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Evaluating Key Criteria for Social Media Advertising and Promotion Platform Selection in Turkish Aviation: A FUCOM-Based Approach

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine which criteria airlines should prioritize when selecting social media platforms for advertising and promotional activities. To support brand awareness through such efforts, the Full Consistency Method (FUCOM) was used to assign weights to the selection criteria. Seven criteria, identified through an extensive literature review, were evaluated and weighted by domain experts. The results showed that the presentation of easy-to-understand information was the highest priority. This was followed by the criteria of quick and accurate information dissemination and user engagement. Together, these three criteria accounted for 55% of the total weight, highlighting their critical influence in the platform selection process. The study provides valuable theoretical and managerial insights that can inform both academic research and practical decision-making in the airline industry.

Keywords
Airline, Social Media, Advertising, Brand Awareness, FUCOM

JEL Classification
M31, M37, L93

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Türk Havacılığında Sosyal Medyada Reklam ve Promosyon Platformu Seçimi İçin Temel Kriterlerin Değerlendirilmesi: FUCOM Tabanlı Bir Yaklaşım

Öz

Bu çalışmada, havayollarının reklam ve promosyon faaliyetleri için sosyal medya seçiminde hangi kriterleri önceliklendirmesi gerektiği belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Reklam ve promosyon faaliyetleri yoluyla marka farkındalığını artırmak üzere seçim kriterlerinin ağırlıklandırılması için FUCOM yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında, alan yazın taraması sonucunda belirlenen yedi kriter, uzmanlar tarafından değerlendirilerek ağırlıklandırılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, kolay anlaşılır bir bilgi sunumu, en yüksek önceliğe sahip kriter olarak belirlenmiştir. Bunu, bilginin doğru ve hızlı şekilde yayılması ile etkileşim kriterleri takip etmiştir. Bu üç kriterin toplam ağırlığı, genel ağırlığın %55'ini oluşturarak sosyal medya platformu seçiminde belirleyici rol oynadıklarını göstermiştir. Araştırmanın değerli teorik ve yönetsel çıktılarının, uygulayıcılara ve akademisyenlere yol göstereceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler
Havayolu, Sosyal Medya, Reklamcılık, Marka Farkındalığı, FUCOM

JEL Kodu
M31, M37, L93

1. Introduction

With the advancement of information and communication technologies, social media tools have become central to our lives and a focal point of marketing. The widespread adoption of these technologies has not only provided valuable data for analyzing customer behavior but also created an interactive space between brands and consumers, enabling businesses to develop new strategies (Karaağaoğlu & Çiçek, 2019). Over time, digital marketing strategies have strengthened the market position of companies and become a cornerstone of their success (Moghadasnian et al., 2024). Airlines, in particular, have increasingly relied on social media marketing - a key component of digital marketing - to build brand identity, increase brand awareness and engage with customers. This shift is largely due to social media's proven effectiveness compared to traditional marketing techniques. Studies have demonstrated that social media marketing not only promotes a positive brand image, but also leaves a lasting impression, underscoring the critical role of social media tools in modern marketing strategies (Chatterjee, 2022).

Airlines utilize social media marketing for various purposes, including customer relationship management, advertising, and promotional activities. Social media is considered particularly suitable for promotional and advertising efforts, as its recall rate exceeds 55% compared to other channels. Given the expected increase in social media usage in the coming years, advertising and promotional activities are likely to become even more prominent in this domain (Seo & Park, 2018). Airlines engage in social media marketing both through their own channels

and via paid advertisements. Accordingly, airlines with business accounts on multiple platforms continue their promotional activities through their official pages while also investing in paid advertisements on external platforms. The existence of numerous platforms raises the question of which one is the most effective for advertising and promotional activities. Moreover, identifying the criteria for airline platform selection has become a key concern. Various studies in the literature have explored social media selection for different purposes across diverse industries. For instance, Eren and Khorsheed (2023) examined the selection of the most suitable platforms for online travel planning in the tourism sector. Similarly, Enyinda et al. (2013) identified the most effective social media platform for relationship marketing in the healthcare sector. Supida et al. (2020) investigated the optimal social media platform for SMEs' e-commerce activities. However, no study specifically examines social media platform selection for airlines. In this context, this study aims to identify the most important criteria for selecting the optimal social media platform to increase brand awareness for airlines. It also seeks to determine the relative importance of these criteria and assign appropriate weights to them.

