

OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MARKETING FOR AVIATION SELECTION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF EMERGING TRENDS

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Abstract: The aviation industry has increasingly turned to digital marketing to stay competitive and meet evolving customer expectations. This study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze emerging trends and best practices in digital marketing within the aviation sector. Utilizing articles from the Scopus database published between 2016 and 2023, the review identifies top key strategies online review such as social media marketing, website, various social media, Online Travel Agent (OTA), social network, travel review website. The findings highlight the effectiveness of these tools in enhancing customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty while addressing challenges such as high competition and data privacy concerns. This study underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing optimization to improve customer choice of airlines.

Keywords: Aviation Selection, Customer Engagement, Digital Marketing, Emerging Trends, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors globally, marked by continuous innovation and evolving customer expectations. In recent years, digital marketing has emerged as a pivotal tool for aviation to differentiate themselves, engage customers, and enhance their market presence. This section delves into the background and rationale behind optimizing digital marketing for aviation selection, highlighting its significance

and the compelling need for a systematic review of emerging trends.

Digital marketing has revolutionized the way aviation communicate with their customers. The shift from traditional marketing methods to digital platforms has enabled aviation to reach a broader audience, personalize interactions, and foster customer loyalty. As digital technology continues to evolve, aviation must adapt to stay competitive and meet the growing expectations of tech-savvy travelers.

The advent of digital marketing tools such as social media, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and email campaigns has allowed aviation to create more targeted and effective marketing strategies. These tools not only help in attracting new customers but also play a crucial role in retaining existing ones by offering personalized and timely communication. According to recent studies, the integration of digital marketing strategies has significantly improved customer engagement and satisfaction in the aviation industry ([Chanpariyavatevong et al., 2021a](#); [Sakas & Reklitis, 2021](#)).

The evolution of digital marketing in the aviation industry can be traced back to the early 2000s when aviation began to recognize the potential of online platforms for marketing purposes. Initially, the focus was on establishing a robust online presence through websites and online booking systems. Over time, the scope expanded to include social media platforms, mobile applications, and more sophisticated data analytics tools.

One of the most notable trends in recent years is the use of social media for customer engagement. Aviation have leveraged platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to interact with customers, address their concerns, and build brand loyalty. Social media marketing has proven to be an effective way to reach a global audience, as demonstrated by the successful campaigns of major aviation such as Emirates and Turkish Aviation ([Waguespack & Ambrose, 2019](#)).

Another significant trend is the use of big data and analytics to personalize customer experiences. Aviation collect vast amounts of data from various sources, including customer interactions, booking histories, and social media activities. By analyzing this data, aviation can gain insights into customer preferences and tailor their marketing efforts accordingly. This data-driven approach has been shown to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty ([Gures et al., 2018a](#)).

Despite the numerous benefits, aviation faces several challenges in optimizing their digital marketing strategies. One of the primary challenges is the high level of competition in the industry. With numerous aviation vying for the attention of the same customer base, it becomes crucial to stand out through innovative and effective marketing techniques.

Data privacy and security are also significant concerns. As aviation collect and analyze large volumes of customer data, they must ensure that this information is protected against breaches and misuse. Compliance with regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) adds another layer of complexity to the management of customer data ([Chanpariyavatevong et al., 2021b](#)).

The aviation industry is undergoing a significant transformation with the integration of digital marketing strategies, driven by the rapid evolution of technology and changing consumer behaviors. Despite the apparent benefits and widespread adoption of digital marketing tools such as social media, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and content marketing, there is a noticeable gap in the systematic review and synthesis of emerging trends and best practices specific to the aviation industry. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive review to provide a holistic understanding of how digital marketing can be optimized for aviation selection.

Current research in aviation marketing predominantly focuses on traditional approaches, customer loyalty programs, and the economic impacts of aviation operations. Studies have extensively examined service quality, pricing strategies, and brand management's influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, these studies often overlook the rapidly evolving digital landscape and its implications for marketing strategies within the aviation sector. Current research in the aviation industry has primarily concentrated on traditional aspects like service quality, pricing strategies, and brand

management's impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty ([Dike et al., 2024](#); [Sezgen et al., 2023](#); [Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023](#)). However, these studies often overlook the rapidly evolving digital landscape and its implications for marketing strategies within the aviation sector.

Digital marketing has revolutionized the aviation industry by enabling broader audience reach, personalized customer interactions, and enhanced engagement. Aviation is increasingly leveraging social media platforms, mobile applications, and data analytics to create targeted marketing strategies that cater to individual customer preferences. Despite the evident benefits, comprehensive reviews systematically analyzing the effectiveness and emerging trends in digital marketing within the aviation industry are lacking. For example, [Waguespack and Ambrose \(2019\)](#) highlight the growing role of social media in sports sponsorships by aviation but do not extend this analysis to a broader digital marketing context.

Several gaps have been identified in the current body of research. Firstly, there is a lack of systematic literature reviews that compile and critically analyze existing research on digital marketing strategies specific to the aviation industry. Most studies are fragmented, focusing on isolated aspects of digital marketing without providing a holistic view ([Andriushchenko et al., 2021](#); [Polous et al., 2022](#); [Song et al., 2020](#)). For instance, [Song et al. \(2020\)](#) developed a methodology to evaluate the sustainability of the aviation industry using network data envelopment analysis, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive assessment of industry processes. Similarly, [Polous et al. \(2022\)](#) discussed personnel marketing in the context of airline anti-crisis management, highlighting the importance of addressing changing customer needs comprehensively within the aviation services sector. Furthermore, [Andriushchenko et al., \(2021\)](#) focused on the integrated structural assessment of the export potential of the aviation complex, underscoring the significance of a comprehensive approach to analyzing the

competitiveness of aviation enterprises in global markets. Secondly, while some studies touch upon the use of big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML) in digital marketing, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on how these technologies are being integrated into aviation marketing strategies and their impact on customer behavior and aviation performance.

