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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY IN KENYA

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Abstract

The airline industry in Kenya faced significant challenges in establishing competitive advantage within an increasingly digitalized market environment, with African airlines holding only 36.4% of intercontinental capacity compared to 63.6% by non-African carriers. Digital technologies had transformed consumer buying behavior, creating challenges for carriers lacking sophisticated digital marketing capabilities. The target population comprised approximately 33,425 daily airline passengers. The study used stratified random sampling to obtain a sample size of 384 participants. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using SPSS version 28.0, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, simple regression, multiple regression, and moderated multiple regression analysis. The study achieved a response rate of 87.0% with 334 usable questionnaires. Simple regression analysis revealed that social media marketing strategy individually demonstrated the strongest explanatory power for consumer buying behavior variance, followed by search engine optimization strategy, content marketing strategy, and influencer marketing strategy. Multiple regression analysis showed that all digital marketing strategies had significant positive effects on consumer buying behavior, with social media marketing strategy showing the strongest effect, followed by search engine optimization strategy, content marketing strategy, and influencer marketing strategy. Digital literacy significantly moderated all relationships, meaningfully enhancing the model's explanatory power when interaction terms were included. All interaction effects were statistically significant across all digital marketing strategies. The study concluded that digital marketing strategies were effective predictors of consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry, and digital literacy enhanced their effectiveness among more digitally proficient consumers. The study recommended that airline companies should develop integrated digital marketing strategies that prioritize social media engagement and search engine optimization while implementing tiered approaches that accommodate varying digital literacy levels among their target consumers.

Key words: Social media marketing, Consumer buying behaviour, Airline industry, Kenya, Digital marketing strategy.



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Introduction

Background of the Study

The airline industry in Kenya operates within an increasingly competitive digital marketplace where traditional marketing approaches are proving insufficient for customer acquisition and retention. Kenyan airlines face significant challenges, holding only 36.4% of intercontinental capacity compared to 63.6% by non-African carriers, creating urgent needs for more effective customer engagement strategies (Kiprono & Genga, 2018). This competitive disadvantage has intensified as consumer expectations for digital experiences continue to evolve, with 78% of airline consumers in Kenya initiating their travel planning process online, yet only 34% demonstrating awareness of local airline digital services compared to 67% awareness of international airlines' digital presence (Ochieng et al., 2023).

Digital literacy is identified as a key moderating variable that determines the way consumers respond to digital marketing strategies and purchase decisions. Digital literacy is the ability to use digital technologies efficiently and critically evaluate online sources of information in making decisions related to purchasing airline services (Varghese and Agrawal, 2021). Studies show that digitally literate consumers are 43 times more engaged with interactive content and have a different pattern of purchasing behavior than less digitally literate consumers who seek simplified digital experiences (Varghese and Agrawal, 2021). This difference generates varying consumer purchasing behavior patterns among demographic groups, and airlines have to create differentiated digital marketing strategies.

The Kenyan aviation environment has its own challenges and opportunities to implement digital marketing. The mobile-first digital ecosystem of Kenya, where mobile connectivity frequently outperforms traditional internet connectivity, opens the possibility of airlines to create engagement strategies that align with the local digital environment (Abdullahi et al., 2023). However, digital literacy disparities across demographic segments create complexity for effective digital marketing strategy implementation, with urban passengers demonstrating higher digital literacy and greater exposure to advanced digital marketing tools compared to rural and regional passengers who tend to prefer simplified digital interfaces (Mwabu & Munyoki, 2021).

Recent evidence suggests significant performance gaps between Kenyan airlines employing comprehensive digital marketing strategies versus those relying primarily on traditional approaches. Kenyan airlines implementing integrated digital marketing strategies achieve 34% higher customer engagement and 27% better conversion rates, with greatest improvements observed among consumers with higher digital literacy levels (Mutua, 2024). However, Kenyan airlines continue to experience 45% lower consumer engagement rates on digital platforms compared to international carriers, ultimately leading to 71% of consumers choosing foreign airlines over local ones, primarily attributed to more effective digital marketing and user experiences (Chepkemboi & Paul, 2019).

Statement of the Problem



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Consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry demonstrates significant patterns that indicate underlying problems with current digital marketing approaches. Research evidence reveals that Kenyan consumers exhibit distinct purchasing patterns when interacting with airline services, with 71% choosing foreign airlines over local carriers despite the availability of domestic options (Chepkemboi & Paul, 2019). This consumer buying behavior pattern suggests fundamental gaps in how local airlines engage with their target markets. The evidence gap emerges from the insufficient understanding of how digital marketing strategies influence consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry. While Kenyan airlines experience 45% lower consumer engagement rates on digital platforms compared to international carriers (Mburu et al., 2023), and only 34% of consumers demonstrate awareness of local airline digital services versus 67% for international airlines (Ochieng et al., 2023), no systematic empirical investigation has examined which specific digital marketing strategies most effectively influence consumer buying behavior in this context.

