2017). Therefore, a product or service should offer a pleasurable level of consumption-related satisfaction to customers. If a firm wants to compete in aviation industry, customer pleasure is the secret to success. Maintaining customer base is more profitable than trying to attract new customer.

The areas that airlines should concentrate on are in-flight comfort, luggage handling, airline personnel quality, digital marketing strategies, accessibility to airports, additional services, the number of accessible destinations, and safety (Walia et al., 2021). Since providing high-quality service is key to the survival of airlines, measuring customer satisfaction in the airline industry is quite important. Thus, airlines should satisfy their passengers by providing high level of assurance, and responsiveness (Mainardes et al., 2021).

2.5. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention describes the tendency of a customer to purchase a specific good or service. In addition to the price, quality, and accessibility of the product, the needs, preferences, and attitudes of customers toward a good or service are also important. Advertising, promotions, and product placement are few techniques that marketers employ to affect consumer decisions. Firms must understand the factors that influence the purchasing intention of consumers to create efficient marketing campaigns (Peña-García et al., 2020). Purchase intention helps companies decide on which geographic markets and customer segments they should concentrate on to uphold their market reputation and increase goodwill (Younus et al., 2015).

2.6. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.6.1. Theoretical Framework

There are two prominent theories that are related to this study. They are technology acceptance theory (TAT) and innovation diffusion theory (IDT). TAT examines how consumers view and use technology. It reflects the attitudes of people toward using

technology. According to TAT, perceived usefulness and simplicity of use are important factors in the technology acceptance of users. TAT can assist in understanding how consumers in the aviation industry perceive and accept digital marketing initiatives. For instance, airlines may use TAT to investigate how customers see the usability of digital marketing channels such as mobile applications and websites, and their valuation of these tools in the decision-making for travel.

On the other hand, IDT focuses on the method by which innovations, i.e., digital marketing strategies, are embraced by people over time. It defines various groups of adopters, including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards, and describes how each category accepts innovations at different level. The IDT can assist in understanding the phases of client adoption and acceptance of digital marketing innovations in the aviation industry.

2.6.1.1. Technology Acceptance Theory

The adoption, acceptance, and use of ICT oblige companies to make continuous IT investment to boost growth, gain a competitive edge, speed up data processing, and improve information accessibility. There are numerous factors that influence the decision-making process of users in the acceptance of IT (Momami, 2017). (Li, 2010) developed TAT based on the theory of reasoned action to determine what factors influence people to adopt or reject an IT service. He claimed that two most significant factors that influence the usage of IT are perceived utility and ease of use. The extent to which a person believes that employing a particular technology would boost his job performance is defined as perceived usefulness. Li (2010) argued that the theory of reasoned action's expectancy-value model serves as the foundation for the definition of perceived utility. The degree to which a person thinks using a particular technology will be effortless is known as the perceived ease of use. Perceived utility and perceived ease of use ultimately influence individual behavior.

Martin Monje & Bárcena Madera (2015) stated that an individual's inclination to use IT is strongly predicted by his perception of utility. Other influencing factors are trialability, visibility, and result demonstrability. Perceived usefulness and ease of use are also subject to external factors such as personality traits and demographic

characteristics (Li, 2010). According to the TAT, the attitude of user toward using a technology is influenced by how useful and simple they find it (Sam & Tahir, 2009) (Taherdoost, 2018). Understanding how the passengers of an airline respond to the digital marketing strategies is vital for the business success.

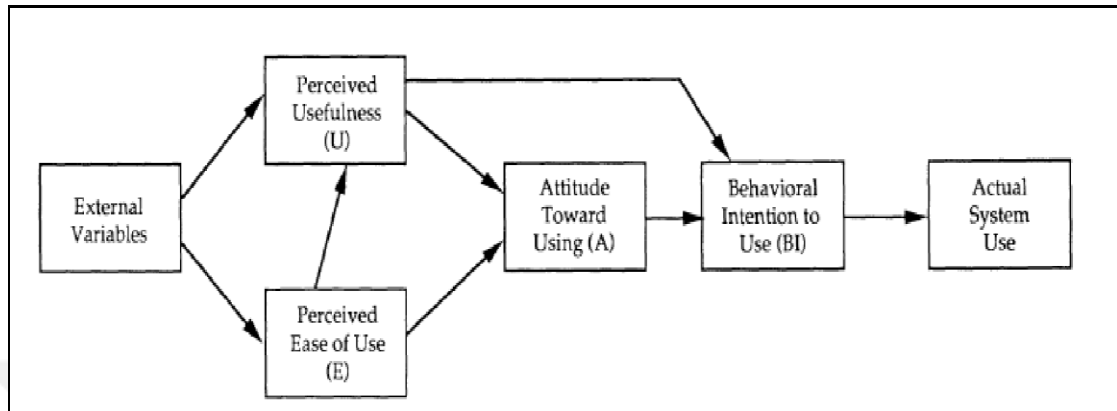


Figure 2.4. Technology Acceptance Model

Source: Davis (1989)

2.6.1.2. Innovation Diffusion Theory

According to Rogers (1962), the diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through specific channels over time, while an innovation is a practice perceived as new by an individual, a group, or an organization. The response of an individual to a concept depends on how novel he considers it. Rogers (1962) stated that IDT is developed to focus on understanding how, why, and how quickly new technologies propagate across a social system. In contrast to other theories that examine changes, IDT views change as being largely about the evolution of products and behaviors so that they become better matches for the needs of individuals rather than focus on convincing people to change. Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is disseminated to the participants over time by specific routes (Sonnenwald et al., 2001).

Companies increasingly depend on technology to promote team cooperation among employees. Potential consumers do not, however, always accept collaboration technology. Prior to the creation and deployment of the final product, an evaluation technique to predict the adoption of collaboration technology by users could help

maximize success and reduce expense. According to Sonnenwald et al. (2001), Rogers compiled five decades' worth of diffusion studies to identify five characteristics of innovations. Diffusion is not always the result of innovation, and the ease with which it proceeds depends on favorable conditions. More specifically, the second stage of adoption, i.e., implementation phase, is more complicated because top management's initial approval of an invention does not ensure that innovation will be successfully implemented (Upadhaya et al., 2018). It implies that the adoption of innovation does not depend on the desires of adopters, but the characteristics of innovation i.e., relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

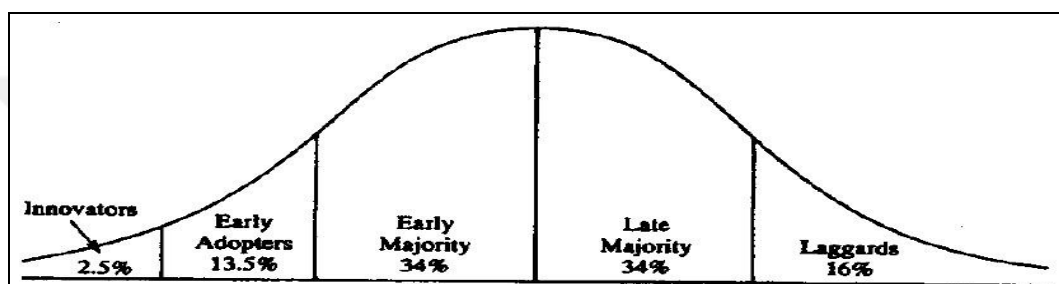


Figure 2.5. Adopter Categories on the Basis of Innovativeness

Source: Rogers (1995)

2.6.2. Hypotheses Development

2.6.2.1. Digital Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intention

Companies use digital marketing techniques to differentiate themselves from competitors, and build brand loyalty. Airline industry, where growth is quick and competition is fierce, aims to provide secure and unique travel experiences to customers by employing technological and marketing platforms. Therefore, it is essential for airlines to go digital by harnessing the diversity of technology and providing consumers with digital apps on a local/global platform. Digital marketing plays a vital role in the communication of brand name to the customers in the aviation industry (Karaağaoğlu & Çiçek, 2019). Airlines should use mobile applications, and other new media platforms to promote brand name. Digital marketing include interactive marketing, online marketing, e-marketing, and web marketing. The distribution channels for airline tickets have expanded with the adoption of online

system, i.e., e-ticketing, enabling people to buy tickets fast, and less costly. Thus, a key component of an airline's marketing strategy is to ensure that customers are satisfied with their online airline services(Sulaiman & Mohezar, 2008).

