

Leveraging Customer Insights in Social Media as a Catalyst for Enhancing the Marketing Performance of Airbnb Tourist Homes

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Abstract

Customer information constitutes a critical resource for businesses in designing, refining, and delivering products and services that align with market demands. In contemporary digital environments, social media platforms have emerged as rich repositories of customer-generated data, offering valuable insights into consumer preferences, behaviors, and perceptions. This study aimed to examine the influence of customer insights derived from social media on the marketing performance of Airbnb tourist homes. Specifically, the research assessed the effects of three dimensions of customer insights which are knowledge-enhancement, action-oriented, and symbolic customer insight on marketing performance. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed via mail survey during the month of June and July 2025. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that all three dimensions of customer insight have a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of Airbnb tourist homes. In practice, the findings suggest that leveraging customer insights can equip Airbnb operators with strategic tools to refine services offered and enhance customer engagement, while strengthening their competitive position in a dynamic, sensitive, and highly information-based sector.

Keywords: *Customer insights, social media, airbnb tourist homes & marketing performance*

Introduction

In today's digital business landscape, effectively harnessing customer insights has become a pivotal factor for achieving and sustaining services marketing performance (MP) in various context (Alghizzawi, Alhanatleh, Alhawamdeh, Ahmed, & Al-Gasawneh, 2023). With the widespread adoption of social media (SM) as a primary platform for communication, the adept use of customer data in this dynamic context has emerged as a crucial catalyst for enhancing the MP of small business (Sugiharto, Harkim, Hiya, Simanungkalit, & Andriani, 2025). This research is dedicated to unraveling the relationship between customer insights (CI) in SM and its profound impact on the MP of Airbnb tourist homes in Kilimanjaro region. The convergence of action-oriented (AOI), symbolic customer insight (SCI) and knowledge-enhancement

customer insight (KECI) in the context of SM has now become a driving force behind MP of small businesses (Palencia-Oliver, 2023; Ramanathan et al., 2020).

In essence, this study explores the dynamic intersection of technology, data, and consumer interaction, aiming to equip Airbnb tourist homes with the essential tools not only for sustaining operations but to thrive in an increasingly competitive and evolving business environment. Historically, the use of customer insights in business has been a critical area of research, given its significant influence on organizational performance (Zaid & Patwayati, 2021). Over the past decade, businesses have increasingly invested substantial resources in information technology systems to manage customer data and transform it into actionable insights (Borah, Iqbal, & Akhtar, 2022). However, limited information exists on investments specifically aimed at integrating customer insights from social media into daily business operations, creating a gap that constrains the recognition of these tools as drivers of firm performance (Brandy, 2023; Omowole, Olufemi-Philips, Ofadile, Eyo-Udo, & Ewim, 2024).

Academic research on information utilization remains notably fragmented, making it difficult to draw consistent comparisons across various disciplines (Brandy, 2023). A central theme emerging in insights utilization literature is that organizations often undervalue the extensive information already embedded within their own SM platforms (Kretschmer, Leiponen, Schilling, & Vasudeva, 2022), as well as that accessible through customer-generated content on external SM platforms (Tuncer & Kartal, 2024). This highlights the critical importance of not only collecting data but also effectively integrating and leveraging existing information to investigate their role on organizational performance particularly MP. For example, Kretschmer et al. (2022) emphasize that underutilization of customer-related insights, particularly in new product development, constitutes a missed opportunity for strategic competitive advantage. Consequently, firms that fail to leverage these insights risk limiting both their competitive edge and overall performance (Nikseresht, Shokouhyar, & Shokoohyar, 2025).

In the marketing field, research on insights utilization has examined a range of themes, including the factors that influence use of market research information and the interplay between service users' insights and their application in shaping marketing knowledge (Nikseresht et al., 2025; Omowole et al., 2024). Much of this research, however, has focused on general market trends, often overlooking the rich, existing insights available at both the organizational and individual levels (Omowole et al., 2024). Recently, there has been a notable shift among marketing researchers from relying solely on aggregated market data to

emphasizing customer-specific insights drawn from various platforms (Zaid & Patwayati, 2021). This includes leveraging customer satisfaction metrics and data related to relational processes. Such shift signifies the evolving context of marketing research, where personalized, customer-oriented strategies are becoming increasingly central to decision-making and competitive advantage (Nikseresht et al., 2025; Ramanathan et al., 2020).

