

# The Relationship between the Digital Work Environment and Airline Operators' Competitiveness in Rivers State, Nigeria

Dr. Blessing Nwiyii Joseph<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Amanawa, David Ebiegbere<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Uelee, Micah Nyone<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. in Management (Organizational Behaviour Option)  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt.  
[nwiyiiblessing@gmail.com](mailto:nwiyiiblessing@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Researcher/Faculty Member at the Centre for Continuing Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.  
[david.amanawa@iaue.edu.ng](mailto:david.amanawa@iaue.edu.ng)

<sup>3</sup>Ph.D in Management (Production Management Option), Faculty of Business Studies, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt  
[micah.nyone12@gmail.com](mailto:micah.nyone12@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *The study determined the relationship between the digital work environment and the competitiveness of Airline Operators in Rivers State. Generally, the objective of the study was to empirically determine how the digital work environment relates to competitiveness in terms of customer service health and corporate reputation of Airline Operators in Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The study population consisted of sixteen (16) Airline Operators in Rivers State. Data regarding the population of this study was obtained from the Rivers State Ministry of Transport in Port Harcourt. The sample of this study consisted of selected five (5) top managers in each of the sixteen (16) Airline Operators in Rivers State. Thus, the study was a census study. The five (5) top-level managers included General Manager, Operations Manager, Marketing Manager, Customer Relations Manager, and Information Technology Manager, and gives a total of eighty (80) managers. The instrument's reliability was ascertained using Crombach Alpha, with the least coefficient up to 0.756. Out of 80 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 72 copies of the questionnaires were retrieved. The data obtained from the field were analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS Version 22.0. Two hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation. The study found that there is a significantly strong relationship between the digital work environment and the customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State, and a significantly strong relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State. The study concluded that using digital office tools to run operations for an airline operation company, such as booking applications, social media booking, and virtual payment systems, are viable ways to achieve, among other things, customer service health and corporate reputation. The study recommended, amongst other things, that Airline operators should utilize booking applications such as booking.com and wakanow.com for seamless customer/organization interaction.*

**Keywords:** Digital Work Environment, Competitiveness, Customer Service Health, Corporate Reputation.

## Background of Study

Almost all facets of air travel and the operations that support it are included in the aviation business. This implies that it covers the entire airline sector, the manufacture of aircraft, research organizations, military aviation, and much more. In Nigeria, over 20,000 individuals work for airlines, airport operators, on-site businesses (restaurants and shops), and air navigation service providers (Mark, 2020). In addition, the sector supported an additional 35,000 jobs by purchasing goods and services from regional vendors. Additionally, the sector is thought to sustain an additional 16,000 employees through the earnings it gives its workers, some or all of which are then used to purchase consumer goods and services. According to estimates, Nigeria's GDP is supported by the airline sector, which includes its supply chain, to US \$600 million (Mark, 2020). Despite its contributions to the global economy, Nigeria's aviation sector is plagued by problems preventing it from expanding and stifling its economic expansion. Amos Akpan, managing director of Capital Airlines, hypothesized that one of the issues facing domestic airlines is their difficulty obtaining funding due to government laws and regulations restricting the airlines' ability to operate (Uche, 2020). In addition, poor facilities, security challenges, and other problems plague Nigeria's aviation industry. Another problem impeding the sector is the apparent lack of competition among airline companies, particularly in Rivers State.

Competitiveness is an organization's ability to outperform other businesses in the same sector by consistently enhancing its goods and services and building a solid reputation. Another definition of competitiveness is an organization's capacity to develop, produce, and market goods or services that are superior to those provided by rivals (D'Cruz, 2012). The development of strategies by businesses to get an advantage in the market through product innovation, satisfactory service delivery, and great brand image is what it takes to achieve competitiveness. According to (Ansoff, 2016; Lemos & Nascimento, 2017), this work measures competitiveness in terms of the company's reputation and customer service.

Organizations like airline corporations need hospitable settings to function properly, just like humans do. Otamiri & Odu (2018) acknowledged that the physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, and digital or technological environments all play a role in the workplace. The digital work environment is one of the workplaces now gaining popularity. Jude et al. (2006) defined the digital environment as the information a business needs to execute its activities, including infrastructure, components, machines, equipment, procedures, and inventions. This work defines a “digital work environment” as a workplace where computer-human collaboration is characterized by virtualization, social media, online transactions, and other digital and cloud computing principles to achieve the intended office goals.