Customer happiness is a key indicator of online customer behavior and a web-based system's effectiveness. Sulaiman and Mohazer (2008) stated that e-satisfaction is how customers rate their online experiences. Customers are more inclined to stick with an online system if they are happy with the services (Tümer et al., 2019). As argued by Moslehpour et al. (2021), the increasing significance of the mobil applications massively affect how companies acquire new clients. A customer's online search and time spent at e-commerce websites is influenced by the dijital marketing strategies of companies and has a significant impact on the purchase intention (Dastane, 2020). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and purchase intention in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.2. Digital Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intention Through Customer Satisfaction

Customers would like to ensure satisfaction from a product or service, and this influences their purchase intention. Since retaining existing clients is more important than acquiring new ones, customer satisfaction is a compelling problem (Kim et al., 2009). Firms should provide exceptional services to increase client pleasure (Kim & Lee, 2011). Companies may achieve long-term client retention by assessing customer satisfaction level. Digital marketing enables airlines to effectively engage with customers via online media, and direct them for online purchasing by enhancing their satisfaction level (Gan & Wang, 2017; Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020). Employing digital marketing platforms like social media, search engines, and smart devices, is a strategy used by firms to enhance online purchasing (Dastane, 2020). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1b: Digital marketing strategies positively affects purchase intention through customer satisfaction in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.3. Digital Marketing Strategies and Customer Satisfaction Through Perceived Value

Value proposition influences the purchasing decision of a customer (Sumerta & Kiswara, 2022). Airlines may create value for customers by providing them digital marketing tools such as e-ticketing. Many studies examine how social media, mobile marketing, and digital technologies improve the consumers satisfaction through marketing intelligence (Kannan & Li, 2017). Firms should develop skills to use digital technologies to benefit clients. Numerous studies has examined how consumers adopt mobile communication ranging from the identification of adoption to consumer value perception (Bruner & Kumar, 2005; Liljander et al., 2006; Wu & Wang, 2005). Service value is identified as the most significant factor of customer satisfaction in the airlines (Park et al., 2004).

Companies should create a way to connect with customers to foster their satisfaction and experiences. Insights from digital sociability can be used by firms to create marketing plans based on the interaction with customers. One should note that perceived service quality is a key predictor of customer happiness. Hence, satisfied buyers are likely to purchase if perceived value exceeds the cost. The success of airlines largely rests on their capacity to recognize the needs and wishes of customers in providing them high-quality services. Thus, perceived value is hypothesized to have an impact on customer satisfaction (Adeola & Adebisi, 2014; Sumerta & Kiswara, 2022). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2a: Digital marketing strategies positively affects customer satisfaction through perceived value in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.4. Digital Marketing Strategies and Customer Satisfaction Through Brand Awareness

In the airline industry, when a customer is familiar with an airline name and services, their likelihood of choosing that brand rises and many airlines make a name through digital platforms (Seo & Park, 2018) Customer satisfaction and brand recognition in the aviation industry can be affected by digital marketing tactics. For instance,

engaging with customers on social media and responding to their problems can promote customer happiness. Employing targeted online advertising can raise brand exposure. Airlines may raise customer satisfaction and brand awareness by offering tailor-made experience and promotions (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Social media marketing strategies focus on client satisfaction and behavioral intention (Bilgin, 2018). Digital marketing helps brands and customers to interact actively (Karaağaoğlu & Çiçek, 2019). In the airline industry, innovative digital services is vital to meet customer needs and enhance customer satisfaction (Chatterjee, 2022; Lin, 2015). A customized digital journey can improve travel experience and foster enduring ties with customers (Keke, 2023). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2b: Digital marketing strategies positively affects customer satisfaction through brand awareness in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.5. Digital Marketing Strategies and Perceived Value

When customers see an item worthwhile to purchase, perceived value is created. From a value maximization perspective, the value adoption model developed by Kim, Chan and Gupta (2005) provides insight into the variables that affect value perception and how it results in adoption. They identified that an individual's benefit- and sacrifice-related beliefs and adoption intention are connected. Usefulness and enjoyment are two elements that make up perceived benefit. Usefulness refers to the value that customers perceive in using a technology, while enjoyment describes how much using technology is regarded as delightful, independent of any performance outcomes. Customer perception plays a vital role in the service sector, and firms respond to this concept by enhancing their digital marketing capacity.

In the aviation industry, laptops, personal digital assistants, and mobile devices are employed for checking in swiftly, making last-minute changes to reservations, booking flights, and receiving arrival and departure information (Lubbe & Louw, 2010). These mobile applications show mobile customer engagement at various travel chain segments to elevate the perceived value (Sembhodo et al., 2022). This may entail developing interesting websites and online platforms, improving search engine

ranking, and interacting with customers on social media (Seo et al., 2020). The longer customers stay with an airline, the higher the customer rating is. Repeated use of the airline and resistance to switching to other airlines are two examples of customer loyalty (Sumerta & Kiswara, 2022). Airlines use digital channels to promote their packages and manage the perceived value of customers about the benefits and costs of the services (Elkhani et al., 2014). They ultimately contribute to a favorable perception of the airline's services by assisting in the development of consumer trust, loyalty, and satisfaction (Heiets et al., 2022). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Digital marketing strategies positively affects perceived value in aviation sector.

H4: Perceived value positively affects customer satisfaction in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.6. Brand Awareness and Customer Satisfaction

Brand recognition and customer happiness are essential components in the aviation industry. Brand awareness is the capacity of a consumer to remember a brand. It enhances the likelihood that a brand will appear on a list of potential candidates and, eventually, raises the likelihood that the brand will be chosen. Seo and Park (2018) claimed that loyal customers built a special relationship to brands. This leads customers to perceive gain, and a feeling of belonging. Brand awareness in the aviation industry refers to customers' familiarity with a particular airline. To attract and keep customers, airlines must build a solid brand image. Customer satisfaction in aviation is frequently assessed by a variety of indicators, i.e., on-time performance, in-flight amenities, customer service, and experience. Airlines try to enhance customers' brand experiences rather than merely provide transportation services to differentiate themselves from competitors and increase brand equity. They offer better innovative designs for services, i.e., meals, supplies, and passenger cabins. Consumers are highly affected by these cutting-edge experiences that increase their loyalty to the company (Ha & Perks, 2005).

The aviation industry has a significant relationship between customer happiness and brand awareness. Customers are more inclined to select an airline with a favorable opinion. A strong brand image also support client loyalty (Anderson, 1994). Finally, the reputation of an airline plays a significant role in the decision-making of passengers.

An airline with a strong reputation may stand out from its rivals, affect customer satisfaction, and enhance preferences (Shafiee et al., 2014). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Brand awareness positively affects customer satisfaction in the aviation industry.

2.6.2.7. Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention

Customer satisfaction in the aviation industry is affected by punctual arrival and departure, the in-flight experience, luggage handling, and customer service. Positive word-of-mouth stimulates customer satisfaction (Basal & Suzen, 2023). Consumers that are more satisfied with their previous experiences are more likely to make a purchase on e-commerce websites (Gan & Wang, 2017; Kuo et al., 2009).

The transaction-specific perspective can be used to define customer satisfaction. This perspective assesses client happiness based on recent purchase experiences (Kuo et al., 2009). The willingness of passengers to buy tickets and select an airline's services is more likely to rise when the airline prioritizes the satisfaction of its customers through high service quality, safety, and convenience. A good reputation, loyalty program, and competitive price affect the decisions of customers (Varadarajan et al., 2022). The client loyalty is based on client satisfaction. The ability to retain clients in fierce competition is possible by providing excellent customer services (Hussain, 2013; Shafiee et al., 2014). Customers that express high level of satisfaction are more inclined to spend money and are less likely to switch other companies (Law et al., 2022). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Customer satisfaction positively affects purchase intention in the aviation industry.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Sample

This study uses primary data collected in the form of a survey to investigate the effect of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase intention in the aviation industry, while examining the mediating role of perceived value and brand awareness on this relationship. The analysis concentrates on a single country, i.e., Gambia, and covers domestic and international carriers operating at the Banjul International Airport (BIA). By using a stratified random sampling method, we obtained a representative sample. Strata were created among the passengers to ensure that different passenger groups were represented.

We collected 310 responses by the survey. In data gathering, we considered ethical matters. Every participant gave his consent for the voluntary involvement. We also ensured the privacy and anonymity of the respondents. We collected the data from April 2023 to June 2023. We faced some challenges, such as coordinating with the airport authorities and navigating the logistical complexities of an international airport. Still, close collaboration with airport staff helped us overcome these obstacles.

3.2. Research Scale

Creating a solid study design is the initial stage in the data gathering. Since passengers at an international airport are different, we selected a cross-sectional design, ensuring a snapshot of the passenger demographics at the airport. The survey includes demographic questions such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, nationality, and education, as well as questions about the airline that the respondent frequently uses and digital marketing tools with which the respondents are familiar. In the appendix,

we provide the survey questions and the research scales used for each demographic question.

3.3. Description of the Variables

3.3.1. Independent Variable

Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS): Companies use a variety of electronic platforms and strategies known as digital marketing tools to promote their goods and services. These tactics use digital gadgets and the internet to reach and interact with target audiences (Morris, 2009). The aviation industry is a fast-paced, cutthroat market. Airlines with more focused consumer interactions better compete (Panchal et al., 2021). This study sheds light on the online behaviour of consumers in the aviation industry, the factors that affect their decision-making, and how digital tactics can be customized to suit their needs.

