

The Impact of Marketing Strategies on the Buying Behaviour of Airline Travellers in Pakistan

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ARTICLE INFO			ABSTRACT
Article History:			<i>The research focuses on details about various factors influencing airline travelers and the impact of marketing strategies in shaping consumer behavior. The behavior industry, which is related to strategic marketing applications, is one of the fastest available modes of transport for passengers or cargo. The key findings show the critical determinants: price, baggage policies, HSE measures, comfort commitment, and ground services. These fundamental elements lead consumers to make decisions, but they will also give airlines a chance to improve their marketing strategy. Thus, airline companies can increase and retain the customer base and profits by targeting advertisements, developing competitive pricing, and rendering personalized services according to customer expectations. The study has emphasized the importance of customer-centric marketing to understand how such a concept can be applied to achieve continuous growth and competitiveness within the aviation sector.</i>
Received:	January	02, 2025	
Revised:	January	13, 2025	
Accepted:	January	15, 2025	
Available Online:	January	16, 2025	
Keywords			
Marketing strategies, Buying behavior, Airline, Travellers, Pakistan			
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Introduction

Constant change is a fact of life, and human actions have a role. The need for change is not inherently negative, but the velocity of change is a big worry for organizational strategists. As an example, consider how consumer preferences and demand might change over time. According to Kotler & Slater, "Private and Public organizations, nowadays are trying to increase and adopt those marketing philosophies & strategies which help to understand customers' demand, attract new customer & retain their regular customer, for building a meaningful and profitable relationship with the customer" (Nimako & Azumah, 2009). In the business world, there is only one Boss, the "Customer, "who can hire and or fire anybody from the CEO to clerk in any organization simply by changing their purchase of goods or services. Customers are the drivers of

change in the market, and changing attitudes are pushing strategists to restructure, reengineer, and rethink their strategies. Those who sense and take immediate action survive in the industry.

Airlines today focus their marketing efforts on customer-centric campaigns driven by insights into consumer wants and behaviour rather than mass marketing (Bawa, 2021). This has changed the way airlines attract and retain customers from traditional mass marketing to personalized marketing. The importance of new strategies has been shown in successful marketing campaigns introduced by airlines. For example, the "Fly Better" campaign by Emirates Airlines has effectively emphasized luxury, comfort, and quality service for both business and leisure travelers. Apart from that, an association with international sporting events like FIFA has helped elevate Qatar as a premium choice for travelers.

Digital marketing has changed the shape of the industry because it facilitates targeted communication. It uses online CRM systems and social networks to contact customers by airlines (Bello, 2021). Personalized discounts, loyalty programs, and easy booking on the Internet have defined a new way of making customers loyal. Such changes are made visible in marketing actions, mainly building up towards carbon-neutral flying and safety, which increasingly compete but add up into the mix for customers, indicating customers' move toward sustainable, healthy travel. This validates the continued presence of airlines before a very diverse global audience in competition.

Strategy formulation is the act of efficient competition management (Porter, 1979). Most organizations now put an emphasis on acquiring new customers while retaining existing ones, as the cost of keeping a customer is less than acquiring a new one. These loyal customers are more likely to develop a mindset of repeat purchases and will create brand equity by becoming advocates of these products or services in their networks. Customer retention has thus become an important area of concern in the rapidly transforming airline industry because of the growing number of domestic as well as international travellers. In 1994, former British Airways Chairman Sir Colin Marshall aptly described the industry as "The flywheel for the engine of the world's industry." The airline competitive landscape consists of a mix of large carriers and smaller low-fare airlines, thus creating a market where differentiation is very important. Air travellers are very simply grouped into two categories, that is, business/corporate travellers and non-business (leisure) travelers. Each of these groups has entirely different preferences.

Business travelers are very particular about the schedules, safety and comfort, all of which are more important than price, meaning that they will be inclined to focus heavily on the reliability of service as well as convenience. On the other hand, non-business travellers tend to be those who will make price the most important consideration when making a decision, while they are sensitive to fares. The significant changes in customer tastes have also created a very urgent need for airlines to not only provide quality service but to also align offerings with changing preferences of customers. "Customer Relationship Management plays a vital role; it is used to identify the customers' demands. A customer will only be satisfied when we give them more for less. The customer expects very good service, but few organizations provide it," according to Thompson and Stone (Nimako & Azumah, 2009). "The customer is ultimately satisfied, either satisfied or dissatisfied, through a process of loyalty value about their retention," as stated by Nimako and Azumah (2009), is the viewpoint of Reichheld, who has also established that the two components, that is, retention and loyalty, are thus closely related to customer satisfaction, which when consistently provided, results him or her to a phenomenon, coined so well by the aforementioned scholars that could affect every valued customer.

Airlines are thus required to assess and meet such individuals in a unique way through market segmentation because all these aspects have to address the services that airlines offer effectively. An airline can offer for fast boarding, priority check-in, in-flight Wi-Fi, and the rest convenient services that help busy business persons maximize productivity while travelling.

On the other hand, incentives such as family discounts, bundled holiday packages, and sometimes even very competitive fares attract the leisure traveler (Vinod, 2021). Thus, segmentation will enable airlines to have specialized marketing strategies such as personalized email campaigns and dynamic pricing models for appealing to different customer groups easily and through effective measures (Tran, 2024). Ensuring that offerings are aligned to customer needs is what marketing essentially does in this case regarding retention. It means that using CRM systems, airlines can precisely address customer needs, figure out audience segments, and send personalized messages derived from this understanding: "Airlines today can collect data-driven insights through CRM systems to find out what customers want, segment them and give them really specific tailored communications."