This research contributes to the literature from several perspectives. First, it is one of the pioneering studies to use Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) method to identify the most effective social media platform for increasing brand awareness in the airline industry. Second, it goes beyond traditional criteria such as reach and interaction by incorporating additional factors such as cost-effectiveness into the analysis, providing a more comprehensive evaluation. Third, by providing a data-driven perspective on social media advertising and promotions, it supports the development of a more rational and optimized strategy, moving away from purely intuitive decision-making.

2. Literature Review

MCDM aims to determine the best alternative by considering multiple criteria in the selection process (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023). These methods provide compact solutions by presenting alternative decisions with both qualitative and quantitative results. They can effectively address problems that arise in different sectors as well as in daily life. In this context, MCDM methods play a crucial role in policy formulation, strategy development, and decision making among multiple alternatives and have become an integral part of various industries (Bhole & Deshmukh, 2018). MCDM has been widely used methods in the airline industry, as well as in many

other industries. It has been used to solve various decision making challenges in different areas of the airline industry. Specifically, it has been used in service quality evaluation (Pandey, 2016), air traffic regulation (Bongo & Ocampo, 2017), route selection (Deveci et al., 2017), aircraft selection (Kiracı & Akan, 2020), operational and financial performance evaluation (Gudiel Pineda et al., 2018), sustainable fleet planning (Lee et al., 2018), sustainable fuel alternative selection (Chai & Zhou, 2022), airport location selection (Janic & Reggiani, 2002), and corporate image and reputation assessment (Liou & Chuang, 2010). Thus, MCDM serves as a valuable tool for enhancing complex decision-making processes in the airline industry.

In recent years, with the growth of digitalization, MCDM methods have been increasingly adopted as an alternative approach to complex decision-making processes in the field of social media, particularly in areas such as performance measurement and service quality assessment. Numerous studies have explored the use of MCDM to various aspects of social media. Muruganantham et al. (2020) emphasized that the Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) method has a lower margin of error compared to other approaches when analyzing large-scale social media data. Hsieh (2018) applied the Quality Function Deployment - House of Quality (QFD-HOQ) model, which incorporates MCDM methods, to investigate the relationship between social media and service quality. This study was further supported by Gray Relational Analysis (GRA), Fuzzy Logic (FL), TOPSIS, and Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) methods. Toglukdemir et al. (2016) used Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to evaluate the social media performance of globally operating companies. Similarly, Dangi and Saini (2018) evaluated social media platforms in terms of Return on Investment (ROI) and identified the key factors influencing their success. Guzman and Robielos (2022) conducted a study on content viewing potential, identifying the content categories with the highest engagement rates to optimize revenue. Meanwhile, Zulkefli et al. (2022) used the AHP-TOPSIS method to evaluate the interaction performance of different content types and develop content-sharing strategies for Instagram. In line with these studies, MCDM methods have been used to evaluate social media performance, identify return on investment factors, evaluate content interaction performance, and analyze the relationship between social media platforms and overall service quality. Therefore, these studies play a crucial role in supporting strategic decision-making for the effective and efficient use of social media platforms.

Although MCDM methods have made significant contributions to various fields, including the airline industry and social media, ensuring their reliability and accuracy remains crucial. At this point, selecting an appropriate weighting method that systematically and consistently prioritizes criteria is essential. In recent years, Full Consistency Method (FUCOM) has gained prominence as an MCDM method known for its high consistency and has been widely applied in various domains. Table 1 presents an overview of FUCOM applications across different fields.