3.3.2. Dependent Variables

Customer Satisfaction (CS): Customer satisfaction is the degree to which a customer's expectations are met or surpassed by a company's goods and services. It is essential to establish a good customer relationship. Airlines must research customer satisfaction to meet their expectations (Seo & Park, 2018).

Purchase Intention (PI): Purchase intention refers to the desire of a person to purchase a good or service depending on a range of elements, i.e., his perception and outside influences (Dastane, 2020). Understanding purchase intention is important in the aviation business. First, it aids airlines in forecasting the probability that customers will select their offerings. Marketing, resource allocation, and strategic planning can all benefit from this information. Second, airlines can drive opportunities for innovation by analyzing purchase intention. Providing distinctive experiences that suit consumers' tastes can increase purchase intention and distinguish an airline from its rivals (Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020). Finally, for airlines to remain competitive, satisfy customer expectations, and adjust to shifting market conditions, purchase intention offers insightful information (Moslehpour et al., 2021).

3.3.3. Mediating Variables

Perceived Value (PV): Perceived value refers to the value that a client feels that a service is worth, considering its costs and benefits. Customer evaluations consider several aspects of the good or service, including reliability, usability, brand reputation, costs, and experience (Chen et al., 2019). PV is a major factor in influencing customer decisions in the aviation industry. Airlines use it to improve customer happiness and uphold a favorable brand image in a dynamic market (Graciola et al., 2020).

Brand Awareness (BA): Brand awareness is related to how well-known a given brand is among consumers. It gauges how well consumers can recognize a brand when they see its name, logo, or other distinguishing features. Strong BA is linked to a high level of customer loyalty and trust (Seo & Park, 2018). It is vital in the aviation industry to evaluate the existing level of BA, pinpoint opportunities for enhancement, and shape tactics to augment visibility and recognition. It offers useful information that airlines may use to improve their marketing campaigns, communication plans, and brand-building initiatives (Widayati, 2020).

3.4. Research Model and Hypotheses

This study examines the influence of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase intention in aviation. It also explores the mediating role of PV and BA in this relationship. Figure 3.1. shows the research framework.

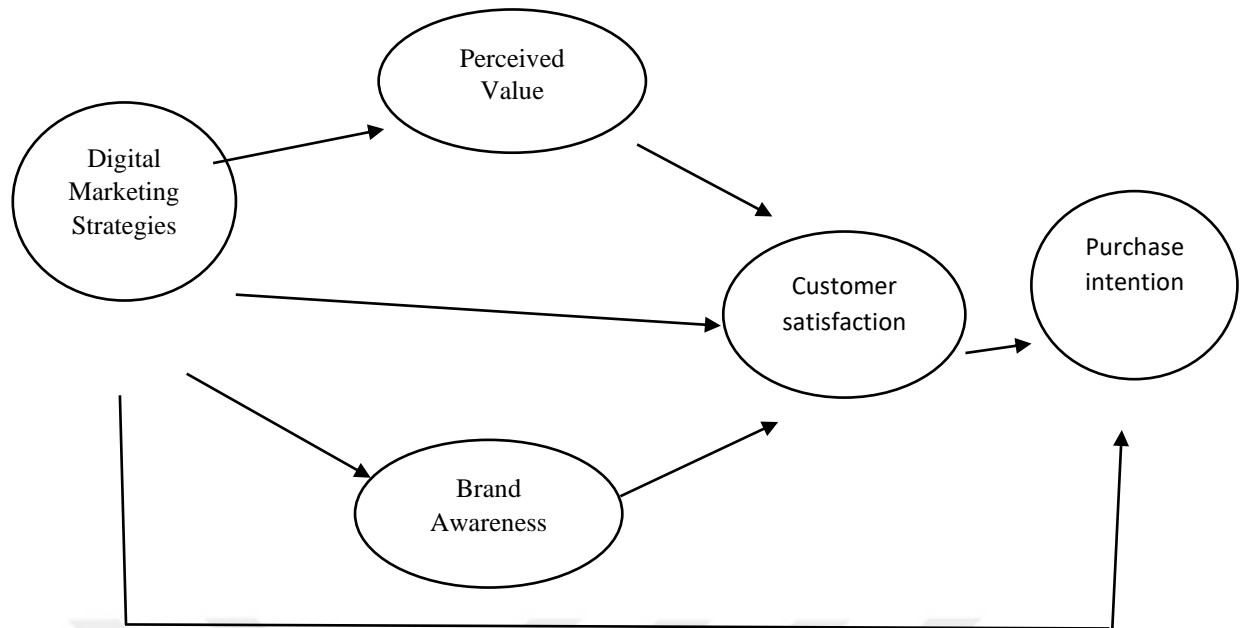


Figure 3.1. The Research Framework

In this context, this study tests nine hypotheses provided below:

H1: There is a positive significant relationship between digital marketing strategies and purchase intention.

H2: Digital marketing strategies positively affect purchase intention through customer satisfaction.

H3: Digital marketing strategies positively affect customer satisfaction through perceived value.

H4: Digital marketing strategies positively affect customer satisfaction through brand awareness.

H5: Digital marketing strategies positively affect perceived value.

H6: Digital marketing strategies positively affect brand awareness.

H7: Perceived value positively affects customer satisfaction.

H8: Brand awareness positively affects customer satisfaction.

H9: Customer satisfaction positively affects purchase intention.

3.5. Methodology

This study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. SEM adopts a confirmatory and bootstrapping approach to examine a structural theory

related to a particular phenomenon. It uses a structural model to establish relationships among the variables (Bilgin, 2018). To achieve this goal, we used essential pre-estimation techniques. SEM can be represented in an equational form as shown below:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \epsilon$$

Where Y represents the endogenous observed variables, CS and PI , β represents the path coefficient that shows how the latent variables X is related to the observed variables Y . The variable X stands for exogenous variables including DMS , BA and PV . The component ϵ represents the residual error that accounts for the unexplained variability in the endogenous variable that is not captured by the exogenous variables. Thus, the structural equation model in this study takes the following form:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CS + \beta_2 DMS + \beta_3 PV + \beta_4 BA + \epsilon$$

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DMS + \beta_2 PV + \beta_3 BA + \epsilon$$

Where PI represents the Perceived Intention, CS represents the Customer Satisfaction, and DMS presents Digital Marketing Strategies, while PV is the Perceived Value, and BA is Brand Awareness. As the component ϵ represents the residual error term, the factors β_1, \dots, β_4 account for the various path coefficients in the model.

3.5.1. Normality Test

Normality test is an approach that provides a comprehensive understanding of the right procedures to use in analysing the data. It helps determine whether the study should rely on a parametric test when the data follows a normal distribution or opt for a non-parametric test when the data does not conform to normal distribution patterns.

3.5.2. Scale Reliability Test

It is also essential to conduct a scale reliability test as it assesses the internal consistency among the items in the measurement scale. This test evaluates a collection of survey items to gauge a specific concept in terms of internal consistency and

dependability. In the survey, it is important to do a scale reliability test. It guarantees that the survey is internally consistent, generates accurate measurement, and offers solid information for the analysis. The reliability test is given top priority to improve the legitimacy of the survey results.

3.5.3. Construct Reliability and Validity

The degree to which a measurement tool, i.e., a survey, reliably and consistently measures a certain theoretical concept is known as construct reliability, while the degree to which a measurement tool accurately captures the theoretical construct it is designed to capture is known as construct validity. They are essential in conducting a survey to guarantee the precision, dependability, and significance of the collected data. These evaluations strengthen the research quality by assisting with sound interpretations and well-informed choices. The assessment of construct reliability enables us to gauge the degree to which a variable or a group of variables remains consistent in measuring what it is intended to measure. When the same measuring instrument consistently yields the same results with the same individuals on multiple occasions, it is considered reliable.

CHAPTER IV

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1. Sample Characteristics

The sample size covers 310 respondents from Gambia. As presented in Table 4.1, 181 of the respondents are male (58.4% of the population), while 129 of them are female. A significant proportion of the sample size (74.8%) fall into the category of young individuals aged between 18 and 35, while the remaining 25.2% fall into the 36 and above age group. A small majority of the respondents, accounting for 56.1% of the sample, are single, 39.7% are married and the remaining 4.2% are classified as divorced. The airline preferences of the respondents show that Turkish Airlines stands out at the first place (33.5%). Royal Air Morocco and Brussels Airlines are preferred by 24.2% and 15.2% of the respondents, respectively. The remaining 27.1% are dispersed among other airlines. In terms of occupation, 40.6% of the respondents are employed in the private sector, while 28.4% of them work in the public sector, and 28.1% of them are students. Among the respondents, 50.3% hold undergraduate degrees, 38.7% possess master's degrees, while 4.2% are PhD holders, and 6.8% completed secondary education.

4.2. Preliminary Data Diagnosis and Analysis

Before conducting the analysis, it is essential to identify the nature of the data. This process involves in analysing the summary statistics, and scale reliability tests. These tests provide the groundwork for employing SEM and determining the compatibility of the data with the model.