Therefore, this has been proven to make the customer create a strong bond with the organization and ensure strong loyalty while increasing lifetime value. It is, therefore, effective marketing that composes most of the customer-centric innovations to remain more competitive and sustain advantage in the airline industry.

Problem Statement and Purpose of Study

The problem statement, according to Wiersma (1995, P.404)," describes the content for the study. It also identifies the general analysis approach", or "is the issue that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study"(Creswell,1994, p.50), and "when stated effectively should answer the question: "Why does this research need to be conducted"(Pajares F. 2007).

The study's overarching goal is to highlight the priorities of air passengers while making airline reservations. Travelers could use quick, cheap, and streamlined mass communication thanks to satellite communication and IT integration. Air travel is a staple of contemporary culture and an essential part of people's daily lives. Commercial aviation sector took a century to provide customers with inexpensive, accurate, and pleasant services. There is now a "global village" encompassing the whole planet.

The airline sector is generating jobs for manufacturers, regulators, and operators. Aviation could be a source of cash for the tourism business. Nevertheless, the aviation industry is vital to GDP. Operators are now competing not only on the sector's fare but also on customer happiness because of excess capacity, deregulation, and competition. As important as pricing is, the operator knows that quality (delay rates, customer complaints, seat comfort, cleanliness, and staff helpfulness) is a powerful marketing weapon. After a flight has been conducted, a customer who is dissatisfied with the airline's service cannot request a refund or change to a different trip. Even if the consumer never complains, he can fly with a different airline.

Airlines are increasingly keeping tabs on customer feedback on the kind of service they receive. Although it is challenging to win new customers, it is very unlikely that a consumer who has formed a negative impression of the firm due to their services would fly with the same airline again. To keep their market share, it is crucial to retain current customers.

The airline industry uses the slogan "ZERO defection" to promote brand loyalty and decrease customer attrition. Most airlines have responded by instituting frequent flyer programs, allowing ongoing communication with loyal customers. The airline industry was transformed by deregulation in 1979. Customer Service is more important to policymakers. Some passengers believe that services have been cut in order to save money.

However, evaluating the services according to customer service standards takes a lot of work. The airline business can only gauge service quality once the service is provided. There are many ways to judge customer service, but a few examples include punctuality, meal quality, seat comfort, cabin service, personnel friendliness, and the ease of making reservations and checking bags.

Customers care most about the following: travel schedules, destinations, seat comfort, information on delayed flights, luggage handling, missing baggage, and so on. We can only gauge their discontent with the service they received by collecting responses from clients. Complaint filing rates are one metric by which certain airlines evaluate customer service. This includes issues with the cabin, boarding and tickets, refunds, and customer assistance while on a flight. Another metric for quality is punctuality, both for arrivals and departures. The overarching goal is to determine what influences airline passengers' purchasing decisions.

The primary goal of every airline's strategy for running the company and making money is to craft regulations catering to passengers' tastes. Airlines increasingly use digital marketing platforms to mitigate negative customer experiences and foster loyalty. Through personalized marketing efforts, such as retargeting campaigns and social media engagement, airlines can address customer grievances, build trust, and strengthen brand reputation

Research Question

1. What are the "customer-centric marketing strategies" in Pakistan's airline industry?
2. Will you buy the ticket for the airline that provides all those important services?
3. Will you recommend that others buy tickets for that airline?

Significance of Study

In Pakistan, those in the aviation sector may find this study useful. The airline industry's business and policy leaders and strategists will find this useful. "Today, you must run faster to stay in place" (P. Kotler). The findings of this study will provide critical insights into designing marketing campaigns that resonate with airline customers' preferences. By aligning promotional messages with the key factors travelers value, such as comfort, pricing, and punctuality, airlines can enhance their market positioning and attract a broader customer base. Airline operators in Pakistan will benefit from the research's findings and observations on client preferences. In it, we'll look at the services that local and international airline customers expected and the ones that were given. Additionally, it will reveal the causes of "switching" from one service provider to another. Additionally, it will be useful for strategists when planning strategies for domestic and international clients.

The state-run Pakistan International Airlines is one of three airlines in Pakistan; the others are private companies, Air Blue and Shaheen Air International. You may fly with these airlines at home and abroad, "The most important thing is to forecast where the customer is moving and be in front of them". (P. Kotler)

The most essential variables for domestic and international flight passengers will be highlighted in this research. The airline industry stands out among several sectors that significantly impact GDP. External economic variables impact the aviation industry, which is dependent on a small number of sectors and has far-reaching consequences for those sectors. Because airlines transport passengers and cargo across nations, they are subject to economic fluctuations originating in other parts of the globe. The aviation sector impacts a country's gross domestic product in many ways.

The airline business boosts the country's tourism and employs many people who are out of work, which helps bring down the unemployment rate. There is much room for new competitors in the Pakistani aviation industry. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Pakistan reports that in 2007, there were 1,804,422 flights, 1,384,40066 passengers, 3,12095 metric tons of cargo, and 5,377 metric tons of mail handled. Pakistan also has 47 domestic airports, with Air Blue, Shaheen Air International, and the national flag airline PIA among the few operators.