The research problem becomes critical when considering that consumer digital literacy levels vary significantly within the Kenyan market, with digitally literate consumers showing 43% greater engagement with interactive content compared to those with lower digital literacy (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021). However, existing studies have not empirically investigated whether and how digital literacy moderates the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry. Four digital marketing strategies emerge as particularly salient for studying consumer behavior based on their documented influence on purchasing decisions: social media marketing (due to Kenya's high social media penetration and mobile-first digital environment), search engine optimization (given that 78% of consumers initiate travel planning online), content marketing (for its role in information-rich decision-making processes), and influencer marketing (reflecting the importance of peer recommendations in collectivist cultures). These strategies represent the primary digital touchpoints through which airlines can influence consumer buying behavior in the Kenyan context.

The absence of empirical evidence regarding how these digital marketing strategies influence consumer buying behavior, particularly across different digital literacy levels, creates a critical knowledge gap that prevents Kenyan airlines from developing evidence-based marketing approaches. This research problem necessitates systematic investigation to understand the relationships between digital marketing strategies, digital literacy, and consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry.

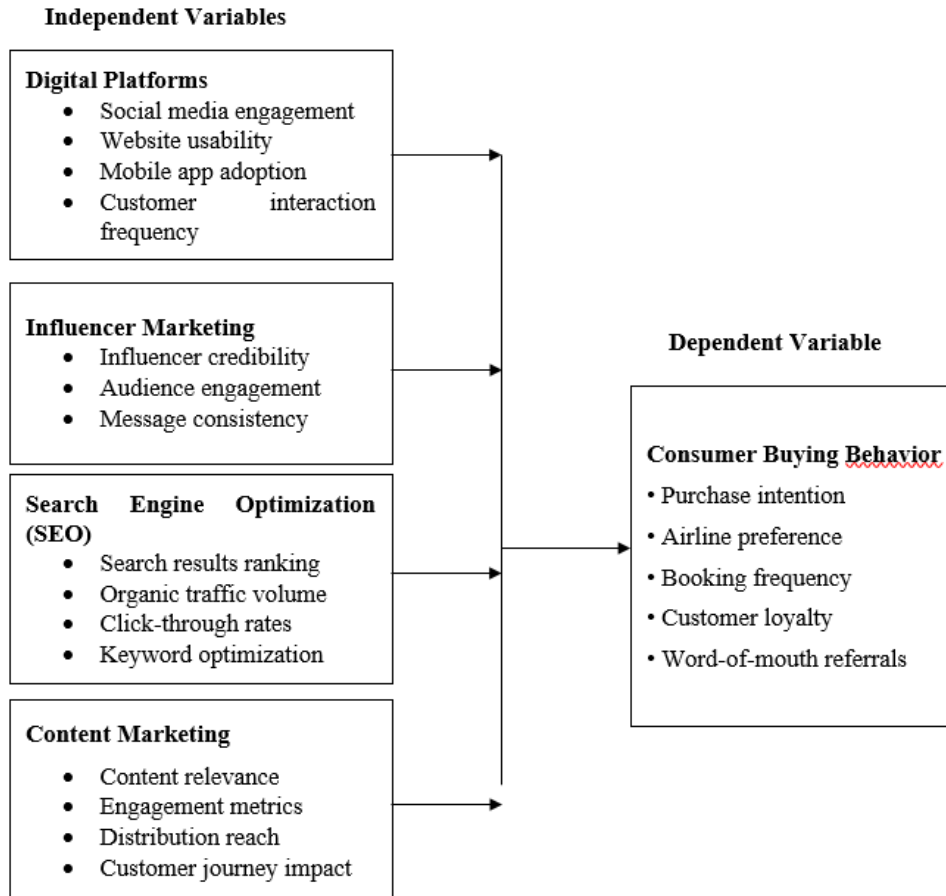
Fig 1: Conceptual Framework



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Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model