Table 1

Literature Review on FUCOM Applications

Authors	Application Area	Method
(Abdullah et al., 2022)	Hospital performance Evaluation (Health)	FUCOM-MARCOS
(Stević & Brković, 2020)	Driver performance assessment (Logistic)	FUCOM-MARCOS
(Badi et al., 2022)	Sustainability performance measurement (Textile)	FUCOM-MARCOS
(Durmić et al., 2020)	Sustainable supplier selection (Mining & Construction Materials)	FUCOM - Rough SAW
(Pamučar, Lukovac, et al., 2018)	Road safety assessment (Transportation)	FUCOM-MAIRCA
(Hatice Gökler, 2024)	Electric vehicle charging station location selection (Transportation/Energy)	FUCOM-GIS, BWM-GIS, AHP-GIS
(Tešić et al., 2023)	Personnel selection (Human Resource Management)	FUCOM-Fuzzy MAIRCA

Note. MARCOS stands for Measurement of Alternatives and Ranking according to Compromise Solution

FUCOM is commonly used in decision-making processes in various sectors. It has been applied in a wide range of fields including healthcare, logistics, transportation and human resources. In addition, FUCOM is often integrated with other methods or used for comparative analyses. Due to its reliable and consistent weighting structure, FUCOM is considered to be highly applicable to the aviation sector, which shares similarities with the transportation and logistics industries. Furthermore, FUCOM is expected to serve as a robust methodological tool with broad applicability in digital ecosystems, including social media, to support decision-making processes.

3. Methodology

3.1. Selection of Evaluation Criteria and Sample

The careful selection of an appropriate and context-relevant set of criteria should be emphasized, as it plays a decisive role in shaping the overall reliability, validity, and relevance of the decision-making process. These criteria must be objective and measurable, as an inappropriate choice of criteria has a direct impact on the accuracy of the decisions made (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023). However, it is not enough to have objective and independent criteria; the number of criteria must also be carefully limited. In this regard, Yurdakul and İç (2009) emphasized the significance of limiting the number of criteria to seven, noting that exceeding this threshold may reduce the accuracy and sensitivity of the model. This consideration was taken into account in the selection of criteria in this study.

In this research, a literature review was conducted to identify the criteria used to weight social media platforms. Accordingly, existing MCDM studies related to social media were analyzed and relevant criteria applicable to this study were selected. Table 2 shows the criteria derived from the literature.

Table 2

Identified Evaluation Criteria for the Research

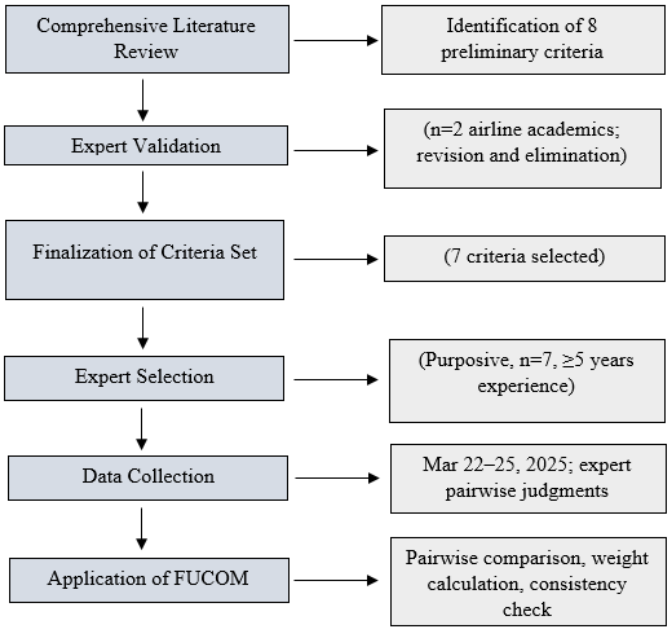
Code	Criteria	Explanation	Source
C1	Wide and even coverage	The ability of the advertisement to reach a wide audience and create brand awareness across different regions	(Latifah Nurhasanah et al., 2024)
C2	Dissemination of information quickly and accurately	The rapid and accurate dissemination of marketing campaigns.	(Latifah Nurhasanah et al., 2024)
C3	Affordable/cheap costs	The cost-effectiveness of advertisements and their budget-friendly nature	(Latifah Nurhasanah et al., 2024)
C4	Easy to understand Content	The clarity and comprehensibility of airline promotions for the target audience	(Eren & Khorsheed, 2023)
C5	Response speed	The ability of users to respond quickly to advertisements and their interaction rates	(Sudipa et al., 2020)

