

# Competition in the Air Transport Market in Congo. Ligne/Pointe-Noire

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**Abstract** This study examines competition among commercial air transport companies in Congo Brazzaville, home network Brazzaville Pointe-Noire. Four (4) companies are the subject of this study, namely ; Canadian Airways, Equatorial Congo Airlines, Mistral Aviation and Tac. This qualitative study analyzes not only the market share of each of these companies, but also the quality of services and customer satisfaction of the four companies was examined. Different service strategies were analyzed case by case in order to explain the practice of marketing mix of these companies on the ground. The preference of the public in relation to the positioning of each of these companies in the market was also measured. This study has put on the spot, the strengths and weaknesses of the Congolese air fleet. Following a field survey, a sample of 1800 people BZV (capital political of the Republic of Congo) and 1200 PNR (economic capital of the Republic of Congo) was respectively taken in the two capital cities of the country. 200 people per boroughs there by determined the quality of services of these companies and the degree of customer satisfaction. The issue of company image was answered by 1,000 people per city. Formal and informal discussions were also held with the staff of these companies on information strategies; ASECNA and ANAC on market regulation issues. Processing and data analysis were performed with Microsoft Excel 2007.

**Keywords:** *competition, market, air transport*

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## 1. Introduction

Congo Brazzaville has accounted for a decade of several airline companies and at present has been experiencing a very stuck competitive environment. Facing this current market condition, a company that does not know its market and its competitors saw its market share decrease and may go bankrupt. The AT<sup>1</sup> Congolese companies ensure a fierce competitive intelligence as any flaw can be exploited in marketing strategy and commercial enterprise. Since the liberalization of AT in Congo, there has been proliferation of airlines in Brazzaville, like the Air Congo companies, Trans Air Congo (TAC), Equajet, Canadian Airways, Mistral Aviation and Equatorial Congo Airlines as such. These AT and others put in place strategies to win the largest share of the market. In this study, we are focusing on four (4) companies (Canadian, Ecair, Mistral, Tac), with regards to the Brazzaville/Pointe-Noire line. Our specific objectives for this study are as follows:

- analyze the competitive issue in air transport Brazzaville/Pointe-Noire.
- explain the practice of the marketing mix of these companies on the market of AT

- examine the quality of the services offered by these companies
- measure both the level of customer satisfaction and the image of these companies.

### The research question:

How do Congolese Airlines sell their services in a competitive market?

### Assumptions:

- different service strategy and the marketing mix are strong points in the sale of their services;
- the practice of strategic communication also allows these companies to increase the sale of their services, and the strengthening of their image.

## 2. Research Methodology

To conduct this qualitative study, the methodology consists of documentary analysis, formal and informal interviews, surveys and processing of the data. *The documentary analysis* consisted of a search for documents dealing with air transport in general and in particular for Congo in the libraries of the ANAC and ASECNA. *Informal (no questionnaire) and formal* interviews were conducted with staff resource of the Ministry of transport and ANAC to have a global vision of the requirements to

<sup>1</sup> AT : air transport

operators in the market of TA. We have also discussed with the responsible staff of airline companies on questions of service implementation strategies.

Investigations were conducted following a reasoned choice, so our sample has the best possible structure and characteristics of all of the clients to determine the satisfaction of customers. For this purpose, any person having already used the BZV/PNR air travel had been selected. These surveys were made in two phases i.e. in 2 cities capitals of Congo and in each of its boroughs and a team of four investigators. Thus, the treatments of the data collected on the ground were made possible with Microsoft Excel 2007.

## Results

This methodology allowed us to diagnose the air transport sector in terms of operation and coverage of the home network BZV/PNR from 4 air operators of Congo Brazzaville, the allocation of market shares, services strategies, the level of client satisfaction and the images of the operators from the users. Taking into account the results, we were able to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the companies on the market.

The following were identified as strengths:

- the 4 companies have a larger percentage of the market share (73.7 shares in total);
- the comfort of aircrafts play a major role in attracting customers;
- promotion of tickets;
- these companies were identified by customers as the only ones that have an opportunity to provide quality services.

### Regarding the weaknesses, the following were identified:

- low punctuality of airlines and overbooking that deplore customers;
- low customer satisfaction regarding quality of services in relation to the expectations of the customers.
- dissatisfaction in the sale of tickets and in the management of disputes;
- the inefficiency of loyalty and communication strategies;
- lack of customer relationship management system (which should ensure the proximity to customers and crisis management).

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Role of Strategy in the Enterprise

To start, we should immediately say that in the context of globalization, business strategy is now of major importance. And the strategy of our days appeals to two very important concepts: communication and marketing. These two words are a pair of binoculars, very complementary concepts that have become real links in the chain of production, the drainage of the customer and sales of businesses. Several specialist authors of communications strategies and marketing believe that no current business can increase sales without resorting to

communication and marketing through well developed policies.

Thus, the communication strategy is the key to the success of all sales [2]. In order to increase its turnover by strong sales, a business needs to establish good communication strategies and/or marketing. The strategy is therefore as the outline of the plan of action, the general pattern that helps the company achieve its objectives [10]. Philip K, [18] also says that communication strategies are now the base of any business, without which it cannot experience growth. Delphine [3] adds that any company policy relies on its communication. It is understandable that marketing and communication strategies are in no doubt the formidable weapon of any competitive battle.