Moreover, there is limited comparative research evaluating the effectiveness of different digital marketing tools and platforms. Understanding which strategies yield the best results in terms of customer engagement, brand loyalty, and return on investment (ROI) remains an underexplored area. Additionally, while customer engagement and satisfaction are central to digital marketing, there is insufficient research on optimizing digital marketing efforts to cater to diverse customer segments. Studies often generalize customer preferences without delving into the specific needs and behaviors of different demographic groups ([Ardini et al., 2022](#); [Dassanayake, 2023](#); [Polous et al., 2022](#); [Sainjargal et al., 2022](#); [Shivani, 2024](#)).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the aviation industry, necessitating a shift in marketing strategies. However, there is a lack of research on how aviation has adapted their digital marketing strategies in response to global crises and the effectiveness of these adaptations. The existing literature does not adequately address the challenges and opportunities presented by such unprecedented disruptions.

Conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) on optimizing digital marketing for aviation selection is crucial to bridging these gaps. An SLR would provide a structured analysis of existing research, identifying key trends, best practices, and areas requiring further investigation ([Rudyanto, 2021](#); [Siahaan et al., 2023](#)). By synthesizing findings from various studies, an SLR can offer valuable insights into the most effective digital marketing strategies and technologies, guiding aviation in enhancing

customer engagement and loyalty. Such a review would not only contribute to academic knowledge but also offer practical guidance for industry practitioners navigating the complexities of digital marketing in the aviation sector.

While digital marketing holds significant potential for the aviation industry, the current body of research is fragmented and lacks comprehensive reviews providing a clear understanding of emerging trends and best practices. Addressing these research gaps through a systematic literature review on this topic is essential to support aviation in optimizing their digital marketing strategies for better customer engagement and competitive advantage. This review will contribute significantly to both academic research and practical applications in the evolving landscape of aviation marketing.

The primary purpose of this review is to systematically analyze the emerging trends in digital marketing for aviation selection. By examining the latest developments and best practices, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how aviation can optimize their digital marketing strategies to enhance customer choice of aviation.

The early adoption of digital marketing by aviation has been a strategic move that significantly impacted their visibility, customer engagement, and ultimately, their revenue. As aviation navigated the digital landscape, they increasingly leveraged various digital marketing strategies to enhance their market presence and effectively engage with customers. This section delves into the historical evolution of digital marketing within the aviation industry, highlighting the key milestones and technological advancements that shaped its current state.

Email Marketing Campaigns

Early adopters of digital marketing in the aviation industry began by establishing a strong online presence through websites and email

marketing campaigns. These initial steps laid the foundation for more sophisticated digital marketing efforts that would follow and aligns with the rapid digital transformation that aviation have experienced in recent years ([Katsoni & Poulaki, 2021](#)).

Email marketing remains a vital tool for aviation to communicate with customers, promote special offers, and provide personalized updates. By leveraging customer data, aviation can segment their audience and deliver targeted email campaigns that cater to individual preferences and behaviors. Effective email marketing campaigns can drive customer engagement, increase conversions, and foster loyalty.

As the internet became more accessible and social media platforms emerged, aviation recognized the potential of these digital tools to reach a broader audience and engage with customers on a more personal level. According to [Katsoni and Poulaki \(2021\)](#), the adoption of digital marketing plans enriched with emerging revenue management practices can lead to increased bookings through direct distribution channels such as websites and apps. This early integration of digital marketing and revenue management practices marked a significant shift in how aviation approached their marketing strategies.

Aviation began leveraging crowdsourcing websites to enhance their digital marketing efforts, aiming to boost organic traffic and user engagement through data-driven analyses and optimization strategies ([Sakas & Reklitis, 2021](#)). Simultaneously, the aviation sector started offering in-flight entertainment and connectivity services using information and communication technology, with a focus on factors influencing customer adoption of these services, such as utilitarian and hedonic motivations ([Kim, 2022](#)). Furthermore, sentiment analysis of user-generated content emerged as a valuable tool for researching aviation service quality, providing insights from real-time passenger feedback to improve overall service

standards and customer satisfaction ([Rasool & Pathania, 2021a](#)). The digital revolution's impact on marketing concepts and practices, including data mining, automation, and remote communications, has been pivotal in reshaping the aviation industry's approach to customer engagement and service delivery ([Belostecinic, 2023](#)).

The Rise of Social Media and Mobile Marketing

The mid-2000s saw a surge in social media usage, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram becoming popular among consumers. Aviation quickly adapted to this trend by creating social media profiles to interact with customers, share updates, and promote their services. Social media marketing provided aviation with powerful tools to interact with customers, share content, and build relationships, ultimately driving customer loyalty and competitive advantage ([Knoblich et al., 2016](#)).

The proliferation of smartphones and mobile applications further revolutionized aviation marketing. Mobile apps became essential tools for aviation to offer convenient services such as mobile check-in, flight status updates, and personalized promotions. These apps not only improved the customer experience but also provided aviation with valuable data on customer preferences and behavior, which could be used to tailor marketing efforts more effectively. The use of organic traffic from crowdsourcing platforms to boost website traffic and user engagement highlighted the importance of understanding factors that influence online visibility ([Σακάς & Reklitis, 2021](#)).

The Advent of Digital Marketing in Aviation

The journey of digital marketing in the aviation industry began in the early 2000s with the realization that traditional marketing methods were insufficient in the rapidly changing technological environment ([Mahendru & Singh,](#)

[2023](#)). The Shift towards digital platforms was driven by the need for more efficient, cost-effective, and targeted marketing strategies ([Katsoni & Poulaki, 2021](#)).