Limitations of the Study

The study's access and time constraints prevented us from using a large sample size for analysis; the research took place within a constrained academic time frame of around two months. The five airlines considered for the study were Etihad Airways, Pakistan International Airlines, Shaheen Air International, Air Blue, and Emirates Air. Another limitation is the scope of marketing data available for analysis. A broader dataset, including insights from digital analytics tools and customer reviews on social media, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior and inform marketing strategies

Literature Review

Development of the Airline Industry

A thousand years ago, it seemed unthinkable that humans might achieve flight on par with birds. Today, that dream has come true. The Wright brothers, who first flew an aero plane on December 17, 1903, deserve the credit. They piloted the "Flyer," widely recognized as the world's first aero plane. It was the first motorized aircraft that weighed more than an aero plane. In 1914, commercial air travel began with letter delivery but soon expanded to include passenger transport and freight. The globe is much smaller due to the exponential growth of communication and technological capabilities. Supersonic freight and one-stop jets have simplified travel and commerce throughout the world.

A change in focus to military aircraft during World War 1 led to advancements in air transport. The first sighting of a jet aircraft in the sky occurred in 1931. From the 1930s through the 1950s, wide-body planes were common in the sky; their size allowed them to fly great distances. Although these planes were more luxurious and advanced, the ordinary could not afford them. Business magnates may take flight at such time. Military airfields were mostly sold to private investors after WWII. Douglas and Boeing were two of the most successful aircraft manufacturers during the period. They developed pressurized aircraft, which can fly across mountains and inclement weather.

In 1978, US President Jimmy Carter deregulated the aviation industry, allowing airlines more freedom to choose their routes and prices. Airfares and the dominance of major airlines were reduced due to deregulation. In 1975, only 205 million Americans had been to the skies; by 2000,

that number had risen to around 638 million, thanks to deregulation. Despite the Concorde's 1976 three-hour Atlantic crossing, several technical issues delayed the flight. In 2003, Concorde ceased operations. Concorde was a world-class commercial airliner with unparalleled speed. Bring it on!

The brand new A380 is here, and it can transport 800 people and their bags from A to B. When it comes to transportation, flying is among the quickest options. Travelers and freight alike may make use of its air transport services. Being an integral aspect of the international economy, it is also a powerful economic actor in its own right. The export and tourist sectors are among those that feel its effects. In the 1950s, significant scientific advancements led to the creation of jet aeroplanes, which were later used in the commercial airline business. In 1970, wide-body aircraft, which could have two or four jet engines, were invented. There are now over 2,000 airlines (both public and commercial) serving 3,700 airports with over 23,000 planes. Two billion people were transported throughout the world by about 28 million scheduled flights. Global air travel has grown 5% annually during the last three decades. The United States airline business, which includes over 100 registered commercial carriers, carries one-third of the world's total air traffic and operates 11 million aero plane departures yearly.

The United States' aviation industry brought in approximately \$160 billion with 745 million passengers. The US airline business has 3, 1000 daily flights, 545,000 personnel, and 8,000 aircraft (including narrow body and vast body). The economic influence of industries ranges from creating jobs for the country's jobless to the profitability of individual companies to producing aeroplanes, hotels, airports, and tourist attractions. Introducing low-cost airlines and other successful new entrants has encouraged more people to fly for less money, but there needs to be proof that operators (airliners) must pay more attention to safety laws.

Major Aircraft Manufacturer

Aircraft manufacturers include AASI, Gulfstream, Embraer, Cessna, Airbus, Boeing, Derringer, Mooney, Raytheon, Aero Visions International, Pilatus Business Aircraft, Lockheed Martin, Zenith, Piper, Lake, Jet Prop DLX, Fairchild Aerospace, Diamond, Stoddard-Hamilton, and Saab.

Aviation Industry in Pakistan

Pakistan's aviation sector was born after the merger of Pakistan International Airline and Orient Airways. Later on, PIA became Pakistan's national flag carrier. In Pakistan's aviation business, PIA is the only operator that has been operational since independence. The private airlines that had hoped to challenge the national flag carrier for a while never got off the ground. Four new private airlines, including Aero Asia International, Bhoja Air, Schon Air, and Pearl Air, began operations in Pakistan in the early 1990s, expanding the country's aviation business considerably. The government-owned national flag carrier PIA had a rough time competing with these airlines, but they ultimately had to sell their assets since they could not exist. The aviation sector is generally stable thanks to PIA's iron fist on both domestic and international lines. Private airlines like Shaheen Air International and Air Blue are still in business today.

Pakistan International Airline Corporation

A national airline of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Pakistan International Airline Corporation (PIA) goes by various names. Skytrax gave the airline three stars. PIA serves local and international routes, transporting passengers to 24 domestic locations and 39 overseas destinations in North America, Europe, and Asia. The national flag carrier's primary bases are in Karachi,

Lahore, and Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Sialkot, and Faisalabad are PIA's subsidiary bases. PIA was also involved in the hotel, cargo, courier, and engineering and maintenance industries.