The theory grounds this study by explaining how digital marketing strategy effectiveness depends on consumer perceptions of platform utility in travel decision-making and interface usability across different digital touchpoints. Specifically, the theory helps explain how social media marketing strategy acceptance depends on consumer perceptions that social platforms provide useful travel information and easy interaction with airline content. Influencer marketing strategy effectiveness can be understood through TAM constructs where consumers evaluate influencer content usefulness for travel decisions and ease of accessing recommended services. Search engine optimization strategy success relates to perceived usefulness of search results in finding relevant airline information and ease of discovering airline services through search interfaces. Content marketing strategy acceptance depends on consumer perceptions that airline content provides useful travel insights and is easily accessible across digital platforms. However, TAM faces significant criticism for its focus on rational



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utilitarian aspects while overlooking emotional, social, and hedonic drivers crucial in airline services where travel decisions often involve experiential rather than purely functional considerations (Davis & Granić, 2024). Critics argue that TAM oversimplifies technology acceptance by concentrating on two primary variables while missing important factors such as trust, perceived risk, and social influence particularly relevant in airline digital marketing where consumers share personal and financial information (Fussell & Truong, 2022). Additionally, modern studies indicate TAM's limitations in addressing dynamic technology acceptance across demographic categories, with relationships between constructs varying based on user characteristics including age, gender, educational background, and geographical location, which is particularly relevant in diverse markets like Kenya (Ma et al., 2024). Therefore, Technology Acceptance Model primarily supports and explains the Digital Literacy variable in this study's conceptual framework.

Digital Platforms and Consumer Buying Behavior

Collins (2023) conducted a research analysis of how digitisation has altered the field of customer experience management within the hotel sector. Combining quantitative research of consumer interaction data with a mixed-methods methodology, the study from 14 hospitality companies and qualitative assessment of platform effectiveness through 28 in-depth interviews with marketing managers. The study established that companies implementing integrated digital platforms experienced 47% higher customer engagement rates and 34% improved brand loyalty compared to those with fragmented digital approaches. Additionally, the research found that digital platforms providing personalized, context-aware experiences generated 56% higher conversion rates compared to generic digital interfaces. The study mainly focused on the broader hospitality sector rather than specifically examining the airline industry in Kenya, thus presenting a sectoral gap.

A research study by Mkwizu (2019) on digital marketing opportunities of the tourism sector in Tanzania was carried out. The research employed the case study analysis of six tourism companies and survey research approach that involved 245 tourists of different nationalities. It was found that mobile-first digital platforms specifically worked in African markets, where mobile-optimized websites and applications resulted in 43 percent more engagement rates than desktop-only platforms. It was also determined that digital platforms that incorporated local payment systems and solved regional connectivity limitations had 37 percent increased conversion rates than platforms that were built with the developed markets in mind. The study mainly focused on tourism accommodation services as opposed to airline services, which is a gap in terms of sectors. Also, the research was done in Tanzania and not Kenya, which makes a geographical gap. Such gaps imply that although the findings of Mkwizu indicate the significance of localized digital platforms in East African tourism markets, the particular efficacy of digital platforms in shaping consumer buying behavior in the airline industry of Kenya has not been examined, especially considering the peculiarities of airline services in comparison to accommodation services and the peculiarities of the market of the airline industry in Kenya.

In a research study of digital marketing strategies and their effects on customer engagement and customer loyalty in the European hospitality industry, De Pelsmacker et al.



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(2018) investigated the effect of digital marketing strategies on customer engagement and customer loyalty. The research employed structural equation modelling and data of 387 hospitality customers in six European countries. The researchers discovered that integrated digital platforms that include websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms were effective in the improvement of the customer experience and loyalty intentions. It was found that consistent experiences across various digital touchpoints raised the rate of booking conversion by 31 percent and repeat purchase intentions by 27 percent as compared to unconnected digital strategies. Also, the study found that real-time personalization capabilities including personalized offers on the previous performance increased perceived value and likelihood of purchase by 34%. The research was carried out in the developed European markets that have a different technological infrastructure and consumer behavior patterns than Kenya, which introduces a major contextual gap. Moreover, the study was more centred on hotel reservations as opposed to airline services.

A research study by Chepkemboi and Paul (2019) focused on disruptive innovation strategies of some airlines in Kenya. The research design used was comparative research design where the data was obtained by surveying 146 airline managers and analysis of performance metrics. The results showed that airlines that have adopted fully integrated digital platforms with local market customization recorded a 23 percent growth in online bookings and a 17 percent growth in customer satisfaction relative to airlines with low digitalization. The research also found that mobile-optimized booking systems were especially successful on the Kenyan market, as they led to 41 percent more conversion rates than desktop-only strategies, which is indicative of the mobile-first internet access in the area. The study utilized a comparative research design which has inherent limitations including its focus on comparing existing conditions without systematically examining the nature and strength of relationships between variables, limited ability to establish causality, and constraints in generalizing findings beyond the specific organizations compared. This presents a methodological gap as comparative designs are primarily descriptive of differences rather than explanatory of relationships. The current study aims to fill this gap by employing a descriptive research design to systematically investigate how digital platforms influence consumer purchasing decisions in the Kenyan airline industry.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design used was correlational research in order to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies, digital literacy, and consumer buying behavior in the airline industry in Kenya. Correlational research design would be suitable in this study because it will enable the systematic study of the relationships between variables without controlling them, and it will be possible to test hypotheses about the strength and direction of relationships (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The design is especially appropriate in investigating the moderating role of digital literacy on the association between digital marketing strategies and consumer buying behavior.