Digital Evolution Models and Revenue Management Practices

Aviation have integrated digital evolution models and revenue management practices to enhance their direct distribution channels and evaluate the progress of digitalization towards achieving revenue integrity and customer-centric strategies. According to [Katsoni and Poulaki \(2021\)](#), utilizing digital tools to optimize revenue streams and customize products to meet customer needs effectively is essential. This strategic integration helps aviation to improve their booking processes, maximize revenue, and offer personalized customer experiences.

Crowdsourcing Platforms for Organic Traffic

The significance of organic traffic from crowdsourcing platforms in driving aviation' website traffic and user engagement cannot be overstated. Crowdsourcing platforms enable aviation to understand factors influencing online visibility and engagement, thus driving more traffic to their websites. This approach underscores the importance of using crowdsourcing as a digital marketing tool to boost user engagement and enhance the overall customer experience. Study of [Sakas and Reklitis \(2021\)](#) highlight the role of these platforms in enhancing website traffic and user engagement.

Web Analytics for Performance Measurement

Web analytics are pivotal in digital marketing as they provide data-driven insights that help aviation evaluate their marketing strategies and enhance performance. [Järvinen and Karjaluoto \(2015\)](#) emphasize the

importance of using analytics tools to optimize digital marketing campaigns and improve overall marketing effectiveness. By analyzing data on user behavior, traffic sources, and conversion rates, aviation can make informed decisions to refine their marketing efforts and achieve better results.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WeChat are powerful tools for aviation to interact with customers, share content, and build brand visibility. [Piranda et al. \(2022\)](#) discuss the impact of using social media platforms, such as Facebook Marketplace, as digital marketing tools that significantly enhance customer engagement and brand visibility. Social media marketing allows aviation to create and share engaging content, run targeted advertising campaigns, and interact with customers in real-time, driving traffic to their websites and increasing bookings.

METHODS

This study conducted a systematic literature review to analyze emerging trends and best practices in digital marketing within the aviation sector. The review focused on literature documents from the Scopus database, which is a comprehensive abstract and citation database for peer-reviewed literature. The review period spanned from 2016 to 2023, ensuring the inclusion of recent and relevant studies.

Data Collection

The literature search was performed using specific keywords related to digital marketing and aviation, including "aviation tourism marketing," "digital marketing aviation," "hospitality aviation," "aviation online tourism," and "aviation online marketing." These keywords were chosen to capture a wide range of studies within the scope of the review. The Scopus database's ranking system, which categorizes journals into quartiles (Q4 to Q1) based on their

impact and quality, was utilized to ensure the inclusion of credible and high-quality sources.

Selection Criteria

The initial search yielded a total of 255 documents. To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected papers, inclusion criteria were applied:

- Articles must focus on digital marketing strategies specific to the aviation industry.
- The publication period must be between 2016 and 2023.

After applying these criteria, 87 papers were identified as relevant for the review ([Alhamad & Mabkhot, 2023](#); [Almeida-Santana et al., 2020](#); [Anguera-Torrell et al., 2021](#); [Bamidele et al., 2023](#); [Banik et al., 2022](#); [Bellizzi et al., 2020](#); [Bougoure et al., 2016](#); [Byun et al., 2020](#); [Chang et al., 2024](#); [Chatterjee & Mandal, 2020](#); [H.-T. Chen & Chao, 2015](#); [T. Y. Chen et al., 2021](#); [Y. Chen et al., 2021](#); [Chiang, 2018, 2019](#); [Coursaris et al., 2016](#); [Dayioglu & Alnipak, 2023](#); [Díaz De Oleo et al., 2022](#); [Dwesar & Sahoo, 2022](#); [Feng et al., 2021](#); [Filippo et al., 2020](#); [Gallego & Font, 2021](#); [Gazzeah et al., 2022](#); [Grandhi et al., 2021](#); [Gures et al., 2018b](#); [Haarpaintner, 2022](#); [Higham et al., 2016](#); [Hlee et al., 2018](#); [Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2016](#); [Hu & Yang, 2021](#); [Ianencko et al., 2022](#); [Jang et al., 2022](#); [Kizildag et al., 2019](#); [Kunz et al., 2016](#); [Kwok et al., 2017](#); [Lin & Zhang, 2021](#); [Line et al., 2020](#); [Liu et al., 2018](#); [Loureiro, 2016](#); [Madzik et al., 2023, 2023](#); [Mantin & Rubin, 2016](#); [Mariani et al., 2020, 2020](#); [Masa'deh et al., 2021](#); [Meire & Derudder, 2022](#); [Menon et al., 2021](#); [Messner, 2020](#); [Moehl & Friedman, 2022](#); [Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2017](#); [Morgan & Pritchard, 2018](#); [Moslehpour et al., 2020](#); [Muritala et al., 2020](#); [Noori-daryan et al., 2023](#); [Novikov, 2022](#); [O'Connor, 2020](#); [Önder & Gunter, 2022](#); [Park et al., 2020](#); [P.J. et al., 2021](#); [Punel & Ermagun, 2018](#); [Rashideh, 2020](#); [Rasool & Pathania, 2021b](#); [Rincon-Novoa et al., 2022](#); [Samarah et al., 2022](#); [Seetanah et al., 2019](#); [Seo & Park, 2018](#); [Sezgen et al., 2023](#); [Sharma & Sharma,](#)

[2019](#); [Širá & Pukala, 2019](#); [Stamolampros et al., 2020](#); [Stanojevic, 2020](#); [Sujoed et al., 2022](#); [Tham & Evers-Swindell, 2018](#); [Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023, 2023](#); [X. Wang et al., 2023](#); [Y. Wang et al., 2017, 2017, p. 201](#); [Xiang et al., 2017](#); [Yao et al., 2024](#); [Ye et al., 2016](#); [Zeba et al., 2020](#); [Zhang et al., 2023](#); [Zheng et al., 2023](#); [Zhou et al., 2020](#)). The selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, ensuring a systematic and transparent approach to the literature review ([Moher et al., 2009](#)).