Among the world's first airlines to fly the most cutting-edge planes in commercial aviation, PIA operates the Boeing 777-200 Extra Range, 777-200 Long Range, and 777-300 Extra Range. On June 7, 1954, PIA began its first domestic flight from Karachi to Dhaka. It also flew from Karachi via Cairo to London on its first international route. Operating domestic and international destinations spanning Asia, Europe, and North America, the current fleet counts more than 45 aircraft, including ATR 42s, Airbus 310s, Boeing 747-200s, Boeing 747-300s, Boeing 737-300s, Boeing 777 Long Range, and Boeing 777 Extra Range. Karachi is home to its headquarters.

Concepts and Theoretical Frameworks

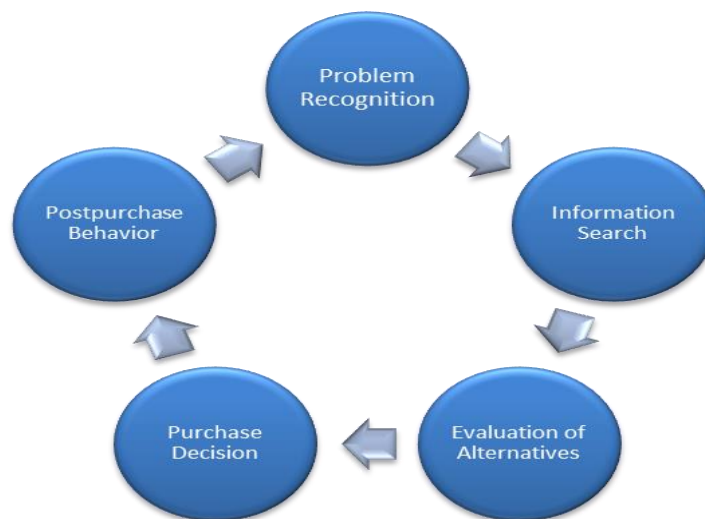
Defining Customers

"Customer" refers to those who purchase products or services from others in a marketplace. "Customer" (Client, buyer, or purchaser) refers to a prospective buyer or user of a company's products or services. It also encompasses any entity that engages with the services of another and serves as a general observer of the products or services offered. Marketing begins with understanding the customer, a central figure in any business strategy.

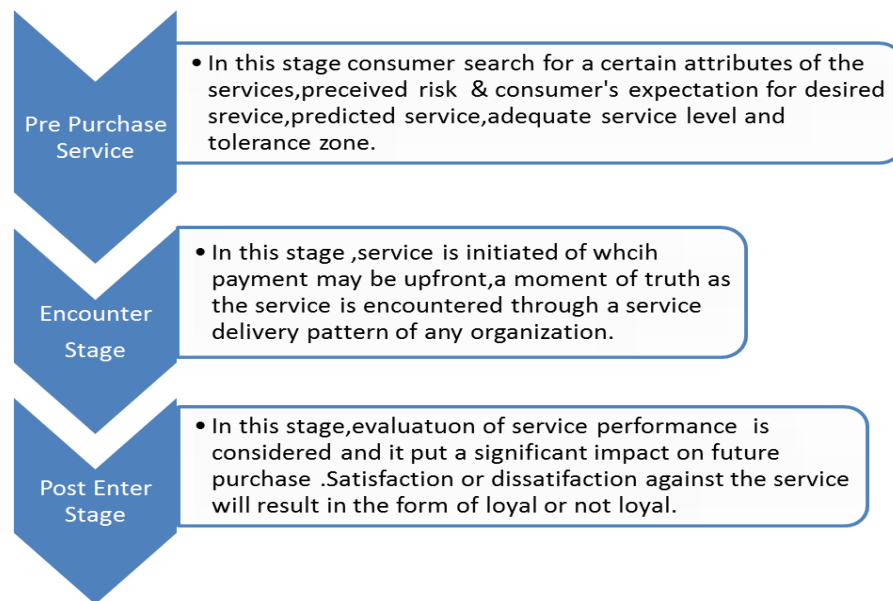
Internal and external customers significantly shape the airline industry's marketing approaches. Internal customers, such as employees, impact brand reputation through service delivery, while external customers, including passengers and stakeholders, directly influence demand and profitability. Effective marketing strategies prioritize understanding these groups' needs, segmenting them, and tailoring campaigns to enhance customer loyalty and engagement. Customers are those who acquire products from any firm, while clients are those who get services from other persons. There are two subcategories of customers: Internal Customers and External Customers. Internal customers are those employed inside the firm, such as workers, while external customers are the stakeholders associated with the organization.

Customer Purchasing Process

Research indicates that most transactions have five stages in a client's decision-making process.



Lovelock and Wirtz propose that three-stage models may be used for service consumption.



Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a cornerstone of airline marketing. Airlines invest in loyalty programs, personalized promotions, and superior customer service to enhance satisfaction. Marketing campaigns often highlight customer-centric policies and feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and digital reviews, to showcase a commitment to excellence. Emotional branding and exceeding customer expectations drive competitive advantage and retention. Barsky and Labagh define customer satisfaction as the single factor driving profitability, market share increases, and acceptable ROI (Nimako & Azumah, 2009).

