



**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
HALIC UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME**

**EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN AIRLINE INDUSTRY IN GULF
COUNTRIES**

MASTER'S THESIS

**By
Tuba SAMEEN**

**Thesis Advisor
Assist. Prof Mehmet Sıtkı SAYGILI**

**İSTANBUL
December 2023**



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MA/MSc THESIS APPROVAL PAGE**

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Effective marketing strategies in Airline Industry in Gulf countries

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THESIS ETHICS STATEMENT

I declare that I completed this study titled 'Effective marketing strategies in Airline Industry in Gulf countries', which I submitted as an MA thesis under the responsibility of advisor Assist. Prof Mehmet Sıtkı SAYGILI, that I collected all the data/ samples by myself, I did the experiments or analysis / I had the experiments or analysis done in the related laboratories, that I have fully indicated the information I have received from other resources in the text and bibliography, that I have acted in accordance with the scientific research and ethical rules during the study process, and that I accept any legal consequences if otherwise occurs.

Tuba SAMEEN

PREFACE

I am honored to present this thesis, the culmination of dedicated research and inquiry into the intricacies of marketing strategies within the airline industry, with a specific focus on the Gulf countries. This work wouldn't have been possible without the support and guidance I received, and I want to express my gratitude to those who played a crucial role in this endeavor.

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Prof Mehmet Sıtkı SAYGILI, whose continuous guidance, and unwavering support have been invaluable throughout this research. My family and friends for encouraging me to broaden my horizons and give the best.

My interest in aviation, which started during my undergraduate studies, combined seamlessly with my curiosity about marketing strategies employed by various companies. This fusion of passions led me to investigate the captivating world of airline marketing strategies in Gulf countries. The dynamic nature of this industry and the strategic excellence of Gulf-based airlines provided a compelling backdrop for my exploration.

This thesis endeavors to provide readers with a comprehensive insight into the factors that position Gulf countries at the forefront of the global airline industry. The synthesis of my love for aviation and the intrigue surrounding marketing strategies has shaped the central theme of this study — an assessment of the effectiveness of marketing strategies within the Gulf airline industry.

The analysis aims to scrutinize the key elements contributing to the success of airlines in this region, shedding light on the intricate interplay between marketing strategies and the broader aviation landscape.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all those who have played a role, directly or indirectly, in the realization of this research. It is my hope that this thesis contributes meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge in both aviation and marketing and serves as a source of inspiration for future endeavors in these fields.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BD. : Brand Development

BR. : Brand Recognition

DA. : Data Analytics

GAC. : Growth of Airline Companies

IATA. : International Air Transport Association

ICAO. : International Civil Aviation Organisation

KPIs. : Key Performance Indicators

LCC. : Low-Cost Carriers

ROI. : Return on Investment

SEO. : Search Engine Optimization

SPSS. : Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

WWII. : World War II

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ÖZET

EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN AIRLINE INDUSTRY IN GULF COUNTRIES

Son yıllarda, Körfez ülkelerinde havacılık sektörü, büyük operatörler arasında yoğun bir rekabet ortamını beraberinde getiren önemli bir büyüme ve gelişme yaşadı. Havayolu şirketlerinin rekabet avantajı sağlamak, tüketicileri çekmek ve bu rekabetçi sektörde karlılığı optimize etmek için artık güçlü pazarlama stratejileri geliştirmeleri zorunluluk haline geldi. Bu çalışma, Körfez ülkelerindeki havacılık endüstrisinde pazarlama stratejilerinin etkinliğini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, pozitivizm felsefesi benimsenmiş ve aynı zamanda dedüktif araştırma yaklaşımı izlenmiştir. Yazar, nicel araştırma yöntemlerini kullanarak birincil verileri anket aracılığıyla toplamıştır. Anket, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 450 katılımcı arasında dağıtılmıştır. Veriler, Körfez ülkelerindeki havayolu şirketlerinin çalışanlarından elde edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, marka tanıma, marka geliştirme ve veri analitiğinin havayolu şirketlerinin büyümesine olumlu yönde etki ettiğini göstermektedir, çünkü elde edilen sonuçlar önemli düzeydedir. Pazarlama çabalarını kişiselleştirmek için, büyük veri analitiği ve yapay zekâ gibi son teknolojilerin entegrasyonuna odaklanmak gereklidir. Tüketici verilerini kişiselleştirilmiş teklifler, promosyonlar ve öngörü analizleri için nasıl kullanacaklarını bilmek, tüketici katılımını ve bağlılığını artırabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Havacılık Endüstrisi, Havacılık, Körfez Ülkeleri, Pazarlama, Pazarlama Stratejileri.*

ABSTRACT

EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN AIRLINE INDUSTRY IN GULF COUNTRIES

In recent years, the aviation business in Gulf nations has experienced substantial growth and development, which has sparked fierce competition among the major operators. For airlines to establish a competitive edge, draw consumers, and optimize profitability in this fiercely competitive sector, they must now build powerful marketing strategies. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies in airline industry in Gulf countries. In this study, the positivism philosophy is used and also deductive research approach is followed. The author has used quantitative research methods and also data is collected through primary data with the help of survey. The questionnaire is distributed among 450 respondents through purposive sampling. The data is collected from the employees of airline companies of Gulf nations. The results show that brand recognition, brand development, and data analytics have positive impact on growth of airline companies because of significant results. In order to personalise marketing efforts, it is first necessary to look at the integration of cutting-edge technology like big data analytics and artificial intelligence. Consumer engagement and loyalty can be increased by knowing how to use consumer data for personalised offers, promotions, and predictive analyses.

Keywords: *Gulf Countries, Airline Industry, Aviation, Marketing, Marketing Strategies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The industry of airline has been hit very hard. The international data assessed that no industry has witnessed a higher effect than airlines (Alshurideh et al. 2019). Many airlines have witnessed all of their flights even various are now using their aircraft of passenger as freighter. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) approximated that the airline sector requires at least five years to get better the major decline in international demand of passengers that decline 90% because it has activated highly severe monetary difficulties covering \$314 billion in the revenues internationally and problems of liquidity (Hussain et al. 2015). Associating to the hit of pandemic and the high fixed cost of operations, the airlines have faced different challenges of severe market. To resolve the commotion, the companies of airline carried out strategies like plan of "Infinite Fly", biometric system of check-in, positioning strategy of pricing, interactive and warmth strategy of promotion from 4P's (product, place, price, promotion) strategy to fix the existing volume of passengers and monetary crisis (Bose, 2018).

Vespermann et al. (2008) says competition is stiff and rising. Understand customers and observe competition. Competition affects airlines. Matching services to client needs can ensure airlines' success. Customer satisfaction determines service quality. Price and service determine airline brands. Airlines exist by monitoring and controlling service quality (McKechnie et al. 2008). An airline can stand out by consistently and efficiently providing high-quality services. Service quality must match or surpass target consumer expectations. However, airlines must balance client satisfaction and profits. The airline properly defines and communicates the service standard so staff knows what to expect. Most airlines fail to deliver. Another factor of productivity is to improve service, replacing old planes with new ones, etc. Airlines must avoid sacrificing quality for productivity (Aburumman, 2020).

Standardizing quality would boost consumer satisfaction. Consumers learn about a brand, examine its offerings, inquire, buy, and use the service. Customers can stick with their existing provider or switch to a new one. However, the airline business has reached a crossroads where it is important to satisfy consumers by providing the best amenities, while fuel and labor expenses continue to discover methods to decrease costs, giving rise to low-cost/no-frill carriers. Aviation is now the most crucial sector for economic growth. It is essential for moving people and goods across long distances, whether domestically or internationally (Lohmann & Spasojevic, 2018). Competition and government incentives boosted flights and fleets.

1.2. Problem Statement

It is challenging to promote the airline sector, which is a service-oriented company, using simply conventional marketing techniques. The product in a product firm is generally standardized and is displayed on a shelf, ready for the consumer to pick it up. The consumer in the airline industry is confronted with the airline whose customer service is more variable and less consistent. More sophisticated marketing will be required as competition increases (Taneja, 2016).

In recent years, the aviation business in Gulf nations has experienced substantial growth and development, which has sparked fierce competition among the major operators. For airlines to establish a competitive edge, draw consumers, and optimize profitability in this fiercely competitive sector, they must now build powerful marketing strategies. However, there are many obstacles that prevent the Gulf airline industry from successfully implementing marketing techniques. The variety of consumer preferences and habits in Gulf nations is one of the primary issues (Tubigi, 2015). Airlines must customize their marketing initiatives to meet the particular needs and expectations of these different client segments, which include a mix of locals, expats, and foreign tourists. The oversaturation of conventional marketing channels is another issue. But because the digital space is so saturated, it takes creative approaches that make use of social media, mobile apps, and tailored communications to stand out. The rivalry for Gulf Airlines is also fierce, coming from both domestic and foreign airlines. To position oneself as the clients' preferred option, this calls for the creation of distinctive brand identities and

differentiation strategies. The Gulf region's geopolitical issues and economic volatility present further difficulties. Political unrest, shifting laws, and fluctuating oil costs can have an effect on customer behavior and travel patterns, necessitating airlines' flexibility and adaptation of their marketing plans (Mantur, 2015).

1.3. Aims and Objectives

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies in airline industry in Gulf countries.

The objectives are:

- To assess the impact of brand positioning on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries
- To assess the impact of brand recognition on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries
- To assess the impact of data analytics on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries

1.4. Significance of the study

Due to a number of important factors, the study on efficient marketing tactics in the aviation sector in Gulf nations is of utmost importance. Throughout the past few decades, the aviation industry in the Gulf area has experienced significant growth. Travelers from all over the world come to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, which have all become significant global aviation centers. The success of airlines operating in the area depends on their ability to comprehend and use successful marketing techniques in this cutthroat sector. The demographics of the Gulf nations are distinctive, with a sizable expatriate community and a focus on luxury and high-end travel. To meet the target audience's varied wants and tastes, this calls for customized marketing strategies (Kemp & Vinke, 2012). The airline sector in the Gulf is also marked by fierce competition, with a number of well-known carriers contending for market dominance. Airlines must use cutting-edge marketing strategies that effectively express their distinct value propositions and services if they want to stand out from the competition and draw in customers (Bahman & Shaker, 2022). The COVID-19 epidemic has also had a significant

negative impact on the aviation sector globally, particularly in the Gulf States. Studying efficient marketing tactics becomes even more important as the economy improves and the sector adjusts to the "new normal." To effectively sell their services, rebuild customer confidence, and increase demand, airlines must recognize emerging trends, consumer behavior shifts, and digital marketing opportunities (De Oliveira & Caetano, 2019).