Table 4.1. Sample Characteristics

Gender			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	181	58.4	58.4
Female	129	41.6	100.0
Age			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25	76	24.5	24.5
26-35	156	50.3	74.8
36-45	51	16.5	91.3
46-55	15	4.8	96.1
56-65	9	2.9	99.0
65+	3	1.0	100.0
Marital Status			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	174	56.1	56.1
Married	123	39.7	95.8
Divorced	13	4.2	100.0
Airlines			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Turkish Airlines	104	33.5	33.5
Royal Air Morocco	75	24.2	57.7
Air France KLM	12	3.9	61.6
Brussel Airlines	47	15.2	76.8
Groupe Trans Air	39	12.6	89.4
Air Senegal	8	2.6	91.9
Corendon Airlines	3	1.0	92.9
Vueling Airlines	14	4.5	97.4
Air Peace	2	0.6	98.1
Others	6	1.9	100.0
Occupation			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student	87	28.1	28.1
Public Sector	88	28.4	56.5
Private Sector	126	40.6	97.1
Others	9	2.9	100.0

Table 4.1. (cont.)

Education			
Sample	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Secondary School	21	6.8	6.8
Undergraduate Degree	156	50.3	57.1
Master's Degree	120	38.7	95.8
PhD	13	4.2	100.0

4.2.1. Normality Test

Normality test provides an understanding of the right procedures to use in analysing the data. It helps determine whether the study should rely on a parametric test when the data follows a normal distribution or opt for a non-parametric test when the data does not conform to normal distribution (Matore & Khairani, 2020). There are diverse methods used by researchers to assess the normality of the data. Some studies use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests, while others gauge the skewness that signifies the symmetry of the distribution, and the kurtosis that pertains to the peakedness of the distribution.

As suggested by Kim (2013), in dealing with a small sample size ranging from 50 to 300 respondents, it is recommended to employ the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for assessing normality. In contrast, in working with large sample exceeding 300 respondents, it is more suitable to gauge data normality by using measures such as skewness and kurtosis. In evaluating the normality of the data, we conducted skewness and kurtosis tests since our study encompassed a sample size of 310 respondents. According to some studies (Hair, Gabriel & Patel, 2014; Morrison, Morrison & McCutcheon, 2017), the data exhibits a normal distribution when both skewness and kurtosis fall within the range of -2 to +2. Similarly, Kim (2013) suggest that the data can still be considered normal when kurtosis falls within the range of -7 to +7. Based on these two arguments, the findings presented in Tables 4.2 show that the collected data exhibit a normal distribution.

Table 4.2. Normality Test Results

Variables	N. Statistic	Mean Statistic	Min Statistic	Max Statistic	Std. Dev. Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender	310	0.42	0	1	0.494	.342	0.138	-0.895	0.276
Age	310	2.14	1	6	1.001	1.289	0.138	2.227	0.276
Marital Status	310	1.48	1	3	0.578	0.732	0.138	-0.450	0.276
Airlines	310	3.08	1	11	2.412	1.444	0.138	1.780	0.276
Occupation	310	2.18	1	4	0.879	-0.108	0.138	-1.231	0.276
Education	310	2.40	1	4	0.679	0.106	0.138	-0.159	0.276
DM Tools	310	4.33	1	5	1.468	-1.781	0.138	1.245	0.276
DM1SEO1	310	4.22	1	5	0.943	-1.588	0.138	2.791	0.276
DM1SEO2	310	4.23	1	5	0.973	-1.575	0.138	2.443	0.276
DM1SEO3	310	4.25	1	5	0.907	-1.592	0.138	2.830	0.276
DM1SEO4	310	4.30	1	5	0.926	-1.762	0.138	2.830	0.276
DM2CM1	310	3.91	1	5	0.967	-1.080	0.138	1.076	0.276
DM2CM2	310	3.98	1	5	0.970	-1.187	0.138	1.412	0.276
DM2CM3	310	4.01	1	5	0.828	-1.091	0.138	1.807	0.276
DM2CM4	310	3.97	1	5	0.953	-1.206	0.138	1.681	0.276
DM2CM5	310	4.13	1	5	0.858	-1.371	0.138	2.748	0.276
DM3SMM1	310	4.12	1	5	1.106	-1.373	0.138	1.165	0.276
DM3SMM2	310	4.24	1	5	0.990	-1.468	0.138	1.796	0.276
DM3SMM3	310	4.19	1	5	0.925	-1.308	0.138	1.704	0.276
DM3SMM4	310	4.21	1	5	0.943	-1.355	0.138	1.683	0.276
DM3SMM5	310	4.35	1	5	0.896	-1.796	0.138	3.682	0.276
DM4EM1	310	3.57	1	5	0.988	-0.724	0.138	0.423	0.276
DM4EM2	310	3.55	1	5	0.973	-0.570	0.138	0.281	0.276
DM4EM3	310	3.52	1	5	0.984	-0.577	0.138	0.130	0.276
DM4EM4	310	3.65	1	5	0.974	-0.573	0.138	0.258	0.276
DM5AM1	310	3.64	1	5	1.036	-0.559	0.138	-0.029	0.276
DM5AM2	310	3.64	1	5	0.991	-0.610	0.138	0.149	0.276
DM5AM3	310	3.64	1	5	0.995	-0.746	0.138	0.518	0.276
DM5AM4	310	3.68	1	5	0.954	-0.650	0.138	0.409	0.276
DM5AM5	310	3.76	1	5	0.941	-0.685	0.138	0.541	0.276
DM6MM1	310	3.94	1	5	0.843	-0.958	0.138	1.617	0.276
DM6MM2	310	3.97	1	5	0.873	-1.052	0.138	1.687	0.276
DM6MM3	310	2.62	1	5	1.276	0.204	0.138	-1.078	0.276
DM6MM4	310	2.42	1	5	1.217	0.534	0.138	-0.656	0.276
DM6MM5	310	3.92	1	5	1.086	-0.930	0.138	0.249	0.276

Table 4.2. (cont.)

Variables	N. Statistic	Mean Statistic	Min Statistic	Max Statistic	Std. Dev.		Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Statistic		Statistic	Std. Error
DM7IM1	310	3.82	1	5	1.040	-0.927	0.138	0.276	0.276
DM7IM2	310	3.89	1	5	1.036	-0.893	0.138	0.488	0.276
DM7IM3	310	3.82	1	5	1.013	-0.897	0.138	0.738	0.276
DM7IM4	310	3.86	1	5	0.991	-0.815	0.138	0.422	0.276
DM7IM5	310	3.80	1	5	1.042	-0.852	0.138	0.512	0.276
DM7IM6	310	3.87	1	5	1.020	-0.892	0.138	0.576	0.276
PV1	310	4.30	1	5	0.847	-1.428	0.138	2.545	0.276
PV2	310	4.27	1	5	0.930	-1.439	0.138	1.964	0.276
PV3	310	4.22	1	5	0.911	-1.320	0.138	1.717	0.276
PV4	310	4.30	1	5	0.890	-1.507	0.138	2.397	0.276
BA1	310	4.37	1	5	0.852	-1.551	0.138	2.435	0.276
BA2	310	4.35	1	5	0.905	-1.685	0.138	2.897	0.276
BA3	310	4.42	1	5	0.795	-1.675	0.138	3.404	0.276
BA4	310	4.48	1	5	0.831	-2.094	0.138	5.100	0.276
CS1	310	4.36	1	5	0.850	-1.363	0.138	1.739	0.276
CS2	310	4.34	1	5	0.895	-1.409	0.138	1.727	0.276
CS3	310	4.33	1	5	0.859	-1.328	0.138	1.654	0.276
CS4	310	4.38	1	5	0.901	-1.707	0.138	2.946	0.276
PI1	310	4.39	1	5	0.866	-1.410	0.138	1.518	0.276
PI2	310	4.43	1	5	0.828	-1.518	0.138	2.266	0.276
PI3	310	4.35	1	5	0.860	-1.544	0.138	2.399	0.276
PI4	310	4.44	1	5	0.793	-1.550	0.138	2.497	0.276
Valid N (listwise)	310								

4.2.2. Scale Reliability Test Results

To ensure that the measurement in this study is consistent and appropriate, we conducted the scale reliability test (confirmatory factor analysis) to assess the internal consistency among the items in the measurement scale. The factor loadings of all the variables used in the model are provided in Table 4.3. In Table 4.3, we presented the factor loadings for all the variables along with their corresponding Cronbach Alpha, t-statistics, and adjusted R-square values. Overall, the constructs measured exhibit the factor loadings surpassing the 0.70 threshold, indicating a robust representation of the items in the latent construct.