### 3.2. Various Development of the Companies of Managerial Aspects

Knowing its market, its competitors and its customers in the current world of air traffic is a huge asset to any business; otherwise it is a disadvantage if disregarded. Because several companies after the 1978 and 1989 deregulation of the air transport world market have gone bankrupt [13]. Such is the case of the closure of some companies in Congo-Brazzaville. By inducing the greater competitiveness in air transport, de-regulation has led to a change in the working methods, of the companies and the Organization of the traffic management [15]. The high level of competition, the sudden change in the market with the advent of new companies and ICT are now a big issue [1]. This therefore imposes new adaptable management methods to the requirements and current contingencies of the market or the environment.

As in any business, in any sector, notions such as: competition, performance, branding, quality and satisfaction are news. Indeed, a company that wants to see its share of market or its turnover increase must take into account these major factors and must have perfect control. Given that the air transport sector is one of the promising economic areas [12]. Then, the players in this sector are engaged in a competitive battle in order to maintain their market positions. And according to the defenders of the liberalisation of the AT (or other areas), it is supposed to create competition to lead to a decrease in prices and an improvement in the quality of services. And according to the defenders of the liberalisation of the AT (or other areas), it is supposed to create competition to lead to a decrease in prices and an improvement in the quality of services.

### 3.3. Price Aspects, Practice Low-cost and the Computer System in the TA

Addressing a study on the marginalization of the African [7] air sector analyze American and European companies after the liberalization. They stipulate that several European companies are matching after the liberalisation, through competition and a decline in the price highly selective row-wise. Also, the strengthening of the companies and their refocusing on a number reduced to airports as well as to the development of a low-cost offer. Some of these companies like Ryanair have systematically sought authorities public and/or managers of airports of direct or indirect advantages. [4] which

addresses in the same direction as the previous authors adds instruments other than the reduction in prices and low-cost practice. According to him, he thinks that in a context of liberalization resulting in progressive development of competition that takes its most tangible expression with the tariff wars they engage, airlines are doomed to improve their production costs and increase their revenues. They must do so because the instruments of globalization carried out by more powerful players develop faster (these instruments are: computerized reservation systems SIR or distribution of GDS services). He added that to improve revenue, European airlines like Air France, have implemented internally a four (4) facets strategy: the Organization of their networks in form "hub and spokes"; optimization of revenue based on the technique of the "yield management"; control of the reservation and distribution systems (GDS) necessary for the dissemination of the offer; Finally the customer loyalty through programs of rebates based on the acquisition of "miles". We understand that the decrease in prices, the low-cost practice and other remedies may suffice to conquer a market, although they are also tangible strategic factors of airlines to be able to outperform the competition and to remain on the market. The yield management technique and the computer system (ICT) are also the work items that are in addition to the good governance of commercial airlines.

This is why other studies expand the response on the issue and advocate management factors such as: management of staff, which is also a great efficiency in competitive struggle of enterprises. The study of [11] speaks of ills that undermine air traffic in Congo Brazzaville and shows that the use of the quality of the staff is a great necessity for the customer management of Congolese airlines. Indeed, the author reveals the forces and weaknesses of the Congo Airlines. For her, the commercial performance and the competitiveness of these companies are problematic with regard to how customers are handled. The problem lies in not mastery of marketing tools, including management of the customer relationship (CRM).

The author considers the management of the customer relationship as a customer loyalty tool in a market of TA. However, taking the study of Mimouni A and Volle P [17] that shows elements more specific and transcendent in the field of management of the company such as relational quality characterized by three-dimensional namely: commitment, trust, and relational satisfaction. They show through the different loyalty programs of the anonymous company FLY, the satisfaction of the needs of consumers in terms of recognition. Indeed, for them, companies must try to soak up the information on the ground of the users and that information collected will enable companies to adapt their offerings to consumers.

This study therefore suggests an opening to market opportunities. Thus, referring to the study of Madeleine B, Laure L [14] their work shows that in addition to the multiple ways of customer loyalty or you want to satisfy it as show them the previous speakers discussed, these elements through also the training of personnel in order to adapt them to the requirements, developments and the different behaviors of the market.

They therefore encourage businesses to benefit from qualitative studies on personnel and develop from time to

time of the training required for the change in behaviour towards customers in order to satisfy them.

Compared to studies (Raquel E, Juan C. M, 2007) which analyzing the choice of high-speed train and transport air ride Barcelona Madrid. Show that the time factor and the level of comfort of the aircraft are values that bring customers to demand and higher consumption of the services of the airlines. They design these factors time and comfort of aircraft as the real tools for improving quality of services and consider this as a great bulwark to distinguish itself from its competitors. By analyzing their traffic in the countries of Africa, (Volle P, Mimouni A, 2003) corroborate in the same direction and deeper studying air traffic in Eastern Africa, believe that African commercial companies should now use large aircraft market to compete with the traffic outside. Because a good portion of the clientele would like to travel in this type of aircraft. This attracts more customers. The business must therefore enhance the product to meet the needs of users and to be the international standard.