1.5. Definition of Terms

Brand Positioning - Brand positioning describes the distinctive value that a brand offers to its target market. It is a marketing technique developed by brands to communicate their value proposition, or the reason why a buyer should choose their brand over rivals, while also establishing their brand identity. Additionally, brand positioning is employed when a business wishes to present itself to its target market in a particular way so that consumers would associate the brand with its value proposition (Fayvishenko, 2018).

Brand Recognition - The capacity of consumers to distinguish one brand over another based on its features is referred to as brand recognition. The idea of brand recognition is applied in marketing and advertising. It is deemed successful when consumers can identify a brand without being explicitly exposed to the name of the company by using visual or auditory cues such logos, slogans, packaging, colors, or jingles (Khurram et al. 2018).

Data Analytics - The study of examining unprocessed data to draw inferences about such information is known as data analytics. Many data analytics methods and procedures have been mechanized into mechanical procedures and algorithms that operate on raw data for human consumption (Runkler, 2020).

1.6. Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is about introduction in which problem statement, aims and objectives, and significance of the study is discussed. The second chapter is about literature review in which the findings of previous studies are gathered.

The third chapter is about methodology in which the research method, approach, and data analysis method are assessed. The fourth chapter is about data analysis and discussion and the fifth chapter is about conclusion and recommendations.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of previous studies and identifies the research gaps that help the researcher to achieve the objectives. This chapter helps to develop theoretical framework and form hypotheses that help to assess the research objectives.

2.2. Marketing and Marketing Strategies

2.2.1. Main Marketing Strategies

According to Pappas et al. (2016) the marketing tactics of an airline corporation include a comprehensive approach aimed at developing an appealing brand image, attracting and retaining consumers, and optimising income streams. First and foremost, a focus on focused segmentation is critical. Airlines use demographic, regional, and psychographic data to personalise their services and promotions to certain client segments. This allows for personalised communications and services, which fosters a sense of connection. Second, digital domination is essential. Airlines invest considerably in a comprehensive web presence in today's tech-savvy environment. Agzamov (2021) mentioned that they use social media platforms, interactive websites, and mobile apps to interact with clients in real time, offering frictionless booking experiences and advertising unique bargains. Furthermore, effective content marketing is used, with interesting travel guides, destination insights, and customer anecdotes that not only highlight the airline's offerings but also inspire wanderlust. Loyalty programs are extremely important in the airline sector. Airlines increase client retention by providing benefits such as seat upgrades, lounge access, and bonus miles through frequent flyer memberships and tiered awards. These programs encourage not only brand loyalty but also repeat business. Furthermore, a great focus on customer service distinguishes

successful airlines. Customer satisfaction and favourable word-of-mouth marketing are enhanced by prompt response to questions, fast grievance resolution, and a pleasant and welcome in-flight experience. Airlines also form alliances and partnerships to broaden their reach (Best, 2013). Moreover, Doole & Lowe, (2012) mentioned that collaborations with other carriers, hotel chains, and travel agencies result in a holistic travel ecosystem that provides customers with integrated services and smooth connections. Finally, airlines benefit from seasonal promotions and dynamic price schemes. Airlines optimise revenue creation while tempting travellers with competitive rates by deliberately altering tickets based on demand, booking trends, and external factors such as holidays or events.

2.2.2. Issues Considering for Creating a Company Marketing Strategy

To ensure a successful and impactful campaign, developing a corporate marketing plan necessitates careful consideration of a number of essential variables. One of the most important issues to handle is identifying and comprehending the target audience. A thorough understanding of demographics, psychographics, and consumer behaviours allows for the approach to be tailored to effectively resonate with potential customers. Ali & Anwar (2021) mentioned that another critical aspect is competitive analysis. In a competitive market, thoroughly examining competitors' strengths and shortcomings enables for differentiation of the company's offers. This study assists in developing a distinct value proposition that distinguishes the organisation and speaks directly to the demands of the target market.

Moreover, another author Best, (2013) mentioned that budget allocation arises as a major issue. Determining the optimal distribution of resources across various marketing channels - digital, conventional, and social - necessitates a delicate balancing act. Striking the proper chord ensures maximum reach while staying within budget limits. Because of the changing nature of the digital landscape, an adaptive online approach is required. To sustain online visibility and engagement, keep up with the ever-changing algorithms, SEO practices, and social media trends. The strategy's adaptability allows for rapid adjustments to capitalise on emerging opportunities and handle unexpected hurdles. Ali & Anwar (2021) mentioned that technology integration presents both opportunities and problems. Using marketing automation tools, data analytics, and AI-powered insights can help

improve productivity and decision-making. However, maintaining data privacy and cybersecurity while employing technology necessitates constant monitoring to mitigate any dangers.

According to Best (2013), the generation and dissemination of content emerge as critical factors. Creating engaging, relevant, and meaningful content engages audiences and develops brand loyalty. Strategizing content distribution across several platforms and formats maximises its impact and creates a consistent brand image. Finally, the effectiveness of the plan is determined by the evaluation of key performance indicators (KPIs). Defining unambiguous success measures, such as conversion rates, customer acquisition expenses, and brand awareness measurements, supports continuing plan refinement and optimisation. Moreover, developing a thorough corporate marketing plan entails tackling a slew of challenges. A comprehensive approach is required for everything from audience comprehension and competition analysis to budget allocation, technological integration, and content planning (Agzamov et al. 2021). The development of a powerful marketing strategy that propels the organisation towards its goals is driven by flexibility, adaptability, and a keen focus on measurable outcomes.

2.2.3. Brand Value and Importance for Companies

According to Tsimonis & Dimitriadis (2014) brand value is an essential component of modern business strategy, exerting significant influence over a company's success and market positioning. It includes intangible assets accumulated by a brand over time, such as consumer perceptions, emotional ties, and reputation. In an era of severe competition and frequently changing customer tastes, brand value is critical for businesses across industries. A great brand builds customer loyalty and trust, which leads to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Customers who identify with a brand's values and offers become champions, expanding the brand's reach through natural promotion (Eugenio-Vela et al. 2020). This results in increasing market share and long-term revenue growth. Brand value is also important in a company's resiliency through difficult times. Consumers are more likely to forgive and remain loyal to a trusted name, so a well-established brand can weather crises more effectively. Furthermore, Leekha Chhabra & Sharma (2014) mentioned that a strong brand can fetch premium pricing,

allowing businesses to maintain solid profit margins while investing in innovation. Brand value serves as a beacon guiding customer choices in the digital age, when information flows fast and abundantly. A brand's online presence, social media participation, and consistent message all help to shape its identity and influence consumer perceptions. Brand management mistakes can result in public relations disasters and long-term damage (Huertas-García et al. 2017). Strategic alliances, collaborations, and market expansion all rely on brand value. A well-known and reputable brand is more likely to attract potential business partners and facilitate entry into new markets. A strong brand may also attract top talent, promoting a great internal culture and allowing a company to compete in the talent market.

2.2.4. Brand Strategies

Brand strategies are critical components of a company's marketing activities, consisting of a series of purposeful acts aimed at developing a distinct and remembered identity in the eyes of consumers. These strategies are more than just logos and slogans; they encompass the company's values, goals, and promises, establishing a strong emotional connection with the target audience (Theurer et al. 2018). According to Herstein & Berger (2013) brand positioning is at the heart of great brand strategy. This entails identifying a distinct market niche in which the brand can own and dominate, therefore distinguishing itself from competitors. A good brand positioning establishes the foundation for long-term success by connecting the brand's offers with the desires and needs of its target customers. Hsu (2017) mentioned that another important factor is consistency. From advertising and packaging to consumer interactions and online presence, brands must portray a consistent image across all touch-points. This consistency fosters client loyalty by increasing recognition and trust. A well-defined brand strategy also specifies the tone and messaging that a company will use. The constant use of language, whether casual and welcoming or formal and instructive, helps build a strong brand voice that resonates with the intended audience.

Theurer et al. (2018) stated that engaging with clients via social media and other platforms has become critical in the digital age. Digital marketing approaches are used in successful brand initiatives to establish a dynamic and interactive online presence. This

allows brands to interact with their customers in real time, listen to their opinions, and adjust their tactics accordingly. A brand strategy considers evolution and adaptation. Markets and consumer tastes shift with time, and a brand must be adaptable enough to pivot while remaining true to its basic values. To remain current, aesthetic components may need to be refreshed or messaging may need to be adjusted. Brand strategies serve as a guidepost for a company as it navigates the competitive marketplace (Hsu, 2017). A well-thought-out strategy positions the brand for success, builds customer loyalty, and ultimately drives business growth. It is a dynamic structure that adapts to shifting market dynamics and consumer expectations while remaining faithful to the brand's identity.

2.2.5. Brand Image and Recognition

According to Elliott et al. (2015) brand image and recognition are critical components of marketing and corporate success. Brand image encompasses consumers' impressions, feelings, and affiliations with a specific brand. It is the core of a brand that separates it from competitors and generates a distinct identity in the minds of consumers. A strong brand image is created by a planned combination of visual components, messaging, values, and customer experiences. In contrast, recognition is the result of a well-crafted brand image. It denotes how well-known and easily recognisable a brand is within its target demographic. Recognition extends beyond a brand's emblem or tagline to the complete spectrum of touchpoints with its customers, including products, services, marketing, and digital presence. Consumer loyalty, trust, and choice are frequently influenced by great brand recognition (Herstein & Berger, 2013).