Digital work environment and competitiveness have constituted research interest over the years. For instance, technological environment and organizational performance/productivity in banks (Okechukwu & Okoronkwo, 2018; Mohammed et al., 2019); Saeid (2011) studied the impact of information technology in the banking system in Keshavarzi, Iran; information technology and the growth/development of banking industry in Nigeria (Alfred, 2012); effects of information technology on organizational performance in Nigerian banking industries (Balogun, 2016).

However, none of these studies above provided empirical evidence on how the digital work environment interacts with measures of the organizational health of Airline Operators in Rivers State, such as customer service health and corporate reputation. This suggests that the relationship between the digital work environment and the competitiveness of Airline Operators in Rivers State has not received sufficient research attention. This knowledge gap necessitated this study.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The study aimed to determine the relationship between the digital work environment and the competitiveness of Airline Operators in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study include the following:

1. To determine the relationship between the digital work environment and customer service health of Airline Operators in Rivers State.
2. To determine the relationship between the digital work environment and corporate reputation of Airline Operators in Rivers State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formed thus:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and the customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is hinged on Person-Environment Fit Theory. Lewin and Edwards' Person-Environment Fit Theory was popularized in 1962, as cited in Osita (2018). This theory of psychological stress describes the interaction between the person and environment (P × E) as the key to comprehending people's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural reactions such as stress and operational productivity level. The relevant assumptions of this theory as deemed fit for this work are as follows:

- i. A mismatch between a person and his work environment will lead to tension and uneasiness capable of hampering his level of productivity;
- ii. Workers' capabilities (skill sets) will determine the level of work pressure and how environmental stress affects their output (Lewin & Edward, as cited in Odu, 2018). This is the phase of the theory that strengthens the fact that the ability of a manager in an airline company to effectively and efficiently utilize the digital tools at his disposal in the workplace will influence how stressful the work will be, as well as influence customer service health and reputation of the organization.

The first assumption is that a manager lacking experience using digital platforms and tools for workplace social media, online transaction systems, and digital meeting systems will have difficulty adjusting to a workplace environment replete with cutting-edge digital technology. To operate activities efficiently and effectively with all of the technologies at his disposal and to increase organizational competitiveness, particularly in terms of customer service health and corporate reputation, such a person will need to hone his skills.

This theory was chosen as the primary theoretical framework for this study because it connects to the digital work environment, which serves as the study's independent variable. In addition, the fact that this theory explains and predicts that a manager's familiarity with digital platforms and tools in a work environment that values digital innovation will determine whether and to what extent the manager can incite competition in the organization is another factor that makes it appropriate to adopt this theory as the theoretical foundation of this study.

### **Concept of Digital Work Environment**

The term "workplace" has changed from a physical location with offices, conference rooms, and desk phones to a constantly linked setting with quick access to everything employees need to do their jobs. Office tasks and records are now frequently found online. Within workplace settings, instant messaging has gained popularity as a means of communication, and e-mail is a frequently utilized form of correspondence. Employees today frequently work in settings that are geographically separated in several places. This current tendency is largely brought on by new technology and easier access to internet resources. However, it is also a result of people trying to manage their personal and professional life. Therefore, human resources must endeavor to involve dispersed teams working on the same project in their efforts today.

Digital technology can become a real chance to strengthen a sense of belonging, establish a company's culture, and enable interaction between employees working from various locations, even though it is frequently perceived as demeaning relationships between people (Montamat, 2019). However, on the other hand, human resource teams must also cope with people who will readily leave their positions if they receive a better offer with more favorable working circumstances, challenges, or career possibilities.

A setting or location made possible by technology and digital gadgets—often communicated over the internet or other digital means—is referred to as a "digital environment" (Tango, 2020). Additionally, it is a setting where work-related tasks are carried out using computers and other technology tools and systems. A setting or location created using computer technology is called a "digital environment." This includes websites, mobile applications, social media, audio and video content, and other web-based resources that promote social interaction. Digital devices connect and control the environment's information and actions in a digital environment, which is an integrated communications environment (Wikipedia, 2019). The idea is built on integrated digital electronics systems a world community uses.