We can then deduce and without hesitation that the product factor and time are among the elements of management that play an important role in the management of commercial airlines. Therefore, the quality of the product is also one of the strong tools of profitability of companies. Corinne Fayolle [16] will in turn support this idea by saying that the current trend to design larger capacity aircraft to increase the number of passengers transported without consequential increase in the number of commercial movements. Curiously for [6] the decor is quite changeable than that of its predecessors on the context of competition from commercial airlines.

After also scrutinizing the air transport after liberalisation, the authors believe that, to create value, firms, even when they are competing, must not hesitate to develop business alliances. This leads to wonder about the functioning of the 'sales teams' inter-organizational created in the context of these alliances.

Here is the place to say that, it is an aspect that plays an important role in the management of commercial airlines because after the liberalisation of airspace in the world, many companies have gone bankrupt because of the competitive shock, with new data and the various companies entering the market. This therefore required certain undertakings to the signing of alliances with other companies for their survival. Such is the case of several companies in the USA. And in the same perspective [5] argues that, to overcome this handicap, the companies have interest in developing cooperation pushed between them. Cooperation can take various forms: code-share (two companies offering the same destination on the same flight number, one being the company operating, i.e. which operates the flight, another marketing company who simply sell a part of the seats), agreements leading, participation in the capital.

We observed a few instances of reconciliation between some African companies with shares in smaller companies with strong potential (Kenya Airways with Precision Air, South African Airways with Air Tanzania). Others such as Ethiopian Airlines have chosen in contrast to prosper alone, aided by the existence of an airport with a hub, traffic boosted by the presence of international organizations.

However and always under competition in the traffic air, other elements of management are born the day and nothing remains static. There is a very essential feature, today occupying a place of choice in the management of the company strategy: is the brand image.

Geraldine Michel [8] in her paper, "In the heart of the brand", writes about Air France which has repositioned the product offering, first class services and business. The company made, indeed, a new interior design of its aircraft, also redesigned spaces in the soil and the uniforms of the cabin crew now signed Christian Lacroix. Indeed, facing the trivialization of the AT, she continues saying that the company has therefore chosen to bet on its brand to stand out from the competition. Brand here plays a strategic role, and the brand identity becomes the guide of each element of the group communication through advertising campaigns, inside the aircraft until the management of staff. The author confirms that the brand is not only in the heart of the marketing strategy but also in the heart of the company. The measure (brand) introduced by the author play an important role on the basis of what the public or customers recognize. It is one of the virtues or a quality that many companies of the neglect and very often. A company must reflect a good image to the location of its customers; because this is a synonym for the positioning on the market of operation and represents nowadays an added value of airlines.

Here, we have another measurement data for the management of air commercial enterprises who want to stand out from the competition. Improve its image through different activities would be a way to identify market and conquer a wider than its competitors commercial environment.

### 3.4. Discussion

A very deep and diverse analysis of competition has been brought by these authors. The work of each and the other dealt with general and specific manner the competition in the AT. They showed the policies or devices that should adopt modern AT companies compete. A number of tools have been deployed so that a company stands out from the competition. Among them, we have among others: communication strategies, ICT, marketing mix, the (CRM) and the brand. They advocated the quality of services, the satisfaction of users, as well as the prize for safety elements contributing to trade performance and added value of the company. They also identified strengths and weaknesses of the fleet passing through some innovations to improve the image of companies.

Thus, we share these strategic aspects of management of the authors, who also meet the standards of modern business management. And these strategic aspects of large scale developed by the authors are also high points on which our study is essentially sitting. However, we should always take into account all the environmental contours of the competition.

With regard to the satisfaction of the customers, airlines should not just stop at the control of satisfied customers in the market. Our study highlights a much more fundamental analysis [9]. This analysis gives a more detailed satisfaction plan and presents in hand the notion of the dissatisfaction of other (public) because dissatisfaction is useful marketing information. It is a

value that allows to process reaction of customers behaviors and thus an instrument of point for the management of the companies, hence the concept; marketing for dissatisfaction. This strategy is either to reduce the rate and intensity of the active reaction to dissatisfaction, or to seek to stimulate active consumer reactions.

Thus, in the end, we believe that to better read dissatisfied customers, the direction of human resources of enterprises should establish a monitoring of the behaviour of dissatisfied customers, through a careful study of this category of clients on the market. Thus, it should have on the ground, service personnel specially trained for this kind of work. The purpose of this service would be firstly to collect data. That is, the number of dissatisfied customers and their opposing views on the company. Secondly convince them, thirdly back their expectations to the aspirations of the company.

In addition, regarding the contribution of the personnel management, we say (the employment of qualified personnel) is a determining factor to meet the requirements of the customers and take the lead on its competitors.

But paradoxically, our in-depth study shows the idea using other stakeholders of the company (the unions...) who play an undeniable role in Enterprise (image and resolution of crises). This factor allows not only companies to retain customers in a space-saving market, but also to effectively manage risk, prepare for the threats which may arise on the market and whether productive and intelligent risk taking. This allows to deal with unfair competition, because we noticed that the air transport sector shines through unlawful practices of competition. The Congolese market of AT is the palpable example.