The impact on consumer behaviour demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between brand image and recognition. When a positive brand image is regularly repeated, it fosters trust and credibility. When customers come across a brand they recognise and identify with favourable traits, they are more inclined to favour it in their purchasing decisions. This phenomena emphasises the necessity of maintaining brand consistency throughout all encounters, as any inconsistency might dilute the image and hinder recognition (Elliott et al. 2015). According to Elliott et al. (2015), with the advent of social media and online platforms in the digital age, brand recognition has taken on new dimensions. Brands have the chance to communicate with a global audience, but they must

also stand out in the digital cacophony. As a result, a well-defined and effectively articulated brand image is critical for breaking through the clutter and creating an unforgettable impression on consumers' minds.

2.3. Aviation Industry and Main Building Blocks

2.3.1. Development of World Aviation Industry

Sarigül & Coşkun (2022) stated that the evolution of the global aviation sector has been extraordinary, distinguished by technological advances, globalisation, and improved accessibility. Aviation has evolved dramatically since the Wright brothers' first powered flight in 1903 to the sleek and efficient aircraft of today. Aviation was once a daring endeavour, with pioneers pushing the boundaries of engineering and aerodynamics. During World War I, the advent of metal construction and more powerful engines lay the groundwork for commercial flying. Passenger airlines emerged during the interwar period, making air travel more accessible to a wider audience. The jet engine revolutionised speed and efficiency, accelerating the industry's growth after WWII. The "Jet Age" witnessed the introduction of renowned aircraft such as the Boeing 707 and the Douglas DC-8, ushering in a new era of transcontinental travel. Following decades saw significant advancements, such as wide-body aircraft like the Boeing 747, which enabled long-haul flights and made international travel a routine experience (Suresh et al. 2023).

According to Suresh et al. (2023) avionics, materials, and safety systems advancements boosted the industry's reputation and attractiveness. Computerised flight control systems improved precision and safety, while composite materials decreased weight and increased fuel efficiency. This emphasis on safety culminated in the adoption of stringent international standards and regulations, resulting in a safe environment for both passengers and cargo. Globalisation aided the development of the sector by increasing connectivity between continents and cultures. Open skies agreements and liberalisation policies increased competition, causing airlines to innovate in terms of services and routes. The introduction of low-cost carriers made air travel even more affordable, offering up new opportunities for both business and pleasure travelers (Hooper et al. 2012). Today, the aviation industry is on the verge of another revolution, with electric

and hybrid aircraft on the horizon, promising lower emissions and a lower environmental effect. Furthermore, improvements in autonomous flying and urban air mobility point to a future in which aviation's reach transcends traditional bounds.

2.3.2. International Organizations in Aviation Industry

The aviation sector is a global network of interrelated businesses, and international organisations play a critical role in maintaining safe, efficient, and coordinated operations. These organisations are critical pillars in preserving standards, rules, and cross-border collaboration. Mehta (2015) mentioned that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), a United Nations specialised agency, is the backbone of international aviation. ICAO, which is in charge of developing global aviation rules and regulations, plays a critical role in assuring civil aviation's safety, security, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. ICAO enables the creation of standard practises, procedures, and protocols that regulate different elements of aviation operations, from air traffic management to aircraft design and aircrew licencing, through joint efforts (Yadav & Nikraz, 2014). Complementing The International Air Transport group (IATA), a trade group that promotes and supports the interests of airlines worldwide, is ICAO's overarching duty. IATA promotes airline collaboration by encouraging standardised processes and rules that improve operational efficiency, safety, and passenger experience (Zhiping, 2011). IATA contributes to the settlement of industry difficulties and the achievement of global aviation goals by offering a forum for conversation and collective decision-making.

Furthermore, Czerny et al. (2021) stated that the Airports Council International (ACI) acts as the global airport industry's voice, promoting communication and collaboration among airport operators, regulators, and stakeholders. ACI aims to construct sustainable airport infrastructure, improve operating practices, and address safety, security, and passenger service challenges. These international aviation organisations work closely together, as well as with national aviation authorities, to build a unified framework that crosses boundaries. Their efforts not only lay the groundwork for safety and standardisation, but also pave the way for aviation innovation, growth, and resilience (Mehta, 2015). As the aviation landscape evolves, the role of these organisations in influencing the industry's present and future direction on a global scale remains critical.

2.3.3. International Regulations in Aviation Industry

According to Abbott & Bamforth (2019) the international aviation business operates within a complicated regulatory structure designed to ensure safety, security, and peaceful international cooperation. These standards, which are principally governed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), are critical to the integrity of global air transport. International aviation standards are built on safety requirements. Annex 1 of the International Civil Aviation Organisation provides minimum requirements for pilot training, certifications, and licencing, encouraging a professional and proficient workforce (Tikhonov et al. 2019). Annexe 6 requires regulations for aircraft operations, including flying procedures, airworthiness, and maintenance standards. These provisions contribute to the industry's exceptional safety record and commitment to accident prevention.

In the face of increasing threats, security laws have become critical. Annexe 17 of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) defines procedures to protect aviation from acts of unlawful interference, including airport security, cargo screening, and passenger checks. Countries that adhere to these requirements strengthen the aviation sector's resilience against potential security breaches (Dube et al, 2021). ICAO regulations aim to promote smooth global connection while facilitating international cooperation. Annexe 15 is concerned with aeronautical information services, with the goal of harmonising data interchange for safe and efficient flight planning. Meanwhile, Annex 10 specifies communication and navigation procedures that allow pilots and air traffic controllers to successfully engage across borders (Dube et al. 2021).

International regulations are also addressing environmental concerns. The International Civil Aviation Organization's CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) program aims to reduce aviation's carbon footprint by offsetting emissions through sustainable activities (Havel & Sanchez, 2014). Harmonising legislation across borders is a difficult task that involves diplomacy, technical expertise, and a common commitment. While the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) provides overall guidelines, individual countries frequently alter these regulations to meet their own needs and situations (Bugayko et al. 2020). This

delicate mix of global uniformity and local flexibility ensures that international aviation thrives while maintaining safety, security, and sustainability.

2.3.4. Civil Aviation and Airline Companies

Civil aviation is critical to modern society, effortlessly integrating people, cultures, and economies all over the world. Airlines, the dynamic businesses that operate the intricate web of flights that crisscross the skies, are at its centre. These businesses are vital to the aviation industry, supporting travel, trade, and tourism (Dube et al. 2021). Airline firms range in size and scope, from huge international carriers to regional and low-cost carriers. They own, manage, and operate aircraft fleets that are meticulously calibrated to match the demands of various routes and consumer preferences. Airlines manage a sophisticated ballet of takeoffs, landings, and layovers, from giant jumbo jets flying intercontinental routes to nimble regional planes flying between neighbouring cities (Kavacık et al. 2012).

According to Novakovska et al. (2019) these businesses are motivated by rivalry and innovation, and they are continuously striving to improve the passenger experience while maintaining safety and reliability. Airlines seek to appeal to a varied range of travellers, from opulent business class seats to sophisticated in-flight entertainment systems. Furthermore, they are always investing in cutting-edge technologies to reduce environmental effect and operational expenses, such as fuel-efficient engines and smart avionics. The airline sector, however, is not without its difficulties. Fuel price fluctuations, geopolitical conflicts, and regulatory changes can all have an impact on airline profitability and operations (Upham et al. 2012). The global COVID-19 epidemic offered an unexpected challenge, resulting in widespread travel restrictions and a huge decline in air travel demand. To weather the storm, many airlines had to adjust quickly, introducing cost-cutting measures and investigating new revenue streams. Airlines, in essence, are the architects of modern flight, allowing people to interact, explore, and trade across great distances. Their adaptability, resilience, and devotion to innovation ensure that the sky remain a dynamic world, inextricably linked with humanity's goals (Sarkar et al. 2012).

2.4. Marketing Strategy Implementations in Aviation Industry

2.4.1. Marketing Strategies of airline companies

The aviation sector is incredibly cutthroat. For the purpose of identifying opportunities and creating value, solid marketing tactics are needed. According to Muninarayanappa & Ravikumar (2014), the kind of services provided in the aviation sector in the form of travel, facilities, amenities, concessions, and relaxations is all-encompassing, interesting, and appealing. Customers receive real and intangible benefits from many companies in the airline services sector. Based on their abilities and market domination, several of these companies have positioned themselves to cater to a certain niche or target market. Nathan et al. (2017) claim that the market participants have used a variety of marketing strategies to satisfy the needs of their target customers. The industry has been able to grow massively, horizontally, and vertically thanks to this diversity. One of the obvious growth indicators is the rise in passengers brought on by the privatization of national airlines and the entry of low cost carriers. Technology developments and improved trade ties have also contributed to the industry's expansion. However, the global economic slowdown and heightened competition have also had an impact on the aviation industry's noteworthy expansion (Chiu et al. 2016). To ensure their dominance in the worldwide market, the majority of business companies have resorted to updating their marketing tactics. Some businesses have succeeded based on the use of marketing techniques and efficiency in operations and customer service, while others have been forced to close their doors due to the unviability of their business enterprises (Fan, 2021). In order to adapt to the challenges and client needs in the contemporary aviation market, the marketing mix must be continuously evaluated in the aviation industry to maintain productivity. Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Processes, and Physical Evidence are the 7 Ps taken into account in the marketing mix of airline services. The aviation product is intricate. It entails offering a short-term contract that includes the usage of aircraft seats together with other material goods like food and clothing, among others (Sheth, 2021). The aviation companies also provide their clients ground and in-flight services. Ground services include things like sufficient and practical parking spots, duty-free shopping, rapid and effective luggage checking, good customer assistance at the