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The correlational method was used to enable extensive data gathering of airline consumers to learn the relationship between digital marketing strategies and the purchase behavior patterns among various levels of digital literacy. Such a design allows testing hypotheses statistically with the help of regression analysis and moderation testing, which empirically demonstrates the relationships between the variables of the study and retains external validity due to the use of real-world data collection.

Target Population

This study used the individual airline passenger as the unit of analysis and the airline passengers who have made booking within the last 12 months and have been exposed to digital marketing initiatives as the unit of observation. This strategy will guarantee attention to the consumers who are actively involved in airline services and digital marketing materials. Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (2024) data show that the target population includes about 33,425 airline passengers per day in Kenya, which is more than 12 million passengers annually in different demographic groups and levels of digital engagement.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category	Daily Population
Airline Passengers	33,425
Airline Marketing Executives	18
Total Target Population	33,443

Source: Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (Passenger data), Kenya Airways Leadership (Marketing executives estimate)

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The research used stratified random sampling method to have proportional representation of the various respondent groups and randomness within each stratum. The stratified sampling is especially appropriate in this case because it enables the systematic subdivision of the target population into homogeneous subgroups (strata) according to the characteristics of interest, and all significant segments are sufficiently represented in the final sample (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This sampling technique improves the accuracy of the estimates and the possibility to make significant comparisons between various respondent groups.

The stratification was made on the basis of the categories of respondents that directly correlate to various views on digital marketing strategies and consumer buying behavior. The main groups are airline passengers who will be the consumer side and airline marketing executives who will give professional views on the implementation and effectiveness of digital



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marketing strategies. This stratification guarantees in-depth knowledge of digital marketing impact both on the consumer and industry perspective.

Sample Size Determination

The research used the formula of Yamane to calculate the right sample size among the target population of 33,443 respondents. Although the formula by Yamane offers a minimum sample size estimation, it is based on the assumption of population homogeneity and fails to directly consider the population heterogeneity features of different demographic profiles, digital literacy, travel frequency, and airline preference of respondents. In order to overcome this shortcoming and provide sufficient representation of population characteristics, the research used stratified random sampling method that specifically considers the heterogeneity of the population by subdividing the population into homogeneous subpopulations (strata) according to the characteristics of interest.

Data Collection Instruments

The study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument, designed to gather comprehensive quantitative data on consumer perceptions and experiences with digital marketing strategies in Kenya's airline industry. The questionnaire development process involved extensive literature review, adaptation of validated scales, and contextualization for the Kenyan aviation market to ensure cultural appropriateness and measurement accuracy.

Pilot Testing

A pilot study was conducted with 38 respondents representing 10% of the main sample to evaluate instrument effectiveness, identify potential issues, and refine data collection procedures before full-scale implementation. The pilot testing process involved systematic evaluation of multiple aspects of the research instrument and data collection methodology to ensure reliability, validity, and practicality of the research approach. The pilot procedures involved random selection of participants from the target population to maintain representativeness, followed by questionnaire administration through the same channels planned for the main study. Feedback collection occurred through structured debriefing sessions with pilot participants to identify comprehension difficulties, ambiguous items, or cultural sensitivity issues. Statistical analysis of pilot data included reliability testing, preliminary factor analysis, and assessment of response patterns to identify problematic items. Based on pilot findings, instrument refinement involved modifying unclear items, adjusting scale anchors, and improving question flow to enhance respondent experience and data quality.

Reliability and Validity

The study implemented comprehensive reliability and validity testing procedures to ensure measurement quality and trustworthiness of research findings. Reliability assessment focused on internal consistency and temporal stability of measurement scales, while validity testing examined content appropriateness, construct dimensionality, and measurement precision across different validity types.