According to Anderson, "Customer satisfaction (CS) has received major attention from scholars and practitioners alike, presumably because it is critical as a basic part of corporate strategy and the end to which all business activities, especially in this competitive market, are pointing" (Nimako & Azumah, 2009; Shafiq et al., 2023; Sibte-Ali et al., 2024). Customer satisfaction is "psychological conception defined as an individual's sense of well-being and pleasure when he or she attains what he or she aspired for and expected from an attractive product and service" (WTO, 1985)

Kotler P. & Kelvin: "An employee's behavior is influenced by the customer's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction after assessing a product performance concerning expectations". The customer should not just feel satisfied but be delighted. This is Customer Satisfaction," say Nimako & Azumah, 2009. Customer satisfaction is of the utmost importance in the airline industry. It includes putting the customer at the centre of business policies, procedures, strategies, and actions to achieve competitive advantages. Retention is a buzzword in organizations these days, and their strategists are increasing the setting to ensure and measure customer retention while focusing more on keeping existing customers. An excellent measure of customer satisfaction is through "Customer feedback" mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, and feedback forms. Feedback forms are typically found at airline reservation counters and in-flight and presented at the arrival desk to identify satisfaction.

According to Yi (1990), "Customer satisfaction is an emotional response to experiences delivered by associated with particular purchased products and services, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behavior such as shopping and buying behavior, as well as the entire marketplace." The arena of fierce competition has few airlines, big or small (low-cost airlines), and a wide variety of travelers - business and non-business. First, business travelers are more interested in time and comfort. Fare considerations would come second, but non-business travelers would instead focus on fares rather than the comfort offered during the journey.

Point-to-Point

Point-to-point models align with marketing goals of efficiency and convenience. Airlines like Ryanair and Southwest Airlines promote their direct routes as cost-effective and time-saving solutions. Marketing efforts emphasize affordability, frequent schedules, and reduced travel times, targeting price-sensitive and time-conscious customers. Most discounted airlines fly point-to-point routes focusing on efficiency. These planes take one city to another, repeatedly doing the same a few times a day. This is according to demand. Point-to-point has direct routes, higher frequencies of flights, and less time for travel, leaving the hub from where the way is such that the points of attraction are perimeter routing schemas, reducing cost and flight time.

According to Ball, "Implementing this circular system has allowed the point-to-point airlines to capture up to 64% of the short-haul market and achieve a higher absolute profit margin than network carriers" (Zane & Reyes, 2010). Points to point require more operational effectiveness to enable reduced ground time in preparing the aircraft to depart safely. It involves service, fueling, and maintenance of the plane".

According to Bond, "Point-to-point airlines leverage their monolithic fleet structure to ...One simplest definition of a point-to-point airline is that it does everything with one model in its fleet as if it is operating the Boeing 737-400 model, the whole fleet will be of that version, which gives benefits because this act increases the expertise of the technical staff and maintenance personnel (they perform the same task many times in a day); baggage handling is a very critical process before an aircraft is, but in point, this process is not very complicated because it is a continuous repeating process; it ends within a few minutes and therefore, has very little ground time.

Hub and Spoke

The hub-and-spoke model showcases centralized operational efficiency in marketing communications. Airlines using this model, such as Emirates and PIA, highlight connectivity and streamlined travel through their hubs. Marketing strategies emphasize the ability to serve diverse destinations efficiently, appealing to business and leisure travelers seeking convenience and flexibility. Generally, a hub and spoke model is a system of arranging and routing traffic in such a way that it uses fewer routes to achieve more efficiency in transport. Only a few mega carriers have gone this way due to the large amount of management and operational resources that need to be mobilized; however, it would work for all traffic routed through a single hub.

Pakistan International Airways operates from three hubs located at Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad/Rawalpindi. These are the "bases of PIA," and all flights are diverted through these bases. Hercules states, "This travel model is efficient as cost per seat mile decreases with the aircraft size" (Zane & Reyes, 2010).

Low Cost

Low-cost airlines revolutionize marketing by emphasizing affordability and simplicity. Airlines like Air Asia and Ryanair use aggressive pricing strategies, promotions, and social media campaigns to attract budget-conscious travelers. Their marketing messages often include value-driven offers and transparent pricing structures, leveraging the growing trend of cost-effective travel. Usually, we travel by airline supported by a plan, going on business trips, going to weddings and ceremonies, holidays, meeting relatives on the other side of the world or travelling the world from one place to another. The airline depends on the factors offered to us, such as fares. According to Bennett & Crown,"

The principal driving force behind dramatic fundamental changes that have occurred and will occur in the US airline industry over the next few years is the dramatic growth of low-cost Southwest Airlines"(Dresner & Lin). 'All low-cost airlines are cheap and have easy access to some extent, and almost all of them cover safety for passengers with air insurance. More often than not, budgeted airlines make good choices for short-distance destinations. However, it's still better to travel with an airline operating large aircraft on long-distance flights; they are expensive, but travelling is much better with better service, so there is less hassle on a long flight.

As such, Price, as the traveller's essential factor, emerges from a reference by Keynote System: "More than 2000 users of travel and airline websites indicated that 81% of respondents believe that Price is the most important factor in their decision to book a flight online" (Benckendorff, 2006). Generally, low-cost or budget airlines mostly use small, low-capacity, more narrow-body aircraft for passengers and Luggage, making charges exceptionally prohibitive for excess baggage. One of the disadvantages of going for budgeted airlines is that they deploy small aircraft with up to two engines and can operate for up to six hours, making it impossible to fly long-range.