reservation counter, and transportation to and from the airport (Sheth, 2021). On the other hand, in-facility services include the way passengers sit in their airplane seats, food and drinks, entertainment, and all face-to-face encounters with the kind, gracious, and polite air hosts. When a client's temporary contract is in effect, the marketing strategy for the products focuses on raising the caliber of the corresponding services across the board. Ferrell et al. (2021) assert that the Indian aviation sector has prospered due to a focus on product quality and details. For instance, according to Santos & Silva (2019), "the airline firms have introduced product differentiation through innovations such as in-flight movies, advanced seating arrangements, air to ground telephone services, sleeping compartment, hot showers and cooked-to-order breakfast, tele check-in and web-in." To ascertain the scope of a product-based marketing strategy's global impact, additional research is required. A successful pricing strategy is also essential in the aviation sector. To provide their customers value for their money, the majority of businesses have implemented the idea of fair pricing. Premiums, value-for-money pricing, demand- and supply-based pricing, low-cost pricing, and competition-based pricing, among other tactics, are crucial considerations for determining fair pricing (Nathan et al. 2017). The strategies used by aviation companies to draw in and keep clients through effective pricing strategy are crucial to their success. Additionally, promotion is a crucial component of the marketing mix. The majority of international airlines promote their services via print, electronic, and online media, as well as through sponsorship of events and exhibitions (Nathan et al. 2017). Promotion, a component of the marketing mix, is hypothesized by Abdelhady et al. (2018) to influence passengers' decisions over which airline to board. In the fiercely competitive aviation sector, low-cost carriers (LCCs) are the airlines best positioned to succeed. Airlines and travel firms collaborate to provide customers with simple, seamless service. In this regard, the majority of the promotions are carried out by the travel agencies with the assistance of the relevant airlines. In the aviation business, a key component of marketing strategy is the idea of people in the marketing mix. Flight crews, attendants, and in-flight security staff all play crucial roles in the industry (Koch & Tritscher, 2017). Airframe and power plant technicians, avionics technicians, dispatchers, baggage handlers, gate agents, ticket agents, passengers' services agents, and reservation agents are among the other employees that make up the ground crew team. Top-

performing airlines have put in place support systems for all the individuals involved in service delivery. All practices and systems that control how business operations are carried out are included in processes as part of the marketing mix. The built and natural environments, the aircraft's appearance quality, personnel uniforms, logos, booking office furniture, social facilities, and the waiting lounge's sophistication serve as physical evidence for the last component of the marketing mix (Morrison et al. 2010). As airlines strive for sustainability and value generation, these 7 Ps continue to change. It suggests that in order to maintain their competitiveness in the aviation business and build a strong worldwide brand, top airlines like Qatar Airways must continuously assess and put into practice the newest and most effective techniques. The way the businesses approach customer service will determine how effective their marketing tactics are. Koch & Tritscher (2017) noted that a firm's reputation and trustworthiness were vital for sustainable company operation in their study of the Indian aviation industry. Today's consumers want proof that the airline they choose will carry little to no risk during the duration of the temporary contract. Airline firms hire marketers' services for design, production, and other value-related decisions from the beginning phases of developing their marketing strategies as a result of the competitive pressures. These are the variables that the current study will pay attention to in order to determine how marketing methods affect passengers' airline preference. In order to identify the research gaps on both domestic and international preferences, a case study of Qatar Airways would be crucial.

2.4.2. Brand development in airline industry

In the modern business environment, using creative brand development tactics is required to draw clients and boost revenue. As a result of flight delays, high surcharges, and poor customer service, the airline industry has seen the rise of novel marketing strategies (Desai & Sousa 2015). This runs counter to the goal of customer pleasure that airlines must meet in order to keep their current clientele and draw in new ones. Therefore, any airline that wants to rule the market should constantly work to solve these problems using the various cutting-edge brand-development techniques that are covered below. One tactic used by participants in the aviation industry to grow their brands is the creation of a loyalty program. A loyalty program aids the airline in reaching out to new demographics and converting them into potential customers (Hossain et al. 2017). Customers should be

able to accrue points through loyalty programs and use them to offset future ticket prices. The incentive points persuade customers to use a specific airline's services when they travel, increasing market recognition and driving up ticket prices. To improve their standing in the industry, aviation businesses can also combine the reward points with complimentary meals on board and seat upgrades. Although some may view this technique as expensive, it would pay off once the airline company attracted more consumers, since it would see an increase in ticket sales and a consequent rise in profitability. Airlines should adopt marketing plans that will influence customers in the market in addition to the loyalty program. Whatever the airlines marketing plan, it is important to make sure that it leaves a lasting impression on customers in order to build a strong brand identity. One of the apparent ways to make an impression on potential customers and turn them into devoted customers is by giving back to society (Kim et al. 2020). For instance, American Airlines' tactic of delivering free food packages to residents of New York City has increased people's interest in its services and garnered the company significant attention from society. As the interested parties transform into devoted consumers of the airline, the respect develops into trust and ultimately culminates in brand loyalty. As a result, the airline should use both online and offline techniques to influence society and build brand trust. The implementation of impressive social media campaigns is a necessary step in the process of brand development in the aviation industry. According to Appel et al. (2020), the majority of people spend the most of their online time on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Airlines should therefore make use of these platforms to connect with their target markets and develop their brands. For instance, an airline can target potential consumers in specific areas through paid advertising on the three social media networks. Although most airlines have used paid advertising to draw customers, the business should set itself apart from its competitors in order to stand out. To differentiate itself from the competition, the airline needs make sure that its offerings promise value for money and top-notch customer service. Similar to other sectors, the value that an airline provider provides to its clients directly affects its bottom line. As a result, it is important to make sure that the paid advertisements offer clients actual value. When a business puts the needs of the client ahead of its goals to boost ticket sales, real value emerges. It may, for instance, publish YouTube movies in which it

instructs consumers on important safety matters and other ways to fly safely or enjoy the flight. The airline should refrain from using conventional marketing strategies that aimed to persuade customers to buy their tickets. The airline shouldn't lose sight of its present consumers as it adopts strategies to target new customers. Prior to coming up with alternative plans for pursuing potential clients, it should continue to concentrate on its current clientele. In order to build its brand, the company primarily targets its existing clientele with the hope that they will recommend its products to others (Kim & Park, 2017). when a result, word-of-mouth advertising boosts ticket sales when new consumers purchase airline tickets to check out the airline's travel services for the first time. This highlights the necessity of making sure that current clients receive the best customer care, including a remarkable in-flight experience marked by blazing-fast internet speeds, allowing clients to watch movies and TV series on flights, and serving delectable food. To entice returning clients to book flights with the airline again, the airline could also provide vouchers for the upcoming flight. Even when traveling in economy, they should make sure that the seats are comfortable enough for the passengers. Additionally, when building their brand, airlines should not ignore "the power of influencers". According to Kadekova & Holieninova (2018), influencer marketing has proven to be a vital technique for boosting the airline's Return on Investment (ROI). Therefore, the airline's influencer marketing methods should be successful in growing the company. Influencers have a sizable fan base that, if they can demonstrate that the airline in question offers outstanding in-flight experiences, will readily consider flying with them. The enormous confidence that influencers enjoy from the millions of fans they have across the world would translate into the confidence that the Airline would enjoy from the targeted people. They can increase brand awareness among their target customer segments by using a storytelling strategy. To increase client confidence, the airline should also make sure that the costs of its services are transparent. The airline should also refrain from imposing hidden costs because most people despise them.

2.4.3. Brand recognition in airline industry

Brand recognition in airlines refers to customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand from competitors. Thakshak (2018) stated that airline brand awareness is the

customer's ability to recall the airline brand. To avoid losing customers to competitors, the airline should have a good reputation. Above brand development tactics boost airline brand recognition. The airline company must invest heavily to achieve brand recognition. Brand awareness tactics boost the company's image and attitude. Brand reputation boosts customer loyalty. The airline should invest in unique brand elements like in-flight customer experience and timeliness to build a positive brand image and brand recognition.

2.4.4. Data analytics in airline industry

Airlines now employ more online channels to engage with customers, requiring massive data processing. Airlines may use this large pile of consumer data to get "big" from customers by using their profiles, preferences, and choices to create customer-centric services (Mikalef et al. 2020). The data can help airlines improve customer happiness, minimize negative product offerings, and monitor consumers' limits to give customized solutions. The airline can predict client wants by analyzing past data. Analyzing massive customer data to get useful insights is difficult. It demands large data analytics technologies and data analysis skills. Big data analytics helps organizations make decisions by extracting crucial facts from big datasets. With speech, revenue model, and contact center analytics, social media analytics is crucial to airlines. Like an altimeter measures an aircraft's height relative to sea level, allowing pilots and the autopilot to keep it aloft, analytics would provide vital customer insights to the airline's management to help them develop strategies to stay in business.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The following is the conceptual framework of this study:

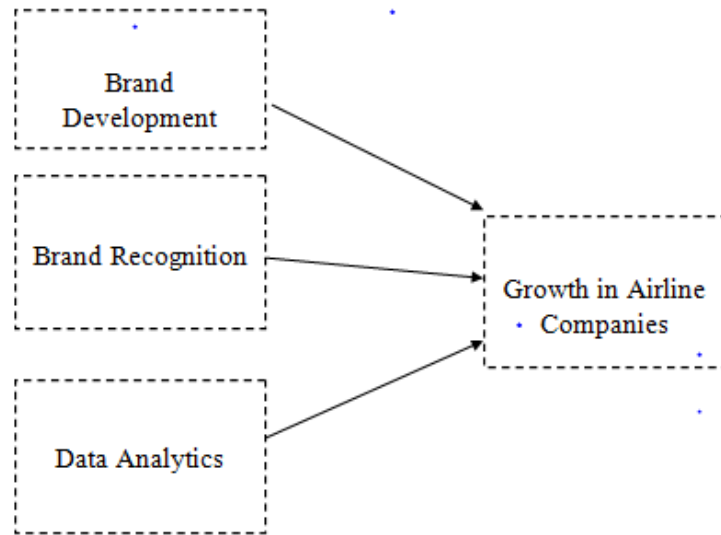


Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework Author’s illustration

2.6. Hypotheses

H1: There is an impact of brand development on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.