The PRISMA diagram outlining the selection process is presented in Figure 1. The initial search for papers yielded a total of 255 documents. To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected papers, several inclusion criteria were applied. First, 27 duplicate records were removed, reducing the count to 228 papers. Then, 80 papers were marked as ineligible by automation tools for not falling within the publication period of 2016 to 2023, leaving 148 papers. An additional 10 papers were removed for not meeting the tier criteria of Scopus Q4 to Q1, and 1 paper was excluded for lacking an abstract, bringing the total down to 137 papers. During the screening process, 2 papers were excluded for not meeting the specified criteria. Subsequently, 40 papers could not be retrieved, further narrowing the selection to 95 papers. Of these, 21 papers were excluded after assessment, resulting in 74 papers included in the review from the initial search.

In addition to the initial search, 31 papers were identified from other sources. Out of these, 12 papers were not retrieved, and 6 were excluded after assessment, leaving 13 papers included from other sources.

In total, 87 papers were included in the review, comprising 74 papers from the initial search and 13 papers from other sources. This meticulous selection process ensured the inclusion of high-quality papers focusing on digital marketing strategies specific to the aviation industry within the stipulated publication

period of 2016 to 2023. In this manner, the systematic review of literature generated from the Watase Uake System (Wahyudi, 2024).

Data Analysis

The selected papers were subjected to a comprehensive analysis and synthesis to identify key trends, strategies, and challenges in digital marketing for aviation. The analysis focused on various digital marketing tools such as social media, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and the use of big data analytics. Additionally, the review identified common challenges faced by airlines in optimizing their digital marketing strategies, including high competition and data privacy concerns. The findings from the selected papers were synthesized to provide a holistic understanding of the current state and future directions of digital marketing in the aviation industry. This synthesis aimed to highlight best practices, emerging trends, and areas requiring further investigation. By integrating insights from multiple studies, the review sought to offer valuable recommendations for both academic research and practical applications in the aviation sector. This systematic literature review aims to bridge the gaps in existing research by providing a comprehensive analysis of digital marketing strategies in the aviation industry. The insights gained from this review will guide airlines in optimizing their digital marketing efforts to enhance customer engagement and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

Year of publication

Figure 2 illustrates a notable surge in research on the efficacy of digital marketing in the aviation sector during 2020, a year profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. This period saw a remarkable peak, with 24 articles published, the highest number recorded within the observed timeframe. However, this spike was followed by a steep