The latter aircraft are considered long haul as they usually have four engines and can perform over a twelve-hour flight. Air Asia is a low-cost carrier which operates out of Malaysia. Their flight routes are mostly within the Southeast Asian region: Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, China, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar without any long-haul services.

Travelling almost for free to a destination is possible by booking your seat 10 to 15 days beforehand and paying a little above the airport taxes. Passengers who organize their programs could benefit from low-cost carriers. Lower fares than what other airlines charge, and more than a train journey, is what low-cost airlines save in time (as they mostly point-to-point). Even if any individual flies with a little higher payment than the train, time is precious and worth flying, including travelling expenses. Travel costs are one of the significant expenditures of holiday time; planning makes traveller access such cheap travel by low-cost airlines to destinations and adds to a better vacation.

Low-cost airlines fly the most fuel-efficient aircraft and have strict baggage allowances flying with you. Extra luggage will cost you money; meals and beverages aren't provided and can only be accessed by paying customers. Everyone can take food or water from home if liquids are restricted. Budget airlines have yet to tie up themselves with their primary central reservation system, allowing you to book your flight but not through the web to choose your seat. Changing the time, flight, and even vague passenger details is incredibly expensive to portray and, at times, impossible. Cheap budget or low-cost airlines are the perfect suit for the most price-conscious people who cannot afford a high budget. The current space contest is for the growth and

development of low-cost airlines. Low-cost airlines always prank travel lovers into coming to their websites with incredible discounts and particular "happy hour" promotions.

Website

"Internet would be a means to create a winner and bury losers" (P. Kotler). In today's competitive market, the internet has become one of the key distribution channels for developing business value, and airlines extended this further by receiving better benefits for their customers today. Airlines are adopting digital channels for the improvement of online offerings like real-time currency conversion rates, weather updates, and a smooth booking experience for users at their websites.

Although the cost structures are changing by electronic ticketing and online bookings by cutting off other intermediaries such as travel agents, reducing expenses on call centers, reservation staff, overhead maintenance for electricity and office, well-designed and easy-move websites form the complete basis of success in digital marketing for airlines. According to Law and Leung, "The home page is usually the starting point for the travelers, and should be constructed as a visually pleasing, straightforward, easy downloading page" (Benckendorff, 2006). It's essential today, given that online booking is growing rapidly all over the world. According to SITA and Charlie Corporation, for example, 88 percent of U.S. consumers source tickets online; 63 percent of North American air travelers source their tickets online (Benckendorff, 2006). Online platforms allow airlines to personalize and better serve the customers by providing features such as in-flight entertainment, seating arrangement, and various menu options, which are becoming very significant to modern travelers. Easy and quick processes such as purchasing tickets or selecting seats online are made especially for fast-paced business customers preferring speed and convenience.

By selling these features, the airline can market itself as a purveyor of costlier and more superior service and comfort. Well, budget carrier might be all about low fares, but that will go only a little distance when it is time to offer fast online seat reservations, which in turn attracts cost-conscious travelers. However, the actual hurdle is more than just winning new customers; they also have to be retained. Most importantly, bad experiences or perceptions could well dissuade people from doing repeat business, thus reaffirming the need for the cultivation of customer satisfaction which will keep the market share relatively intact. To enhance this area, marketing ensures that airlines really have to put their value propositions into good and effective use. And it's everything from SEO-optimized sites to targeted digital advertising campaigns that highlight the benefits airlines can offer different customer segments from their online services. Customer loyalty and retention will improve with email campaigns, loyalty programs, personalized recommendations, and other customer relationships. Thus, integrated marketing, using both currently available internet-based tools and insights, is necessary for airlines to remain in the competitive race as far as airline marketing is concerned in this digital era.

Comfort

It is rather indeed a way of entering the market-place either through space or making it as a service value. Marketers and advertisement campaigns by leaders like Qatar and their services like World Class Generally available such as these, spacious seating, gourmet dining, and superior entertainment in the flight, tend to pull the high-value customer segments into their fold. These marketing efforts are pretty much well devised for the business traveler and very rich people who want such kind of service and comfort compared to their price.

The message that premium airlines offer is closely related to such an aspect of personal experience as it is well communicated through elaborate marketing. Effective advertising would probably consist of testimonials, visuals of plush cabins, and narratives oriented towards excellent customer service. This kind of strategy fosters brand loyalty nurtured by frequent flyers from the corporate side and, to a great extent, has those who book last-minute trips abroad, where long-haul travel is common. For such travelers, the choice of airline often depends on the close availability of larger aircraft featuring enhanced comfort levels and better quality of premium service.

Budget airlines, on the other hand, market themselves by showcasing their services as affordable and efficient. The airlines manage to skimp on certain parameters like smaller seats, minimum servicing within flight, and other perks like offering no complimentary blankets or eye masks, to make the ticket price lower than their competitors. Their value proposition lies on practicality and convenience, which their digital campaigns, fare comparison tools, and budget travel ads echo.

Premium marketing in airlines is whereby superior services differentiate themselves from their potential competitors in this brand aspirational imagery. Exclusivity is emphasized through the inferring of loyalty programs, tie-ups with luxury brands, and promotional material that mentions the various certifications associated with 5-star status. Such other airlines include the likes of Asiana Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Kingfisher Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, and many others that run similar advertisements relying heavily on their international status as campaigns featuring the awards and customer satisfaction summations in the competitive arena.