H2: There is an impact of brand recognition on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.

H3: There is an impact of data analytics on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain the research approach in order to provide various high-quality outputs. The researcher makes sure that the research is grounded on ethical and scientific criteria in order to conduct it properly. The study design contains a number of techniques and ideas connected to the body of knowledge being examined in this chapter, as well as a number of ethical considerations, limitations, and the research method and methodology. The methodological decisions, methodological approach, and philosophical stance of the researcher are evaluated. Also carefully examined are the data collection strategy and the research onion.

3.2. Research Philosophy

Positivism emphasizes scientific evidence through countless experiments and statistical methods that show how a real society runs, highlighting how the study of society depends on and prioritizes empirical data. Because it focuses on a clear-cut social reality and creates the laws that give rise to generalizations, positivism is also used. The fact that the hypothesis was evaluated in this investigation, which used numerical and quantitative data to examine the produced theory, lends even more credence to this approach. Therefore, this point of view is more suited for this investigation (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). This study is founded on factual information rather than the impressions and vocal sensations of the participants. Another justification for the choice is that this study is quantitative, and positivism generally lends itself to quantitative inquiries the best.

3.3. Research Approach

In this study, hypotheses are examined using the deductive method, which is better suitable for usage with quantitative data. This method involves reproducing the prior study to determine whether the results are the same or whether fresh results are achieved based on a different setting. According to Scheurich (2014), this method frequently starts with theory, develops hypotheses based on theory, then compiles and evaluates the data to test the hypotheses. This methodology is employed in this study to help with theory testing because the researcher is testing an existing hypothesis rather than coming up with a new one.

3.4. Research Method

The author of this study employed quantitative research, which employs statistical and numerical data and entails evaluating hypotheses based on the findings. This approach has the disadvantage that it does not take into account the thoughts and impressions of the participants because the data was obtained through a questionnaire. To obtain factual and numerical data, however, and to evaluate that data, the quantitative research approach was selected for this study (Rajasekar & Verma, 2013). This method's employment is further justified by the fact that it is a rigorous way to demonstrate relationships and occurrences and is founded on verifiable, quantifiable data. The quantitative research methodology responds to the queries by formulating multiple correlations between numerous quantifiable criteria that evaluate the degree of control over phenomena and predictability (Rajasekar & Verma, 2013). Since they provide the dataset additional rigor, the reliability and validity elements of the quantitative research approach are essential for this study.

3.5. Data Collection Method

The data for this study came from the employees of airline companies of Gulf nations who were contacted via personal visit. The instrument used for gathering data was a questionnaire that had been modified from a prior study. According to Brannen (2017), the questionnaire is a type of closed-ended data collection that employs a set of questions to collect statistical data from samples. The questions on the instruments are each related to a particular variable. The questionnaire was altered, and it was finished with assistance

from a supervisor. The respondents were physically visited in order to acquire the primary data for the study. Based on past research on subject of marketing strategies of airline of Gulf countries, the poll was created.

Moreover, there are three separate scales in the survey. Moreover, reliability of all these scales are also assessed. The scales of brand recognition and brand positioning are developed by Khan & Razzaque, (2015), the scale of data analytics is developed by Berumen, (2021), and the scale of business growth is developed by Alabi et al. (2019).

3.6. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The two different types of sampling are probabilistic sampling and non-probabilistic sampling. Probabilistic sampling is used when each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. Non-probabilistic sampling selects the sample based on judgments rather than giving each participant an equal chance of being chosen (Flick, 2015). This study uses non-probabilistic sampling because the participants were not picked at random. In this study, the method used is purposive sampling. This approach is used since the researcher's judgment in selecting which members of the population to include in the study is a key component of this investigation. The sample was picked with the help of purposive sampling, and respondents were chosen according to their level of subject knowledge. This was established by asking the participants a number of questions prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. It also only targets respondents to surveys who answer questions on behalf of the entire population (Choy, 2014). This approach also chooses study participants based on that objective (Choy, 2014). The data for this study was contributed by employees of airline companies of Gulf nations who work for the organization in various positions.

470 people were initially given the research gathering tool, but 20 of them did not finish the surveys, therefore they were ignored. A sample size of 450 persons was employed for this study. After providing their email addresses, survey monkey used them to send the questionnaire to the respondents. Some of the respondents who lived close to the researcher's location also received paper copies of the survey. In the questionnaire, there were in total 5 sections. The first section was of demographic questions while other four sections were of our variables. Moreover, each of the variables had 4 items and each

of the items was used for hypotheses testing. Additionally, one section was of brand positioning, one section was of brand recognition, one section was of data analysis, and one section was of growth of airline companies.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

The degree to which a research instrument analyzes what it needs to measure is known as validity according to (Queirós et al. 2017). Validity is a measure of how well an instrument captures what needs to be captured (Queirós et al. 2017). It refers to how accurate the outcomes are. To assess the reliability of the items and the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study with 30 participants was conducted. The questionnaire is structured properly. A pilot research is a type of experiment that is carried out on a small scale to assess the viability, duration, cost, adverse events, and enhance the study design before the start of the full-scale project, according to (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). A pilot study is also helpful for assessing the questionnaire's content and criterion validity and for determining areas that require improvement. The data collection tool's statement structure, syntax, and wordings have all been somewhat altered.

It is crucial to take reliability into account in addition to the validity of the instrument. Kumar (2018) claim that dependability measures the instrument's capacity to consistently deliver outcomes that are similar across trials. As a result, the results are more accurate and relevant, and it is simpler to extrapolate the conclusions to the entire population. The reliability of the instrument's items is assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha test. Using this tool, the consistency of each variable is assessed, and any variables with low reliability scores are dropped from the analysis. Items with values greater than 0.7 are included in this study. If not, they will be removed (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

3.8. Data Analysis

To effectively analyze the study's results, the researcher assessed the dataset that was acquired using SPSS 24. The validity of the instrument's items was examined by the researcher using SPSS 24. Additionally, the researcher was able to utilize this program to compute the responder frequency distribution for each of the questions, which then used to depict the data graphically. The quantitative data accurately portrays this process, as

well as the main subjects that were looked into in order to identify which antecedents were important to customers and to develop analysis (Apuke, 2017). Additionally, the author ran a regression analysis to assess the study's hypothesis and a correlation analysis to ascertain the relationship between the variables.

3.9. Research Ethics

In this study, the research project's ethical considerations were taken into account. The ethical principles are taken into account when data is collected, analyzed, and presented (Dooly et al. 2017), and there are a few methods for doing this. Additionally, it is made sure that every participant in the study gave their informed consent and participated voluntarily. All clients were also given a brief explanation of the goals, procedures, and applications of the research. Additionally, the researcher took into account the secrecy factor when gathering data from the employee of Gulf airline companies, and it was made sure that their personal data was secured and not used in the study. The discussion that follows further evaluates these factors:

3.9.1. Maintaining privacy

Confidentiality, which refers to the situation in which the author understands the identity of the study subject and takes action to defend the identity achieved by others, is one of the key components of ethical considerations. Obtaining respondents' signed consent is a requirement for many types of research (Greaney et al. 2012). In this sense, maintaining secrecy is a crucial test to determine how well personal information is protected.

3.9.2. Participation That Is Willing

Another aspect of research ethics is voluntary participation, which shows that subjects consent to participate in the study voluntarily and without being forced or coerced (Greaney et al. 2012). The researcher in this study made sure that participants might opt out of the study at any moment and without giving a reason. The respondents have the right to withdraw at any moment and for any reason; they will not be under any pressure

to do so (Barrow et al. 2017). Additionally, it is not required of the respondents to state specifically why they quit the research.

3.9.3. Informed permission

With fully informed consent, the subject actively participates in the evaluation. The participants must understand the study's objectives, who and what organization is supporting the project, how the research findings will be applied, whether their participation would be negatively impacted, and who will have access to the findings. The participant will be better able to decide whether or not to participate in the study if this factor is taken into account (Oliver, 2010).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the collected data is analyzed considering demographic analysis, descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression. The demographic variables are assessed through graphical representation in excel and main questions are tested with the help of statistical analysis through SPSS 24. In this study, BD refers to brand development, BR refers to brand recognition, GAC refers to growth of airline companies, and DA refers to data analytics.

4.2. Demographic Analysis

The first demographic variable assessed is gender and the outcomes are displayed in below graph:

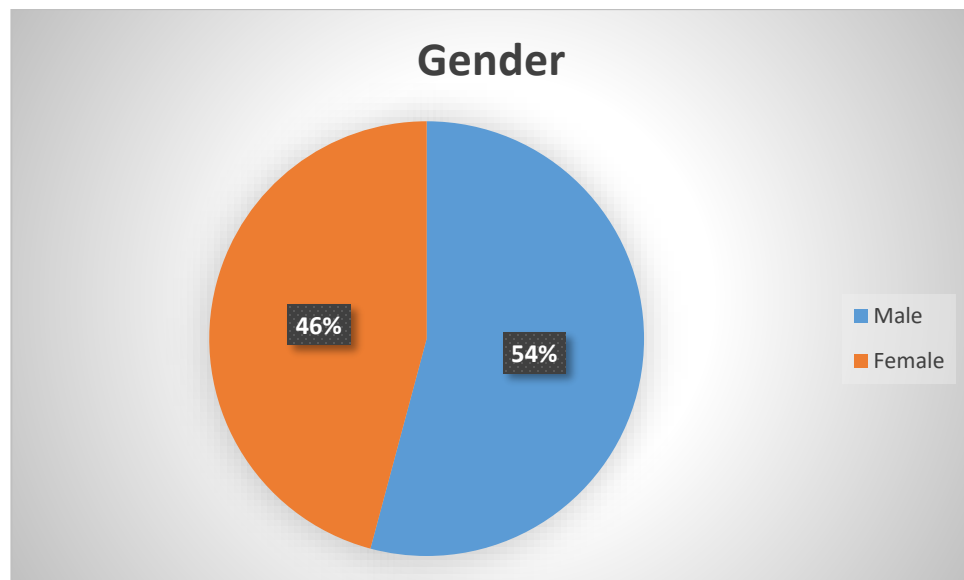


Figure 4.1: Gender

The above graph shows that the males who took part in this study are 54% and females who took part in this study are 46%. This shows that most of the respondents who have taken part in this study are males.