Research on the utilization of customer insights derived from SM and their influence on a firm's MP remains underexplored, particularly in the context of emerging economies. Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory by Barney (1991), this study seeks to address this gap by examining the role of three key dimensions of customer insights that are AOCI, SCI, and KECI in influencing the MP of Airbnb tourist homes in Kilimanjaro region. The region is selected as a study area due to its strategic significance as one of Tanzania's leading tourist attraction for a diverse mix of travelers drawn to Mount Kilimanjaro, cultural heritage sites, and adventure tourism (Begashe, Mgonja, & Matotola, 2024; Kilungu, 2023). The rapid growth of Airbnb accommodations in the region highlights a competitive hospitality environment where SM customer insights can play a critical role in shaping Airbnb marketing strategies. Despite this growth, empirical research on how Airbnb homes leverage customer insights from SM to enhance MP remains limited, making this study both timely and contextually relevant.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Formulation

In recent years, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory has gained prominence in business by highlighting the strategic importance of customer insights as valuable business resources (Cooper, Pereira, Vrontis, & Liu, 2023; Nayak, Bhattacharyya, & Krishnamoorthy, 2023). Firms operating in diverse contexts increasingly harness these insights to achieve their marketing objectives, recognizing them as key intangible assets that contribute to sustained competitive advantage (Nayak et al., 2023). Traditionally, RBV assumes that firms derive long-term advantages from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). However, with the evolution of internet-based tools and SM platforms, scholars have extended the application of RBV to examine how customer insights especially those generated through online interactions and SM may function as strategic resources that enhance business operations (Begashe et al., 2024; Nayak et al., 2023; Nikseresht et al., 2025). Although such efforts are evident in literature, limited attention has been given to the role of customer insights in influencing the of Airbnb tourists' homes MP.

According to Ramanathan et al. (2020), customer insights are data-driven that provides understandings of customer behavior, preferences, and experiences that inform strategic decision-making in the business settings. These insights commonly fall into three categories: action-oriented customer insights (AOCI), which drive immediate marketing responses; symbolic customer insights (SCI), which reflect the meanings and values customers attach to products or services (Yawson, 2020). The third category, knowledge-enhancement customer insights (KECI), contributes to long-term learning and the strategic refinement of business practices (Loia, Capolupo, & Adinolfi, 2025). Each of these dimensions plays a vital role in strengthening the relationship between businesses and their customers (Loia et al., 2025). Such relationship in marketing is important given its role in fostering customer loyalty, enhancing satisfaction among customers that ultimately drive sustainable business growth and competitive advantage in marketing (Ramanathan et al., 2020).

Action-oriented customer insights (AOCI) represent actionable knowledge derived from customer behaviors, preferences, and feedback, much of which is increasingly disseminated through SM platforms (Bohlayer, 2023; Yawson, 2020). In tourism sector, these platforms functions as a critical source of real-time consumer-generated data, where tourists frequently share experiential narratives, evaluations, and expectations (Christou, Giannopoulos, & Simeli, 2025). According to Kar, Choudhary, and Ilavarasan (2023), these platforms provide tourism enterprises with access to systematically monitor and analyze customer thoughts and growing trends, thereby facilitating timely and informed marketing decisions. The strategic exploitation of AOI sourced from SM enables firms across diverse tourism segments including adventure, cultural, and leisure tourism to enhance customer engagement and optimize MP through implementation of targeted and adaptive marketing strategies (Christou et al., 2025; Kar et al., 2023). Consequently, the integration of SM-derived customer insights highlights the evolving role of digital technologies in advancing competitive marketing results in the tourism industry. Drawing from the reviewed literature, the study hypothesizes that:

H1. *Action-oriented customer insights is positively related to the marketing performance of Airbnb tourists' homes.*

Researchers conceptualize symbolic customer insights (SCI) as the interpretations and meanings that customers attach to products, services, or brands, often shaped by cultural, emotional, and identity-related associations (Pachidi, Berends, Faraj, & Huysman, 2021; Sabir, 2020). These insights move beyond functional evaluations of a product to capture the symbolic

value that customers derive from their consumption experiences, such as a sense of belonging, prestige, or personal expression (Sabir, 2020). Within service-oriented industries, SCI serves as an important dimension of customer knowledge because it enables organizations to align their offerings with deeper customer motivations and lifestyle aspirations (Pachidi et al., 2021). Empirical evidence shows that firms that successfully leverage symbolic meanings in their marketing strategies often achieve enhanced brand loyalty, higher willingness-to-pay, and stronger market positioning (R. R. Chen, Davison, & Ou, 2020; Pachidi et al., 2021). SM platforms have become particularly significant in generating SCI, as customers frequently share narratives, imagery, and brand-related symbolism that can be systematically analyzed to inform brand storytelling and customer engagement strategies (R. R. Chen et al., 2020).

