

# IMPACT OF E-MARKETING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED AIRLINES IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.

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## **Abstract**

*e-marketing is showing an explosive growth in Nigerian service industry today because it comes with much opportunities for maximized profit, personalized, interactive and measurable operations impact from any location in the world, though not without challenges. This study seeks to examine the operations of Aero Contractors and Arik Nigeria Airlines as service companies in order to encourage increase performance. The study adopted survey design, the sample size was 400 drawn from the customers of Arik and Aero Airlines, of which 381 questionnaire copies were returned and used accordingly to measure the perception of consumers on the applications of e-tools; e-mail, Web site for online booking, search engine marketing, social media and e-word-of-mouth. Chi-square and ordinary least square statistical tools were used for the hypotheses tests with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings revealed that; there is a significant relationship between the application of electronic marketing tools of Website for online bookings/reservations, e-mailing/social media for customer/management relationship management and the performance of these airlines. Performance here covers; increased consumers' satisfaction and patronage and as a result increased the productivity levels of these airline companies. Recommendations were made that; service companies must educate the populace on the benefits of electronic marketing tools application, so as to tap enormous benefits that abound. Moreover, to overcome some challenges faced by e-marketers, government should create an enabling environment by enacting laws to protect company's electronic innovative strides, equivalent to what patent right represent in tangible product marketing.*

**Keywords:** e-world, e-issues, e-campaign, e-marketing, search engine, e-tools, social media.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Marketing as a profession has changed dramatically in the last decade through the adoption of electronic tools in its operations. The internet is a marketer's dream come true, with myriads of e-tools that brought about low cost operations that can reach a large audience simultaneously. The business world is changing faster than ever before, old approaches and models are being turned on their head, causing many businesspeople to wake up sweating at the middle of the night for fear of uncertainty, keeping marketers on their toes for return on investment. The old value chain is being replaced with non-linear value networks that extend enterprises into partners of electronic platform only can facilitate.

Plug-and-play companies stands the chance of reaping the benefits of this ever changing world through electronic tools as markets are immerse in a boundary-less world with category-less competitors (Yahoo! Sells electricity), Smith & Taylor (2007).

The idea of e-marketing pre-dates the World Wide Web for there were earlier experiments involving real-time transaction processing from a domestic television. The technology, based on Videotex was first demonstrated by Michael Aldrich in 1979 who designed and installed systems in the UK, including the first Tesco pilot system in the 1980s, Vinny Lingham (2005).

In 1990, Tim Berners-Lee created The World Wide Web Browser. A few years later in 1994 other advances took place such as Online Banking, after that, the next big development was the opening of an online pizza shop by Pizza Hut. In that same year Netscape introduced SSL encryption to enable encryption over the data transferred online which has become essential for online shopping. In 1995, Amazon started up with online shopping, and then in 1996, eBay opened up for online shopping as well, Linda Rosencrance (2008).

According to Sir Arumemi-Ikhide the founder of Arik Air, the company is a wholly-owned Nigerian airline with a commitment to the people of Nigeria to deliver new standards in aviation. Founded in 2002 with the vision of being a leading and well-respected Nigerian airline, had carried 10 millionth passengers as at 2012, launched new Book-on-Hold online payment option for Nigeria customers, the first of a wave of new online initiatives and integrated it with online booking in May 2013. It also launched mobile website in August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and corporate website and internet booking search engine in September 17<sup>th</sup> 2013. This fit expands the business with direct flights to Cotonou, Bamako (Mali) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) with Lagos, Lagos to Douala (Cameroon.), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). It has also commenced operations to its second long haul destination - Johannesburg, South Africa - as well as flights to several destinations in the West African region; linking Lagos to Freetown (Sierra Leone), Dakar (Senegal), Banjul (Gambia) as well as Cotonou (Benin). Arik also was the first Nigerian airline to fly non-stop between Lagos and Luanda (Angola).