The second demographic variable is age and the outcomes are shown below:

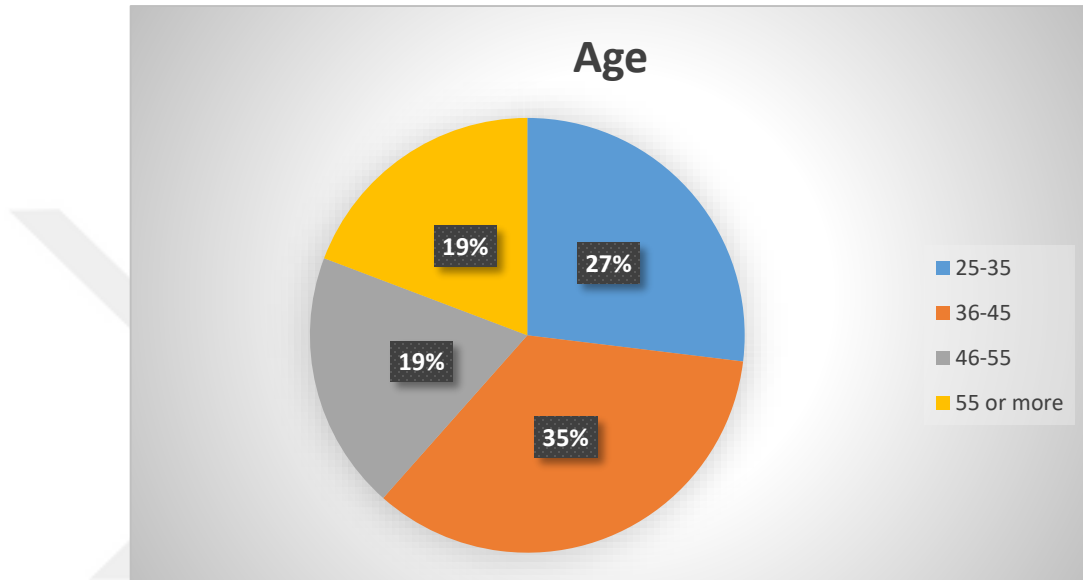


Figure 4.2: Age

The above figure depicts that 35% respondents who have taken part in this study fall within the age group of 36-45 years, while 27% fall within the age group of 25-35 years. There are 19% each respondents who fall within the age group of 45-55 years and 55 or more.

The third variable addressed is education level and the outcomes are shown below:

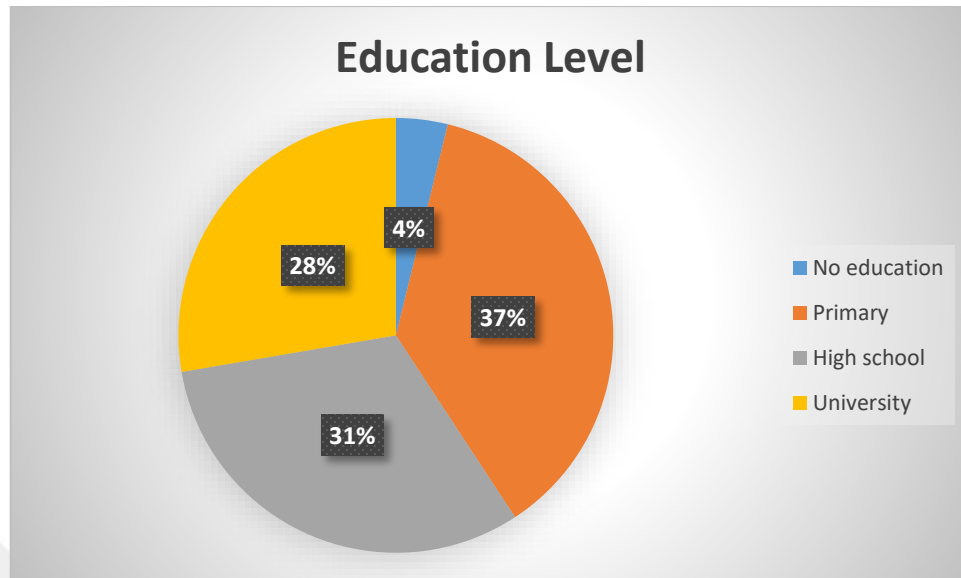


Figure 4.3: Education level

The above graph shows that 31% respondents have completed their high school, while 37% respondents have completed their primary school. There are also sufficient number of respondents i.e. 28% who have done their university studies and have their degrees.

The fourth variable assessed is occupation and the results are depicted below:

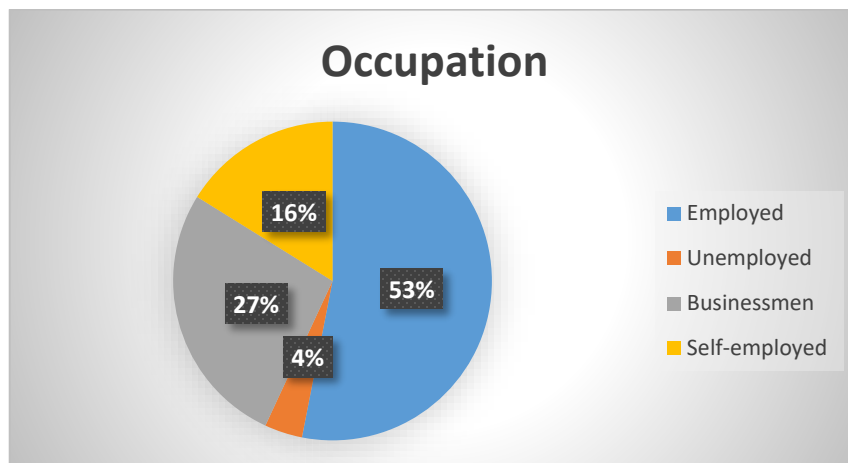


Figure 4.4: Occupation

The above results show that 53% respondents who took part in this study are employed and 16% are self-employed. This shows that majority of the respondents are earners and they are self-satisfied.

4.3. Reliability Test

In order to check the inter-consistency of items for each of the variables, the cronbach's alpha test is conducted. The range of Cronbach's alpha is 0 to 1. Greater internal consistency between the items, or high alpha values, suggest that the items accurately measure the same underlying concept. For most uses, it is generally accepted that a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or above is appropriate; however, depending on the field and context, this criterion may not always be met (Verma, 2012). The results of reliability is shown below:

Table 4.1. Reliability Test

Variables	Number of items	Chronbach's Alpha
BR	3	0.79
BD	5	0.88
DA	5	0.79
GAC	2	0.74

The results of above table show that there are total 4 items for each of the variables and for every variable, the value of cronbach's alpha is 0.7 and above and this shows that the items of each of the variables is reliable and this means that the data is appropriate for further parametric analysis.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics

In order to provide important insights into the distribution and properties of a dataset, descriptive statistics are crucial tools for summarizing and analyzing its key elements. The average, or mean, is a central tendency statistic that expresses the typical value of the data points. To compute it, add up all the values, then divide the total by the total number of data points. The data's dispersion or spread around the mean is evaluated by the standard deviation. Greater variability is indicated by a higher standard deviation,

and more grouped data points are suggested by a lower standard deviation (Pallant, 2020). The distribution's asymmetry is measured by skewness. Positive skewness suggests a concentration of lower values with few high outliers by showing a longer tail on the right side of the distribution. The opposite is implied by negative skewness. Kurtosis measures how flat or peaky a distribution is in relation to a normal distribution. Whereas low kurtosis denotes a flatter distribution with lighter tails, high kurtosis suggests a more peaked distribution with heavier tails, possibly indicating outliers or extreme values. When combined, these descriptive statistics provide a thorough picture of the properties of a dataset (Bryman & Cramer, 2009). They help researchers and analysts comprehend the nature of the data distribution, spot any outliers, make well-informed conclusions, and select the best statistical techniques for additional study. The results of descriptive statistics are shown below:

Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
BD	450	1.50	5.00	3.7211	.82739	-.362	.115	-.908	.230
BR	450	2.00	4.75	3.7956	.69550	-.382	.115	-.530	.230
DA	450	1.75	5.00	3.6828	.70063	-.944	.115	.520	.230
GAC	450	1.00	5.00	3.9011	.66276	-.408	.115	.564	.230
Valid N (listwise)	450								

The aforementioned table indicates that there were 450 total respondents, and the mean values of all the variables ranged from 3.6 to 3.9, indicating that most respondents provided replies that were on the agreement side. Additionally, the fact that the SD values are less than 1 indicates that the dataset has less variation. Furthermore, the fact that the values are less than 1 suggests that the data are less variable. Additionally, kurtosis and skewness are examined to verify normality; the results of these indicators fall between -1 and +1, indicating that the data is roughly regularly distributed.

4.5. Correlation Test

A statistical technique for determining the direction and degree of a relationship between two variables is a correlation test. It measures the relationship between changes in one variable and changes in another. Correlation coefficients, commonly represented by the symbol "r," span from -1 to 1 (Arkkelin, 2014). When two variables tend to rise or fall together, there is a positive correlation, as indicated by a positive value. When one variable rises as the other lowers, there is a negative correlation, shown by a negative value. However, a strong correlation does not indicate that changes in one measure create changes in the other. Correlation does not imply causation. Although it is a technique for looking into possible links in data, cautious interpretation is needed (Carver & Nash, 2011). The results are shown below:

Table 4.3. Correlation Test

Correlations

		BD	BR	DA	GAC
BD	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**	.675**	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	450	450	450	450
BR	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1	.796**	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	450	450	450	450
DA	Pearson Correlation	.675**	.796**	1	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	450	450	450	450
GAC	Pearson Correlation	.673**	.730**	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	450	450	450	450

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above results show that BD has a robust relationship with BR because the value is 0.78 and BD has a robust association with DA because the value is 0.67.