The "digital work environment" has emerged as the workplace of the twenty-first century has been completely supplanted by digital tools and technologies that have all but universally made work simple and quick. It is a work location where staff members collaborate virtually despite their geographical separation. The modern, virtual equivalent of the conventional workplace is the digital work environment (Eric, 2020). Through a user-friendly online experience, it swiftly and securely provides tailored role-based services as well as all the applications, data, and collaboration that employee needs on any device, anytime, anywhere. In addition, a digital work environment adapts to people's work and employs the most recent mobility services and digital technologies to boost employee engagement and happiness.

The term "digital work environment" refers to the entire digital tools employees use to carry out their duties in a certain firm. These technologies include an intranet, messaging platforms, e-mail, customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise reporting systems (ERP), human resource systems, calendars, and other business processes or tools that support the regular day-to-day operations of an organization (Perks, 2015). In the modern digital-first, consumer-focused corporate climate, successfully transforming the workplace digitally is essential for long-term business success. The physical workplace, technology, and people are all impacted by the digital workplace. A change made in one area could have an impact on another.

The information, technology, collaboration tools, and procedures employees utilize to complete work on any device, at any time, and from any location are referred to as the "digital work environment" (Miller & March, 2016). The infrastructure for the digital workplace should be uniform and adaptable to enable secure information access through various channels and devices. For example, it should integrate texting and video to make life easier and knowledge sharing more successful for all employees. The platform should also enable secure access to the required data on any device. In addition, there may be issues with governance, risk, and compliance that the business must deal with.

The boundaries between the physical office and the location where work takes place have become hazier in today's always-connected, instant-access environment. Management and employees are interacting and communicating in previously unheard-of ways as the line between work and home life blurs, and the workplace environment goes fully digital. They need the capability to establish fruitful commercial ties outside traditional work groupings to facilitate information transfer throughout the corporation. As a result, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the conventional "produce and push" information approach does not match the

changing needs of employees. As a result, leading companies have started implementing a completely new digital work environment, to reflect their staff's evolving work experience accurately. The digital work environment eliminates communication barriers by integrating employees' technologies, including e-mail, instant messaging, enterprise social media tools, human resource applications, and virtual meeting tools. This places a person in a position to improve management and employee experiences by fostering efficiency, innovation, and growth. Nevertheless, to be successful, a digital work environment strategy must be put into practice in a way that may lead to real cultural change.

The technologies currently in use and those that will soon be used in the modern workplace are all included in the digital work environment (Berg et al., 2018). It includes everything from enterprise social networking and virtual meeting tools to e-mail, instant messaging, and fundamental business systems for human resources. The idea of a digital work environment has already become a reality due to technological advancements, and future improvements will continue to have an impact as the workplace changes. As one moves from one style of working to an environment that coordinates people, processes, and technology more closely than ever before, shifting into a digital work environment demands a lot of management, effort, and experience. The entire process needs to be planned and handled proactively so the business may reach its established goals by implementing a digital work environment. The working environment has been digitalized like some other human endeavor environments have, where computers operate alongside other devices, people, and information to complete tasks. The digital work environment will not typically be created from scratch because many of these components are currently used by most enterprises. A business may be closer to running a digital work environment than they believe if management and staff respond to e-mails from smartphones, check their pay stubs online, or digitally enter a sales opportunity. However, even when new technology is necessary, the advantages exceed the disadvantages. Organizations that do not embrace the digital work environment risk falling behind as management and employee expectations change and the workplace environment continues to evolve.

According to James (2016), a digital work environment is a framework of interconnected technologies that manages work activities from beginning to end. It enables management and staff to access their data and apps from any location and device. A successful digital workplace must offer end users and information technology a cohesive, contextual, and safe experience. Human resources, application and desktop virtualization, file sharing and content collaboration, unified endpoint management, secure access to Software as a Service (SaaS) applications/secure browsing, and single sign-on are all components of a unified, secure, and intelligent digital workspace (SSO) (Marsh, 2018).