The influence of SCI on performance is supported by studies showing their capacity to guide marketing decisions that resonate with customers' value systems and aspirational identities (R. R. Chen et al., 2020). Through SM monitoring, firms can identify symbolic themes expressed by customers and integrate them into promotional campaigns, service design, and brand positioning, leading to improved marketing effectiveness and competitive advantage (Sabir, 2020). While much of the empirical research to date has been conducted in sectors such as luxury goods, fashion, and automotive industries, findings agree that SCI represents a valuable source of marketing information across varying context, (Zhang, Zhu, Wu, & Yu-Buck, 2023). Such insights not only help rectify prior marketing or service delivery misalignments but also inspire the development of new product and sales strategies that are emotionally relevant to target audiences. Moreover, SCI offers fertile ground for generating forward-looking business ideas by revealing emerging cultural trends and identity expressions, thereby informing tomorrow's service innovations and brand narratives (De Toni, Pompermayer, Lazzari, & Milan, 2022; Pachidi et al., 2021). This underlines the strategic importance of SCI as both a corrective tool and a source of innovation in shaping MP outcomes.

The integration of symbolic value as a marketing strategy has empirically enhanced brand equity, foster customer loyalty, and drive sales growth (De Toni et al., 2022). Comparable effects in automotive industry, shows that symbolic associations linked to lifestyle and identity have contributed to market share expansion and strengthened customer advocacy (Javed, Khalil, Ishaque, & Khalil, 2023). In the hospitality and food service domains, the strategic use of symbolic meanings in branding such as authenticity, cultural heritage, and prestige has been associated with improved customer satisfaction and increased repeat patronage (X. Chen &

Lee, 2021; De Toni et al., 2022). In relation to that, SM has emerged as a critical enabler of these outcomes, offering platforms through which firms can capture, interpret, and strategically respond to the symbolic narratives that customers construct around their consumption experiences (De Toni et al., 2022). Although direct empirical investigations examining the relationship between SCI and the MP of Airbnb tourist homes remain scarce, the robust evidence from other service-intensive industries provides a strong conceptual basis for inferring the existence of a similar relationship. Accordingly, the theoretical and empirical foundations derived from similar service sectors substantiate the hypothesis that:

H2. Symbolic customer *insights are positively related to the marketing performance of Airbnb tourists' homes.*

Distinct from AOCI, and SCI, KECI focus on sustained organizational learning, arising from the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of customer data to progressively expand a firm's knowledge base (Wen, Wu, Kang, Wang, & Zeng, 2020), long-term orientation enables businesses to anticipate market shifts, identify emerging customer needs, and adapt business models accordingly (Bidgoli, Owlia, & Isaaei, 2023). In the service industries, KECI have been proved to enhance business performance by informing evidence-based marketing strategies, optimizing the allocation of resources, and refining customer segmentation practices (Bidgoli et al., 2023). Firms that effectively leverage KECI are able to design personalized marketing communications, foster customer-driven innovation, and strengthen their strategic positioning in competitive environments (Migdadi, 2021). Although much of the empirical evidence originates from diverse economic sectors, these studies consistently highlight the role of KECI in establishing an analytical foundation for delivering targeted, value-rich information to firms (Bidgoli et al., 2023), thereby ensuring that marketing strategies remain responsive to evolving consumer preferences and supportive of sustainable competitive advantage.

Building on this foundation, scholars further contend that KECI are indispensable for analyzing market trends, forecasting demand patterns, and evaluating the lifetime value of products and services (Omowole et al., 2024). Through continuous refinement of this knowledge base, firms can more effectively adapt their offerings, pricing strategies, and service delivery models to maximize profitability while sustaining long-term customer retention (Bidgoli et al., 2023). Moreover, KECI facilitate the proactive management of customer-business relationships by providing the evidence-based insights necessary for personalized engagement, trust-building, and loyalty reinforcement (Migdadi, 2021). In service-oriented contexts, such insights also

serve as an early-warning mechanism for detecting shifts in market dynamics, enabling firms to anticipate and respond to changes ahead of competitors (Bidgoli et al., 2023). Extending beyond tactical marketing activities, KECI contribute to the development of dynamic capabilities that safeguard a firm's relevance in rapidly evolving marketplaces (Falasca, Zhang, Conchar, & Li, 2017; Famoti et al., 2024).

This enduring strategic relevance highlights the potential applicability of KECI in tourism settings particularly within experience-driven offerings such as Airbnb tourist homes where service customization and responsiveness to evolving customer expectations are paramount sources of MP (Wong, Lu, Lin, & Lin, 2023). The theoretical relevance of KECI in equipping firms to anticipate market shifts and strengthen customer relationships is reinforced by empirical evidence across diverse industries (Wong et al., 2023). For instance, in healthcare, detailed analysis of patient feedback has been associated with improved service delivery and stronger brand trust (Chang, Chen, & Lan, 2013). Likewise, the financial services sector demonstrates that integrating customer data into marketing analytics boosts selling, client retention, and revenue growth (Famoti et al., 2024).