In this sense, both the premium and budget lines can mix in their marketing strategies with the service provisions in relation to end-users, effectively ensuring that they address different clientele in their communication trade messages. This segmentation of customers thus creates a competitive niche for the airlines above the others, making it a point to sustain long-term relationships with consumers.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach, research design, data sources, demographics, sample size, and instruments used for the study. The strategy must align with the study scope. Upon examining the literature of previous researchers and analyzing historical secondary data, selecting an appropriate approach makes research credible, legitimate, and widely accepted.

Research Approach

This research employs a quantitative technique to validate the outcomes. In the quantitative method, researchers gather data in numerical form, which may be obtained via questionnaires or other valid and trustworthy instruments. This quantitative data may be examined using any statistical method to get significant findings and conclusions. For the relationship between the factors influencing the purchasing behavior of air travelers, a quantitative research method has been employed, as this approach is particularly suitable for elucidating the connections between these variables with clarity and efficiency, given that the researcher is assessing the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable.

As indicated by its name, the quantitative method is grounded in reality. This method involves quantifying variables by providing numerical values. The quantitative method is exclusively

focused on the study of objective facts. The current study is based on the examination of primary data.

Research Design

The research design delineates the technical framework of the study for data collection, aiming to provide a comprehensive set of procedures and measurements that facilitate the investigation of research topics with a certain degree of confidence (Beiger and Gail, 1996). In quantitative research, the study uses a correlation research design. Correlation study design involves examining gathered data to determine if and to what degree a link exists between two or more variables. The research approach used in this study is based on a correlational research design using multiple linear regression analysis.

The research strategy aimed to ensure that the observed effects were attributable to the investigated variables rather than irrelevant or extraneous influences. It facilitated improved accuracy in the results and enhanced trust in the study findings.

Population and Sampling

Sampling is the procedure of selecting people from a whole population, either randomly or non-randomly, to reflect the genuine population or to facilitate generalizations about it; this subset is termed a "sample." Sekaran and Bougie (2009) assert that 30 observations per variable are appropriate for multivariable research. According to this heuristic, the estimated sample size for this study is 210; nevertheless, the researcher collects 220 samples to enhance the accuracy of the findings. In this study, sampling is based on simple random sampling from the described population.

Data Collection

This research obtained primary data using surveys and closed-ended questionnaires from travellers arriving from various destinations and those planning to travel.

Research Instrument

Research instruments are the equipment researchers use to gather data for research purposes. Data may be collected from respondents using several methods, including interviews and questionnaires. For this study, a closed-ended questionnaire was developed to gather data from travelers purchasing airline tickets.

Data Analysis

The primary data gathered for the research has been evaluated using multiple linear regression analysis to determine relationships between the dependent variables: consumer purchasing behavior and autonomous variables Comfort and commitment (C&C), Ground Services (GS), Value Addition (VA), Price (P), and Baggage (B).

Reliability and Validity

An instrument is deemed dependable when it repeatedly yields consistent readings or findings under the same conditions; hence, dependability signifies consistency. If the thermometer yields

consistent findings at the same temperature, it is deemed dependable and beneficial. The instrument's dependability in this investigation is quantified at 76.4%, indicating a commendable level of reliability. Validity signifies that your instrument must accurately assess what it is designed to measure. Consequently, the questionnaire or any other tool used for data collection must be relevant to your research and objectives. This research aims to gather data on variables influencing airline ticket purchasing behaviour, and field specialists have verified the instrument's validity. Mr Muneer Abbas (Country Manager PIAC) for Kuwait and Mr Tirath Das (Ticket of Manager PIAC) for Kuwait.

The Model and Variables

$$BB=B_0+ B_1(C\&C) + B_2 (VA) + B_3 (B) + B_4 (P) + B_5 (HSE) + B_6 (GS)$$

The model presented illustrates the factors examined in this study, including the dependent variable, purchasing behaviour (BB), and the independent variables, Comfort & Commitment (C&C), Ground Services (GS), Value Addition (VA), Price (P), and Baggage (B).

Pilot Study

A pilot or feasibility study involves the researcher using a small sample from the population to test and validate the collected data before undertaking a larger-scale study, enhancing the overall quality and efficiency of the research. A pilot study may detect research design deficiencies, conserving the researcher's time and resources. The researcher selected a sample of 30 respondents for the pilot study in this investigation.

Ethical Issues

This study also addresses moral and ethical problems, including maintaining integrity in data collection, avoiding fabrication or falsification, and ensuring transparency with social groups, funding agencies, and the community. Other difficulties include ingenuousness, carefulness, and respect for intellectual property, privacy, responsible publishing, and respect for social groups, social responsibility, non-discrimination, capacity, and individual subject security.

Hypothesis

- H₁: Price has significantly affected the buying behavior of airline travelers
- H₂: Baggage has significantly affected the buying behavior of airline travelers
- H₃: Comfort Commitment has significantly affected the buying behavior of airline travellers
- H₄: Value Addition has significantly affected the buying behavior of airline travelers.
- H₅: HSE has significantly affected the buying behaviour of airline travellers
- H₆: Ground Services have significantly affected the buying behavior of airline travelers.