Table 4.3. The Factor Loadings for All Variables in the Model

Variables	Digital Marketing Strategies	Perceived Values	Brand Awareness	Customer Satisfaction	Purchase Intention	t-statistics
DM1SEO1	0.656					13.742
DM1SEO2	0.725					16.965
DM1SEO3	0.636					12.121
DM1SEO4	0.611					10.141
DM2CM1	0.761					25.805
DM2CM2	0.750					22.074
DM2CM3	0.640					13.240
DM2CM4	0.718					17.641
DM2CM5	0.591					11.128
DM3SMM1	0.730					20.193
DM3SMM2	0.709					18.814
DM3SMM3	0.717					21.677
DM3SMM4	0.695					17.470
DM3SMM5	0.663					13.302
DM4EM1	0.601					12.987
DM4EM2	0.673					17.392
DM4EM3	0.657					16.926
DM4EM4	0.614					13.482
DM5AM1	0.737					24.288
DM5AM2	0.708					16.935
DM5AM3	0.713					16.762
DM5AM4	0.720					19.887
DM5AM5	0.641					12.878
DM6MM1	0.524					7.611
DM6MM2	0.510					7.181
DM6MM3	-0.097					1.512
DM6MM4	-0.095					1.403
DM6MM5	0.637					13.603
DM7IM1	0.774					29.930
DM7IM2	0.751					19.224
DM7IM3	0.722					17.970
DM7IM4	0.728					19.212
DM7IM5	0.676					14.038
DM7IM6	0.738					19.792

Table 4.3. (cont.)

Variables	Digital Marketing Strategies	Perceived Values	Brand Awareness	Customer Satisfaction	Purchase Intention	t-statistics
PV1		0.881				45.818
PV2		0.908				63.225
PV3		0.907				62.586
PV4		0.890				44.298
BA1			0.881			59.355
BA2			0.864			39.352
BA3			0.875			32.352
BA4			0.878			40.043
CS1				0.883		45.748
CS2				0.917		72.227
CS3				0.913		68.652
CS4				0.877	0.874	43.707
PI1					0.885	39.413
PI2					0.893	46.489
PI3					0.910	53.312
PI4					0.629	59.073
R-square adjusted	1.000	0.508	0.357	0.727	0.912	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.953	0.919	0.896	0.920		

This result shows that a significant portion of the variations in the variables can be attributed to the latent variables. The positive signs denote the positive relationships, while the negative signs signify inverse relationships, and factor loadings closer to 0 indicate weak relationships. The adjusted R-square demonstrates that a large proportion of the variance in the variables could be explained by the underlying latent factor. This suggests that the factor is effective in capturing and accounting for the variability in the variable, as most of the variables have R-square adjusted value closer to 1.

4.2.3. Results from the Scale Reliability Test

As shown in Table 4.4, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all the components exceed 0.7. This result suggests that the items in each construct of the model are closely related and measure a single underlying concept reliably. This level of internal consistency enhances the reliability of the measurement instrument, implying that it is effective in consistently capturing the construct. Although there is no strict rule that states

Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is always indicative of good reliability, Gladson (2021) propose that Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7 or higher indicate acceptable reliability. This finding does not only strengthen the reliability of our measurements but also signifies that the items in our scale exhibit internal consistency.

Table 4.4. Scale Reliability Test Results

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS)	34	0.953
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	4	0.920
Purchase Intention (PI)	4	0.912
Brand Awareness (BA)	4	0.896
Perceived Value (PV)	4	0.919

4.2.4. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct reliability assessment allows the evaluation of the extent to which a variable or set of variables is consistent in what it intends to measure (Ursachi et al., 2015). The measuring instrument is reliable when the same instrument produces the same results with the same individuals on different occasions. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are mainly used to assess the reliability of a construct. According to Penang & Kheng (2010), 0.7 is the benchmark for the modest reliability applicability. On the other hand, the construct validity test helps ascertain if our model fits the data used and whether it will be robust enough to give us reliable results. Thus, it measures how well the items selected for the construct measure the construct. This construct is usually established through two forms of validity, i.e., convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In convergence validity, multiple indicators measuring the same concept through convergent validity are assessed to find out whether these indicators converge to measure the underlying construct. The average variance extracted (AVE) is used to measure convergent validity. The AVE measures how much of the indicators' variance can be explained by the latent unobserved variable. An AVE greater than 0.50 provides evidence for the convergent validity (Paclawskyj et al., 2000), as the corresponding latent variable explains more than half of the variance in the belonging indicators. Discriminant validity is about the degree to which the

measures that should not be very highly correlated with each other are distinct. It generally measures the extent to which a given construct differs from other constructs. Therefore, it ascertains the individuality of the constructs.

Table 4.5. Construct Reliability and Validity Test Results

Sample	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
DMS	0.956	0.96	0.438
CS	0.920	0.943	0.806
PI	0.913	0.939	0.793
BA	0.898	0.929	0.765
PV	0.919	0.943	0.804
SEO	0.898	0.902	0.929
SMM	0.917	0.938	0.75
MM	0.643	0.656	0.445
IM	0.958	0.966	0.825
EM	0.914	0.94	0.796
CM	0.9	0.926	0.714
AM	0.943	0.957	0.815

Note: DMS: Digital Marketing Strategies, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PI: Purchase Intention, BA: Brand Awareness, PV: Perceived Value, SEO: Search Engine Optimization, SMM: Social Media Marketing, MM: Mobile Marketing, IM: Influencer Marketing, EM: Email Marketing, CM: Content Marketing, AM: Affiliate Marketing.

According to the results in Table 4.5, we can conclude that the reliability of the construct is ascertained since the values of both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are more than the 0.7, except for Mobile Marketing whose values are below 0.7, i.e., 0.643 and 0.656, respectively. Thus, we can infer that the constructs of the variables are reliable for modest reliability applicable. On the other hand, the construct validity test helps ascertain if our model fits the data used and whether it is robust to give us reliable results. Similarly, the results of the AVE show convergent validity since all latent variables, except Digital Marketing Strategies and Mobile Marketing, are more significant than 0.5. This implies that in the belonging indicators, the corresponding latent variable explains more than half of the variance. Based on these

results, we may say that the construct of these variables passed the reliability and validity tests.

4.3. Empirical Results for the SEM Analysis and Mediation Analysis

4.3.1. The Findings for the SEM Analysis

The path model of structural equation modelling (SEM) serves dual purpose. First, it facilitates the exploration of the interrelationships that exist among the variables, shedding light on the intricate connections. Second, it provides a means to rigorously assess the significance of the hypotheses, enhancing the validity of the findings. Table 4.6 and Table 4.7. display the SEM model fit results and the SEM Path analysis results for the hypotheses. The results in Table 4.6 indicate the model fit for our SEM model. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) that represents the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesised covariance model, is found in the first column. Since the SRMR is an absolute measure of fit, a value of zero indicates perfect fit. Here, the values 0.107 and 0.110 for the saturated and estimated models, respectively. Since the values fall between 0 and 1, we can conclude that we have a good model fit as documented by (Ursachi et al., 2015). In literature, the value of d_ULS and d_G in itself do not relate any value. Thus, there may be better ways of indicating whether the model is a good fit or not. For the normed fit index (NFI), an acceptable range is between 0 and 1. The rule of the thumb is that the closer is to 1, the better the fit (Kuo et al., 2009). Since the values are 0.954 and 0.967, we conclude that the model is a better fit.

Table 4.6. The SEM Model Fit Results

	SRMR	d_ULS	d_G	Chi-square	NFI
Saturated Model	0.107	41.132	n/a	infinite	0.954
Estimated Model	0.110	42.957	n/a	infinite	0.967

Note: SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals, d_ULS: Squared Euclidean distance, d_G: Geodesic distance, NFI: Normed Fit Index.

The results in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.2 indicate that the relationships among all the variables are positive and significant. The findings show that the relationship between DMS and critical aspects - CS, PI, BA, and PV - are all highly significant at 5% level. The results imply that for every 1% increase in DMS, CS increases by 0.34%, while PI, BA, and PV show a rise of 0.188%, 0.60%, and 0.716%, respectively. Similarly, the relationship between CS and PI, BA and CS, and PV and CS, have statistical significance at the 5% level. A 1% increase in CS corresponds to a 0.645% increase in PI. Similarly, when BA increases by 1%, CS rises by 0.418%. Likewise, a 1% increase in PV results in a corresponding rise in CS by 0.212%. These findings support all the hypotheses about the impact of DMS on CS and PI in the aviation industry, with PV and BA being the key mediating factors. Although the path coefficient linking DMS and PI is low, it does not necessarily translate to a weak relationship. This is because the most crucial factor is the significance of the relationship. Since the model fits our data and the result of this relationship is meaningful, we conclude that the path coefficient from DMS to PI is relevant.

Figure 4.1 shows the results of the PLS SEM path analysis. The numbers on the arrows connecting factors and indicators displays factor loadings. These values show how strongly each indicator is related to its underlying factor. The values on the arrows between factors represent the path coefficients, indicating the strength and direction of the relationships among factors. Finally, the figures inside the circles of the factors represent R² values, revealing the proportion of variance explained by each factor.