**Arik Air also has** launched third long-haul destination - New York, operating non-stop flights three times a week, between New York JFK (USA) and Lagos. In addition, Arik has launched non-stop services between the capital cities of London and Abuja from its new home at the renovated London Heathrow Terminal 4 and **Wins** the Best Security & Safety Conscious Airline 2012 award for the second consecutive year in October 2012 – Arik Air Website (2015). It should be noted here, as witnessed by this author, that Arik Air was the first airline to land in the Ibom International Airport when it was first commissioned by the State Government in 2010.

In the same vein Aero Contractors Airline is wholly owned by the Ibru family group. The Company started business in the early 1960's as an air charter operator. From this humble beginning, in 1970's Aero has gone-on to provide both rotary and fixed wing services to all the major oil and gas related / support companies working in Nigeria and in West Africa sub-region. Today, Aero has grown from oil service provider to a leading regional schedule carrier operator. Since 2000 when the airline commenced scheduled commercial operation, it has emerged to become the first choice of customers in the region. Aero currently operates passenger services with the Bombardier Dash8 Q300 aircraft (a modern 50-seat pressurized turboprop aircraft) and the Boeing 737-400 and 500 variants with 104 to 144 seats.

The airlines foundation is built on proven safe, reliable and on-time air transportation while delivering to customers the highest standard of professionalism and efficient customer services by applying e-marketing tools. Aero has always aimed to be a step ahead with a strong focus on innovation, convenience, reliability and affordability. Aero has introduced some ground breaking products to cement its position as the innovative and e-airline company in sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these products are: Online Checkin, Online Excess Baggage Voucher, Online Ticket Voucher, Online Travel Insurance and Webmoblie , *Aero contractors website, (2015)*

Before the emergence of internet services in Nigeria, booking and reservations for commuters were done manually either directly at the counter or through an agent, at times without confirmation for days. People travel long distances to airports, some returns without securing a ticket. Web site and social media tools has to a greater extent bridged the gap of travelling long

distances for the purpose of booking, giving a prospecting traveler an instant confirmation for a seat in his or her chosen airline at the comfort of his or her home, thereby reducing the cost on the part of the airline company and the consumer of their services.

The impact if any, of the emergence and application of e-tools of; Web site marketing, social media marketing (YouTube, Twitter, Whatsapp and Facebook) by these airlines was what this study seeks to appraise.

## **2.0 Objectives of the Study**

The study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the impact of e-marketing on the performance of airlines in Akwa Ibom State Airport.
2. To evaluate the relationship between Web site marketing, search engine marketing, social media and increase in passengers' patronage.

## **3.0 Research Questions**

To accomplish the listed objectives, the following research questions will be necessary;

1. What impact does e-marketing has on the performance of airlines operation in Akwa Ibom State Airport?
2. To what extent do Web site marketing, search engine marketing, and social media enhance Airlines competitiveness?

## **4.0 Research Hypotheses**

H01: E-marketing does not have any impact on the performance of airlines in Akwa Ibom State.

H02: Website marketing, Search engine marketing and social media marketing do not enhance Airlines competitiveness.

## **5.0 Scope**

This research focused on the impact of e-marketing techniques (internet services, search engine and social media) on service industry's performance of Arik Airline Nigeria and Aero Contractor Airline operational in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

It is exclusively relating to marketing of services and how e-tools can be used to improve upon the two airlines performances and customer's satisfaction.

The customers of these airlines made up the class of people to be surveyed for the study and the period covered is between 2012 and 2016

## **6.0 Literature Review**

### **6.1 Understanding e-Marketing**

Understanding the impact Internet based electronic marketplaces have on buyer-seller relationships is of crucial importance for the success of such market places as well as for buyers and sellers to fully exploit the benefits, Mossinkoff M., Peelen, E. (2001). E-marketing, a field in marketing with online tools or internet services continues to grow rapidly in both sophistication and integration with mainstream marketing communication, as more and more marketers embrace the online opportunities, Smith & Tailor (2007). The explained that with the expanded online marketing armory, such as; Web site marketing, search engine Marketing, e-mailing, m-marketing and the social media (Facebook, Twitters, YouTube, and Whatsapp) it will continually create the potential for excellent e-Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) which is what professional marketers seeks to achieve at a long run.

