



## Predicting car drivers' intention to use low cost airlines for intercity travel in Libya



Muhamad Nazri Borhan <sup>a, \*</sup>, Ahmad Nazrul Hakimi Ibrahim <sup>a</sup>,  
Manssour A. Abdulasalm Miskeen <sup>b</sup>, Riza Atiq O.K. Rahmat <sup>a</sup>, Ahmed Mohamed Alhodairi <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Civil & Structural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>b</sup> Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Sabha University, P.O. Box: 68 Brack – Alshatti, Libya

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### ABSTRACT

This study used an extended version of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to predict the travel intention of car drivers in Libya with regard to using the new low-cost carriers (LCC). In order to understand the willingness of travellers to accept the LCC in Libya and its antecedents, this study has added three constructs to the original TPB model, namely novelty seeking, trust, and external influences. The respondents in this study are 338 car drivers in Libya. The results of this study indicate that attitude towards LCC, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norm all have positive effects on the behavioural intention of taking LCC. Furthermore, novelty seeking and trust have indirect positive effects on behavioural intention. Trust, on the other hand, has an indirect positive influence on the three antecedents of intention in accepting LCC in Libya. Results also revealed that external influence (i.e. advertising campaigns by the media) has a significant indirect influence on car users' intention to accept the new LCC via subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, and indirect influence on the behavioural intention of car users via novelty seeking with regard to attitude towards LCC and trust to perceived behavioural control.

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## 1. Introduction

Researchers and technologists are presently focusing mainly on enhancing the service and quality of current typical carrier modes, particularly air and intercity bus systems. The delivery of enhanced services, however, requires considerable effort. It seems extremely ideal to plan and design a transport system which facilitate the maximization of economic stability, while at the same time minimizing financial losses. Many countries, including Libya, are now giving more focus to the management of travel demand in the effort to deal with intercity transport problems. The process of managing the demand for intercity travel involves not only the planning of the transport system, but also dealing with the problems associated with the increase in the use of vehicles, such as traffic congestion, motor accidents, and ecological contamination. In the case of Libya, the government is constantly making effort to improve intercity transport through various methods. Hence, a discussion on the

improvements in the country's public transport is of utmost importance (Abuhamoud et al., 2011).

Tourism is an important service industry that plays a crucial role in the economy of many countries throughout the world. In fact, the constantly increasing number of travellers could proportionately increase tourism-related income in these countries, which in turn generate income for local businesses and hence tax revenue. In this context, for a large country like Libya, where distant cities are connected by ground and air transportation, transporting the population from one municipality to another is considered as a very important activity for Libya's financial and social developments. Hence, the new LCC in Libya is expected to boost to the lethargic domestic travel industry. The most frequent challenge faced by both local and foreign tourists is the lack of adequate public transport. Furthermore, Libya's existing transport system is not able to adequately meet the demand for the moving merchandise and people (National Department of Transport, 2010a). Additionally, the 2017 African Soccer Cup, which is one of the most important sporting events in Africa, requires an effective coordination between all modes of transport. For this purpose, the Libyan

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [mnazri\\_borhan@ukm.edu.my](mailto:mnazri_borhan@ukm.edu.my) (M.N. Borhan).

government has allocated US\$ 11 billion for the improvement of transport infrastructure, such as road, rail, air and ground transportation systems (National Department of Transport, 2010b), and public transport network. The Libyan Ministry of Youth and Sports projected that half a million local spectators and 80,000 visitors would have to be transported to and from the 7 host cities in Libya during the 30-day event. In this regard, LCC could play an important role in the 2017 African Soccer Cup and beyond. To this effect, the Libyan Ministry of Transportation has launched a program to double the number of tourist arrival by half a million and increase the total number of visitor arrival to a minimum of one million by 2017. Therefore, the operation of LCC service is expected to stimulate the sluggish domestic travel industry.

The embedded ideologies in LCCs include lower average price, more emphasis on value for money, and empowering customers with an additional range of airline choice in the form of low fares and unbundled products. The literature is replete with the shortcomings of the full-service airlines as they have not adequately met the expectations of the short-haul market segments; the resulting dissatisfaction, which is largely attributable to cross-price elasticity, have prompted many passengers to switch to using LCCs. The price of ticket has become the ultimate factor in making this decision and has shifted large volume of traffic towards the lean business models of LCCs, while at the same time stimulating new traffic influxes. Network airlines reacted by removing layers of cost to achieve lower fares, which in general has reduced yields. This, however, has been counteracted by an increase in traffic and load factors.