A digital work environment is viewed from an operational perspective as a workplace where computer and human collaboration is characterized by virtualization, social media use, online transactions, and other digital and cloud computing concepts being implemented to achieve the targeted goals of an office. Given that technology and digitalization define airplane and how it operates, it would be ludicrous to have a non-digital workplace. Therefore, it will not be out of place to argue that anything "digital work environment" should first be embraced in the aviation industry, as this would improve communication health, operational efficiency, and customer service health. Airline operators in Rivers State and throughout Nigeria can embrace such a technologically advanced work environment, permitting an open flow of information between their staff members as well as between staff members and management. Employees and supervisors who operate in such a technologically advanced setting tend to do far better than their counterparts in less advanced or non-digital work environments. Digital solutions helped airlines increase direct and indirect revenues between 2017 and right before the pandemic's onset, optimize costs, enhance the customer experience, and advance growth prospects (Frost & Sullivan, 2020). Expanding the timeframe to 10 years earlier (2010 to 2019), according to Frost & Sullivan (2020), airline revenues nearly doubled while the industry expanded by 32%. A company's success is determined by its ability to balance its traditional and new, technology-driven models, i.e., to continue serving your older customers and traditional markets through traditional channels while offering cutting-edge online platforms for the younger generation. It would help if you utilized all available channels as long as they are still applicable (Tom, 2017).

Implementing cutting-edge digital tools, solutions, and services may not be at the top of airlines' priority lists now that they are dealing with the harsh post-COVID-19 operating climate (Igor, 2020). However, many airlines are at a pivotal point in putting digitalization talk into practice. This is because numerous accessible, intelligent solutions available that do more than only allow for working more efficiently and intelligently during difficult economic circumstances. They can also actively support airlines' long-term digital goals and help modify and restructure their operations.

The possibilities for introducing digital technologies to airlines are limited by the management's creativity, from Air Asia's facial recognition for check-in to Emirate's meal ordering device for business class (Mazareanu, 2020). The main goal is to enhance operational capabilities and customer experience while achieving financial effectiveness (Mazareanu, 2020). With the emergence of new platforms and gadgets for what is known as "Digital Revenue," airlines can generate new revenue streams. Airlines can surpass passenger expectations, streamline operations, and make money with these technologies. However, investment in these solutions needs to be carefully considered, and it must be made sure that the right talent is available not only to implement but also to operate

and maintain the solutions. This is why upgrading the IT organization's skills (or hiring new staff) who can operate and think digitally may be necessary.

### Concept of Competitiveness

The idea of competition has several facets. Three perspectives can be considered: national, industry, and organizational. The Latin word *competer*, which denotes involvement in a corporate battle for markets, is where "competitiveness" first appeared. In the global market economy, where goods, services, people, talents, and ideas may move freely across borders, it has become usual to compare one entity's economic strength to its rivals (Murths, 2010).

According to D'Cruz (2012), the ability of a company to design, produce, and market products that are superior to those provided by rivals can be characterized as competitive. Competitive procedures are how organizational competitiveness is achieved. Competitiveness processes assist in assessing the significance and present effectiveness of fundamental procedures, including strategic management, human resource, operational, and technological procedures. The competitiveness process can be seen as a balancing act that supports more established functional processes like operations management and human resource management. As a result, it improves an organization's capacity to compete more successfully.

Assets and processes work together to create a competitive advantage. Assets can be inherited (like natural resources) or created (like infrastructure), while processes change assets to generate revenue through sales to consumers. Through the competitiveness process, outcomes can be reached comparable to the Asset-Process-Performance (APP) architecture (Momaya, 2017). Some authors perceive competition through the lens of competency. They emphasize the significance of internal organizational variables for an organization's competitive success, including organizational strategy, structures, competencies, and capacity for innovation (Hatch & Schultz, 2014; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2016). This viewpoint is especially prevalent among those who favor a competitive strategy centered on resources (Ulrich, 1993 in Haradhan, 2016). Achieving world-class competitiveness can be facilitated by the capacity to create and utilize capabilities and talents significantly more effectively than rivals (Balmer, 2016).

Many authors have referred to productivity as a substitute for competitiveness and a reliable indication of an organization's long-term competitiveness. For example, Porter defined organizational competitiveness as productivity growth that results in lower costs or differentiated products that fetch higher prices. These qualities are also emphasized in Porter's general strategies (Peter, 2014). According to some, the organization, sector, or country with the highest production may be viewed as the most competitive (McKee & Sessions-Robinson, 2015). However, there are several approaches to quantifying competitiveness; in this study, we will use customer service quality and brand reputation.