Smith & Taylor (2007), Stafan Lagrosen (2005), Anyanwu (2013) Mossinkoff, M., Peelen, E. (2001) and Olayinka & Aminu (2006) all agree that e-marketing means marketing online. That is the application of electronic means in the anticipation of customers' needs, the conception of production and the facilitation of exchanges in order to ensure customers satisfaction at a profit. It encapsulates all marketing activities over the internet, i.e. the use of Web site marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing and all other activities in the ICT, (Information and Communication Technology).

It is worth clarifying the difference between e-marketing, e-commerce and e-business. E-commerce is just a small part of the business primarily the sales or the transactional side that is integrated into the main business. Isolated e-commerce fails if what will enhance its sustenance is unplugged. For instance, an order made, but not supported by procurement unit, stock control unit or communication units which are part of the whole business will fail. Whereas, e-business is the sum total of all electronic operations of the entire business, it is a set of applications or systems, integrated and often automated to include the sells side (marketing and sales), 'buy' side (procurement), and the inside (operations).

On the other hand, e-marketing as earlier stated is a subset of e-business but larger in operations than e-commerce because it anticipates sales, planned for and creates values, and taking myriad of ways to satisfy customer's needs at a profit. And so, today's marketers must embrace continual change and the online opportunities and challenges that constantly come with it, argues Mossinkoff, M., Peelen, E. (2001). The digital impact affects every element of both the overall marketing mix and the communication mix. A host of e-tools have been added to the marketer's armoury, including; web sites, emailing, i-TV, i-radio, i-phones, i-pads, social medias and the list continues. Customers just want to be recognized, remembered and dealt with quickly, pleasantly and personally, not knowing the challenges these posed to marketers.

## **6.2 How e-Marketing Helps Businesses**

### **e-marketing saves time and increases passenger's patronage.**

Services by their very nature are time-intensive activities because there is no way to continue providing a service without continuing to invest time performing the service. Time is an important part of marketing a service because if you promise results within a given time frame, you must be certain you're able to deliver while still managing and providing services for others. You must be able to effectively estimate and manage the time needed for providing services to clients, Eze, Nnabuko & Etuk, (2014) e-marketing has helped Arik Nigeria and Aero Contractors Airlines manage time in that, online booking gives customers and potential customers opportunity to book a flight online and at the comfort of their homes. Again, as a result of increase patronage, the company stands to make more profit at a short and long run, Jessi Hampel (2007).

### **Cost Effectiveness**

With the advent of electronic markets, and in particular of industry-specific internet-based market places, or industry web-based networks these costs are deemed to be much lower, (Bailey and Bakos 1997). According to Kotler & Keller (2013), online marketing, an option in direct marketing, has made it possible for companies to reach prospects at the moments they want a solicitation and therefore be noticed by more cost-effective approaches. The cost benefits accrue to both product or services producers and consumers alike, Sharma I. (2007).

Still on cost effectiveness, e-word of mouth (eWOM) according to Eze, Nnabuko & Etuk, Aniebiet (2014) (which means, the use of internet, social medias and other digital medias by

satisfied customers in airing their experiences on a brand), has unequivocally changed and restructured the communication landscape – brand awareness, perception, image and comprehension which are collectively imbedded in brand loyalty. It is obvious that e-word-of-mouth as a powerful promotional tool without cost to the company, can ultimately enhance successful brand awareness which is quintessential for brand's knowledgeable and easy recognition.

### **Competitive Advantage**

In e-marketing, direct marketer's offers and strategies are less visible to competitors, giving firms that embrace it, an edge over competitors. More so, e-marketer can measure responses to their campaigns to decide which have been the most profitable (Kotler & Keller, 2013). There is no 'if' or 'but' firms that uses electronic tools will have an edge over its competitors.