In the technology industry, KECI derived from user interaction data have been pivotal in driving product innovation and strengthening competitive positioning (Brandy, 2023). According to Cooper et al. (2023), these insights, acquired from various sources including SM, represent valuable and rare resources in line with the Resource-Based View, providing firms with inimitable stance that underpin sustained competitive advantage. Together, these findings highlight the KECI's role as a strategic asset that drives sustained business performance in service-intensive and innovation-driven markets. Although direct empirical research linking KECI to the MP of Airbnb tourist homes in Tanzania remains sparse, the consistent evidence from similar sectors provides a compelling basis to anticipate a similar beneficial impact within the Airbnb context. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H3. *Knowledge-enhancement customer insights is positively related to the marketing performance of Airbnb tourist homes.*

Methods

Data Collection, Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

This study focuses on Airbnb tourist homes in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, renown for attractions such as Mount Kilimanjaro and surrounding cultural experiences (Kitole & Sesabo,

2024). These establishments operate within the sharing economy model, providing short-term accommodation to both domestic and international travelers, with core activities centered on offering personalized lodging experiences, facilitating cultural immersion, and enhancing overall tourist satisfaction. The research aims to examine the role of customer insights from social media in influencing the marketing performance of Airbnb tourist homes in the area.

A total of 231 Airbnb tourist homes, identified from the Tanzania Tourist Board database (TTB, 2024), were contacted and invited to participate through self-administered questionnaires sent via email to their marketing managers, who served as the unit of inquiry. Of these, 212 responses were received, representing a high initial participation rate from the targeted establishments. However, 3 responses were identified as outliers and 4 were excluded due to missing values, leaving 205 valid cases for analysis, which corresponds to a final effective response rate of 88.74%. This response rate is robust, especially when compared to Ceissa, Gamayanto, & Wibowo (2025) in their study on customer information in hospitals, which achieved a 74% response rate. To ensure data reliability, only establishments with a minimum of three years' operational experience in the Airbnb business were included, as this level of maturity provides more informed perspectives on the adoption and utilization of strategic technologies (Berry et al., 2020).

Research Variables and Measurements

Variables were reflective in nature, a common approach in market research to capture latent constructs through observed indicators. Marketing performance (MP) was evaluated using both financial and non-financial measures to provide a comprehensive assessment of business outcomes. This approach was adopted in recognition of the fact that objective measures of MP are often difficult to obtain, particularly in small businesses (Jamai, De Steur, Abidar, & Gellynck, 2021), such as tourist homes, which are often not well-structured due to their newness and rarely maintain systematic financial records (Vardopoulos, Papoui-Evangelou, Nosova, & Salvati, 2023). Given this constraint, questionnaires capturing perceived financial performance and non-financial performance were employed to assess the tourist homes MP dimension, using seven items adapted from Kristi and Yanto (2020) and Anwar and Shuangjie (2021), which included items such as increased sales, growth in cash flow, market share, customer satisfaction, firm growth, expansion in market share, growth in customer base and increased profits.

Customer insights have been broadly categorized into three key types: action-oriented, knowledge-enhancing, and symbolic customer insights (Birch-Jensen, Gremyr, & Halldórsson, 2021; Park & van der Aalst, 2022). Action-oriented insights focus on using customer data to support immediate marketing decisions and activities, such as selecting effective communication channels and customizing products or services to meet specific customer needs (Birch-Jensen et al., 2021). To measure this construct, seven reflective items adapted from Park and van der Aalst (2022) were used, including statements like “we use customer insights to identify appropriate channels to reach our customers” and “we use customer insights to customize our offers.” Respondents rated their agreement to reflect the extent to which these practices are embedded in their tourists’ homes.

In contrast, knowledge-enhancing customer insights emphasize the ongoing development and refinement of a firm’s knowledge base through the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of customer information (Park & van der Aalst, 2022). Five reflective items adapted from Ramanathan et al. (2020), were employed to measure this dimension, including examples such as “we use customer information to analyze market trends” and “we often summarize customer insights by simplifying complex data, for instance through generic reports.” Symbolic customer insights, meanwhile, refer to the use of customer data primarily to legitimize decisions, secure stakeholder buy-in, or demonstrate market responsiveness, even when the information does not directly influence decisions (Ramanathan et al., 2020). This construct was measured using seven items from Park and van der Aalst (2022), with respondents indicating how frequently such symbolic practices occur in their firms. All constructs were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The instruments measuring customer insights and MP were reviewed and validated by academicians and marketing experts prior to the pilot survey to ensure clarity and eliminate any confusing items.