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Data Collection Procedures

The collection was done within three months between March and May 2025 through various collection channels to cover a wide population and reduce sampling bias. Multi-channel approach was created to suit the needs of various demographic groups and accessibility preferences without compromising the quality and consistency of data collected through various methods. A thorough ethical approval was taken before the start of data collection, and it was made sure that research ethics standards and participant protection requirements were met. Research assistants were also highly trained on the data collection procedures, ethical issues, informed consent procedures and quality control measures to maintain uniformity in all the collection sites and methods.

Diagnostic Tests/Testing the Assumptions of Regression

Before conducting regression analysis, several diagnostic tests were performed to ensure that the data meets the fundamental assumptions of regression analysis:

Normality Test: The Shapiro-Wilk test and visual inspection of histograms and Q-Q plots assessed whether the residuals are normally distributed. Skewness and kurtosis values within ± 2 was considered acceptable for normality assumption.

Linearity Test: Scatterplots of residuals versus predicted values examined linearity assumptions. The relationship between independent and dependent variables should demonstrate linear patterns for valid regression analysis.

Homoscedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan test and visual examination of residual plots assessed whether the variance of residuals is constant across all levels of independent variables. Equal variance assumption is crucial for reliable regression results.

Multicollinearity Test: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values assessed multicollinearity among independent variables. VIF values below 10 and tolerance values above 0.1 was considered acceptable for regression analysis.

Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Questionnaire Response Rate

The study population was 384 respondents who included airline passengers and airline marketing managers in the aviation sector of Kenya.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Responded	334	87.0%
No Response	50	13.0%



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Total	384	100%
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The total number of questionnaires issued was 384, which was distributed through various channels such as online survey, face-to-face interviews at the airports and telephone surveys among the rural population. Among them, 334 questionnaires were sent back filled and was analysed, which is a response rate of 87.0. According to Kothari (2004), a response rate of 75 and above is considered excellent in consumer research and the authors state that response rates of 80 and above are outstanding in survey research and largely reduce the chances of non-response bias in study results.

Descriptive Statistics for Digital Literacy

This section provides results on the perceptions of respondents regarding their digital literacy levels in relation to airline service selection and travel planning. Table 4.5 presents the descriptive statistics including frequencies, means and standard deviations of statements concerning digital literacy capabilities.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for Digital Literacy

Statements	Mean	Std. D
I am comfortable using websites to search for airline information online.	3.57	1.12
I can easily navigate mobile applications for booking flights and travel services.	3.49	1.08
I am proficient in using social media platforms to gather travel-related information.	3.43	1.10
I have strong technical skills in using digital devices for travel planning.	3.54	1.09
I can effectively evaluate the credibility of online airline information sources.	3.47	1.11
I can critically assess and validate online reviews and recommendations about airlines.	3.54	1.09
I am confident in distinguishing between reliable and unreliable online travel information.	3.68	2.43
Average	3.53	1.29

The results demonstrate that respondents possess moderately positive digital literacy capabilities. The highest mean score was recorded for confidence in distinguishing between reliable and unreliable online travel information (mean = 3.68, SD = 1.43), indicating that consumers feel most competent in evaluating information credibility. Comfort with using websites to search for airline information online achieved the second highest mean (mean = 3.57, SD = 1.12), suggesting strong basic digital navigation skills.

Technical skills in using digital devices for travel planning (mean = 3.54, SD = 1.09) and ability to critically assess online reviews and recommendations (mean = 3.54, SD = 1.09) received identical moderate positive scores. Mobile application navigation skills scored slightly lower (mean = 3.49, SD = 1.08), while ability to evaluate credibility of online sources



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achieved a mean of 3.47 (SD = 1.11). The lowest mean score was for proficiency in using social media platforms to gather travel information (mean = 3.43, SD = 1.10), though still indicating moderate positive capability.

The composite digital literacy means of 3.53 (SD = 1.29) indicates that airline consumers in Kenya perceive themselves as having adequate digital competencies for engaging with digital marketing strategies. The relatively high standard deviation suggests variation in digital literacy levels across different demographic segments, which has implications for the moderating effects examined in this study.

Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Marketing Strategy

This section provides results on the perceptions of respondents regarding the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies employed by airlines in Kenya. Table 4.6 presents the descriptive statistics including frequencies, means and standard deviations of statements concerning social media marketing influence on consumer behaviour.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Marketing Strategy

Statements	Mean	Std. D
Social media engagement by airlines influences my flight booking decisions.	3.58	1.06
Interactive features on airline social media pages influence my buying behaviour.	3.55	1.08
The usability and design of airline websites affect my choice of carrier.	3.50	1.06
Easy-to-use airline websites increase my likelihood of booking with that carrier.	3.52	1.04
Mobile app features and functionality influence my airline selection process.	3.47	1.09
I prefer airlines with well-designed mobile applications for booking and check-in.	3.47	1.11