Table 4.7. The SEM Results for the Hypotheses

Path	Estimate	S.E.	T statistics	P value	Label
DMS → CS	0.340	0.046	7.405	0.000	Supported
DMS → PI	0.188	0.065	2.869	0.004	Supported
DMS → BA	0.600	0.059	10.480	0.000	Supported
DMS → PV	0.716	0.040	17.995	0.000	Supported
CS → PI	0.645	0.061	10.499	0.000	Supported
BA → CS	0.418	0.066	6.335	0.000	Supported
PV → CS	0.212	0.071	2.979	0.003	Supported

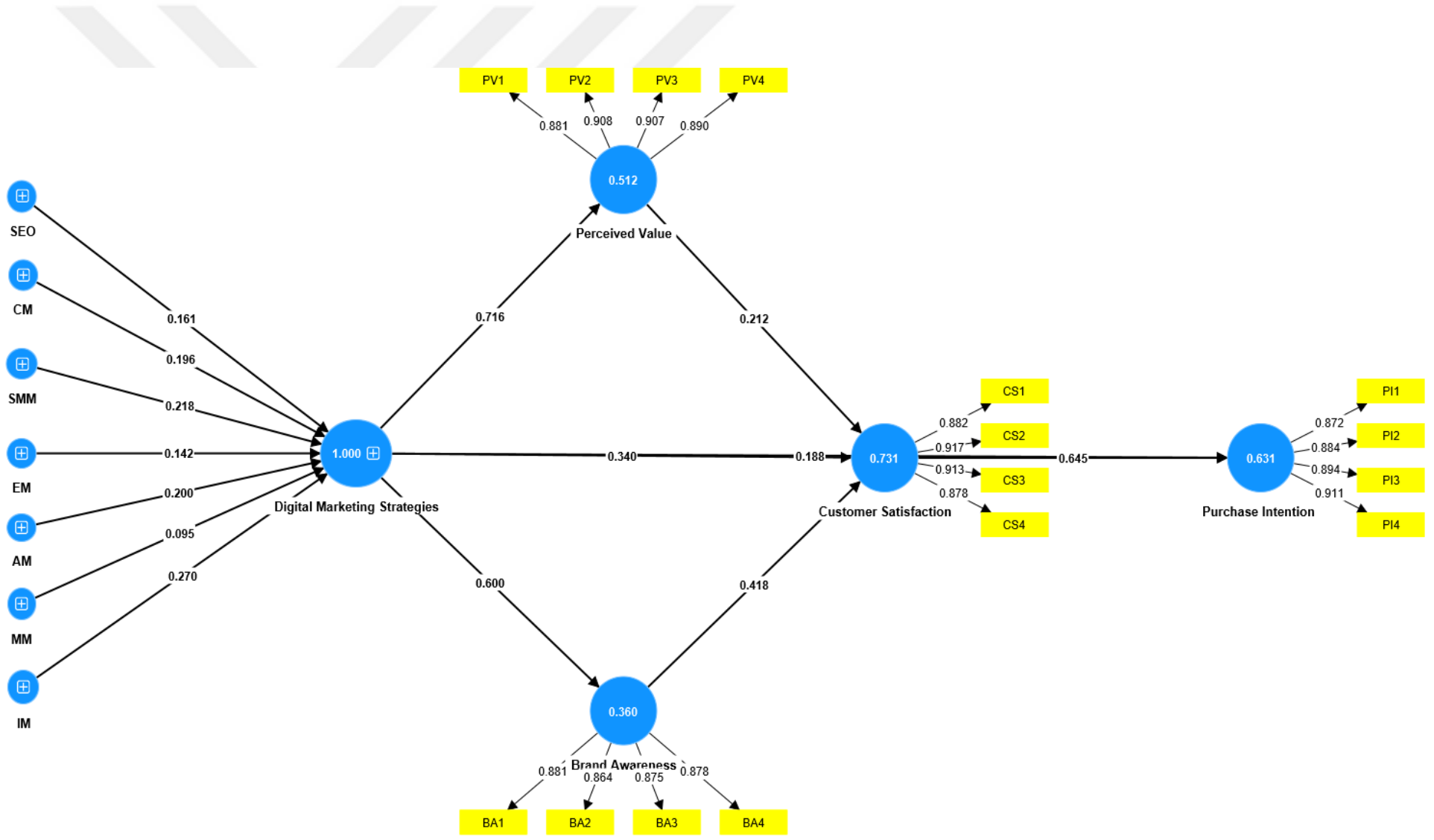


Figure 4.1. The SEM Path Model Results

Table 4.8. The SEM Results and the Level of Support for the Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Expected sign	Estimate with Actual sign	P value	Level of support
H1: There is a positive significant relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intention	+	0.188	0.004	Supported
H2: Digital Marketing Strategies positively affects Purchase Intention through Customer Satisfaction	+	0.219	0.000	Supported
H3: Digital Marketing Strategies positively affects Customer Satisfaction through Perceived Value	+	0.152	0.003	Supported
H4: Digital Marketing Strategies positively affects Customer Satisfaction through Brand Awareness	+	0.251	0.000	Supported
H5: Digital Marketing Strategies positively affects Perceived Value	+	0.716	0.000	Supported
H6: Digital Marketing Strategies positively affects Brand Awareness	+	0.6	0.000	Supported
H7: Perceived Value positively affects Customer Satisfaction	+	0.212	0.003	Supported
H8: Brand Awareness positively affects Customer Satisfaction	+	0.418	0.000	Supported
H9: Customer Satisfaction positively affects Purchase Intention	+	0.645	0.000	Supported

The positive relationship between DMS and CS implies that airlines can leverage online channels to enhance the interaction with customers. Personalized content, targeted promotions, and efficient communication through digital platforms contribute to a more satisfied customer experience. This finding suggests that airlines should invest in digital marketing to capitalize on the identified positive outcomes. Allocating resources to enhance online presence, engaging with customers, and communicating brand value can result in increased customer satisfaction and purchase intention.

The findings also indicate the importance of customization in digital marketing efforts. Airlines should leverage customer data to tailor marketing messages and offers, creating a more personalized experience for each customer. This approach can strengthen the impact of digital strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase decision. The digital landscape is dynamic. Therefore, airlines should adopt a proactive approach, continuously monitoring the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Regular evaluations based on emerging trends and customer feedback are essential to stay competitive in the digital area. Airlines and market players can leverage these findings to refine and optimize their digital approaches, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and overall competitiveness in the market.

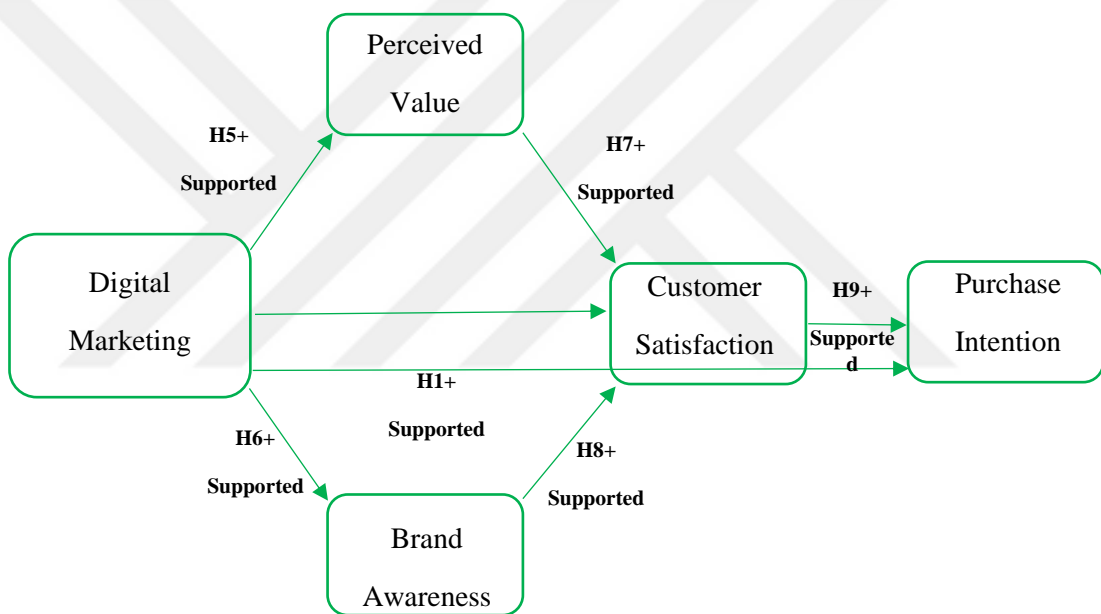


Figure 4.2. The Level of Support for the Hypotheses

4.3.2. The Results for the Mediation Analysis

In this study, we also run the mediation analysis for exploring the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. We employed perceived value and brand awareness as the mediating variables to assess the relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer satisfaction and purchase intention.