### **Enhances Firm's-Customer Relationship**

E-marketing creates opportunities for customized and personalized messages and builds a continuous relationship with customers, Mark Walsh (2009). Social media marketing in particular offers; interactive, personalized and measurable responses that boost customers relationship with the companies, and Varieties of communication options means companies can send tailored messages that engage consumers by reflecting their special interest and behaviours. The internet is also highly accountable and its effect can be easily traced by noting how many unique visitors click on a page or advert, how long they spend there and where they go afterwards (Bonfrer & Dreze, 2009).

Marketers can build or tap into online communities, inviting participation from consumers and creating a long-term marketing assets in the process. The web offers the advantage of contextual placement, buying ads on sites related to the marketer's offering. Marketers can also place advertisement based on keywords from search engines, to reach people when they've actually started the buying process (Kotler & Keller, 2013).

Smith & Taylor (2007), summarize the benefits of e-marketing thus; it helps marketers to achieve many objectives, from increasing sales enquiries, to getting closer to customers and listening to them, to adding extra service and added value; to gaining efficacies and saving money; to strengthening the brand as it moves from visual orientation to an interactive and experiential orientation.

## **6.3 E-marketing Tools**

Marketers are trying to figure out the right way to be part of the consumer conversation, and it has been proved that e-marketing tools affords personalized communication possibilities by creating dialogues, saying and doing the right thing to the right person at the right time which is critical for marketing effectiveness, Kotler & Keller (2013). The study will restrict itself to the following tools;

### **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)**

This is a form of e-marketing that seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages (SERPs). According to the Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization SEM methods include: search engine optimization (or SEO), paid placement, and paid inclusion. New York Times, define SEM as the practice of buying paid search listings. Search engine marketers ensures that a web site is visible at the top of the list when search engines like google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL etc, brings out search results. A prominent listing is important as many enquirers visits only the first few sites listed in the search result. Smith & Taylor (2007) adds that; SEM requires an understanding of how customers and prospect use words when searching the internet, and the buying keywords relevant to their business must be

sponsored to be listed in the search section of major search engines and portals. And that over 700 marketers engage in SEM by bidding for high-ranking positions on search engines and portals. They pay if the search results listing their site are actually used, ie click on so visitors lands on their site. They do not pay for impressions ie the number of people who just see the listing, they only pay for the number of click-throughs ie when people see the listing and then click on it to land on the site.

### **Websites marketing**

Companies must design Web sites that embody or express their purpose, history, products and vision and that are attractive on first viewing and interesting enough to encourage repeat visits. Jeffrey Rayport & Bernard Jaworski (2001) propose that effective sites feature seven design elements they called the 7Cs;

1. Context: layout and design.
2. Content: Text, pictures, sound, and video the site contains.
3. Community: How the site enables user-to-user communication.
4. Customization: Sites ability to tailor itself to different users or allowing users to personalize the site.
5. Connection: Degree that the site is linked to other sites.
6. Commerce: Sites capabilities to enable commercial transactions.

Bob Tedechi (2002), agrees with Jeffrey Rayport & Bernard Jaworski (2001) but adds that; to encourage repeat visits, companies must pay special attention to context and content factors and embrace another 'C' ie constant change. Still on qualities of a good Web site, Jan-Benedict Steenkamp & Inge Geyskens (2006), posited that visitors will judge a site's performance on ease of use and physical attractiveness – ease of use means;

1. The site downloads quickly.
  2. The first page is easy to understand.
  3. It is easy to navigate to other pages that open quickly.
- While physical attractiveness is assured when;
1. Individual pages are clean and not crammed with content.
  2. Font types and sizes are very readable.
  3. The site makes good use of colour and sound.