C6	Customer engagement	The ability to establish direct interaction between the brand and customers (e.g., comments, messages, feedback)	(Enyinda et al., 2013)
C7	Cost effectiveness	The conversion and engagement rate achieved relative to the advertisement cost.	(Biswas, 2021)

Once the criteria had been identified by the author, a verification process based on expert opinion was initiated. In order to increase the validity of the selected criteria, one-on-one interviews were conducted with two academicians specializing in airline marketing and their feedback was obtained. Following their evaluations, a criterion (brand positioning) that was deemed irrelevant to air transportation was removed. Thus, the final set of criteria was validated through both a literature review and expert consultations. In the next stage, experts in airline marketing were selected to prioritize the criteria used in the study. The sample consisted of industry managers and academicians specializing in airline marketing, selected through a purposive sampling method. Accordingly, experts with at least five years of experience in the field were preferred. Data collection took place between March 22 and March 25 2025 through a survey of 7 experts. The collected data was entered into Excel and analyzed using FUCOM formulas, following a structured methodological framework previously established in the literature.

Table 3

Research Flow Diagram



3.2. FUCOM

The problems we encounter in real life do not usually involve criteria of equal importance. The importance of each criterion varies. In this case, each criterion must be defined by appropriate coefficients. Since it is problematic to determine the correct coefficient when weighting the criteria, methods that emphasize objectivity are needed. FUCOM, which was developed to minimize these problems, ensures that the weighting coefficients of all elements are determined accurately, while at the same time meeting the conditions of comparison consistency (Pamučar, Stević, et al., 2018). This method is based on the principle of ensuring the reliability of results by checking deviations from maximum consistency (DMC), based on the principles of pairwise comparison (Stević & Brković, 2020). It has several advantages over other methods. First, this method performs criterion weighting by making fewer comparisons than methods such as AHP and BWM. It reduces the workload of both decision makers and computational processes by requiring only n-1 comparisons. It also improves systematic evaluation by eliminating unnecessary comparisons. Secondly, the comparisons made by decision makers are analyzed using the DMC method and the consistency of the results is assessed. This ensures the reliability and validity of the results by determining how close the comparisons are to the mathematically optimal value. Thirdly, a transitivity check is performed to ensure logical consistency. This check determines whether the comparisons are logically consistent (Feizi et al., 2021; Pamučar, Stević, et al., 2018; Stević & Brković, 2020).

FUCOM is carried out according to certain procedures. A set of criteria to be used to evaluate a decision is identified. Decision makers determine the importance of each criterion by assigning a weight to it. The comparison between the criteria reveals the effect of each criterion on the other criterion (Badi et al., 2022). In order to explain this in more detail, the calculations of FUCOM are described step by step below;

Step 1: In the first step of FUCOM, the criteria are ranked according to their importance within the defined set C = {C1, C2, ..., Cn}. The ranking process takes into account the relative significance of the criteria. The criterion with the highest importance is denoted as Cj(1), while the criterion with the lowest importance is denoted as Cj(k):

$$C_{j(1)} > C_{j(2)} > \cdots > C_{j(k)} \quad (1)$$

Step 2: Once the criteria have been ranked, they are compared. At this step, the relative importance of each criterion in relation to the next criterion is determined and comparative priority coefficients are calculated. The comparative priority coefficient is expressed as follows;

$$\Phi = (\Phi_{1\,/2}, \Phi_{2\,/3}, \dots, \Phi_{k/k+1}) \tag{2}$$

where each $\Phi_{k/k+1}$ denotes the preference ratio of criterion k over criterion k+1, reflecting the expert's perceived importance between consecutive criteria.