For the second hypothesis (H2), we employed the dependent variable of CS to assess its mediating role on the relationship between DMS and PI. The direct effect between DMS and PI is 0.188, while the total indirect effect is 0.219. Notably, both effects are statistically significant at the 5% level. This finding affirms the presence of partial mediation, meaning that while CS plays a role in explaining the relationship between DMS and PI, there is still a direct effect of the DMS on the PI that is not accounted for by the mediator. Moreover, the consistent alignment in the signs of both the direct and indirect relationships suggest the existence of a complementary mediation. Hence, both DMS and CS offer a comprehensive understanding of their effects on the PI.

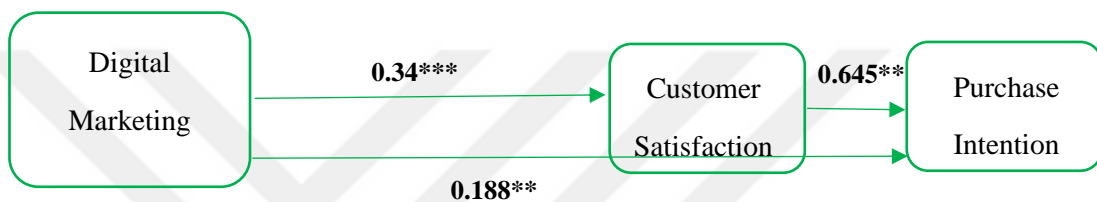


Figure 4.3. The Result for the Mediating Role of the Customer Satisfaction

Note: Indirect Effect = $0.34 \times 0.645 = 0.219^{***}$, Direct Effect = 0.188^{***} and (***) represents significance at a 5% level.

Aligned with the third hypothesis (H3), we investigated the mediating role of the perceived value on the relationship between DMS and CS. The direct effect between DMS and CS is 0.34, while the indirect effect is 0.152, both being statistically significant at the 5% level. These results suggest the presence of partial mediation, meaning that while PV plays a mediating role in explaining the relationship between DMS and CS, but there is still a direct effect of the DMS on the CS that is not accounted for by the mediator. Furthermore, the consistent agreement in the signs of the direct and indirect relationships indicate the presence of a complementary mediation. Hence, both DMS and PV offer an understanding of their effects on the CS.

The positive relationship between DMS and CS implies that airlines can leverage online channels to enhance their interactions with customers. Personalized content, targeted promotions, and efficient communication through digital platforms contribute to a more satisfied customer experience. The mediating role of the perceived value

implies that customers assess the value proposition offered by the airlines through digital marketing efforts. This extends beyond mere product features to encompass the overall experience and benefits perceived by the customers. Therefore, airlines should focus on highlighting unique value propositions in their digital campaigns to influence perceived value positively.

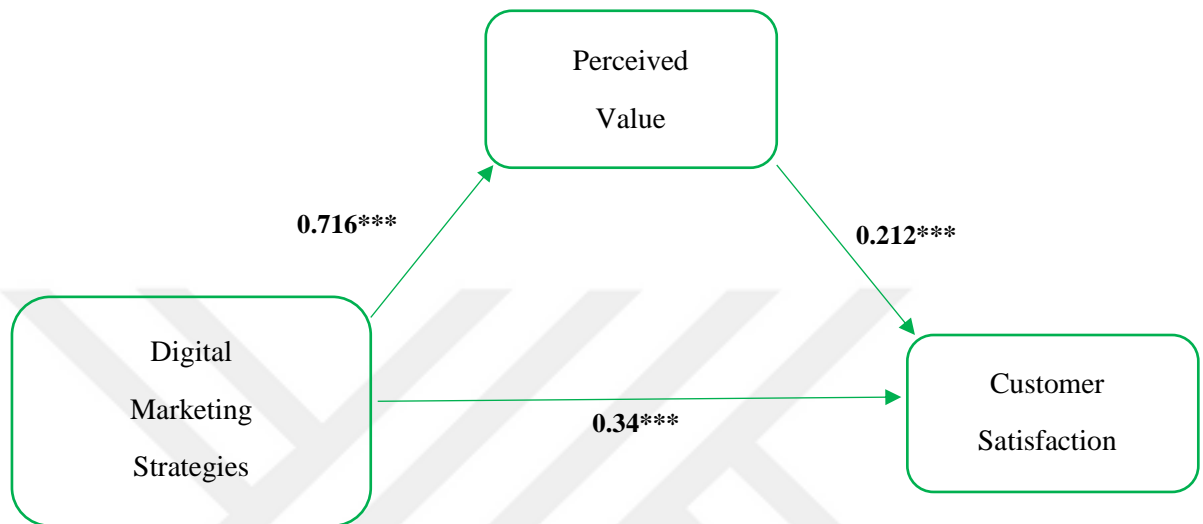


Figure 4.4. The Result for the Mediating Role of the Perceived Value

Note: Indirect Effect = $0.716 \times 0.212 = 0.152^{***}$, Direct Effect = 0.34^{***} and (***) represents significance at a 5% level.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) examined the mediating role of the brand awareness on the relationship between DMS and CS. The direct effect between DMS and CS stands at 0.34, while the total indirect effect is 0.251, both being statistically significant at the 5% level. This finding supports the presence of partial mediation, meaning that while brand awareness plays a mediating role in explaining the relationship between DMS and CS, there is still a direct effect of the DMS on the CS that is not accounted for by the mediator. Moreover, there is evidence of a complementary mediation, given that the signs of both direct and indirect relationships are positive. Thus, both DMS and BA offer a comprehensive understanding of their effects on the CS.

The mediating role of brand awareness underlines the significance of building and maintaining a solid online brand presence in the market. Digital marketing activities

contribute to increase brand awareness, which, in turn, influences the perceptions and choices of the customers. Therefore, airlines should implement strategies that would enhance brand visibility and recognition across various digital platforms.

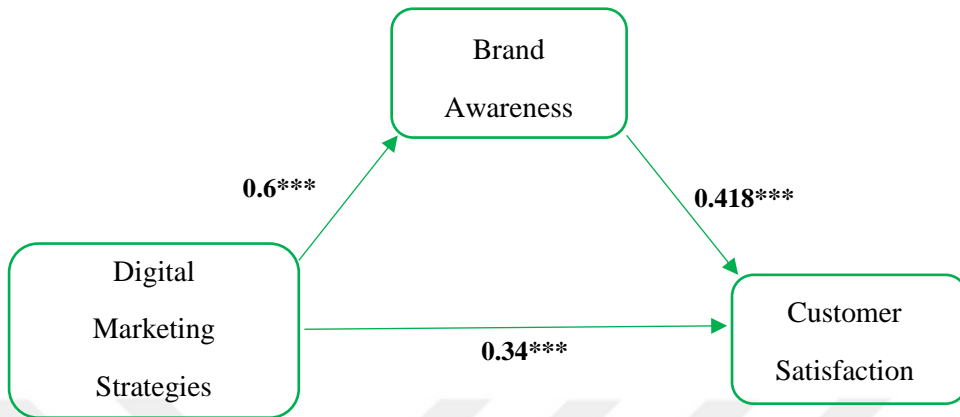


Figure 4.5. The Results for the Mediating Role of Brand Awareness

Note: Indirect Effect = $0.6 \times 0.418 = 0.251^{***}$, Direct Effect = 0.34^{***} , and (***) represents significance at a 5% level.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The importance of digital marketing strategies in the aviation industry has remarkably increased over the world, as airlines try to reach more people, enhance global presence and strengthen customer relationship by improving their digital abilities. This study aims to investigate the effect of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase intention in the Gambia aviation industry. It also examines the mediating role of perceived value and brand awareness in this relationship. Using a survey, we collected 310 responses in two months period i.e., from April 2023 to June 2023, in the Gambia airport. We employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyse the results, as SEM facilitates the exploration of the interrelationships among the variables, and it provides a means to rigorously assess the significance of the hypotheses, enhancing the validity of the findings.

The results indicate a significant positive relationship among all the variables. The findings show that the relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer satisfaction, purchase intention, brand awareness, and perceived value are all significant at 5% level. The results imply that for every 1% increase in DMS, CS increases by 0.34%, while PI, BA, and PV show a rise of 0.188%, 0.60%, and 0.716%, respectively. Similarly, the relationship between CS and PI, BA and CS, and PV and CS, have statistical significance at the 5% level. A 1% increase in CS corresponds to a 0.645% increase in PI. Similarly, when BA increases by 1%, CS rises by 0.418%. Likewise, a 1% increase in PV results in a corresponding rise in CS by 0.212%. These findings support all our hypotheses about the impact of DMS on CS and PI in the aviation industry.