Moreover, the relationship between BD and GAC is robust because the correlation value is 0.67. The results of BR and DA is robust because the value is 0.79 which means there is strong correlation between the variables. Moreover, the relationship between BR and GAC is strong because the correlation value is 0.73. Moreover, the relationship between DA and GAC has high level of correlation because the value is 0.70 which is high. Moreover, the correlation values are positive and they are statistically significant at 99% confidence interval.

4.6. Regression Analysis

In this study, the multiple linear regression is used because there are more than one independent variables and one dependent variable. The regression results are shown below:

Table 4.4. Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.771 ^a	.594	.592	.42354

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA, BD, BR

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	117.220	3	39.073	217.820	.000 ^b
	Residual	80.005	446	.179		
	Total	197.224	449			

a. Dependent Variable: GAC

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA, BD, BR

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.041	.115		9.054	.000
	BD	.175	.040	.218	4.408	.000
	BR	.291	.057	.305	5.055	.000
	DA	.300	.047	.318	6.330	.000

a. Dependent Variable: GAC

According to the results above, the model's explanatory power is 59%, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.59. Additionally, the Anova table demonstrates that the f-value is 217.8, which is greater than 4, and the p-value of the f-test is 0.00, indicating that the model as a whole is statistically significant. Furthermore, the p-value of the t-test is $0.00 > 0.05$, indicating that all of the variables BD, BR, and DA are statistically significant, according to the coefficient table. This indicates that GAC is impacted by all of the variables that are BD, BR, and DA.

4.7. Hypotheses Assessment Summary

The following table shows hypotheses assessment summary:

Table 4.5. Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypotheses Assessment Summary	Reject/Retain
There is an impact of brand development on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.	Retain
There is an impact of brand recognition on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.	Retain
There is an impact of data analytics on growth of airline companies of Gulf countries.	Retain

4.8. Discussion

Based on our results, the first hypothesis is retained that shows that there is an impact of brand development on growth of airline companies in Gulf countries. For airline companies in the Gulf to grow, brand development is essential. These airlines' strategic branding activities have played a major role in their transformation from regional carriers to global aviation titans over the past few decades. Gulf airlines, like Etihad Airways, Emirates, and Qatar Airways, have been able to differentiate themselves in a very

competitive market because to their distinctive branding (So et al. 2018). They have developed distinct personas that incorporate not just their offerings but also the customs and goals of their native countries. These airlines have carefully constructed their brand narratives to convey elegance, innovation, and outstanding customer experiences, appealing to tourists from other countries who are looking for ease and comfort (Keller et al. 2011).

The results of brand development are aligned with the findings of Koech et al. (2023) in which it is stated that a key factor in determining an airline company's growth trajectory and a crucial factor in determining success in the fiercely competitive aviation sector is brand building. A strong and well-designed brand helps an airline stand out from the competition and creates a distinct personality that appeals to customers. Travellers in the airline business have a wide range of options, and a strong brand helps leave a lasting impression on customers. When choosing an airline for a trip, customers look for trust and confidence, which are bestowed by a well-known and respectable brand. Additionally, building a strong brand helps airline firms maintain client loyalty, which is a major factor in their success (Yadav & Nikraz, 2014). Passengers who are devoted to a strong brand are more likely to make repeat purchases and favourable word-of-mouth referrals. Airlines that put money into creating a strong and unique brand image stand to gain from higher customer retention and an expanding customer base as travellers become more brand-conscious (Wahyuni & Praninta, 2021). Furthermore, a strong brand might be a tactical advantage for initiatives aimed at both local and global expansion. By utilising the established brand equity to draw in new clients from a variety of geographic areas, it makes market entry easier. Moreover, brand creation includes the whole traveller experience, not just the logo and advertising (Jin et al. 2019). A dependable and satisfying brand experience improves consumer happiness and strengthens the airline's position in the market, from the reservation process and in-flight amenities to the post-travel engagements. In addition to allowing airlines to adjust to shifting consumer tastes and market trends, effective brand development also ensures relevance and resonance in a sector that is always changing. Broadly speaking, brand development plays a variety of roles in the success of airline firms, including distinction, customer loyalty, market expansion, and flexibility in response to changing market conditions. A strong brand

continues to be an important instrument for long-term success and expansion for airlines as they manage the difficulties facing the sector (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

A crucial element of brand building is the dedication to providing exceptional customer service. Gulf Airlines has established a stellar reputation for excellence by concentrating on providing excellent in-flight facilities, cosy accommodations, and attentive customer service. They have been able to create devoted client bases and positive word-of-mouth marketing by continuously fulfilling their promises. International collaborations and sponsorships have also been very important to the growth of brands (Jin et al. 2019). By carefully matching up with prestigious events, sports teams, and cultural initiatives, these airlines have raised their brand globally and are now more closely associated with status. The growth plans of Gulf Airlines have been closely aligned with their brand development. Their brand's visibility has increased as a result of their fleet expansion and new route launches. Travelers identify airlines not only with domestic travel but also with global connections. The result of first hypothesis also suggests that Gulf airline firms' brand building methods have had a significant impact on their growth (Sezgen et al. 2023). They have distinguished themselves from rivals by clearly communicating their dedication to luxury, innovation, and first-rate service. These airlines have become industry icons of excellence through their steady fulfilment of brand promises, strategic alliances, and international growth.

The results of second hypothesis suggest that there is an impact of brand recognition on growth of airline companies and for airline firms in the Gulf to expand and succeed, brand recognition is essential. This region's aviation sector has grown significantly over the years, and gaining a competitive edge, increasing passenger numbers, and increasing income all depend on having a strong brand presence (Tam et al. 2022). First of all, prospective passengers are given a sense of legitimacy and confidence when they recognise a brand. Airlines with international recognition, like Etihad Airways, Emirates, and Qatar Airways, are based in the Gulf countries. These airlines have made significant investments to uphold their reputation for dependability and safety, as well as to develop their brand image and provide outstanding client experiences. Travellers are therefore more likely to select a well-known and trustworthy airline, which boosts reservations and fosters client loyalty (Chen et al. 2019). The results are aligned with the

findings of Heiets et al. (2021) in which it is the perception of quality and luxury is improved by brand recognition. Many Gulf airlines are renowned for their luxurious offerings, state-of-the-art aircraft, and first-rate facilities. Through constant fulfilment of these commitments, they have established a unique brand synonymous with elegance and cosiness. Because of this notion, airlines are able to charge higher rates and draw in premium travellers, which boosts their bottom line.

McKechnie et al. (2008) identified that because it builds trust, encourages consumer loyalty, and sets them apart in a very competitive industry, brand awareness is essential to the expansion of airline firms. In the aviation sector, passengers greatly benefit from a strong brand presence as safety and dependability are of utmost importance. Not only can well-known airline brands draw in new business, but they also help maintain their current clientele because travellers tend to choose well-known and trustworthy companies when making reservations. Additionally, because customers are more likely to remain loyal to airlines they trust, brand recognition plays a major role in fostering consumer loyalty (Tian et al. 2021). A reputable brand instills in consumers a sense of dependability, security, and consistency, hence fostering favourable associations. In the airline industry, where customers commit their safety and well-being to the selected carrier, this trust is especially crucial. Strong brand awareness allows airlines to grow their consumer base and cultivate a devoted fan base. Moreover, successful marketing and promotional initiatives are facilitated by brand familiarity. Advertising, social media, and other marketing channels are easier for airlines with a well-known brand to use to reach customers (Muninarayanappa & Ravikumar, 2014). This enhanced visibility aids in drawing in new clients and holding on to current ones. Additionally, it enables airlines to charge more for their services because customers are frequently prepared to pay extra for the perceived quality and dependability of a well-known brand.

Furthermore, Koech et al. (2023) identified that market domination and expansion are facilitated by brand recognition. Gulf Airlines has systematically built up vast networks of routes that link important cities throughout the world. Well-known companies have a higher chance of forming alliances, code-share contracts, and collaborations with other foreign airlines, which opens up new business opportunities by improving connectivity. Marketing initiatives are one area where brand familiarity has a particularly

noticeable impact. Gulf Airlines frequently participates in high-profile sponsorships, alliances with upscale companies, and creative marketing initiatives. By fostering emotional ties with customers, these initiatives not only strengthen the airline's brand identity but also increase the likelihood that those customers will pick it again (Pramudya et al. 2018). The foundation of expansion for Gulf airline firms is brand recognition. It builds confidence, enhances the image of luxury, propels market growth, and supports successful marketing initiatives. Maintaining and improving their brand recognition will be essential to these airlines' success as they grow their global reach in an increasingly competitive aviation industry (Wahyuni & Praninta, 2021).

Tian et al. (2021) identified that an essential tool for figuring out the expansion paths of Gulf airline firms is data analytics. These countries, which are at the intersection of global travel, have seen notable growth in their aviation industries in recent decades. Deciphering the complex variables causing this increase requires the use of data analytics. Gulf airline firms can evaluate past performance data, passenger trends, preferred routes, and economic indicators by utilising advanced analytical methodologies. They are able to make well-informed judgements, customise their offerings, and optimise their operations thanks to these insights. To adapt to shifting demand, airlines, for example, might modify flight frequencies and capacity distribution by examining booking trends and travel seasons (Hausladen & Schosser, 2020). Additionally, data analytics helps to comprehend the preferences and behaviour of customers. Sentiment analysis of social media interactions and consumer feedback offers priceless insights into areas for service quality improvement. By customising their services to meet the demands of their customers, airlines can improve their standing and increase consumer loyalty.