Data Analysis and Results

The research model comprises four constructs: three independent customer insight dimensions including symbolic customer, action-oriented, and knowledge-enhancement and marketing performance (MP) all measured using reflective items. The study employed Partial Least Squares (PLS), a component-based structural equation modeling technique well-suited for handling complex models with multiple variables and collinearity issues common in marketing survey data. Smart-PLS software was utilized for its user-friendly interface, strong ability in

modeling latent constructs, and effectiveness in managing collinearity (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021), making it ideal for analyzing the relationships within this research model.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis Results

The study revealed that all participants were either owners of Airbnb tourist homes or managers responsible for controlling the marketing of these businesses. This indicates that they possessed the necessary knowledge about their business marketing activities and the role of SM usage as a source of customer insights. Their experience with SM varied, with 15% having 3–5 years, 22% having 6–10 years, 40% having 11–15 years, and 23% having over 16 years of experience. Regarding Airbnb business experience, 11% had operated for 3–5 years, 41% for 6–10 years, 30% for 11–15 years, and 19% for 16 years or more. Such extensive background, Airbnb tourist home owners and managers had developed a deeper understanding of the value of customer insights obtained from SM platforms, enabling them to provide credible responses that genuinely reflect the perceived positive impact of customer insights on the MP of their businesses (Yi, Wang, Tian, & Xia, 2021). In terms of education, the majority (82%) possessed post-secondary qualifications, whereas 18% had completed only advanced secondary school; this relatively high level of education facilitated their understanding of the questionnaire and enabled them to provide accurate responses (Aithal & Aithal, 2020).

To ensure data accuracy, distribution was assessed using measures such as skewness and kurtosis. All skewness values were within the acceptable range of ± 1 , and kurtosis values fell between ± 3 , indicating a normal distribution of the data. Central tendency measures showed an average mean of 4.94 and a median of 5, both exceeding the 4.44 threshold recommended by Pimentel and Pimentel (2019) for a 7-point Likert scale. Additionally, the standard deviation of 1.28, well below the threshold of 3, suggested minimal variation in the responses, thereby reinforcing the data's reliability (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). Overall, these statistical results indicate that Airbnb tourist home owners and managers generally agree that customer insights derived from SM platforms positively influence the MP of their businesses.

Measurement Model Analysis

The model assumes that all latent variables are reflective, acting as antecedents to their indicators. Accordingly, the measurement model was evaluated through analyses of indicator reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The results are summarized measurement model indices in Table 1.

Table 1. *Measurement Model Indices*

Items	Mean	SD	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Action-Oriented Customer Insight (AOCI)						
AOCI1	5.044	1.164	0.662			
AOCI2	4.760	1.060	0.698			
AOCI4	4.750	1.209	0.636	0.813	0.864	0.515
AOCI5	5.324	1.285	0.780			
AOCI6	4.892	1.232	0.763			
AOCI7	5.010	1.287	0.755			
Knowledge Enhancement Customer Insight (KECI)						
KECI2	4.922	1.190	0.773			
KECI1	4.721	1.490	0.693			
KECI3	4.667	1.403	0.646	0.771	0.845	0.523
KECI4	4.510	1.100	0.717			
KECI5	4.662	1.267	0.777			
Marketing Performance (MP)						
MP1	4.725	1.250	0.817			
MP2	4.814	1.190	0.845			
MP3	4.804	1.237	0.774			
MP4	4.495	1.338	0.776	0.903	0.923	0.633
MP5	4.740	1.331	0.685			
MP6	4.657	1.217	0.829			
MP7	4.574	1.379	0.834			
Symbolic Customer Insight (SCI)						
SCI1	4.887	1.201	0.729			
SCI2	4.804	1.358	0.659			
SCI3	4.858	1.206	0.562			
SCI4	4.603	1.186	0.797	0.835	0.876	0.506
SCI5	4.956	1.273	0.773			
SCI6	5.250	1.090	0.730			
SCI7	5.279	1.178	0.704			

Notes: SD: Standard Deviation performed by 10,000 repetitions bootstrapping procedure, α : Cronbach's alpha, CP: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Construct reliability was assessed using factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Examination of indicator reliability through factor loadings led to the removal of ACOI3 from *action-oriented customer insight* due to its low loading. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability results indicated strong reliability across all constructs, while AVE values exceeding the 0.50 benchmark confirmed convergent validity and supported the internal consistency of the reflective measurement scales. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which verified that correlations between constructs were lower than the square root of their respective AVE values, as shown in Table 2. Additionally, the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations for

all latent variables were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, providing further confirmation of adequate discriminant validity.