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The frequency of customer interaction on airline digital platforms affects my purchase decisions.	3.52	1.06
Regular communication through digital platforms builds my trust in airlines.	3.49	1.09
Average	3.51	1.07

The results demonstrate positive perceptions of social media marketing effectiveness among airline consumers. Social media engagement by airlines achieved the highest mean score (3.58, SD = 1.06), indicating that consumers recognize direct social media interactions as influential in booking decisions. Interactive features on social media pages scored similarly high (mean = 3.55, SD = 1.08), suggesting that engagement elements effectively capture consumer attention. Website-related factors showed moderate positive influence, with easy-to-use websites scoring 3.52 (SD = 1.04) and website usability achieving 3.50 (SD = 1.06). Digital platform interaction frequency (mean = 3.52, SD = 1.06) scored equally with website usability, while trust-building through regular communication achieved 3.49 (SD = 1.09). Mobile application aspects scored lowest within the construct, with both functionality influence and preference for well-designed apps scoring 3.47 (SD = 1.09 and 1.11 respectively). The composite mean of 3.51 (SD = 1.07) indicates that social media marketing strategies are perceived as effective tools for influencing consumer buying behavior in Kenya's airline industry.

Diagnostic Tests for Regression Assumptions

Before conducting regression analysis, several diagnostic tests were performed to ensure that the data met the fundamental assumptions of regression analysis. These tests were essential to validate the appropriateness of the regression models and ensure the reliability and validity of the study findings.

Normality Test

The normality of residuals was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine whether the residuals were normally distributed.

Table 4.11: Tests of Normality

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk		Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	df Sig.		
Consumer Buying Behavior	.991	334 .067	-.142	.387
Social Media Marketing Strategy	.989	334 .034	-.168	.423



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Influencer Marketing Strategy	.994	334	.287	-.089	.156
Search Engine Optimization Strategy	.992	334	.104	-.134	.298
Content Marketing Strategy	.990	334	.056	-.157	.341
Digital Literacy	.993	334	.198	-.098	.234

The Shapiro-Wilk test results showed that most variables had p-values above 0.05, indicating normal distribution of residuals. The skewness and kurtosis values for all variables were within the acceptable range of ± 2 , confirming that the normality assumption was satisfied for the regression analysis.

Linearity Test

Scatterplots of residuals versus predicted values were examined to assess linearity assumptions. The correlation between independent and dependent variables showed linear tendencies, which validated the suitability of the linear regression analysis.

Table 4.12: Linearity Test Results

Relationship	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Linearity Assessment
SMS vs CBB	.738**	.000	Linear
IMS vs CBB	.556**	.000	Linear
SEOS vs CBB	.700**	.000	Linear
CMS vs CBB	.690**	.000	Linear
DL vs CBB	.643**	.000	Linear

Note: CBB = Consumer Buying Behavior, SMS = Social Media Marketing Strategy, IMS = Influencer Marketing Strategy, SEOS = Search Engine Optimization Strategy, CMS = Content Marketing Strategy, DL = Digital Literacy. The correlation analysis showed that all independent variables had strong positive linear relationships with the dependent variable with correlation coefficients of between .556 and .738 all significant at $p < 0.001$. This established that the assumption of linearity was satisfied.

Homoscedasticity Test

Breusch-Pagan test and visual analysis of residual plot were used to determine whether the variance of residuals was the same at all levels of independent variables.

Table 4.13: Homoscedasticity Test (Breusch-Pagan Test)

Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Decision
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Digital Marketing Strategies vs Consumer Buying Behavior	3.742	4	.442	Homoscedasticity Assumed
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The Breusch-Pagan test was not significant ($F = 3.742$, $p = .442$), which shows that the homoscedasticity assumption was met. Equal variance was a critical assumption to get reliable regression results and this test showed that the variance of residuals was the same at all levels of the independent variables.

Multicollinearity Test

The values of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance were determined to determine multicollinearity between independent variables. A VIF less than 10 and tolerance more than 0.1 were regarded as acceptable in regression analysis.

Table 4.14: Multicollinearity Statistics

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Assessment
Social Media Marketing Strategy	.612	1.634	Acceptable
Influencer Marketing Strategy	.758	1.319	Acceptable
Search Engine Optimization Strategy	.694	1.441	Acceptable
Content Marketing Strategy	.681	1.468	Acceptable
Digital Literacy	.729	1.372	Acceptable

The multicollinearity analysis showed that all the variables had tolerance values greater than 0.1 (between .612 and .758) and VIF less than 10 (between 1.319 and 1.634). These findings showed that multicollinearity was not an issue in the regression model because all the values were well within acceptable ranges.