With regard to the practice of decreases in prices, the low-cost system, the yield management, our study adds to this other additional strategic management elements such as: the strategy of domination by costs and the strategy of differentiation to withstand some hard knocks from the market. These strategic elements that we will also develop in the case of commercial traffic in the air sector of Congo Brazzaville.

In the context of the image companies and the comfort of the aircraft, we found that it is more desirable for companies to develop corporate culture and manipulate certain alliances as pointed out the defenders of the factor of alliance sponsors. But this alliance factor should not be limited between airlines only; other companies from different sectors may be part. Also we noted that in analyzing the Congolese air transport sector, it has become hard to find real inclinations or desires of some workers and students Congolese on the brand and quality of the aircraft. We saw this as an example on the Mistral company in 2010, during the visit of the trophy of the FIFA World Cup of football in Africa more precisely in the Congo. The Mistral company signed an alliance with the official sponsor Coca Cola and in rented a plane branded Coca Cola, add to that the design of the world's nations Cup trophy. This alliance strategy has improved not only the image of the company Mistral and but also known a great success on its turnover. So we also recommend partnerships with other companies in different sectors with already strong images, because this will serve

as a support on the development of several companies and in this case those in a position of weakness.

### 4. Conceptual Bases

With regards to conceptual bases, we define the following basic concepts:

- Marketing service

A service activity which is essentially characterized by the availability of technical or intellectual capacity. In contrast to industrial activity, it cannot be described by the only characteristics of a tangible acquired by the customer. Understood in their broadest sense, services covering a wide range of activity ranging from transport to administration passing through trade, financial and real estate, activities services to businesses and individuals, education health and social action. In statistical practice, this set is grouped under the term of tertiary activities.

- Marketing mix (Cf. Glossary of terms information and communication)

The marketing mix is the set of tools that are available to the enterprise in order to achieve its objectives with the target market.

- Market

It is defined as the meeting point between the supply and demand.

- Concurrence

It corresponds to a situation of open confrontation between supply and demand in a market. According to the dictionnaire Encarta 2009, it is defined as a trade, a competition between traders, companies or products designed to attract a clientele.

## 5. The Air Transport Market Regulation

As in any responsible state, the Government of the Congo to regulate the sector of air transport has set up a legal framework which is ANAC (Agence Nationale de l'aviation Civil): responsible for the establishment of the legal framework in which to exercise control. All codes governing the functioning of a market (example: the fixing of the price of the tickets).

### 5.1. Liberalisation

The Congolese airline market had only a single company into the 1990. It is from the period according to the national conference that there is liberalisation of the air transport market, thus giving access to several companies to settle, and to freely carry out their activities. It is also the case of the following companies: TAC, Air Congo, Aero service... Thus, in a chart the evolution of the cycle of life of the Congolese air industry show.

Table 1. List of airlines of 1990-2015

Companies airlines Congolese	year of creation
Trans air congo (TAC)	1994
Equalihgt	1996
Air congo	2004
Canadian airway	2004
Equajet	2008
Mistral avion	2009
Aéro fret business	2009
Ecair	2011

Source: Anac (DTA) Directorate of air transport.

Present the elements of this table in a chart to assess and explain the evolution of Congolese AT market

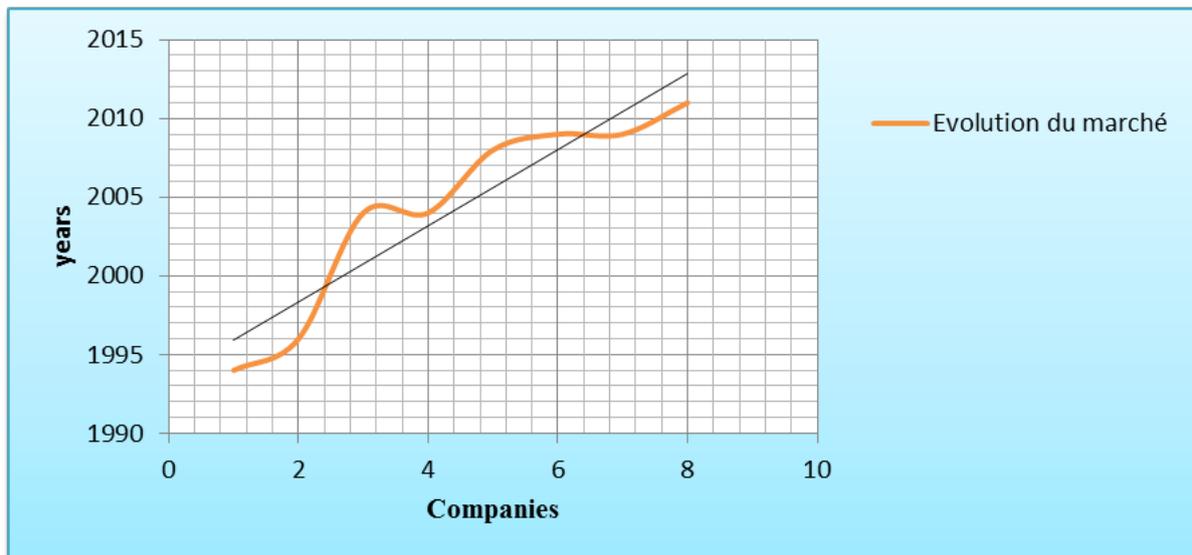


Figure 1. From 1990 to 2015, the Congolese air transport market has experienced a broad change in terms of birth of companies, either a birth every five (5) years. Source: author from excel

### 5.2. Overview of the Costs of Air Transport of These Companies

The cost of the transport line BZV/PNR differs according to the strategies and the quality of the services that each of the companies has.