Table 2. *Discriminant Validity*

Variables	Action-Oriented Customer Insight	Knowledge Enhancement Customer Insight	Marketing Performance	Symbolic Customer Insight
Action-Oriented Customer Insight	0.718			
Knowledge Enhancement Customer Insight	0.371	0.723		
Marketing Performance	0.677	0.483	0.796	
Symbolic Customer Insight	0.608	0.299	0.652	0.711

Source: *Field Data (2025): The HTMT ratio is presented above the diagonal (in italics). Following the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE is displayed on the diagonal (in bold), with construct correlations shown below the diagonal.*

Moreover, additional analysis was conducted to assess model quality, revealing that the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) both fell within acceptable limits, with SRMR not exceeding 0.9 (Hair, 2022). The NFI value is 0.733, that, while below the ideal threshold of 0.95, still indicated an acceptable model fit. These indices collectively confirmed that the study model demonstrated a satisfactory fit to the data. In addition, the Q^2 (cross-validated redundancy index), obtained through the blindfolding procedure, recorded a value of 0.364. A Q^2 value greater than zero signifies that the model possesses predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs, meaning that it can reliably predict the observed data. The value of 0.364, being substantially above zero, indicates a moderate-to-strong predictive capacity of the structural model.

Path Analysis

Path analysis was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to detect potential multicollinearity issues if happen to be found. As presented in Table 3, the VIF values ranged from 1.171 to 1.709, which are well below the common cut-off threshold of 5.0 indicating the absence of multicollinearity in the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). The coefficient of determination (R^2) for the endogenous construct was found to be 0.592 as demonstrated in figure 1. According to Rodríguez Sánchez, Salmerón Gómez, and García (2022), R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 can be described as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively.

Therefore, an R^2 of 0.592 reflects a moderate-to-substantial explanatory power, suggesting that approximately 59.2% of the variance in the dependent construct is explained by the model's predictors. Thus, the study's model accounts for approximately 59.2% of the variance in the dependent construct, demonstrating a moderate-to-substantial explanatory power.

Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) values for each predictor were also calculated to assess the individual contribution of exogenous variables to the R^2 value. According to Hafliðadóttir et al. (2021), f^2 values of 0.184, 0.123, and 0.197 represent small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. The results revealed that all f^2 values fell within acceptable ranges, implying that each predictor contributed meaningfully to the model. Finally, bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples was conducted to evaluate the significance of path coefficients through t-statistics and p-values. This non-parametric resampling method provides robust estimates for hypothesis testing by avoiding assumptions of normality and is widely recommended in PLS-SEM applications (Wang, Smith, Hejase, & Liu, 2020). The findings are positive and significant as the 95% confidence interval values are entirely above zero, indicating a reliable positive effect (Comets, Rodrigues, Jullien, & Ursino, 2021) exclusion of zero from the interval corresponds to statistical significance at the 5% level (Wang et al., 2020).

Table 3. *Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing*

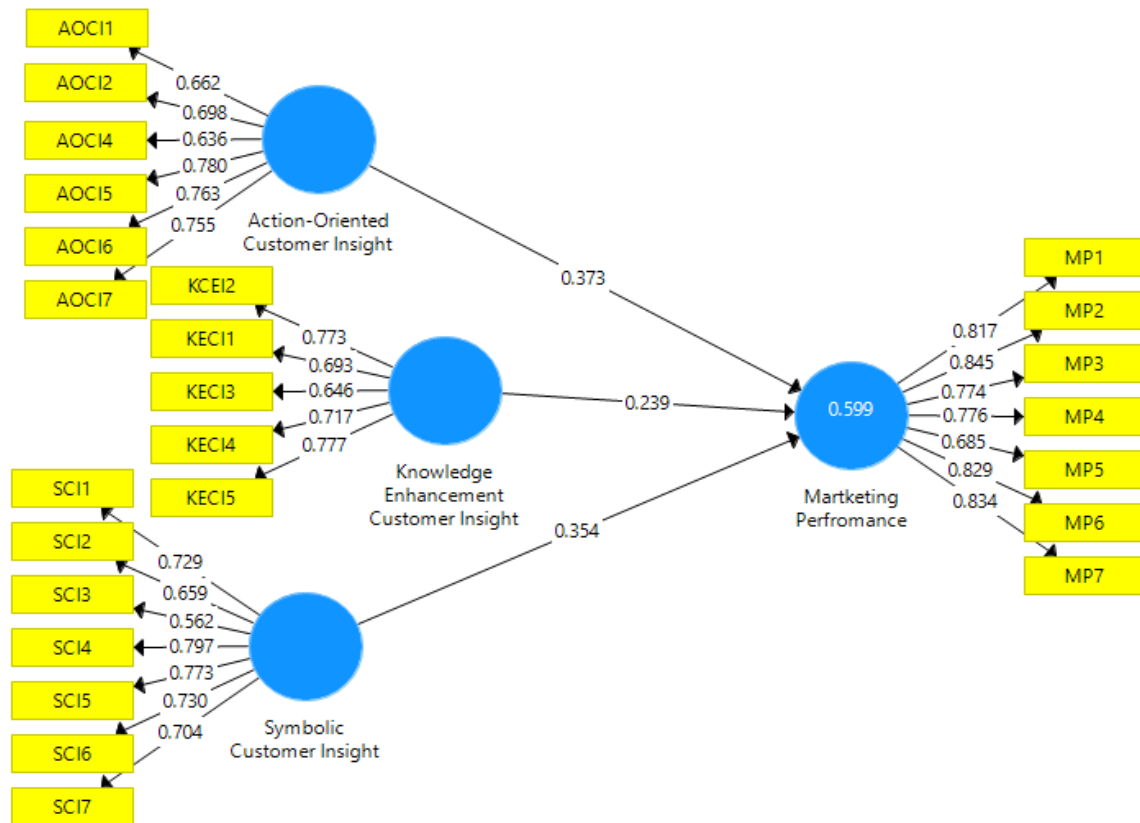
Effects	Path	TV	PV	f^2	95CI	H	VIF	Decision
AOCI → MP	0.373	4.965	0.000	0.184	[0.237; 0.463]	H1	1.709	Accepted
KECI → MP	0.239	4.237	0.000	0.123	[0.147; 0.338]	H2	1.171	Accepted
SCI → MP	0.354	5.408	0.000	0.197	[0.245; 0.459]	H3	1.618	Accepted