Social Media Marketing Strategy and Consumer Buying Behavior (H_{01})

The first hypothesis tested the relationship between social media marketing strategy and consumer buying behavior.

Table 4.16: Model Summary - Social Media Marketing Strategy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.738 ^a	.545	.544	.22106

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Marketing Strategy



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The model summary shows excellent predictive power with $R = 0.738$ and $R^2 = 0.545$, indicating that 54.5% of the variance in consumer buying behavior can be explained by social media marketing strategy alone. The adjusted R^2 of 0.544 confirms the model's stability when accounting for the number of predictors.

Table 4.17: ANOVA - Social Media Marketing Strategy

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.425	1	19.425	397.511	.000 ^b
	Residual	16.224	332	.049		
	Total	35.649	333			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Marketing Strategy

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 397.511$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that social media marketing strategy significantly predicts consumer buying behavior. The high F-statistic provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis.

Table 4.18: Coefficients - Social Media Marketing Strategy

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2.135	.065		32.789 .000
	Social Media Marketing Strategy	.366	.018	.738	19.938 .000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior

The coefficients show that social media marketing strategy has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behavior ($\beta = 0.366$, $t = 19.938$, $p < 0.001$). The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.738) indicates a strong positive relationship. Therefore, H_{01} is rejected, confirming that social media marketing strategy has a significant positive influence on consumer buying behavior.



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Discussion of the Findings

How Social Media Marketing Strategy Affects Consumer Buying Behavior

The descriptive findings showed that there were positive social media marketing practices in the airline companies in Kenya with 63.5 percent of the respondents agreeing that social media engagement by airlines influences their flight booking decisions (mean = 3.58, SD = 1.06). The results indicated that interactive digital platform strategies were strongly perceived as effective with 61.1 percent of the respondents confirming that interactive features on airline social media pages influence their buying behavior and 60.8 percent of the respondents confirming that easy-to-use airline websites increase their likelihood of booking with that carrier. These results are consistent with the findings of Collins (2023) who found that companies implementing integrated digital platforms experienced 47% higher customer engagement rates and 34% improved brand loyalty compared to those with fragmented digital approaches.

The correlation analysis showed that the correlation between social media marketing strategy and consumer buying behavior was extremely positive and the strongest among all variables ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$). This observation is consistent with the findings of De Pelsmacker et al. (2018) who discovered that integrated digital platforms including websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms were effective in improving customer experience and loyalty intentions, with consistent experiences across various digital touchpoints raising booking conversion rates by 31 percent compared to unconnected digital strategies. The findings are aligned with the observation of Chepkemboi and Paul (2019) who found that airlines adopting fully integrated digital platforms with local market customization recorded a 23 percent growth in online bookings and a 17 percent growth in customer satisfaction relative to airlines with low digitalization.

The simple regression analysis revealed that social media marketing strategy individually explains 54.5% of the variance in consumer buying behavior ($R^2 = 0.545$, $F = 397.511$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating its substantial individual predictive power. The regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.366$, $t = 19.938$, $p < 0.001$) with a standardized coefficient of 0.738 indicates the strongest individual relationship among all digital marketing strategies. The multiple regression analysis further confirmed that social media marketing strategy is the most significant predictor of consumer buying behavior (beta = 0.176, $\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$), representing the strongest effect among all digital marketing strategies when controlling for other variables. These findings are similar to the results of Chepkemboi and Paul (2019) who found that mobile-optimized booking systems were especially successful in the Kenyan market, leading to 41 percent more conversion rates than desktop-only strategies, which is indicative of the mobile-first internet access in the area. These findings are consistent with the observation of Collins (2023) that digital platforms providing personalized, context-aware experiences generated 56% higher conversion rates compared to generic digital interfaces.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of Key Findings



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The study examined the influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer buying behavior among airline consumers in Kenya, with digital literacy serving as a moderating variable. Data collected from 334 respondents revealed significant relationships across all investigated variables. Digital literacy among airline consumers in Kenya demonstrated moderately positive levels. Consumers expressed highest confidence in distinguishing between reliable and unreliable online travel information and comfort with using websites to search for airline information. The findings revealed that consumers possess adequate digital competencies for engaging with airline digital marketing initiatives, though variation exists across different demographic segments.