### Measures of Competitiveness

**Customer Service Health:** Customer service health is a business concept that describes interactions between service providers and customers in which the customer either gains or loses value due to the service provider's offering of a service, whether it be information or a task. Customer service health is known as the level to which a corporate organization's products and/or services satisfy its customers' preferences, requirements, or expectations. An easy way to determine a company's health is to look at how satisfied its consumers or clients are. Successful businesses adapt their business practices to the specific requirements of their target markets. Additionally, it is critical to establish sincere ties with clients that go beyond business and to treat them like actual people. To improve the service quality, employees in a commercial setting must be kind and approachable. Having a quality product on the market is insufficient. Customers should be greeted with a smile, listened to, and given instructions on how to use things sold by those who sell these goods.

Keeping open lines of communication to maintain connections and advance service delivery is possible by paying close attention to consumers, probing inquiries, and interpreting body language. Service delivery is influenced by the managers' human interactions with their staff. A key component of excellent customer service is following up with clients to ensure their expectations have been fulfilled and exceeded. It is feasible to immediately resolve issues when customers receive prompt solutions to their complaints. Increased trust results from this. In order to resolve any issues that arise, personnel must design a concise and effective procedure for managing client complaints and ensure that they are aware of what the consumer truly wants. Customer complaints must be viewed as an opportunity to learn how to provide even better customer service. Businesses must work to retain existing consumers and draw in new ones.

According to this study, "customer service health" refers to the organizational effort made to meet consumers' expectations by providing them with dependable service, handling complaint redress and efficient booking administration. Customer service health can be seen in the context of customer service health. This is the case because a production company is one in which, among other things, the needs of its customers are addressed, assuming that such needs fall within the organization's purview. Customer service



health gauges an organization’s performance under customer requirements. This also offers a way to gauge service quality. Customers can genuinely remark on items and services by giving feedback on aspects of the service (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017; Sweta & Bhawana, 2012). In the current market, businesses that do not offer high-quality goods and services risk losing clients to rivals (Cheng, 2013).

**Corporate Reputation:** It has been said that a brand’s or a person’s reputation is an extrinsic cue—an attribute related to the product but not its physical makeup. Brand image is constantly changing and is largely influenced by the information users share (Herbig & Milewicz, 2013). Reputation encapsulates the general opinion of an organization’s public, rivals, suppliers, customers, and workers (Fombrun & Shanley, 2018). Companies strive for brand reputation because they are aware that those with a positive reputation for all of their products may expect to command the highest sales prices, making them more powerful than their rivals (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2016).

Outstanding brand reputation is the same as corporate reputation in this context (Harit & Chetioui, 2017). Corporate reputation is described as the collective evaluation of a corporation’s past deeds and capacity to consistently produce better financial returns for many investors by The Online Business Dictionary (2018). For instance, many companies rate their reputations based on financial stability, management competence, level of goods and services, and market competition. James (2013) describes a strong corporate reputation as an intangible asset that represents non-physical assets like brand name and image and appears on the asset side of an organization’s balance sheet. He also made the following points: A corporation frequently gains a corporate reputation by acquiring another company.

**Methodology**

The study adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The study population consisted of sixteen (16) Airline Operators in Rivers State. Data regarding the population of this study was obtained from the Rivers State Ministry of Transport in Port Harcourt. The sample of this study consisted of selected five (5) top managers in each of the sixteen (16) Airline Operators in Rivers State. Thus, the study was a census study. The five (5) top-level managers included General Manager, Operations Manager, Marketing Manager, Customer Relations Manager, and Information Technology Manager, and eighty (80) managers.

To acquire primary data, a structured questionnaire entitled “Digital Work Environment and Competitiveness Index (DWECI)” was designed on a four-point Likert scale with the following response options: Very Great Extent (4), Great Extent (3), Moderate Extent (2), and Low Extent (1). Two experts in management validated the instrument. The instrument’s reliability was ascertained using Crombach Alpha, with the least coefficient up to 0.756. Out of 80 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 72 copies of the questionnaires were retrieved. The data obtained from the field were analyzed using Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS 22.0.

**Decision Rule:** Using a level of significance of 0.05 (confidence interval of 95%), when a significant calculated value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected; if otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Results/Findings**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and the customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Correlations between Digital Work Environment and Competitiveness**

		Digital Work Environment	Customer Service Health	Corporate Reputation
Spearman’s rho	Digital Work Environment	Correlation	1.000	0.717**
		Coefficient		0.862**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	72	72
	Customer Service Health	Correlation	0.717**	1.000
		Coefficient		0.755**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	72	72	
	Corporate Reputation	Correlation	0.862**	0.755**
	Coefficient			1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.