### **Search Engine Optimization**

After watching an advert, it is surprising that many people will forget the URL or Web address. The work of search engine optimizer is to see to it that keywords and phrases are chosen carefully as these are the words with which a Web site is associated when a user enters words into a search engine, Danny Sullivan (2001). He said, for instance, a Web site that sells sportswear will have thousands of sites competing with it. But 'men' sportswear or 'tennis' sportswear will not be competing with so many other sites, so this will increase the likelihood of their appearing in the result, Smith & Taylor (2007). SEO is fundamental to getting a Web site listed organically so that it appears in the results content, understanding words and how existing and prospective customers use them is absolutely essential in SEO. Web site needs to be regularly audited against best practices guidelines, including current rankings and positions; this requires a lot of effort and resources, in addition to recruiting a professional search engine optimizer. Smith and Chaffey (2001) in Smith & Taylor (2007) suggested the following;

1. Ensure that your site is registered on all general and specialist search engines and directories.
2. Include your products and company names in the title tag and brief description. Ensure that they include popular keywords and key phrases.
3. Use meta-tags containing most important key phrases such as product or service names.

4. *Alternate* copy to include keywords and phrases that users are likely to type.
5. Use alternate graphic text
6. Maximize links from and to different sites.

### **Mobile Marketing**

With over 4.1 billion mobile subscribers in the world as at 2009, the appeal for mobile marketing as a communication tool in e-marketing is obvious, Roger Cheng (2009). There are more than twice as many mobile phones in the world as personal computers, so mobile phones represents a major opportunity for advertiser to reach consumers with bulk SMS and personalized messages based on demographics and other consumer behavior characteristics, Mark Walsh (2009). Smart phones also allow for e-mailing and location information through GPS which allows marketers to track customers' locations for proximity's ads, Sharma I. (2007). By tracking locations of receptive customers, marketers can send location specific promotions when they are at proximity to airports or any of the airline offices, Peter DaSilva (2010). With the increase capability of smart phones, online booking and reservation, luggage checks, online payment, flight schedule checks and flight rescheduling are made possible, thereby increasing customers satisfaction, and at the same time, productivity on the part of the airline companies.

### **E-mail Marketing**

This is a form of direct marketing which uses electronic mail as a means of communicating commercial or personal messages to an audience. In its broadest sense, every e-mail sent to a potential or current customer could be considered e-mail marketing according to Fairhead, N. (2003). However, Brownlow, M (2008) describes the term as:

- Sending e-mails with the purpose of enhancing the relationship of a customer or potential customers and to encourage customer loyalty and repeat business.
- Sending e-mails with the purpose of acquiring new customers or convincing old customers to buy something immediately.
- Adding advertisements in e-mails sent by other companies to their customers.
- E-mails are being sent on the Internet,

E-mail allows marketers to inform and communicate customers at a fraction of the cost of a regular post office mail, and it is timely, targeted and relevant, Kottler & Keller (2013). E-mail offers audio and virtual messages, making it possible to capture the interest of consumers with mind captivating campaigns, Piet Levy (2010).

## **6.4 Mapping out e-Strategies**

The foundation of any kind of marketing strategy are built upon clearly identified target markets and crystal-clear positioning and propositions (STP), where S stand for Segment, T stands for target market, and P for positioning, Smith & Taylor (2007). Remember, strategies are created for one reason and one reason only; to fulfill objectives. We must see to it that we are not distracted and that strategy fits the original goal or objective.

Assuming that it all fits the overall objectives, then the remaining components of strategy are (SIT) ie sequence or strategies for S, Integration for I and Tools for T. Sequence or strategies embrace a couple of e-issues, sequence means one considering whether there should be a sequence of e-tools. For instance, whether there should be Web site development before mobile marketing, e-mailing or social media marketing. Shawn Collins (2007) argues that any of the stages is fine provided the marketer knows where the company is in the evolutionary stages and he is aware of the implications, limitations and resources required by each of the stages.

Piet Levy (2010) adds that, implicit in all these are resources, the strategies may at the end be determined by the resources available and their allocation. But still on resources, Smith & Taylor (2007) noted, the ratio of allocation must be considered between, web site design, Web site service and Web site traffic generation for example. It has been suggested that the UK companies tend to adopt a 5:2:1 (design, service and traffic), whereas US companies tend to use a 1:2:5 ratio – which makes sense, as there is no point having a wonderful (expensive) Web site if no customers or prospects bother to visit it, he concludes.