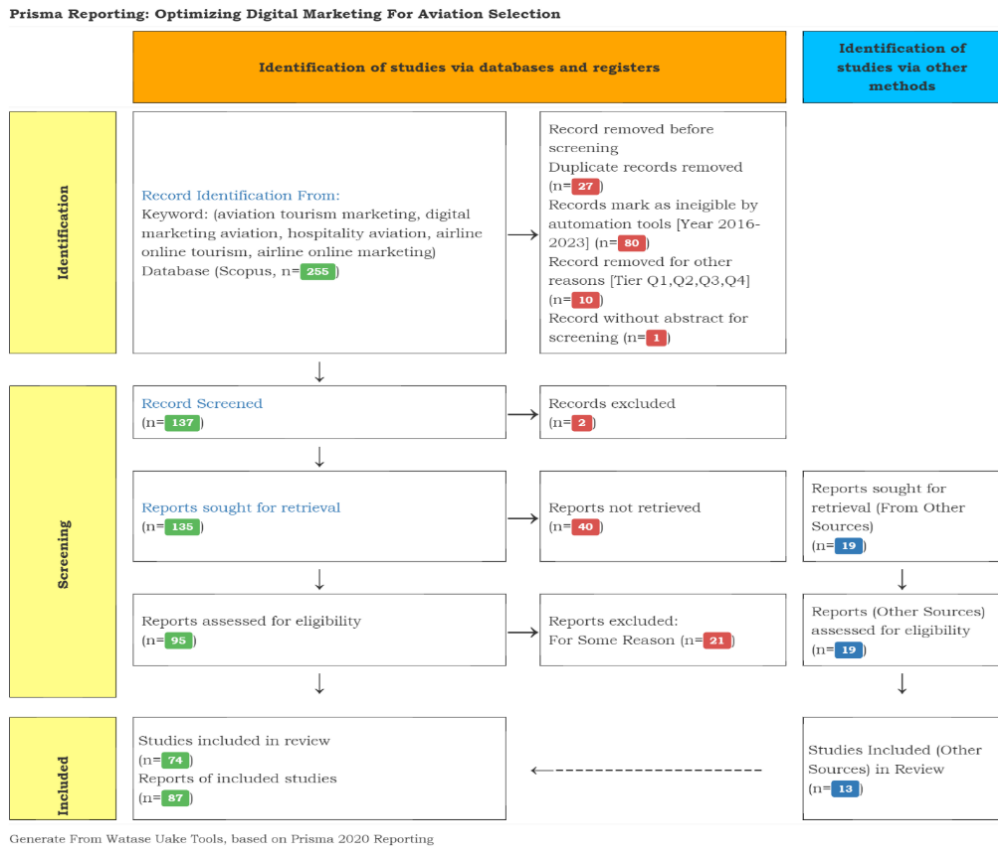


Figure 1. PRISMA diagram

RESULT

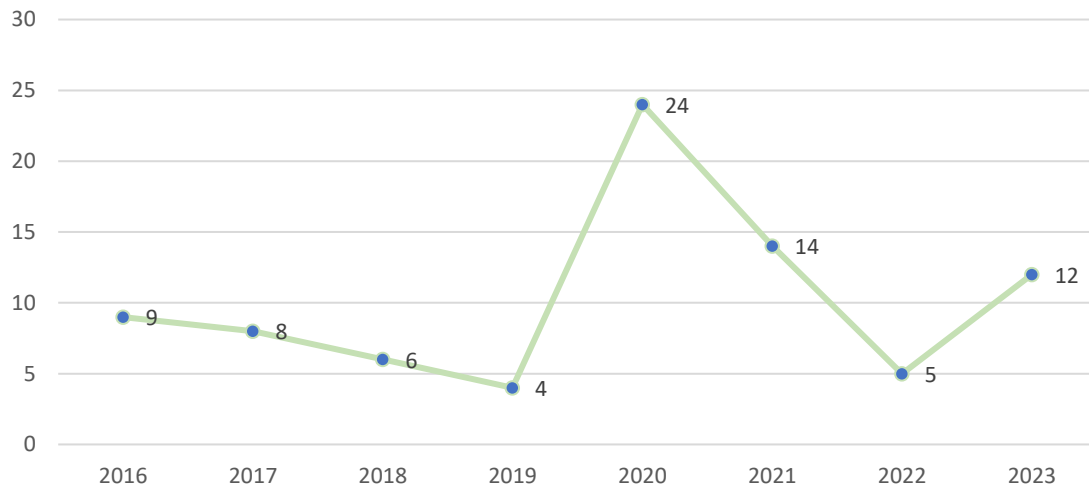


Figure 2. Year article publication

decline, with the number of publications dropping to 14 in 2021 and further plummeting to a mere 5 articles in 2022, marking the lowest point. Interestingly, there was a resurgence in 2023, with publications increasing to 12. Between 2016 and 2018, the annual number of articles fluctuated modestly, ranging from 6 to 9.

Additionally, Figure 3 provides a comparative analysis of publication trends across three distinct periods: before-COVID, COVID, on-COVID, and post-COVID. The before-COVID era, spanning from 2016 to 2019, saw the production of 27 research articles. The onset of the pandemic between 2020 and 2022 triggered a substantial increase in scholarly activity, resulting in 42 articles. However, the post-COVID period, defined as 2022 to 2024, experienced a significant downturn, with the number of articles dropping sharply to 13. These trends underscore the pandemic's profound impact on research dynamics within the aviation sector, highlighting both the volatility and the resurgence of interest in digital marketing efficacy.

The trend observed in the publication of research articles on digital marketing efficacy in the aviation sector highlights the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic interest and activity. In 2020, there was an unprecedented surge, with 24 articles published, reflecting a significant spike in scholarly attention as researchers sought to understand the transformative effects and challenges imposed on the industry by the pandemic. This heightened interest underscores the urgency and relevance of digital marketing strategies during times of crisis, as aviation grappled with unprecedented disruptions and sought innovative solutions to sustain operations.

However, this surge was followed by a notable decline in the number of publications, dropping to 14 in 2021 and further to 5 in 2022.

This downward trend may indicate a shift in research priorities as the initial flurry of questions related to the pandemic began to mature. Researchers possibly gained foundational insights into the immediate impacts of COVID-19, prompting a pivot towards other emerging issues or more nuanced aspects of digital marketing in aviation. This pattern suggests that the initial wave of research fulfilled a critical need for understanding, allowing the academic community to build a base of knowledge upon which to develop more specialized studies.

Interestingly, the year 2023 witnessed a resurgence in research activity, with the number of published articles rising to 12. This revival may signal a renewed interest in digital marketing strategies, perhaps driven by the emergence of new challenges or opportunities within the post-pandemic landscape. The fluctuating trends observed over these years emphasize the dynamic nature of research focus, heavily influenced by global events and industry-specific transformations.

To gain deeper insights into these trends, a comprehensive analysis of the content and themes of the published articles is essential. Such an examination would reveal the evolving dynamics and focal points of research in this field, highlighting how global crises can steer scientific inquiry in the short to medium term. This pattern of publication reflects not only the immediate response to a global crisis but also the ongoing adaptation and refinement of digital marketing strategies as the aviation sector navigates its recovery and future growth.

Country studies

According to the data depicted in Figure 4, the geographical distribution of research articles on digital marketing efficacy in the aviation sector is varied but notably unbalanced. The lowest number of articles come from several

regions, including Korea, UAE, Europe, Cuba, and France, with each contributing only two articles. This limited representation suggests that these regions may either be in the early stages of research development or have a lower academic focus on the intersection of digital marketing and aviation. These areas could present significant opportunities for future research growth and investment, addressing a currently underexplored domain. China, represented by six articles, also appears underrepresented despite its significant role in the global aviation market.

This underscores a potential gap in the research landscape, indicating a need for increased scholarly efforts to understand and enhance digital marketing strategies within Chinese aviation. Taiwan shows a slightly higher involvement with seven articles, while both India and the US each produced nine articles, reflecting a moderate level of research activity. Interestingly, the highest number of articles,

totaling 45, are from multinational studies. This indicates a substantial collaborative effort across borders, reflecting the global nature of both the aviation industry and the digital marketing strategies it employs. Such multinational research efforts are crucial for developing comprehensive insights and best practices that can be applied universally, considering the diverse challenges and opportunities presented by different markets.