The results are aligned with the findings of Olaganathan (2021) airlines in the Gulf use data analytics for predictive modelling as well. Airlines may predict future demand and modify their growth strategies by integrating economic data, geopolitical considerations, and rising travel trends. They are able to keep ahead of competition and market changes because to their proactive attitude (Izzo, 2019). Data analytics also improves maintenance and safety procedures. The prevention of any problems and enhancement of overall operational efficiency can be achieved by real-time monitoring of flight data, engine performance, and maintenance records. By minimising downtime and

guaranteeing passenger safety, this eventually increases revenue. The success story of airline firms in the Gulf region is based on data analytics (Aarthy et al. 2021). These airlines can anticipate market trends, improve safety protocols, optimise operations, and accommodate customer preferences by leveraging data. Data analytics will continue to be a vital instrument in the aviation industry's evolution, helping to shape Gulf Airlines' rise to prominence in the world market.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS and CONCLUSION

5.1. Recommendations

Over the past few decades, the airline business in the Gulf countries has grown remarkably, turning the region into a hub for global aviation. Efficient marketing techniques are essential for airlines to be competitive and maintain growth in the face of multiple competitors vying for travelers' attention. Airlines must be creative, customer-focused, and flexible in an ever-evolving landscape. Here are five recommendations for developing successful marketing plans for the aviation sector in the Gulf:

The first recommendation is that personalization with data analytics and airlines in the Gulf countries need to use data analytics to better understand the interests and behaviours of their customers in this age of data-driven decision-making. Travel patterns, reservation histories, and social media interactions can all be used by airlines to customise marketing efforts to specific travelers (Hussain et al. 2015). For example, issuing customised loyalty program benefits, providing exclusive discounts on commonly travelled routes, or making destination recommendations based on previous travel preferences. By adding a personal touch, you may increase customer happiness and loyalty, which in turn leads to more reservations. The second recommendation is to creative online presence and the Gulf area has one of the highest rates of smartphone and internet penetration worldwide. Because of this, having a powerful online presence is crucial for efficient marketing. Airlines should concentrate on developing mobile-responsive, user-friendly websites and applications that provide a smooth reservation process (Aburumman, 2020). Airlines can differentiate themselves from the competition by incorporating state-of-the-art technologies like chatbots for rapid customer help or virtual reality for immersive travel experiences. Real-time updates and aesthetically appealing material are two other ways that social media platforms can be used to engage clients (Kemp & Vinke, 2012).

The third recommendation is to welcome influencer partnerships and in Gulf nations, partnering with regional and local influencers might prove to be a potent marketing tactic. Influencers can effectively advertise an airline's services and have a substantial impact on consumer decisions. Airlines can collaborate with social media influencers, vloggers, and travel bloggers to highlight their unique locations, first-rate amenities, and in-flight experiences. Through these collaborations, the airline's reach and visibility are increased not just by receiving genuine endorsements but also by gaining access to the influencers' sizable and active following (Kemp & Vinke, 2012). Another recommendation is to put an emphasis on premium services and Gulf airlines should take advantage of the opulent lives of their clientele by providing premium services that appeal to wealthy tourists. Personalised concierge services, access to a private lounge, upscale dining selections, and roomy sitting arrangements are a few examples of this. Marketing campaigns should draw attention to these distinctive products in order to give prospective buyers the impression that they are valuable and exclusive (Kemp & Vinke, 2012). Partnering with well-known companies to provide in-flight amenities and services can help the airline project a more upscale image.

Moreover, another recommendation is to promote sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and these two concepts have become increasingly important in the minds of consumers when they make decisions in the recent past. Gulf nations are placing more and more emphasis on social responsibility and environmental preservation (Bose, 2018). By implementing eco-friendly procedures, cutting carbon emissions, and assisting with community projects, airlines can be in accordance with these ideals. Promoting these initiatives shows the airline's dedication to making a good social impact in addition to appealing to eco-aware tourists. Dedicated CSR initiatives and open reporting of sustainable practices are good ways to draw attention to this.

5.2. Conclusion

To succeed, maintain growth, and foster brand loyalty in the fiercely competitive and fast-paced airline sector in the Gulf countries, it is critical to apply efficient marketing methods. A flexible and dynamic strategy to marketing is required due to the distinct features of this industry, which include shifting consumer preferences, geopolitical

influences, and fluctuating fuel prices. The aviation business in the Gulf region has grown remarkably in the last few decades thanks to a number of factors including favourable geographic location, rising tourism, and strong economic growth. But this expansion has also increased competition, so airlines must now stand out from the crowd through creative marketing techniques. The foundation of effective marketing tactics in the Gulf airline sector is a customer-centric mindset. It is essential to comprehend and anticipate client needs in order to customise experiences and services that appeal to travellers. Loyalty program, improved customer service, and personalization can all help to promote brand loyalty and repeat business. Second, embracing technology and digitalization is essential rather than optional. Gulf nations have a high rate of smartphone and internet adoption, which makes them an excellent place for airlines to interact with passengers via digital media. Effective use of social media, user-friendly booking platforms, and a strong online presence may all greatly improve brand awareness and consumer engagement.

Thirdly, extending market reach is greatly aided through alliances and partnerships. A holistic travel ecosystem that provides customers with ease and value can be created through partnerships with hotels, travel agencies, and other relevant industries. An airline's network can also be expanded through codeshare arrangements and international alliances without requiring a large increase in aircraft size. Moreover, because of the Gulf region's diverse population and disparate cultural standards, cultural awareness is crucial. Airlines may effectively engage emotionally with their audience and establish strong brand recall by customising their marketing efforts to align with the values and goals of various target audiences. Moreover, a crucial instrument for building marketing strategy is data analytics. Through leveraging data, airlines can acquire insights into the preferences, behaviours, and trends of their customers. Higher returns on investment can be achieved by developing targeted marketing efforts, optimising pricing, and improving services with the help of this data.

Both internationally and in the Gulf countries, sustainability has become a major concern. Airlines can obtain a competitive advantage by integrating eco-friendly practises into their operations and effectively marketing them to environmentally sensitive clients. Two essential components of marketing strategies are flexibility and crisis management. Natural catastrophes, health crises, or geopolitical events can all cause interruptions in the

airline sector. To keep customers' faith and confidence, it is crucial to have strong crisis communication plans and to be nimble with your marketing activities as things change. The Gulf airline sector employs diverse and adaptable marketing methods that yield positive results. A thorough grasp of consumer needs, an acute awareness of technology trends, strategic partnerships, cultural sensitivity, data-driven decision-making, sustainability initiatives, and crisis management skills are all necessary. Succeeding in this field depends on combining these tactics into a flexible and well-thought-out marketing plan. Airlines operating in the Gulf region need to be alert and creative in their marketing efforts as long as they want to maintain their status as major international travel hubs. Airlines may not only survive but also prosper in the dynamic Gulf airline sector by constantly adapting to the needs and expectations of their clientele. Future airline growth and excellence will be guided by the convergence of customer-centricity, technology, partnerships, cultural sensitivity, data analytics, sustainability, and crisis management. In conclusion, there are many different ways in which airline firms benefit from strong brand recognition. In addition to giving businesses a competitive edge in a congested market, it cultivates client loyalty and trust. Airlines that make the effort to establish and nurture a strong brand are better positioned to prosper, grow their clientele, and meet the demands of the ever-changing aviation sector.

5.3. Future Research Areas

Future studies on efficient marketing techniques for the aviation sector in the Gulf countries should focus on a number of important areas to address the region's particular difficulties and changing environment. In order to personalise marketing efforts, it is first necessary to look at the integration of cutting-edge technology like big data analytics and artificial intelligence. Consumer engagement and loyalty can be increased by knowing how to use consumer data for personalised offers, promotions, and predictive analyses. Moreover, the Gulf region is not an exception to the growing global significance of sustainable practices. The integration of eco-friendly activities and carbon offset programmes into marketing strategies could be the subject of future research, given the increasing desire for travel options that are environmentally responsible.

The emergence of digital platforms and social media calls for an investigation into efficient digital marketing strategies tailored to the Gulf region. Examining social media usage patterns, linguistic inclinations, and cultural quirks might help optimise digital campaigns for this heterogeneous market. Given the competitive landscape of the Gulf airline business, it is imperative to comprehend pricing methods and how they affect consumer behaviour. Study topics include fare transparency, dynamic pricing methods, and the impact of auxiliary services on purchase decisions. Investigating the function of alliances and partnerships between Gulf airlines and their international competitors may reveal joint marketing potential. Examining the efficacy of code-sharing, cooperative promotions, and combined loyalty programs can yield valuable information on optimising market penetration and competitive edge.

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Survey Questionnaire

This survey has no practical use and is being conducted purely for research purposes. All of your private information will be treated with the utmost discretion and security.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Please tick the appropriate box

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- Over 55

3. What is your Education?

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Secondary education
- Primary education

Rate your level of satisfaction with each question between 1 and 5, where:

1 = Extremely Disagree

2= Disagreement.

3= Neutral.

4= Agree

Assigning a score of 5 to "Strongly Agree"

Brand Positioning

Khan & Razzaque, 2015	1	2	3	4	5
The particular brand is different from competing brands.					
There are reasons to buy a particular brand over competitors.					
The particular brand has a personality.					
The particular brand is interesting.					
I have a clear image of the type of person who would use the brand.					

Brand Recognition

Khan & Razzaque, 2015	1	2	3	4	5
The particular brand is very prestigious.					
The particular brand has high status.					
The particular brand is very upscale.					

Data Analysis

Berumen, 2021	1	2	3	4	5
We consider data a tangible asset.					
We base our decisions on data and analytics rather than on "gut" or instinct.					
We are willing to override our own intuition when the insights from data analysis contradict our viewpoints.					

We continuously assess and improve the business rules in response to insights extracted from data.

We continuously coach our employees to make decisions based on insights derived from data and data analysis.

Business Growth

Alabi et al. 2019

1 2 3 4 5

The major government policy affects my business most favorably.

The major government policy affects my business unfavorably?

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Name-Surname: Tuba SAMEEN

STATE OF EDUCATION:

- **Undergraduate and graduate:** 2021, Superior University, Bachelor's in Aviation Management.
- **Graduate:** 2023, Haliç University, Business Administration Department, International Business Management.