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Column two of table 1 above shows an r-value of 0.717 at a significance level of 0.00, less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to the digital work environment and customer service health. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ), which states that there is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State, is rejected. This implies a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and the customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State.

Column three of table 1 above shows an r-value of 0.862 at a significance level of 0.00, less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to the digital work environment and corporate reputation. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ), which states that there is no significant relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State, is rejected. This implies a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State.

These results show that the adoption of a digital work environment for businesses such as airline operators brings about improvement in their competitive ability, especially when it comes to customer service health and corporate reputation.

### Summary of Findings

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses presented above, the following findings were evident:

1. There is a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and the customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State.
2. There is a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and customer service health of airline operators in Rivers State. This indicates, among other things, that using booking tools like booking.com, wakanow.com, and the global distribution system encourages good customer service. As a result, airline operators will be more competitive in attaining their aims and objectives the more they outfit their offices and use these technologies. This result is consistent with Frankenfield's (2020) assertion that using booking software by airline operators has improved corporate reputation and convenience of work in addition to customer service health.

This indicates, among other things, that using booking tools like booking.com, wakanow.com, and the global distribution system encourages good customer service. As a result, airline operators will be more competitive in attaining their aims and objectives the more they outfit their offices and use these technologies. This result is consistent with Frankenfield's (2020) assertion that using booking software by airline operators has improved corporate reputation and convenience of work in addition to customer service health. In addition, because of current levels of innovation, cell phones can be programmed to allow users to browse the internet, reserve a hotel room, a car, a seat on an airplane, and other services, making the best use of time and all other human resources (Alo et al., 2014).

The booking app's simplicity and "all in one place" features create a stunning customer experience that improves customer service and boosts the company's reputation and productivity. The higher the scores from the general public and customers, the better the customer experience. The more customers an airline operator receives through the booking app, the more it increases their profitability and allows them to offer more services. Customers naturally refer business to others when they are satisfied with a service provided to them, both consciously and unconsciously. When they receive poor treatment, the situation is the opposite. This is one of the reasons it is crucial for companies like airline operators to design their booking apps so that they are adaptable, simple to use, and have almost everything in one place to ensure that customers are completely satisfied when booking flights engaging in other related activities.

The test of hypothesis two showed a significant strong relationship between the digital work environment and the corporate reputation of airline operators in Rivers State. This research also suggests that using banking applications, the USSD payment system, and website-based payment for airline payments facilitates customer service, which enhances business reputation, among other things. It is relatively simple for customers to get what they want and for businesses to react quickly as a result because customers can make payments from the comfort of their offices, homes, pubs, for reservations for flights, hotels, and cars without having to

stand in line for these same purposes. The capacity to make payments online from anywhere worldwide is a huge service improvement and profit expansion for airline operators and firms in this modern age. (Mark, 2019).

More than 35% of travelers state that the payment procedure is crucial when booking a trip; thus, your payment strategy may be effective for attracting, converting, and retaining customers. Providing clients with a safe and flexible payment experience at every stage of their customer journey, from the website or branded app to payments made aboard the flight, may impact an airline's financial performance. It gives clients the frictionless experience they desire while developing customer confidence and trust. The payment process is a crucial step in the booking of a trip. Nearly 30% of customers stop the checkout process and choose a different airline if their preferred payment option is not accepted. As a result of travelers' frequent high-value transactions, such as flights, they give these factors greater thought as they move through the payment process. Airlines must ensure no friction throughout the process by offering suitable payment methods in various locations. These elements help to make travel desirable overall, fostering company success, profitability, and other aspects that foster competition.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the analysis, the study concluded that using digital office tools to run operations for an airline operation company, such as booking applications, social media booking, and virtual payment systems, are viable ways to achieve, among other things, customer service health and corporate reputation. The use of digital office tools, including booking software, social media booking, and virtual payment systems, which are in demand in the airline operating industry, increases organizational competitiveness in terms of productivity, customer happiness, and corporate image. Operators of airlines that do not start using and optimizing these digital tools run the risk of being out of business.

## Recommendations

1. Airline operators should utilize booking applications such as booking.com and wakanow.com for seamless customer/organization interaction.
2. Airline operators should all enable banking applications for customers to carry out virtual payments, hence promoting customer satisfaction.
3. Airline operators should also accept payments through the USSD payment system, which will generally promote healthy competitiveness.

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