Type of method used

According to Figure 5, the survey method emerges as the most prevalent research approach, utilized in 24 articles out of the total examined. This indicates a strong preference for quantitative data collection and large-scale research within the field of digital marketing efficacy in-flight selection. The widespread use of surveys can be attributed to their efficiency in gathering data from diverse participants, making them a flexible option for researchers seeking

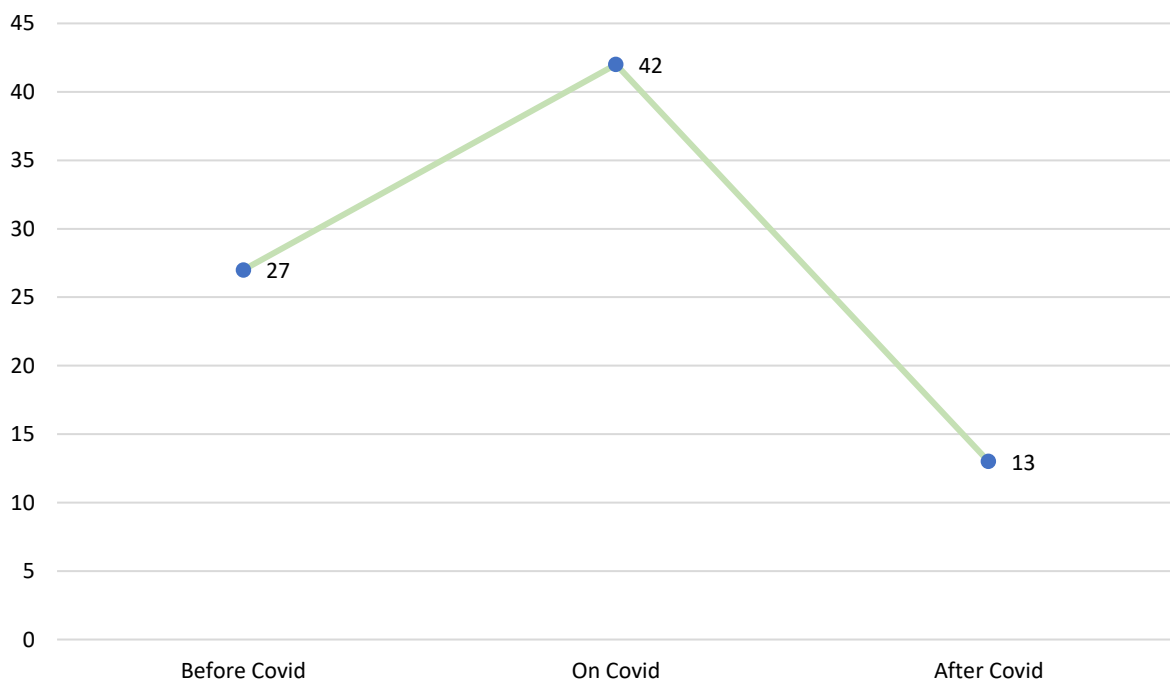


Figure 3. Paper count based on Covid 19 Pandemic status

statistically significant results. Surveys enable researchers to capture a broad spectrum of insights, allowing for comprehensive analysis and generalizable findings.

The second most prominent method is the systematic review, featured in 10 papers. This reflects a substantial interest among

researchers in conducting in-depth reviews of existing literature. The systematic review method is favored for its comprehensive and structured approach to collecting, evaluating, and analyzing literature pertinent to the research topic.