Step 3: In this step, the final weights of the criteria are calculated. Here**,** the final criteria weight coefficients ($W_1, W_2, W_3, \dots W_k$) must meet two basic conditions. First, the ratio of the weight coefficients (W_k) must be proportional to the comparative priority coefficient determined in Step 2 (3). Second, transitive consistency must be ensured between all comparative priority coefficients (4)

$$\frac{W_k}{W_{k+1}} = \Phi_{k/(k+1)} \tag{3}$$

$$\Phi_{k/(k+1)} \text{ x } \Phi_{(k+1)/(k+2)} = \Phi_{k/(k+2)} \tag{4}$$

Step 4: At this stage, the optimization problem is solved. An optimization problem is formulated to ensure that the determined weight coefficients (W) are proportional to the comparative priority coefficients (Φ_(k/k+1)) and comply with the mathematical transitivity conditions. Accordingly, the following optimization model is developed, where the final weight coefficients are determined by minimizing the inconsistency factor (χ).

$$\min \chi$$

subject to

$$\left|\frac{W_{j(k)}}{W_{j(k+1)}} - \Phi_{k/(k+1)}\right| \leq \chi, \ \forall_j$$

$$\left|\frac{W_{j(k)}}{W_{j(k+2)}} - \Phi_{k/(k+1)} \otimes \Phi_{(k+1)/(k+2)}\right| \leq \chi, \ \forall_j \tag{5}$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} W_j = 1, \forall_j$$

$$W_j \geq 0, \forall_j$$

4. Case Study and Findings

4.1. Application of FUCOM

The implementation of FUCOM followed the steps outlined above. In step 1, the decision makers ranked the criteria according to their importance ($C_{j(1)} > C_{j(2)} > \cdots > C_{j(k)}$). Based on the responses provided by the 7 decision-makers, the criteria were ranked in order of their importance.

Table 4

Priority Ranking of Criteria

Expert	Rank
E1	C2 > C1 > C7 > C4 > C5 > C6 > C3
E2	C6 > C7 > C3 > C4 > C2 > C1 > C5
E3	C4 > C2 > C1 > C6 > C5 > C7 > C3
E4	C6 > C2 > C1 > C5 > C7 > C4 > C3
E5	C4 > C2 > C6 > C5 > C3 > C1 > C7
E6	C4 > C6 > C2 > C1 > C5 > C7 > C3
E7	C1 > C4 > C5 > C6 > C2 > C3 > C7

In step 2, the criteria ranked in the previous step were compared using the [1,9] scale. The relative importance of each criteria with respect to the next one was calculated (2) and the comparative priority coefficient (Φ vector) was determined, as shown in Table 4.

Table 5

Vector of the Comparative Priorities

Expert	Comparative Significance ($\Phi_{k/k+1}$)						
E1	C2	C1	C7	C4	C5	C6	C3
	1	1,5	3	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5
E2	C6	C7	C3	C4	C2	C1	C5
	1	1,5	1,5	1,5	2	2,5	3
E3	C4	C2	C1	C6	C5	C7	C3
	1	1,5	2	3	4	5	5
E4	C6	C2	C1	C5	C7	C4	C3
	1	1,5	2	1,5	2	2	4
E5	C4	C2	C6	C5	C3	C1	C7