According to O'Connell and IATA (2007), the ability of LCCs to offer an adequate portion of their service quality at less than 50 per cent of the cost of network airlines has jeopardised the future of network carriers in short-haul markets. This assertion is further supported by the findings made by Merkert and Pearson (2015) that there exists an insignificant relationship between service quality, which is a key part of the proposition of network airlines and airline profitability.

Low cost carriers (LCCs) have brought about rapid increase in market share and has changed the landscape of airline industry (Chou, 2015). According to Pearson et al. (2015), the penetration rate of LCC throughout the world has grown from 8% in 2001 to 26.3% in 2015. Within the Asia Pacific region, it has increased from 1.1% to 24.5% within this same period of time. Budd et al. (2014) analyzed the relationship between service failure, service recovery, and loyalty for low cost carrier travelers. They also examined the mediating effects of service recovery between service failure and loyalty through travelers' perceived satisfaction. This study has contributed to extant literature as the instrument employed is effective in assessing service failure and can therefore be confidently used again in LCC service-related studies.

The present study aims to determine the factors that influence behavioral intention to use LCC for intercity travel, which is very crucial for managing the expenditure borne by governments when developing a transportation system. We believe that the attention given to and the expenses borne for transportation projects should be well-balanced between the various transportation systems based on the utilization of each mode; it is also essential to study travelers' behaviour to avoid any problems associated with under-designing or over-designing of any components in the transportation systems. This study employed an extended version of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to predict the travel intention of car drivers in Libya with regard to accepting the new LCC.

### 1.1. Air transport in Libya

Domestic air transportation in Libya began with the establishment of Air Libya in 1947. At present, Libya has five international

airports and six domestic airports (see Table 1). This study focused on only five of these airports, namely Tripoli, Benghazi, Sabha, Sirt and Kufrah (see Fig. 1).

There are currently three airlines operating in Libya: Libyan Airline, Afriqiyah Airways, and Buraq Air, all of which operate both international and domestic flights. Libyan Airlines (formerly known as Kingdom of Libya Airlines) was established in 1964, and operated its first commercial flight in October 1965. In the initial stage, the airline operated flights to Europe and neighbouring countries from Tripoli and Benghazi, in addition to a large number of domestic flight routes. However, in 1968, the international network was expanded to include destinations such as European, African and Asian countries. Libyan Airlines initial fleet commenced with the procurement of several modern air crafts. By the year 2001 the airline began to lease of air crafts to meet its increasing need at the beginning of that decade. A 2007 report by the Libyan Civil Aviation and Meteorology Bureau stated that almost 885,000 passengers were transported, with 40% of them travelling on domestic flights. In April 2001, the wholly-Libyan government owned Afriqiyah Airways was established and began its services in December 2001. Buraq Air (also known as Buraq Air Transport), the first privately-owned airline, was established in October 2000 and commenced its operations in November 2001; its headquarters is based at the Mitiga Airport, Tripoli. In general, most of the passengers are tourists and government officers on urgent or important business trips. Only a small segment of the population could afford this service since air fare is fairly costly. As a result, it is essential to introduce new low-cost carriers or low-cost airlines, and AirAsia and Ryanair, for example, have been well received by people from the lower income sector (O'Connell and Williams, 2005).

### 1.2. Theory of planned behaviour

Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is a model used to understand and predict human behaviour across various disciplines, including psychology, health, technology application, education, environment, business, security, and transport (Ajzen, 1991). TPB was proposed to improve the Theory of Reasoned Action, TRA, which was introduced by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975 (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). According to TRA, if people evaluate a suggested behaviour as positive (attitude), and if they believed that their significant other would like them to perform this behaviour, they would have strengthened their intention and would be more likely to behave in that particular way (Sheppard et al., 1988). Since then, many studies which utilized TRA as a framework for studying behaviour have succeeded in measuring public behaviour intention for a particular behaviour (Haustein and Hunecke, 2007). According to TRA, the important determinant in measuring human behaviour is the desire to perform a particular behaviour. The intention to perform a certain behaviour is the attitude towards an act or a behaviour, AT, and subjective norm, SN. Attitude towards a behaviour is the tendency to do or not do something while subjective norm refers to the social pressure imposed by the people closest to an individual (parents, life partner or friend) with regard to whether or not they want to do something as his or her behaviour.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), higher behaviour

**Table 1**  
Airports in Libya.

Category of Airport	Location of Airport
International	Tripoli, Benghazi, Sabha, Misratah, Al Abraq
Domestic	Sirt, Ghat, Ghadames, Kufrah, Tubruq, Mitiga, Ubari

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