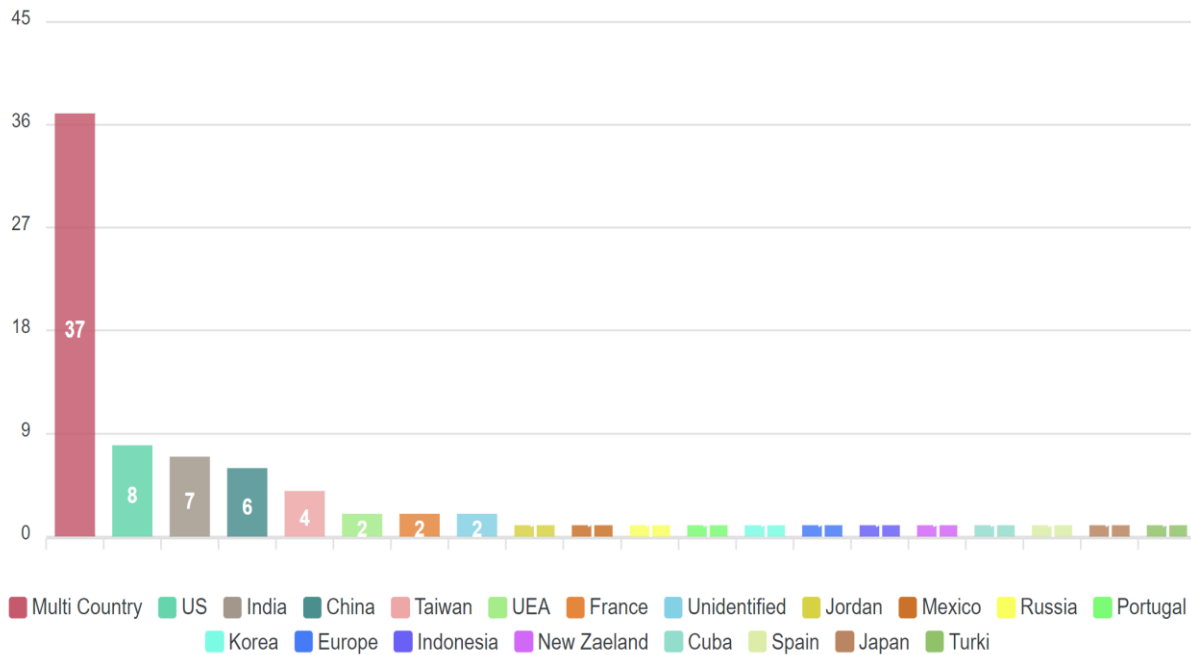


Figure 4. Country studies

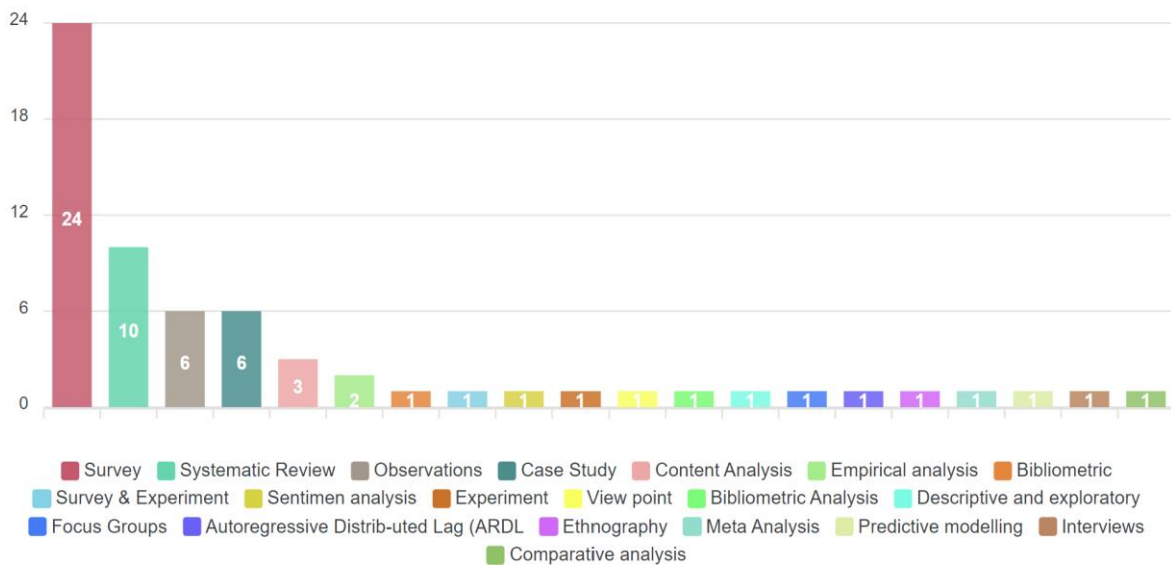


Figure 5. Method used

By adhering to a systematic and transparent methodology, systematic reviews help mitigate selection and publication bias. Researchers follow stringent procedures in searching, selecting, and evaluating studies, thereby ensuring that all relevant research is critically considered and assessed. This rigorous approach enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.

Other notable methods include observations and case studies, each used in seven articles, highlighting the value placed on qualitative insights and detailed contextual analysis. Content analysis, employed in four articles, underscores the importance of examining communication patterns and media content to understand digital marketing efficacy. Less frequently used methods, such as empirical analysis, ethnography, experiments, viewpoints, and focus groups, indicate a more diverse but limited application within this research domain.

In contrast, the use of observational methods and case studies in only 6 papers each indicates a lower preference or suitability for these approaches in the research domain of digital marketing efficacy in-flight selection. Although observational research provides rich, in-depth insights, it faces several challenges that may contribute to its lower popularity. These challenges include observer bias, high time and cost requirements, limited generalizability of results, reactivity of subjects who may alter their behavior when observed, difficulties in controlling variables, complex data documentation and analysis, and ethical issues related to observing personal behavior.

Case study methods, while offering highly contextual and detailed insights, also face limitations that may explain their less

frequent use. The primary challenge with case studies is their difficulty in replication across different contexts, which reduces their external validity. This makes it challenging for researchers to generalize findings to broader populations or different settings, limiting their applicability.

Despite these limitations, both observational and case study methods remain valuable for certain aspects of research. They can provide deep contextual understanding and nuanced perspectives that other methods might miss. However, the specific demands and characteristics of research on digital marketing efficacy in-flight selection seem to favor approaches that allow for broader data collection and more easily generalizable results, such as surveys and systematic reviews.

Digital marketing efficacy

The systematic literature review (SLR) on digital marketing efficacy in the aviation industry provides valuable insights into the prevalent digital marketing tools and platforms. The ranking of these tools, based on the number of articles, indicates the popularity and perceived effectiveness of each method within the industry.

Social media emerges as the most discussed digital marketing tool, with 19 articles highlighting its broad reach and engagement potential. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow airlines to interact directly with customers, share updates, and manage brand reputation. The high number of articles suggests that social media strategies are pivotal for aviation marketing, offering real-time communication and targeted advertising opportunities.