Finally, a good strategy will select the best segments and target them carefully with clear propositions built on a crystal-clear positioning platform which is what Aero Contractors and Arik Nigeria Airlines are expected to do.

### 6.5 Challenges of e-Marketing

There is no point pushing harder if you are pushing in the wrong direction, e-issues and tools no matter how good they are or seems to be will not profit the company or its customer who are not ICT compliance.

Greater percentage of our country’s population is not computer and ICT literate and this poses a great challenge to e-marketers.

Furthermore, enabling laws are needed to tackle copyright bridge in service industry, equivalent to tangible product patent laws to protect and encourage innovative strides and creativity in e-service delivery.

### 7.0 Methodology

The study adopted the survey design approach through the administration of questionnaires to the customers of the selected airlines so as to gather relevant information about their perception on the applications of e-marketing techniques on service industry performance.

Samples were drawn from the customers of Arik and Aero Airlines in Akwa-Ibom Airport Terminal. A total of 400 questionnaire copies were distributed in line with the 400 sample size that was determined using the Taro Yamene determination tool, though 381 questionnaire copies returned were the actual used for the analysis.

All collated information was subsequently tested using chi-square for hypotheses one and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) for hypotheses two.

### Data Presentation and Findings

A total number of 400 questionnaires were distributed while 381 were adequately filled and returned, representing 95 percent return rate. These sets were used accordingly and the data are as presented below:

**TABLE 1: e-marketing and performance**

QUESTIONS	SD	D	A	SA	Total
1. I prefer online booking of ticket	24	130	150	77	381
	6.3%	34.1%	39.4%	20.2%	100 %
2. Online booking has increased my patronage	39	91	166	85	381

	10.2 %	23.9%	43.6%	22.3%	100 %
3. Social media has created airline awareness	21	147	173	40	381
	5.5%	38.6%	45.4%	10.5%	100 %
4. The use of Youtube, Facebook and Twitter propel airline interactions	75	102	183	21	381
	19.7%	26.8%	48.0%	5.5%	100 %
5. Airline website usage boost online booking	29	96	175	81	381
	7.6%	25.2%	45.9%	21.3%	100 %
6. Search engine marketing is critical to today's business	83	133	120	45	381
	21.8%	34.9%	31.5%	11.8%	100 %

Source: field survey, 2015

Table 1 above show the information on application of e-marketing tools and airline performance; however data from the respective questions raised on item 1 of the above table revealed that 227 of the 381 respondents used both preferred online booking of ticket; this shows that more than half the distribution was in affirmative of the statement. Item 2 also shows that over 65.9 percent of the distribution affirmed that online booking has increased their patronage. Item 3 which housed information on social media creating airline awareness shows that 55.9 percent of the distribution collective agreed and strongly agreed to it. Item 4 shows that 204 respondents which is also more than half the distribution affirmed that the use of YouTube, Face book and Twitter propel airline interactions. 67 percent of the distribution in item 5 affirmed that airline website usage boost online booking. Conclusively, Item 6 shows that 43.3 percent of the distributions were affirmative while the remaining 56.7 were not in support.

**TABLE 2: Airline competitiveness**

7. Airline can capture more market through its online business	24	130	184	43	<b>381</b>
	6.3%	34.1%	48.3%	11.3%	100 %
8. Purchase decision can be instigated by online advert	7	34	202	138	381
	1.8%	8.9%	53.0%	36.2%	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015

Item one on Table two above shows that over 69.6 percent of the respondents were affirmative that Airline can capture more market through its online business. In a similar vein, item one on the above table revealed that 89.2 percent were also affirmative of purchase decision being instigated by online advert.

Hypothesis one

H<sub>0</sub>: Airline performance is independent of e-marketing tools.