Table 2. Cost of air transport line BZV

Companies	Prix
Canadian	36000 FCFA or 60,31\$
Ecair	50000 FCFA or 83,77\$
Mistral	36000 FCFA or 60,31\$
Tac	46000 FCFA or 77,07\$

Source (Anac and Author) : standard cost of air transport companies line BZV/PNR, which often varies the strategies and the market opportunities.

## 6. Market Share Distribution of These Companies

From our investigation, the market share of these companies is distributed as follows:

Table 3. current market share figures

Companies	Repartition	
	Year 2014	Year 2015
Canadian Airways	12,8%	9,5%
Ecair	18,4%	25,9%
Mistral Aviation	2,0%	2,1%
Tac	33,4%	29,2%

source : anac.

Illustrate this in a graphique to establish the relative position of each company on the market.



Figure 2. market share of the year 2014, the TAC Company occupies the largest market share of Ecair, Canadian, and Mistral Aviation (source Author from excel)



Figure 3. market share of the year 2015 in these days, TAC still occupying the market leadership, ECAIR still in the second place, after Canadian and Mistral at the end (source Author from excel)

Figure 2 and Figure 3 above show title posture the market share occupied with respect to the companies mentioned. This explains the current result of these enterprises in their competitive environment. It should be noted that the competition is well visible. However, there is the proliferation of these companies' strategies to obtain some leadership in the market. Based on observed trends, the ECAir Company would be spirit to join TAC first instead of that market. Because of reforms in current trade policy with new services in Congo, ECAir Company remains leader as compared to TAC in core competitiveness.

## 7. Analysis Strategic or Competitive Air Transport Market Companies

This part of the study deals with particular strategies services offered by these airlines. It also highlights their sales performance and measures their images or notoriety to the near their audiences.

### 7.1. Ecair Strategies

Ecair Company has become one of the flagships of the aerial landscape companies in Congo. Since the launch of

its first maiden flight through its pro-active policy: 144 flights per week to (11) destinations (Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Ollombo, Kinshasa, Cotonou, Bamako, Dakar, Paris, Dubai, Brussels). This result is therefore a flexible commercial policy. Ecair offers its clients reliable services with ease and comfort. It also offers promotional pricing for the Interior like BZV/PNR and Ollombo destinations. The company has flights from economic and business classes. During the trip, passengers receive the choice of local or western meals and drinks. For entertaining during the ride, LCD screens are embedded in the file, giving access to movies, series and music. In business class, seats are reclining 180° in order to allow passengers to relax in complete tranquility and comfort. In addition, the company offers over a program of fidelity to its users, a program that lets just frequent travelers earn miles, divided into 3 categories. Maps mahogany, Okoumé and ebony provide separate travelers benefits like priority at the entrance to the program, travelers are mahogany, then they go Okoumé after 20 flights back and forth on, then ebony with 50 flights back and forth on. It also communicates through its magazine "Mbote", several activities relating to the business and social environment of the country. One of the strong points of Ecair strategies is that it is also the recruitment of some Congolese graduates that the company itself provides training at times. It also participates in charitable works with its Social Aid Foundation.

## 7.2. TAC Strategies

National leader of the air fleet in the Congo as Congolese public, the TAC airline, has kept its position being appreciated for the services offered to its passengers; no cancellation of flights, tickets at rates reduced during periods of holidays and vacation- up to 28,000 FCFA(\$50) BZV/PNR instead of 46.000FCFA (\$77). To meet the demand on the BZV/PNR line, the company TAC has 6 flights per day, the last departed Brazzaville at 7 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays issue to take Air France passengers who go to PNR after a small scale in BZV. But one of the aspects which is a weight measurement of these strategies, it is his undeniable and undisputed criterion of seniority. It seems the first since 90 to settle on the Congolese AT market.

## 7.3. Mistral Strategies

Mistral air, a single strategy will switch its turnover, the strategy of the first flight of 6hours formality and 7:30 take-off. This policy allows passengers who come on weekends to Brazzaville to leave very early morning to finally get to their workplace or other occupations.

## 7.4. Canadian Strategies

This company adopts the follower strategy to increase its market share. It offers a direct way of Commissionaires agents 'courtiers' in the field of merchant customers on behalf of the company. Moreover, this strategy is now receiving attention from other companies, putting them also "courtiers" and have the ticket sales agencies across the city.

## 8. Practice of the Marketing Mix on the Ground

The use of the marketing mix strategy is also strongly observed to win more clients on the AT market. Generally this strategy is essentially based on:

- product (service);
- the price;
- the place (distribution);
- promotion.