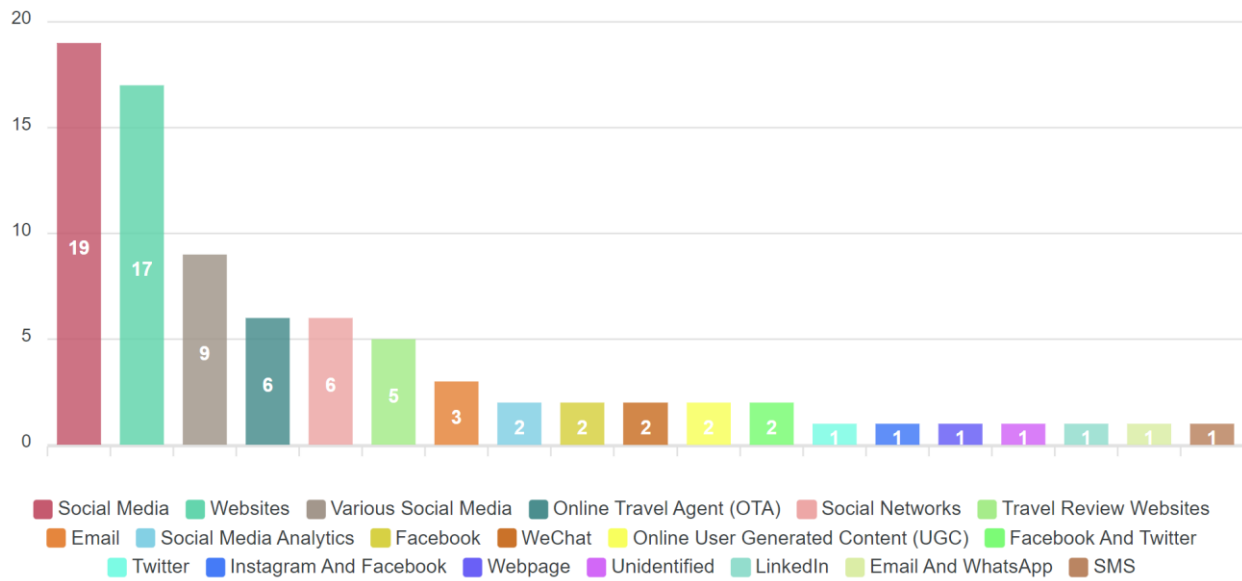


Figure 6. Digital marketing efficacy

Similarly, airline websites, which are the focus of 17 articles, serve as the primary portal for ticket sales, customer service, and information dissemination. This underscores the importance of having a user-friendly, informative, and efficient online presence. Websites also enable airlines to collect customer data, tailor services, and offer personalized experiences, thus enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Moreover, the use of various social media platforms, as indicated by nine articles, highlights the strategy of leveraging multiple channels such as Instagram and LinkedIn to reach different audience segments. This comprehensive social media approach maximizes visibility and engagement across diverse demographics and preferences.

Collaboration with online travel agents (OTAs) and social networks is also significant, as shown by six articles. OTAs facilitate broader distribution of airline tickets and services, while social networks enhance connectivity and community building. This strategy helps airlines

tap into the extensive user bases of OTAs and social networks, thereby expanding market reach.

Travel review websites, discussed in five articles, play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and decisions. Positive reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor can significantly boost an airline's reputation and attract more customers. This focus on review sites indicates the importance of maintaining high service standards and encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive feedback.

Despite being less discussed, email marketing, with three articles, remains a valuable tool for personalized communication. It allows airlines to send targeted offers, updates, and loyalty program information directly to customers. Its effectiveness in nurturing customer relationships and driving repeat business is notable.

Additionally, tools and platforms such as social media analytics, Facebook, WeChat, user-generated content (UGC), and combined use of Facebook and Twitter are each highlighted in

two articles. Social media analytics help in measuring campaign performance and customer sentiment, while Facebook and WeChat offer direct communication channels. Leveraging UGC boosts engagement and authenticity.

Finally, other digital media like SMS, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, each discussed in one article, still play roles in digital marketing strategies. SMS and WhatsApp are used for direct, immediate communication, while LinkedIn is valuable for B2B marketing and professional networking. Instagram and Twitter provide additional channels for visual and real-time content sharing.

The SLR results highlight the diverse range of digital marketing tools utilized in the aviation industry, with social media and websites being the most prominent. Each tool offers unique benefits, from direct customer interaction to data-driven insights. Airlines are increasingly adopting a multi-channel approach to maximize reach and engagement, tailoring their strategies to leverage the strengths of each digital platform. This comprehensive approach helps in building stronger customer relationships, enhancing brand loyalty, and ultimately driving business growth in the competitive aviation market.

Key Trends in Digital Marketing Efficacy in Aviation

Social Media Platforms

Social media emerged as a dominant theme, with 20 papers highlighting its significance as a marketing, sales, and customer engagement tool (Figure 6). Social media platforms enable airlines to reach wider audiences, share engaging content, and build brand loyalty. Effective use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok allows airlines to cater to specific

demographic groups, enhancing visibility and customer relationships.

Websites

Websites ranked second with 16 papers, underscoring their role as primary information hubs for customers. Airline websites provide essential details such as flight schedules, ticket prices, and baggage policies, alongside functionalities like online check-in and seat selection. This emphasis on websites showcases their importance in enhancing customer convenience and reducing the burden on customer service teams.

Online Travel Agents (OTAs)

OTAs were discussed in six papers, reflecting their role in expanding market reach. OTAs help airlines increase visibility and manage revenue more effectively by offering comprehensive solutions and leveraging advanced technologies. Integration with OTAs allows airlines to improve customer service through 24/7 support and joint promotions.

CONCLUSIONS

This systematic literature review highlights significant advancements and ongoing challenges in digital marketing strategies within the aviation industry. The findings underscore the crucial role of digital tools such as social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and big data analytics in driving customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. These tools have enabled airlines to enhance their market presence, personalize customer interactions, and foster stronger relationships with their audience.

Despite the clear benefits, airlines face considerable challenges, including high competition and data privacy concerns. The competitive nature of the industry demands continuous innovation and adaptation to stand out. Data privacy and security remain significant

issues as airlines collect and analyze vast amounts of customer data. Ensuring compliance with regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) adds complexity to data management processes.

The review identifies several key trends in digital marketing for airlines. Social media platforms are essential for reaching broader audiences and building brand loyalty through engaging content and direct customer interactions. Websites serve as critical information hubs, offering comprehensive services that enhance customer convenience. Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and travel review websites significantly influence customer decisions, highlighting the importance of maintaining a positive online reputation. User-generated content (UGC) on platforms like TripAdvisor and Instagram plays a vital role in modern marketing strategies, providing authentic and trusted customer experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted research dynamics within the aviation sector, as reflected in the surge of publications in 2020. The pandemic emphasized the importance of digital marketing strategies in times of crisis, prompting airlines to seek innovative solutions to sustain operations. The

subsequent decline in research activity suggests a shift in priorities as the immediate impacts were absorbed and foundational insights gained.

Future research should focus on integrating emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into digital marketing strategies. These technologies hold the potential to further personalize customer experiences, enhance engagement, and improve operational efficiency. Additionally, there is a need for comparative studies evaluating the effectiveness of various digital marketing tools and platforms to determine the best approaches for different market segments.

Addressing the identified research gaps through a comprehensive and systematic analysis of digital marketing strategies will provide valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications. Aviation must continually adapt and refine their digital marketing approaches to maintain a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. By leveraging the latest technologies and best practices, aviation can enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, their market position.

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