H<sub>1</sub>:Airline performance is dependent on e-marketing tools.  
 This hypothesis test was conducted using chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) statistical tool

TABLE 3: Hypothesis Test

e-marketing tools	Airline performance				X <sup>2</sup>	P-Value
	SD	D	A	SA		
1.I prefer online booking of ticket	24(45)	130(117)	150(161)	77(58)	7.328	P< 0.05 Significant
2.Online booking has increased my patronage	39(45)	91(117)	166(161)	85(58)		
3.Social media has created airline awareness	21(45)	147(117)	173(161)	40(58)		
4.The use of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter propel airline interactions	75(45)	102(117)	183(161)	21(58)		
5.Airline website usage is a boost	29(45)	96(117)	175(161)	81(58)		
6.Search engine is critical to today's airline business	83(45)	133(117)	120(161)	45(58)		

SPSS Result, 2015

**Table 3** shows the result of the observed and expected variables of the chi-square test of significance. The observed variables preceded the expected variables which are presented in brackets. It was discovered that the chi square (X<sup>2</sup>) result of 7.328 at 15 d.f. was higher than the tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the Null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) which states that “airline performance is dependent on e-marketing tools” was accepted.

Hypothesis Two

H<sub>0</sub>: Website marketing, Search engine marketing and social media marketing enhances Airlines competitiveness.

H<sub>1</sub>: Website marketing, Search engine usage and social media enhances Airline competitiveness

This hypotheses test was however conducted using the ordinary least square and the result is as presented in table 4:

**TABLE 4**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
1 (Constant)	.737	.411		1.794	.074	.278	49.678
WEB_MKT	.398	.059	.312	6.732	.000		
SEARCH_ENG	.050	.051	.045	.972	.332		
SOC_MEDIA	.423	.048	.389	8.870	.000		

a. Dependent Variable: AIRLINE\_COMPETITIVENESS

**Table 4** shows the effect of Website marketing, Search engine marketing and social media marketing on airline competitiveness. It indicates that the model fits the data, as measured by the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>). The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.278 or 27.8% indicates that about 28% of the observed changes in the dependent variable, that is, airline competitiveness were explained by the independent variables: Website marketing, Search engine marketing and social media marketing. It follows that the remaining 72% was not accounted for by the model and was therefore represented in the usual stochastic error term. The high value of the adjusted R-squared occur by chance, since its overall statistical significance as measured by the F-statistic showed a high levels [F-statistic =49.678 compared to F<sub>0.05</sub>= 3.84]. This therefore confirms that the model had a high predictive power.

To examine the statistical significance of the individual variables in the model, the t-statistic value was used. First, the expected a priori sign confirmed the theoretical stance that Website marketing, and social media marketing were positively related to airline competitiveness, while search engine usage marketing was not related to it. Specifically, the independent variables that is Website marketing, and social media were found to be statistically significant at unconventional level [tcal =6.732, 8.870 > t<sub>0.05</sub> = 1.97], while Search engine marketing was found to be statistically insignificant at unconventional level [tcal = 0.972 < t<sub>0.05</sub> = 1.97]. This was read from a two tailed test table.

H<sub>0</sub>is therefore rejected on website marketing and social media influences on airline competitiveness while it is accepted on search engine influences on airline competitiveness

**Conclusion**

Since the emergence of e-tools in the nineties, it has impacted every aspect of our lives; empowering us to buy what we want, when we want at our convenience, and helps us to imagine ourselves buying, owning, and having positive outcomes by the goods and services available out there on the web. One of which being lower costs for the distribution of information and media to a global audience, the interactive nature of e-marketing builds consumer-firm relationships both in terms of providing instant response and eliciting response, increases customers patronage and by extension profit for the Aero contractor and Arik Nigeria Airlines, brings about competitive advantage and cost effectiveness.

It is hoped that the findings will be beneficial to the management of these airline companies, the consumers/potential consumers, the business community in general and Akwa Ibom State University as it has added to the body of knowledge.

### **Recommendation**

Drown from the findings, it is recommended that; service companies must educate the populace on the benefits of the ICTs and the e-tools use by them, so as to tap enormous resources that abound on the net through these e-tools.

Moreso, to overcome some challenges faced by e-marketers, government should create an enabling environment by enacting laws to protect company's electronic innovative strides, equivalent to what patent right stands for in tangible product market.

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