E6	1	1,5	2	3	4	5	6
	C4	C6	C2	C1	C5	C7	C3
	1	2	1,5	1,5	3	3	3
E7	C1	C4	C5	C6	C2	C3	C7
	1	1,5	2	2,5	3	3,5	4

In step 3 (a), the final coefficients must satisfy condition (3). To achieve this, the evaluation criteria must be consistent with the comparative priority coefficients (Table 5). Accordingly, the weight of each criterion was obtained by dividing the weight of the previous criterion by the comparative priority coefficient. Taking the first criterion as a reference ($W_1 = 1.00$), the weights of the remaining criteria were calculated as follows:

W1=1.000, W2= W1/ Φ1/2, W3= W2/ Φ2/3, W4= W3/ Φ3/4, W5= W4/ Φ4/5, W6= W5/ Φ5/6, W7= W6/ Φ6/7

The raw weights obtained from the above transformation are presented in Table 5.

Table 6

Raw Weight Coefficients

Expert	**C1**	**C2**	**C3**	**C4**	**C5**	**C6**	**C7**
E1	0.143	0.214	0.143	0.143	0.143	0.143	0.071
E2	0.094	0.118	0.157	0.157	0.079	0.236	0.157
E3	0.159	0.212	0.063	0.317	0.079	0.106	0.063
E4	0.122	0.163	0.061	0.122	0.163	0.245	0.122
E5	0.064	0.214	0.080	0.321	0.107	0.160	0.053
E6	0.174	0.174	0.087	0.261	0.087	0.130	0.087
E7	0.291	0.097	0.083	0.194	0.146	0.116	0.073

In Step 3 (b), various calculations were performed by considering the priority coefficients to ensure that the final weight coefficients of the determined criteria satisfy the mathematical transitivity condition (4). $W_1 / W_3 = \Phi_{1/2} \cdot \Phi_{2/3} = X_1$, $W_2 / W_4 = \Phi_{2/3} \cdot \Phi_{3/4} = X_2$, $W_3 / W_5 = \Phi_{3/4} \cdot \Phi_{4/5} = X_3$, $W_4 / W_6 = \Phi_{4/5} \cdot \Phi_{5/6} = X_4$, $W_5 / W_7 = \Phi_{5/6} \cdot \Phi_{6/7} = X_5$. As a result of the obtained criteria, it has been verified that the weight ratios among the criteria satisfy the mathematical transitivity condition.

In step 4, a final model has been defined to determine the weight coefficients that satisfy the maximum consistency condition.

Expert 1- min χ

s.t.

$$\left|\frac{W_1}{2} - 1.496\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j\ , \left|\frac{W_2}{W_3} - 2.014\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j, \left|\frac{W_3}{W_4} - 0.497\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,$$

$$\left|\frac{W_4}{W_5} - 1.000\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j, \left|\frac{W_5}{W_6} - 1.000\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j, \left|\frac{W_6}{W_7} - 1.000\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,$$

$$\left|\frac{W_1}{W_3} - 3.010\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,\ \left|\frac{W_2}{W_4} - 1.001\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,\ \left|\frac{W_3}{W_5} - 0.497\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,,\ \left|\frac{W_4}{W_6} - 1.000\right| \leq \chi,$$

$$\forall_j, \left|\frac{W_5}{W_7} - 1.000\right| \leq \chi,\ \forall_j,$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{7} W_j = 1, \forall_j$$

$$W_j \geq 0, \forall_j$$

Table 7

Priorities of Criteria

Code	Weight	χ
C4	0.2166	0.0000
C2	0.1704	0.0000
C6	0.1624	0.0000
C1	0.1497	0.0000
C5	0.1150	0.0000
C3	0.0964	0.0000
C7	0.0895	0.0000