As part of our study on the ground, it is found that the marketing mix strategy applies as follows:

-service production level, there is the removal of services on planes, the decrease in staffing, the versatility of staff, the increase in the number of places available and the rate of use of aircraft.

-in the field of distribution, airlines proceed by direct and indirect sales (intermediaries) of the tickets.

With regard to price and promotion, these companies are respectively implementing strategies YIELD Management; a technique marketing of flexible pricing methodology services characterized by a strong presence of fixed costs and certain inertia of capacity by ECAir) and advertising. It should also be noted that these different strategies above may be translated as follows:

- Strategy of domination by the costs

It is for the company to seek lasting costs less than those of the competition, allowing them to offer prices lower. This competitive advantage in terms of cost can be obtained:

- by a volume strategy, these different companies produce more, offer their products and services to a broader target.

They thus realize economies of scale: decline in unit costs of production.

- by a strategy of efficiency, these companies are streamlining their production processes and/or distribution by a more efficient labour (versatility of staff) Organization, a better use of their qualities of production (optimization of utilization of materials), a more appropriate location (local services for the companies air "lowcost", search for lower costs.

- Differentiation Strategy

It is for the company to implement the non-price means to distinguish a good or service from those of its competitors. It is this uniqueness of service recognized by the consumer, that builds loyalty and providing a competitive advantage to the company permitting it to charge prices higher than the competition. The factors on which to build this differentiation are not many: the intrinsic quality of service, certification, innovation and patents in the field of service activities. In addition to these, in particular air transport cannot really hide its policy there is no patent to file, only part human resource training and practice in its relationship with the customer can make the difference.

The strategy of domination by costs requires that the company meets lasting efforts on the control of its costs. It can thus encounter to technical progress, or the change in the expectations of consumers. Example of the airlines

involved almost the lowcost<sup>2</sup>. Differentiation strategy is based on specific skills that the consumer recognizes to the company. If they do not justify a difference in the prices charged by the company, or if the element of differentiation is commonplace and is imitated, the company can no longer maintain its competitiveness. It is therefore advisable for these companies to be looking for the recruitment of staff in contact with the client. We noticed that the presentation is not a sufficient condition to the satisfaction of the client. It should also be that personnel are trained and better equipped to answer all questions of the customer.

## 9. Competitive Challenges

The objective is to lay down rules for the application of the provisions of the Treaty on competition in the field of TA, taking into account the specificities of the sector, which is still characterized by states aid to national airlines and airports. In addition, the creation of fair conditions of competition policy should encourage AT companies to offer the users of services of quality at an affordable price. In recent years, ASECNA<sup>3</sup> in AT policy focused on the protection of passenger rights both at the level of the safety of air passengers and aviation security to the level of the quality of services offered to passengers, such as overbooking<sup>4</sup>.

We find that in the Congo the majority shareholders of our airlines are ministers and senior officers of our armed forces and police. They handle business either by manipulating opinion by the wrong information on the competitor or by pillaging the company providing aircraft fuel. This is illustrated by the case of Mistral Aviation Company that very often its aircraft nailed to the ground for very often not proven grounds. We can say without much risk to say that competition is far from perfect despite the efforts of the Government in this field in Congo.

Some companies such as CANADIAN and MISTRAL aviation adapt the lowcost housing competition, but this competition of the lowcost air is beneficial too. Above all, to those who do not use it, the winners are in reality customers who stayed loyal to the incumbent. Indeed, the lowcost threat the installed company had to adjust its prices downward although there is a lack of subsidy enjoyed by ECair. After what has been seen in the Congo, the decrease in the price of the tickets would be in the order of 30% and often acts preemptively, even before the entry of the low cost. In the case of Pointe-noire we believe this indirect gain power over 32 million in a period of 3 years from 2009-2011. If we extrapolate our results on the entire line BZV - PNR with low cost competition, it is likely that the total gain in purchasing power exceeds 60 over the period 2012-2016, despite a few air disasters lately on the Congolese sky (Source ANAC)

<sup>2</sup> It is an economic concept and marketing based on the practice of price lower than the market average.

<sup>3</sup> Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation Aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar.

<sup>4</sup> Is a commercial practice which is for sale in booking a number of places (transport, show, hosting) higher than the amount actually available. This technique is mostly used by the major airline or railway companies as well as in the hotel sector.

The low cost competition also helps to expand the size of the market: the drop in prices gives access to the aircraft to customers that were travelling little far or using other modes of alternative transportation. Beyond the gain purchasing power, the lowcost competition participated in some form of democratization of air transport.

## 10. Survey on the Consumption of the AT Services Line Brazzaville/Pointe-Noire

This analysis follows the counting of our field investigations in these two cities of the country, and answer the question of consumption services line BZV/PNR. The investigations are based on a sample of 1,800 people at BZV and 1200 to PNR or 200 persons per district.

Table 4. Level of consumption of services

	Districts	Yes	not
Brazzaville	Makélékélé	95	105
	Bacongo	80	120
	Poto-poto	160	40
	Moungali	122	78
	Ouenzé	67	133
	Talangai	129	71
	Mfilou	179	21
	Madibou	58	142
	Djiri	101	99
Total	9 Arr.	991	809
Pointe-noire	Lumbumba	190	10
	Mvoumvou	104	96
	Tié-tié	98	102
	Loandjili	191	09
	Mongo-poungou	49	151
	Ngoyo	69	131
Total	06 Arr.	701	499

BZV : 991 or 55,05% of yes vs 809 or 44,94% of not and PNR : 701 or 58,41% of yes vs 499 or 41, 58% of not. (source Author).