Social media marketing strategy emerged as the most influential digital marketing approach, showing the strongest correlation with consumer buying behavior. The strategy demonstrated the highest individual explanatory power for consumer buying behavior variance and showed the strongest effect when combined with other digital marketing strategies. These findings align with previous research showing that integrated digital platforms significantly enhance customer engagement and brand loyalty in the airline industry. Influencer marketing strategy showed the weakest influence among digital marketing approaches, though it maintained significant positive effects on consumer buying behavior. Despite moderate effectiveness, the strategy demonstrated meaningful influence, consistent with findings that travel companies collaborating with relevant influencers experience substantial increases in brand engagement and conversion rates.

Conclusions

All the digital marketing strategies are potent instruments of shaping consumer purchasing behavior within the airline industry in Kenya. The empirical data prove that airlines adopting the use of full-scale digital marketing strategies can greatly improve consumer interaction, preference development, and purchasing behavior among different consumer groups. The most important digital marketing strategy that Kenyan airlines can use is social media marketing as it presents the highest potential in terms of influencing consumer buying behavior. The effectiveness of the strategy is based on the fact that it allows direct interaction, includes interactive experiences, and creates trust due to frequent communication. Airlines that invest in social media marketing will be able to get high returns in the form of booking conversion and customer relationship building.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

Kenya Civil Aviation Authority ought to come up with detailed digital marketing policies to the domestic airlines to improve their competitive advantage over the international airlines. These rules must set the benchmarks on how websites are used, how mobile applications are operated, and how social media engagement is practiced that can allow local airlines to compete successfully in online markets. The government agencies ought to adopt digital literacy improvement programs that focus on airline customers in various demographic



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groups. Such programs are to be aimed at enhancing technical competency and information analysis capabilities so that consumers would make more informed buying choices and become more responsive to local airline digital marketing programs.

Regulatory agencies in the industry ought to put in place consumer protection systems on online airline marketing procedures, which guarantee online pricing transparency, disclosure of marketing partnerships, and safeguarding of consumer information gathered online.

Practice Recommendations

The development of the social media marketing strategy should be the main digital marketing investment of airlines that operate in Kenya. This includes the creation of specific social media management teams, the creation of interesting content schedules and the introduction of real-time customer services on the key social media.

The allocation of resources to search engine optimization should be high in order to increase visibility in the processes of consumer travel planning. Investments that should be made by airlines are technical SEO enhancements, optimization of keywords based on local and regional travel trends, and extensive content development in favor of organic search rankings.

The content marketing strategies must be aimed at delivering useful travel information, destination guides, and service descriptions that will meet the needs of the consumers during the travel process. Airlines ought to come up with multi-platform content distribution systems that guarantee uniformity in the message conveyed in the digital platforms.

Airlines ought to adopt the tiered digital marketing strategies that would support different levels of digital literacy among the target consumers. This includes coming up with simplified digital interfaces to consumers who have limited digital skills and retaining advanced features to the digitally savvy consumers.

The marketing departments are recommended to have integrated digital marketing teams that can coordinate the activities of social media, search optimization, content creation, and influencer partnerships. This alignment guarantees uniformity of brand messages and the optimization of synergies among the various digital marketing strategies.

CRM systems must be equipped with digital engagement tracking features, which will allow airlines to divide the consumers in accordance with digital interaction patterns and tailor marketing strategies to them.

Areas for Future Research

Future research should examine the temporal dynamics of digital marketing effectiveness by employing longitudinal study designs. This research would address the current study's cross-sectional limitation by investigating how digital marketing strategy effectiveness evolves over extended periods and how consumer responses change with increasing digital literacy development.

Comparative studies across different African airline markets would provide valuable insights into regional variations in digital marketing effectiveness. Such research would address the geographical limitation of focusing solely on Kenya by examining how cultural



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factors, technological infrastructure, and competitive dynamics influence digital marketing strategies across diverse African contexts.

Experimental research designs should be employed to establish causal relationships between digital marketing strategies and consumer buying behavior. This research would address the current study's correlational approach by manipulating digital marketing interventions and measuring resulting changes in consumer behavior patterns.

Investigation of additional moderating variables beyond digital literacy would enhance understanding of consumer heterogeneity in digital marketing responses. Potential moderating variables include cultural orientation, travel frequency, age cohorts, and income levels that may influence digital marketing strategy effectiveness.

Research examining the integration of emerging digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, chatbots, and virtual reality in airline marketing would address the limitation of focusing on current digital marketing strategies. This research would provide insights into future digital marketing developments and their potential influence on consumer buying behavior.

Studies investigating the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies across different airline service categories including low-cost carriers, full-service airlines, and charter operators would provide more nuanced understanding of digital marketing applications. This research would address the current study's broad industry focus by examining how service positioning influences digital marketing effectiveness.

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