Analysis

This chapter explains the analyses used to obtain the findings. The researcher used SPSS version 15 throughout the study phase to identify the variables influencing the purchasing behavior of airline passengers in Pakistan, using primary data from a questionnaire for each aspect. The following table presents the descriptive statistics used in this study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
BB	3.800	0.72449	220
CC	3.740	0.37555	220
P	3.150	0.45103	220
HSE	2.6500	0.47806	220
B	3.9500	0.21844	220
VA	1.988	0.5517	220
GS	3.4167	0.23327	220

Source: Author's estimation

The first column presents the variables used in this research, while the subsequent column displays the average value corresponding to each variable. The independent variable with the greatest mean is "Baggage" (B). The highest mean is 3.9500, while the lowest mean, according to "Value Addition" (VA), is 1.988. The average value of the dependent variable "Buying Behavior" is 3.800. The standard deviation for each variable is shown in the third column, with the greatest value belonging to "Buying Behavior" (BB) at 0.72449 and the lowest value associated with "Baggage." The value of 0.21844 N represents the number of observations recorded for each variable, totaling 220.

Table 2: Correlation

	COMFORT_CO MMITTMENT	VALUE_ ADDITIO N	BAGGAGE	PRICE	HSE	GROUN D_SERV ICES	BUYING BEHAVIO R
COMFORT_CO MMITTMENT	1 220						
VALUE_ADDITI ON	0.081 0.23	1					
BAGGAGE	-0.037 0.588	0.099 0.143	1				
PRICE	.291** 0.000	.209** 0.002	0.076 0.259	1			
HSE	0.106 0.116	.150* 0.026	.313** 0.000	.419** 0.000	1		
GROUND_SE RVICES	.210** 0.002	.138* 0.041	0.082 0.225	0.04 0.557	.188** 0.005	1	
BUYING_BE HAVIOR	.334** 0.000	0.057 0.404	.333** 0.000	.254** 0.000	0.123 0.068	0.025 0.715	1

Source: Author's estimation

Table 2 illustrates a significant connection across variables, indicated by * for a significance level of 0.05 and ** for a significance level of 0.01. The table indicates that purchasing behavior is significantly associated with Comfort_Committment, Baggage, and Price variables at 0.01 levels.

Table 3: Coefficients

Variables	Coefficient	t-stat	P-value	VIF
(Constant)	-1.102	-1.205	0.229	--
CC	0.960	9.000	0.000	1.151
P	-0.832	-8.596	0.000	1.365
HSE	0.298	3.238	0.001	1.386
B	1.104	6.091	0.000	1.123
VA	0.106	1.513	0.132	1.071
GS	-0.418	-2.484	0.014	1.106
Adj.R ² = 0.418		F Stat (prob) =27.212(0.000)		

Source: Author's estimation

Test of Multi-Collinearity (VIF)

This study uses SPSS software to assess the presence of multi-collinearity among the variables in the regression model. The representative values of the model's Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), which ascertain the presence of collinearity among the variables, have not shown any indication of such phenomena. While there is no definitive threshold for the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to assess multi-collinearity, it is often accepted that if all VIF values are below 10, multi-collinearity is absent in the model. All independent variables possess a VIF value.

Adjusted R-Square

The adjusted R-squared assesses the model's adequacy. The adjusted R-squared value is not fixed for all types of research since it varies depending on the nature of the investigation. In our investigation, the corrected R-squared value was determined to be 0.418, indicating that our model accounts for 41.8% of the variance.

Value and Significance

The F statistic and its associated probability value indicate the significance of the entire regression model. The F statistic, calculated as the Mean Square (Regression) divided by the Mean Square (Residual), is 27.212. The P value of the F statistic is less than 0.05, namely 0.00, indicating that the entire regression model is significant and that the independent variables effectively account for the variance in the dependent variable. The ordinary least squares line may be formed using the constant (y-intercept) and coefficient (slope) from Table 4.2:

$$BB = (-1.102) + 0.960(CC) + 0.160(VA) + 1.104(B) + (-0.832)(P) + 0.298(HSE) + (-0.418)(GS)$$

The hypotheses are evaluated using regression analysis, revealing that the p-value for the regression coefficient of Value Addition (VA) exceeds 0.05. Consequently, the null hypotheses are accepted, indicating that this variable does not affect the purchasing behavior of airline travelers. Conversely, the p-values for the regression coefficients of Comfort and commitment (C&C),

Baggage (B), Price (P), Health Safety Environment (HSE), and Ground Services (GS) are less than 0.05; thus, the null hypotheses are rejected. It indicates that airlines excelling in these domains significantly affect the purchasing behavior of airline travelers in Pakistan.

Conclusion

This study examines the impact of those factors that effect on buying behavior of airline travelers in Pakistan. Results clearly show that there are a few factors that have a significant effect on the buying behavior of airline travelers. Among all studied variables in this research, Value Addition (VA) has an insignificant impact on the buying behavior of airline travelers. On the other hand, Comfort and commitment (CC), Baggage (B), Price (P), Health Safety Environment (HSE), and Ground Services (GS) have a positive significant impact on the buying behavior of airline travelers.

Recommendation

Airline operators in Pakistan are required to emphasize variables that significantly impact airline travelers' buying behavior.

Direction for Future Research

Further study on regulations about the aviation business might be conducted for the long-term benefit of Pakistan's airline sector so those factors that impact the buying behavior of airline travelers in Pakistan can create a boom in this industry.

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