Source: *Field Data (2025); Probability values (PV), T-Values (TV), Hypothesis (H), effect size (f^2)*

The findings indicate that all three hypothesized relationships positively and significantly influence the MP of Airbnb tourist homes. Hypothesis H1, which assessed the influence of AOCI on MP, shows a standardized path coefficient of 0.373 at a significance level of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 4.965, indicating a strong and significant relationship (Table 3). For H2, KECI also exhibited a positive and significant relationship with MP, supported by the path coefficient on 0.239, a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of 4.237. Similarly, H3, which examined SCI, revealed a positive and significant relationship with MP. The results for this hypothesis may be evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.354, a p-value of 0.000 and t-values of 5.408.

Overall, the results confirm that customer insights derived from SM exert a positive and significant impact on the MP of Airbnb tourist homes in the Kilimanjaro region.

Figure 1. *The Research Final Model*



Source: *Field Data (2025)*

The final model explains the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, illustrating how the three dimensions of customer insights AOCI, KECI, and SCI collectively shape the MP of Airbnb tourist homes in Kilimanjaro. In quantifying the strength and significance of these relationships, the model offers practical value for managers and hosts, enabling them to strategically leverage SM-derived customer insights to enhance engagement, tailor offerings, and improve overall market positioning. In this way, the model not only contributes to academic understanding but also serves as a decision-making tool for improving operational and marketing strategies in the tourism accommodation sector.

Discussion of Findings

The projected hypotheses in this study were found to have a positive and significant relationship with the MP of Airbnb tourist homes. Similar to previous studies, these findings complement existing literature by reinforcing the view that AOCI are positively and significantly related to MP (Bidgoli et al., 2023; Cooper et al., 2023). AOCI refers to the ability of businesses to translate customer-related data into concrete actions that directly enhance operational and marketing outcomes. In line with Cooper et al. (2023) the current results support the argument that applying actionable insights drawn from customers' behaviors, preferences, and feedback enables businesses to make timely, evidence-based, and strategically aligned decisions that enhances MP. These actionable insights help managers move beyond descriptive data analysis toward prescriptive strategies that specify what should be done to maximize value creation (Bidgoli et al., 2023).

As noted by Bidgoli et al. (2023), actionable knowledge derived from customer interactions provides a competitive advantage by translating raw data into strategies that enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. In the context of Airbnb tourist homes, these insights may arise from guest reviews, booking patterns, and inquiries made through SM or online platforms, all of which help refine service delivery and improve brand visibility (Christou et al., 2025). Consequently, the MP of these homes is largely aligned with the effective use of AOCI, ensuring that marketing activities are grounded in actual market intelligence rather than assumptions. Furthermore, although the majority of respondents (owners or managers) have been in the industry for several years, those who have mastered the use of existing customer insights are in a better position to outperform competitors by anticipating guest needs, enhancing the guest experience, and adapting swiftly to market shifts.

KECI, which was found to have a positive and significant influence on MP, aligns with the findings of Christou et al. (2025), who emphasized that continuously improving market knowledge strengthens a firm's capacity to adapt and compete effectively. The current results extend existing literature by demonstrating that, in the context of Airbnb tourist homes, KECI enables hosts to refine service quality, identify emerging market opportunities, and develop targeted strategies that enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty. From RBV perspective (Barney, 1991), these findings suggest that owners and managers who systematically acquire, integrate, and apply customer knowledge develop valuable, rare, and inimitable offers that provide a sustained competitive advantage. Therefore, Airbnb operators who invest in gathering and

utilizing guest feedback, booking data, and market trends are better positioned to differentiate their offerings, anticipate customer needs, and secure superior MP over competitors.