When solving the above model, the final values of the weight coefficients were obtained as follows: easy-to-understand content (0.2166), dissemination of information quickly and accurately (0.1704), customer engagement (0.1624), wide and even coverage (0.1497), response speed (0.1150), affordable/cheap costs (0.0964) and cost effectiveness (0.0895) Additionally, the total consistency deviation was found to be $\chi = 0.000$ (Table 6).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to identify the most important criteria for selecting social media platforms using the FUCOM, with the objective of enhancing airline brand awareness through advertising and promotional efforts. As a result of the weighting conducted with the FUCOM, easy-to-understand content (W = 0.2166) was identified as the most significant criterion. This was followed by the criteria of dissemination of information quickly and accurately (W = 0.1704) and customer engagement (W = 0.1624). Together, these three criteria accounted for nearly 55% of the total weight, highlighting their critical role in social media platform selection. In other words, platforms chosen by airlines to increase brand awareness through advertising and promotional activities should facilitate clear, accurate, and rapid information dissemination while promoting customer interaction. Such platforms should not only convey messages effectively but also foster meaningful connections with customers. The criterion wide and even coverage (W = 0.1497), traditionally prioritized in conventional media research, ranked fourth in this study. This finding suggests a shift in perspective between digital and traditional media approaches. Although social media marketing contributes to brand awareness, its greatest impact is believed to stem from customer engagement (Mujica-Luna et al., 2021). Therefore, brand awareness is achieved through the synergy of social media marketing and customer interaction (Rafika & Satria Bangsawan, 2023). From this perspective, the existing literature supports the findings of the current study.

These findings differ from previous MCDM-based studies on social media platform selection. For instance, while earlier research emphasized criteria such as engagement, reach, and content quality (Enyinda et al., 2013; Eren & Khorsheed, 2023; Latifah Nurhasanah et al., 2024), this study identified easy-to-understand content as the highest weighted criterion. This contrast suggests that, particularly in the highly regulated air transportation sector, message clarity and content reliability are valued more than communication mode, which is consistent with expert findings. Similarly, the relatively low weights given to the criteria of affordable/cheap costs (W = 0.0964) and cost effectiveness (W = 0.0895) indicate that cost alone is not a determining factor in the selection of social media platforms. Maintaining brand reputation and cultivating user trust emerge as more significant priorities. Viewed through the lens of signaling theory, this implies that airlines should select platforms that project credibility and are structurally aligned with such signals, rather than simply selecting low-cost alternatives (Spence, 1973). In industries such as aviation, where information asymmetry is significant, both content and communication style serve

as indirect signals to consumers regarding brand reliability and awareness. In this light, expert evaluations clearly suggest that platform selection should prioritize not only reach or cost, but also the delivery of content that is understandable, trustworthy, and transparent.

From a theoretical point of view, the derived weight ranking is closely related to online dual-process models, in particular the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). According to the ELM, low-involvement individuals tend to base their decisions on surface-level cues, such as message format, rather than substantive content. This type of cognitive processing, known as the peripheral route, is activated when motivation is low or cognitive capacity is limited. Conversely, high involvement individuals focus on the content itself, evaluating it for accuracy and logical coherence-a process referred to as the central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In this study, the identification of easy-to-understand content as the highest weighted criterion suggests that users often rely on peripheral cues, indicating the prevalence of peripheral processing strategies. According to experts, message comprehensibility acts as a peripheral cue that reduces users' cognitive load. However, the high weights given to criteria such as dissemination of information quickly and accurately suggest that users also engage in central route processing. In particular, the emphasis on accuracy indicates that the central route is actively engaged. Thus, the findings of this study support the ELM proposition that both processing routes can operate simultaneously. This dual-processing mechanism illustrates that in industries such as aviation, which are characterized by heightened perceptions of risk and safety, users do not evaluate messages solely on the basis of visual or superficial cues, but also take into account central-route factors such as accuracy, transparency, and credibility. These conclusions are also consistent with recent research in digital communication contexts, which emphasizes that users value not only the superficial features of a message, but also the trustworthiness of its content (Li & See-To, 2024; Pan & Zhang, 2023). In this regard, the current study provides a meaningful theoretical contribution by highlighting the influence of sector-specific contexts on the dynamics of information processing.