The positive relationship between DMS and CS suggests that airlines can leverage online channels to enhance the interaction with customers. Personalized content, targeted promotions, and efficient communication through digital platforms contribute

to a more satisfied customer experience. This finding suggests that airlines should invest in digital marketing activities to capitalize on the identified positive outcomes. Allocating resources to enhance online presence, engaging with customers, and communicating the brand value can result in increased customer satisfaction and purchase intention. The findings also indicate the importance of customization in digital marketing efforts. Airlines should leverage customer data to tailor marketing offers for creating a more customized customer experience. This approach can strengthen the impact of digital strategies on customer satisfaction and purchase decision. The digital landscape is dynamic. Therefore, airlines should adopt a proactive approach, continuously monitoring the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Regular evaluations based on emerging trends and customer feedback are essential to stay competitive in the digital area. Airlines and market players can leverage these findings to refine and optimize their digital approaches, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and competitiveness in the market.

Finally, the mediating role of the perceived value implies that customers assess the value proposition offered by the airlines through digital marketing efforts. This extends beyond mere product features to encompass the benefits perceived by the customers. Airlines should focus on highlighting unique value propositions in their digital campaigns to influence perceived value positively. On the other side, the mediating role of brand awareness underlines the significance of building and maintaining a solid online brand presence in the marketplace. Digital marketing activities could contribute to increase brand awareness, which, in turn, influences the perceptions and choices of the customers. Thus, airlines should implement strategies that would enhance brand visibility and recognition across various digital platforms.

5.1. Implications of the Study

This study provides valuable insights for the airlines. First, it signals that digital marketing strategies are vital in shaping the satisfaction of customers and their purchasing intention. Therefore, airline companies operating in Gambia should leverage on online channels to enhance their interactions with customers. They can provide more satisfactory experiences to the customers through personalized content creation, targeted promotions, and efficient communication through digital platforms.

This cannot be materialized without investing in digital marketing initiatives to capitalize on the identified positive outcomes. By allocating resources to enhance online presence, engaging with customers, and communicating brand value, airlines can increase the satisfaction of customers and their purchase intention. On this respect, brand awareness and perceived value should also be considered in formulating digital marketing strategies.

Second, digital marketing can provide an opportunity for airlines to offer innovative experiences to their customers. Using technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, pre-flight experiences can be offered to customers to explore destinations virtually before they even go. In-flight entertainment options can also be expanded. On this respect, airlines may focus on impressive content in the digital marketing strategies to enable customers to establish emotional bonds with their brands. Finally, airlines may use social media influencers to reach the target audience and increase brand awareness. Choosing the right influencers ensures that the airlines can deliver an appropriate and compelling message to its target audience to stimulate its desire.

5.2. Limitations of the Study and Future Research

We acknowledge that this study has some limitations. First, it covers only a single country, i.e., Gambia, in the Africa region. Futures studies may extend the coverage and analyse other countries in Africa to generalize the findings of this study. Second, this research employs a cross-sectional approach, capturing data at a specific point in time. Given the rapidly evolving nature of digital marketing and consumer preferences, a cross-sectional design may not fully capture the dynamic interplay between the variables. A longitudinal study may offer more insights in the relationships between digital marketing strategies, perceived value, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. Third, the study examines the mediating role of perceived value and brand awareness, but there are other factors that may influence the relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer outcomes. Exploring other potential mediators, such as trust or perceived risk, could provide a more comprehensive picture of the mechanisms through which digital marketing influences customer satisfaction and purchase intention.

Future studies could delve deeper into the specific attributes of digital marketing campaigns that contribute most significantly to brand awareness and customer satisfaction. Exploring the impact of various digital channels and content types may provide valuable insights for developing enhanced marketing strategies. Moreover, studying the moderating effect of cultural factors on the observed relationships may offer a more nuanced understanding of how digital marketing strategies resonate with diverse consumer groups. Finally, future research may examine the role of emerging technologies such as augmented reality, artificial intelligence, in shaping customer perception and purchase intention within the digital marketing context.



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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Dear Sir/Madame,

We attempt to investigate the effect of digital marketing strategies for aviation companies on perceived value, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and purchase intention via this survey. This survey is going to be a part of the master thesis in the Air Transport Management Graduate Program run by Ibn Haldun University. Please note that the findings of this survey will be used only for academic purposes. **We shall not disclose or share your answers with a third party. All the answers will be kept in confidential.**

We highly appreciate your participation and cooperation. If you need any further clarification, please do not hesitate to send an email to

Please stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

Haddy Faal

General Information	
Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
Which airlines do you use most frequently?	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkish Airlines <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Air Morocco

Brussel Airlines	<input type="checkbox"/> Air France KLM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Senegal	<input type="checkbox"/> Groupe Trans Air	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tap Portugal	<input type="checkbox"/> Corendon Airlines	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Peace	<input type="checkbox"/> Vueling Airlines	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Nationality	:	Occupation;
Education	:	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School
<input type="checkbox"/> High School		<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School
<input type="checkbox"/> PhD.	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Master
Which digital marketing tool are you familiar with?	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search Engine	<input type="checkbox"/> Email Marketing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Content Marketing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Influencer Marketing	

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES					
Please select the best option for you from 1 to 5.					
(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I frequently utilize search engines to learn more about airlines and their offerings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The website's search engine ranking has an impact on how I treat particular airline companies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The relevance and quality of search results affect my likelihood to purchase from a particular airline company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The search engine optimization is essential for an airline company's online presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Content Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often engage with content, such as blog posts or videos, produced by airline companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airline companies' content marketing efforts influence my purchasing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quality and relevance of airline companies' content affects my brand perception.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airline companies' content marketing encourages me to become a constant customer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content marketing is an effective way for an airline company to reach its target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often use social media to search or purchase my flight tickets and airline services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airline companies' social media presence influences my purchasing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airline companies' social media presence reflects the quality of their products and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media marketing encourages me to recommend a particular airline company to other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media is an effective marketing channel for airline companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often open and read emails from airline companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airline companies' email marketing influences my purchasing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The relevance and frequency of emails from an airline company affects my likelihood to engage with that brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe email marketing is an effective way for airline companies to reach their target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often make purchases through affiliate links, such as those found on websites or social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate marketing influences my purchasing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think the relevance and trustworthiness of affiliate marketing affects my likelihood to engage with it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate marketing encourages me to try a new product or service of an airline company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I believe affiliate marketing is an effective marketing strategy for airline companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Marketing					
I find mobile marketing as an effective way to reach potential customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more likely to make a purchase from an airline company with a mobile-friendly website.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I receive too many irrelevant mobile advertisements from airline companies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find mobile advertisements to be an annoyance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile marketing has a significant impact on my purchasing decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influencer Marketing					
I often search flight tickets or airline services recommended by influencers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The credibility and authenticity of influencer marketing affects my likelihood to engage with it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am likely to purchase a flight ticket and airline services recommended by an influencer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influencer marketing makes me more interested in an airline services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I trust influencer recommendations more than traditional advertisements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The number of followers of an influencer affects my perception of its endorsement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERCEIVED VALUE					
Please select the best option for you from 1 to 5.					
(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Airline companies' digital marketing activities influence my perception of its brand value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that the digital marketing activities of airline companies accurately reflect the quality of their services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My perception about airline companies is influenced by their digital marketing efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The perceived value of airline companies is significant in deciding with which one to fly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BRAND AWARENESS					
Please select the best option for you from 1 to 5.					
(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

The digital marketing efforts of airline companies are effective in promoting the brand and highlighting the benefits of choosing these companies for travel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The brand image of airline companies significantly influence my purchase intention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the existence of different airline brands in the aviation industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I recognize my favorite airline company's brand logo among other competitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please select the best option for you from 1 to 5. (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the digital marketing communication efforts that I have receive from airlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The digital marketing strategies of airline companies significantly influence my overall satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The airline brand's digital marketing strategies contribute to my customer experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will continue using airline companies' digital marketing services in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PURCHASE INTENTION	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please select the best option for you from 1 to 5. (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.	1	2	3	4	5
The airlines digital marketing strategies significantly affect my purchase intention (i.e. likelihood to book a flight with them).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer to book a flight from an airline company that has digital solid marketing efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The perceived value of an airline brand influences my purchase intention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am very likely to purchase a flight ticket/service from the digitally succesful airline companies in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 17.04.2023-25371



T.C.
İBN HALDUN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği
Kurulu Başkanlığı

Sayı : E-71395021-020-25371
Konu : Haddy FAAL-Etik Kurul Kararı

17.04.2023

İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Kurulumuza başvuran Haddy FAAL'ın "Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies on Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention Through Perceived Value and Brand Awareness" isimli projesi; amaç, araştırma türü, veri toplama araçları, süreç ve işlemler, veri analizleri dikkate alınmak suretiyle 07.04.2023 tarihinde değerlendirilerek 2023/02-4 karar numarası ile etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi arz/rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Alev ERKİLET
Başkan

CURRICULUM VITAE

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2021-2023 MSc in Air Transport Management, Ibn Haldun University, Turkiye

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2020-2024 Gambia Civil Aviation Authority, Senoir marketing and communication officer

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