The final hypothesis in this study (H3) examined the role of Symbolic Customer Insight (SCI) in influencing the marketing performance (MP) of Airbnb tourist homes. The findings indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between SCI and MP, as evidenced by the path coefficient of 0.354, a p-value of 0.000, and a t-values of 5.408. These results align with the arguments of Famoti et al. (2024), who contended that firms leveraging symbolic customer insight are better positioned to identify cultural trends and extract deep-seated consumer meanings that can guide future service innovations and strengthen brand narratives. In this context, SCI serves as a strategic tool for translating intangible cultural and emotional cues into actionable marketing strategies that enhance competitive advantage (Migdadi, 2021). This suggests that businesses capable of decoding symbolic meanings from customer interactions are more likely to design experiences that resonate emotionally, thereby increasing market relevance and differentiation.

Similarly, De Toni et al. (2022) and Javed et al. (2023) also reported a significant association between SCI and firm performance, highlighting its importance in business success. In the context of SM, customers often share trusting and influential words that can shape the perceptions of other potential customers. Leveraging SCI to integrate these insights into product improvement becomes crucial for driving the MP of various offerings. Such insights are pivotal for building brand equity, which in turn fosters customer loyalty by aligning products and services with the values, aspirations, and lifestyles of target audiences (Javed et al., 2023). In the case of Airbnb tourist homes, this process not only enhances brand awareness but also ultimately increases sales. Moreover, the effective use of SCI can create stronger connections between a customer's lifestyle and identity and the brand itself, thereby reinforcing customer advocacy a process that leads to sustained engagement, repeat patronage, and positive word-of-mouth promotion (De Toni et al., 2022).

Conclusions

The findings reveal that customer insight has a positive and significant relationship with the MP of Airbnb tourist homes. Specifically, KECI, SCI, and AOCI can lead to improved marketing outcomes in the local economic environment. Unlike traditional marketing activities characterized by one-way communication, the digital era particularly with the growth of SM usage enables businesses to access customer information freely and easily (De Toni et al.,

2022). This access transforms how products are designed, promoted, and delivered, ultimately enhancing business performance. Such a shift contrasts sharply with traditional approaches where customers were passive recipients of firm-generated messages, without their opinions, feedback, or preferences being incorporated. Applying the RBV, these results suggest that the ability to strategically use customer insights constitutes a valuable resource that drives MP in Airbnb tourist homes within a developing context (Barney, 1991). This study is among the few to assess the influence of customer insight on Airbnb tourist home performance in Africa generally, and Tanzania in particular.

From a policy perspective, the significant relationship between customer insights and MP highlights a need for strategies that promote the effective integration of customer feedback into marketing processes. Policymakers should consider formulating supportive frameworks that encourage the adoption of SM-based customer insight tools across the accommodation sector. Internet access policies should prioritize affordability, high-speed connectivity, and broad coverage to ensure that both hosts and customers can engage effectively on SM platforms (Zhan, 2020). Targeted capacity-building initiatives such as SM training, customer data interpretation skills, and innovation workshops should also be introduced to enhance Airbnb home owners' ability to utilize customer insights strategically. These initiatives could bridge the digital skills gap and enable hosts to compete effectively in both local and global tourism markets. In Egypt, for example, a high level of SM adoption among service firms is partly attributed to investments in training and the promotion of innovative technological usage (Shehata & Montash, 2020). In relation to RBV, the capacity developed through such training helps explain why firms differ in performance despite operating in similar environments.

Practically, these findings highlight the importance for Airbnb tourist homes to actively leverage customer insights available through SM platforms to strengthen their marketing strategies. Increased use of customer insights can enhance brand positioning, improve customer loyalty, and drive higher sales (Abdelaziz, Wu, Yuan, & Ghonim, 2023). While this study focused on Airbnb tourist homes, future research could explore similar relationships in more sophisticated hospitality segments such as boutique hotels, luxury resorts, eco-lodges, and serviced apartments. Comparative studies across sectors could also develop benchmarks that inform both policy formulation and practical strategies for optimizing MP.

Future researchers should consider conducting a qualitative case study focusing on a single service dimension to generate rich and in-depth insights. Such an approach would allow for a

deeper understanding of contextual factors that may not be fully captured through quantitative methods. Moreover, including customers as participants could highlight the significance of shared information from peers and how such information shapes their decision-making when selecting particular tourist homes, whether in the Kilimanjaro area or in other destinations. In addition, employing a longitudinal research design may be important, as it would enable scholars to capture changes in customer perceptions and behaviors over time, thereby offering more dynamic insights into service sector and decision-making patterns. The use of secondary data, such as customer reviews, tourism reports, or statistical records, could further enrich such studies by providing broader contextual evidence, historical trends, and comparative benchmarks that complement primary data and strengthen the robustness of these findings.

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