### Comment and deduction

This table shows with great objectivity the result of the investigative work on the ground in terms of consumption of services. That is, the number of people who have used the BZV/PNR travel by these different companies. Then, the figures communicate and let understand that the domestic air network is frequently practical, but also known by the Congolese public. In this perspective the result expected in the town of BZV is 991 people, all categories (CSP<sup>5</sup>) having already borrowed the BZV/PNR line, or 55.05% against; 809 Nos, i.e. a percentage of 44.94 percent. What is the city of PNR, the observation is the same as that of BZV. We have 701 people so either 58.41% who have practiced airway is against with 449 Nos, or a 41.58%.

So, all this is explained by the simple fact that some people prefer to travel through rail and road. Indeed, for more than 5 years now Congo Brazzaville acquires national road of 510 km, connecting the two (2) cities. There are many who now legitimize the cart path. It is worth noting that the cost of air transport is high compared to some income, which requires some use other

<sup>5</sup> Socio-professional category

means of transport to travel. A first plane ticket class or case is survey of 50 to 46 thousand FCFA (\$83 to 77), the second class at 36 000 FCFA (\$ 65), while a first-class train ticket is 22,000 FCFA (\$ 36) and 14,000 FCFA (\$ 23) second class. Relatively, the road the ticket price of a truck would rise to 15,000 FCFA (\$ 25). Therefore, the choice for some is clear. Other reasons that explain the rate of abstinence to the borrowing of the flights for some, it would be the lack of security or insecurity experienced by Congo Brazzaville for awhile in the sector of AT, with

including the crashes of the type Antonov flights that the Congolese Government has banned the operation.

### 11. Survey of Opinions on Satisfaction with Services

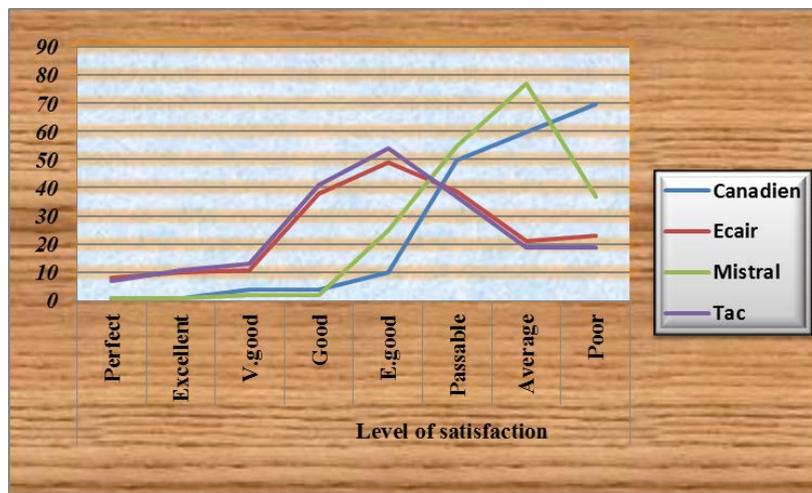
- Zone Brazzaville survey results: 200 consumers have asked about the satisfaction of the services.

**Table 5. Level of satisfaction of the public at BZV**

Compagnies	Level of satisfaction								Total
	Pecfect	Excellent	V.good	Good	E.Good	Passable	average	Poor	
Canadian	1	1	4	4	10	50	60	70	200
Ecair	8	10	11	38	49	39	21	23	200
Mistral	1	1	2	2	25	55	77	37	200
Tac	7	11	13	41	54	37	19	19	200

source : Auhor.

Interpretation of the data of appreciation of the services of the public in a figure



**Figure 4.** decryption as a percentage of the level of satisfaction, BZV city (source Author)

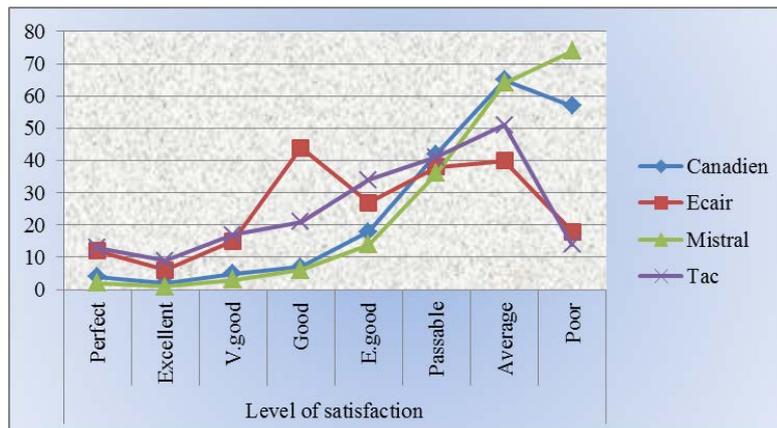
Surveys area Pointe-Noire: 200 consumers also for answering this question of satisfaction to PNR.