From a methodological perspective, the complete consistency achieved by FUCOM (χ = 0.000) highlights both its reliability and practical applicability. Compared to other multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) methods, FUCOM involves fewer pairwise comparisons, thereby significantly reducing the cognitive load on decision makers. In this respect, FUCOM can be seen not only as a weighting technique, but also as a decision support tool that helps alleviate the mental fatigue of decision makers.

This study puts forward three key managerial recommendations. First, it emphasizes that airlines should place the principle of understandability at the core of their social media strategies. This is particularly important in the airline industry, which is characterized by complex and information-rich service processes. From a managerial perspective, the adoption of the principle of "understandability in the first seconds" (Klein et al., 2020) is recommended, along with a focus on producing advertising content that is short, simple, and symbolically impactful. Second, the criterion dissemination of information quickly and accurately underscores the significance of not only visibility but also the clear and error-free delivery of advertising messages to consumers. Misinterpretation of advertising content can have a negative impact on brand perception. In this context, airline managers are encouraged to consider the following questions when selecting platforms: - Does the platform's content delivery format compromise the integrity of the message? - Can the message be redistributed by users without distortion? Thus, to enhance brand awareness, attention should be directed not only to platforms that enable rapid dissemination, but also to those that preserve the accuracy and core of the message. Third, the customer engagement criterion suggests that it is essential for users not only to view advertising and promotional content, but also to engage with it in a meaningful way, thereby improving brand recall. Such engagement has been identified as a critical factor in the cognitive retention of advertising (Hotkar et al., 2023)**.** Accordingly, platforms that algorithmically promote repeated exposure, incorporate engagement-enhancing features such as gamification, and enable interaction beyond mere likes and comments are recommended. Through these mechanisms, advertisements can evolve from simply being seen to becoming memorable, cognitively embedded messages.

As with any scientific investigation, this study has certain limitations. First, the number of evaluation criteria was limited to seven to avoid increasing the cognitive load on decision makers. However, given the rapidly evolving nature of the digital ecosystem, future research could enhance the evaluation process by incorporating next-generation criteria such as privacy, sustainability, and AI-driven content generation, thereby making it more attuned to current digital dynamics. Second, this study focused solely on determining the relative importance of criteria that influence the selection of social media platforms. Due to the challenges associated with obtaining direct and reliable numerical data from social media providers, the analysis did not extend to ranking the platforms themselves. However, as data accessibility improves, it may become possible to identify the most appropriate platforms -such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok- and conduct

comparative evaluations among them. Such an approach would allow promotional and advertising strategies to be optimized based on platform-specific characteristics. Third, airline passengers are not a homogeneous group but consist of diverse customer segments, including business and leisure travelers (Atalık, 2016). These segments have different expectations and preferences. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to conduct multi-criteria and multi-group analyses that take into account different customer profiles. By doing so, more targeted social media platform selection strategies can be developed that are tailored to the specific needs of each segment.

6. Conclusion

This study identified the criteria that decision makers prioritize when selecting social media platforms within the airline industry. In doing so, it proposed a decision support framework aimed at increasing brand awareness through advertising and promotional efforts. The results indicate that elements such as easy-to-understand, dissemination of information quickly and accurately, customer engagement take precedence over traditionally emphasized factors such as cost and broad reach. The findings are theoretically consistent with frameworks such as the ELM and signaling theory. According to decision makers, social media users value not only the format of content, but also its accuracy and reliability. The full consistency results of the FUCOM, coupled with its low cognitive demands, once again confirm its practical applicability. Beyond its theoretical insights, the study also offers actionable guidance for airline managers, providing an industry-specific perspective.

Declaration of Research and Publication Ethics

Permission was obtained for the implementation of the comprehensive survey method by the Dicle University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision numbered 162, dated 10.03.2025, and the study complies with research and publication ethics.

Researcher's Contribution Rate Statement

Since the author is the sole author of the article, his contribution rate is 100%.

Declaration of Researcher's Conflict of Interest

There are no potential conflicts of interest in this study.

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