**Table 6. Level of satisfaction of the public on PNR**

Compagnies	Level of satisfaction								Total
	Pecfect	Excellent	V.good	Good	E.Good	Passable	average	Poor	
Canadian	4	2	5	7	18	42	65	57	200
Ecair	12	6	15	44	27	38	40	18	200
Mistral	2	1	3	6	14	36	64	74	200
Tac	13	9	17	21	34	41	51	14	200

Source: Author

The opinions gathered in the level of satisfaction with services zone PNR in figure



**Figure 5.** decryption as a percentage of the level of satisfaction, city PNR (source author)

These two Figures (4 and 5) explain accurately the results of our surveys on the level of satisfaction with services provided by these various AT companies on our list of study line BZV/PNR. Indeed, our graphics decrypt in a decreasing way the level of satisfaction; that is, from imperfection to perfection. We note that on our statistics, a large number of people present a negative opinion against the services of these different companies. However, the slightly higher than Ecair Tac company presents more or less passable data. What we will therefore say is that, faced with the quality of the services less than the expectations of consumers on the market of AT in the Congo, the company Tac presents more or less of reliability of service, visibility and good image compared to others. Then comes Ecair, which clings neck-on to his competitor's size Tac, with a barely recognized image of rising. The other two classified according to the graph, a low image for Canadian and very low image for Mistral Aviation.

### 12. Image of These Companies

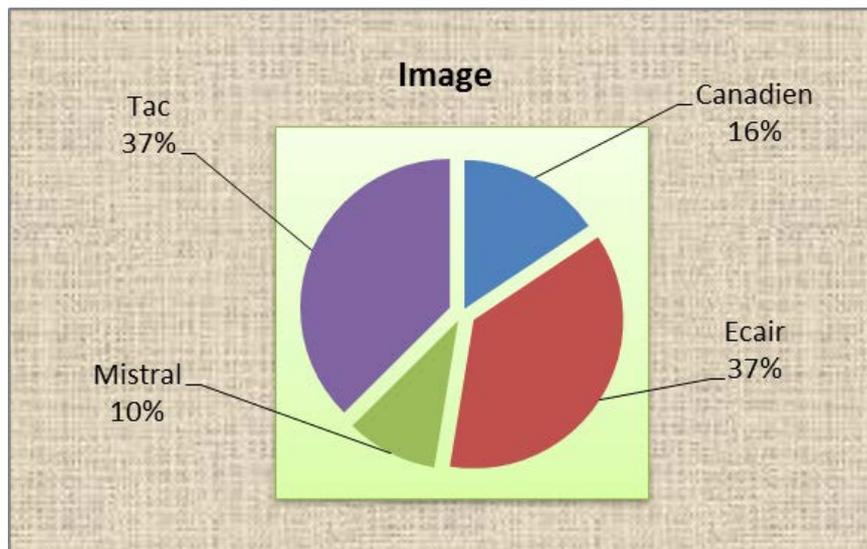


Figure 6. response encrypted on the matter of preference asked for 2,000 people as the original samples BZV/PNR or 1000 people by city (source Author)

### 13. Conclusion

The market of the AT in Congo Brazzaville is from a competitive perspective. This competitive situation is that the different companies in this market are implementing several strategies to win the largest market share. It is in this perspective that we observed during our survey, a strong strategic practice (advertising, promotions, and the improvement of quality of service...) by them. This work therefore meets a problem, to know what were the sale mechanisms used by companies (TAC, ECAIR, CANADIAN and MISTRAL of competition on the market. Then, several substantial elements were actually referred to analyze this sector of activity. Among which we have among other things: the quality of the services; the marketing mix; the satisfaction of customers and their preferences. These 4 different domestic companies of the

In this same context of investigation also follows the matter of image. With the same samples of people, men and women in these two cities. we were able to analyze and understand the preference of some customers on these companies. Here, the criterion of choice does not reside only on the consumption of services offered by these companies on the market of AT, but also the idea that the public has of these operators. That is, the knowledge that the public has about these companies. For this reason, we have the result below (Table 7). These notices preferably therefore give the company TAC and Ecair the first place, the canadian occupies the third place and finally comes the Mistral Company.

Table 7. Preference of the public companies

Companies	Preference
Canadien	312
Ecair	739
Mistral	199
Tac	750
Tatal	2000

Source : Author.

Present these numbers in a chart to have percentage preference or the image of the public on these companies.

Congolese air fleet, line BZV/PNR. However, it follows from this analysis that; there is a lower customer satisfaction with the expectations of the market. In addition to these, some aspects like the comfort of the aircraft which attracts clients, promotions of sale of tickets and despite all the advantages that present the strategies implemented by the different airlines, it remains no less noted some shortcomings in the practice of these. Users lament the lack of punctuality of aircraft, the dissatisfaction of the quality of services offered since the sale of tickets for the management of disputes, the ineffectiveness of the techniques of communication and loyalty and the lack of proximity to customers. Hence, there is an urgent need to always develop innovative marketing strategies and develop communication and services policies that can promote the degree of customer satisfaction, in order to drain other potential customers in a market as bulky as the Congo.

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