

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microenterprises

استخدام استراتيجيات التسويق الرقمي في الجزائر: تحليل مدى فعالية الممارسات المعتمدة من قبل المؤسسات الصغيرة جداً

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Abstract:

This study attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies adopted by microenterprises in Algeria through analyzing the impact of online channels on the purchasing decisions of Algerian consumers. To achieve our research objective, we conducted two research methodologies. The first was qualitative, involving interviews with Algerian microenterprise managers to identify the strategies used. The second was quantitative, consisting of a survey answered by a random sample of 334 respondents. This survey analyzed the impact of digital channels, including social media marketing, online advertising, and search engine marketing. The findings of our study indicate a slight divergence in the responses from both groups. This led us to conclude that Algerian microenterprises do not plan efficient strategies and also fail to fully leverage digital tools. As a result, their digital marketing efforts have a limited impact on local consumers.

Keywords: Digital marketing, digital strategy, customer purchase decision, microenterprises, online channels.

JEL Classification Codes: M300, M310, M210

ملخص:

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مدى ملائمة استراتيجيات التسويق الرقمي التي تتبناها المؤسسات الصغيرة جداً في الجزائر، وذلك من خلال تحليل تأثير القنوات الإلكترونية على قرارات الشراء لدى المستهلكين الجزائريين. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف البحثي، تم الاعتماد على منهجيتين بحثيتين متكاملتين في الأول، تم إجراء دراسة نوعية تألفت من مقابلات مع مديري المؤسسات الجزائرية الصغيرة جداً من أجل تحديد الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها. ثانياً، تم تنفيذ دراسة كمية من خلال استبيان وزع على عينة عشوائية مكونة من 334 مشاركاً. أظهرت نتائج تحليل الدراستين إلى وجود تباين طفيف بين إجابات المجموعتين، مما يسمح لنا باستنتاج أن المؤسسات الجزائرية الصغيرة جداً لا تستخدم الاستراتيجيات المناسبة وتعجز عن استغلال الإمكانيات التي توفرها الأدوات الرقمية بشكل أمثل. ونتيجة لذلك، يظل تأثير جهودهم في الأدوات التسويقية الرقمية لها تأثير محدود على المستهلكين المحليين.

كلمات مفتاحية: التسويق الرقمي، استراتيجية رقمية، قرار الشراء للمستهلك، الشركات الصغيرة جداً، قنوات الإنترنت.

تصنيفات JEL : M300, M310, M210

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Introduction

The rise of the internet, combined with the rapid adoption of electronic devices, has transformed the way companies engage with their audiences and promote their products or services. Online marketing “has emerged as a common practice, revolutionising the way businesses reach, connect, and convert consumers in the global marketplace.” (Kvasova et al., 2023).

In order to have an effective and efficient online presence, any organization needs to develop a solid strategy using the right tools. Despite the abundance of models aimed at unravelling the factors influencing the adoption of a digital marketing approach, “a notable research gap exists in the absence of an integrated framework that consolidates and synthesizes the diverse insights offered by these individual models.”. The existence of an integrated model would “not only provide a more nuanced understanding of digital marketing adoption but also offer practical utility for businesses seeking to navigate the complex landscape of digital marketing strategies.”. (Xavier et al., 2024)

“Micro, Small and Medium- Enterprises - MSMEs - play a crucial role as the backbone of a country's economy, , as they are the largest contributors to Gross Domestic Product -GDP- formation and employment absorption.” (Kurniawan et al., 2024) In addition, MSME’s are very active in key sectors, including food, services, goods, and others.

The aim of this article was to analyze the adoption of a digital marketing approach by Algerian microenterprises by evaluating the relevance of the practices implemented and their impact on the decision-making process of consumers in Algeria.

The research question that we seek to address in this work is as follows: **To what extent are the digital marketing practices adopted by Algerian micro-enterprises effective in terms of their impact on Algerian customers' purchasing decisions?**

In an attempt to answer this question, we rely on the following two hypotheses:

H0: The digital marketing practices adopted by microenterprises have no significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions, making the approach ineffective..

H1: The digital marketing practices adopted by microenterprises have a significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions, making the approach effective..

To answer this question and test our hypotheses, this research will be divided into two parts:

Part 1: Dedicated to a literature review including the theoretical framework of the subject.

Part 2: Dedicated to the empirical research. We used two research studies, the first qualitative, with the aim of analyzing the digital marketing approach adopted, followed by a second quantitative study on a sample of Algerian consumers to determine the effectiveness of the practiced approach.

1- Literature review :

1-1 Digital marketing and its importance

Digital marketing can be defined as an adaptive, technology-enabled process through which businesses collaborate with customers and partners to co-create, communicate, deliver, and sustain value for all stakeholders. (Tjandrawira et al., 2022), in innovative ways, such as using channels that draw information from online databases, to target consumers in an efficient, relevant, and cost-effective way. (Salim et al., 2022). Microenterprises are forced to compete with large corporations in a globalized market. These companies can utilize digital marketing

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

to attain substantial outcomes, even with limited marketing resources. Acquiring customers and consumers is crucial for any business, especially smaller ones. (Xavier et al., 2024) in their study showed that this type of business needs help with marketing to satisfy their potential customers. In microenterprises, the owner-manager possesses greater authority compared to large corporations, the organizational structure is less formal, resources are typically limited, and the emphasis is predominantly on short-term objectives. (Setkute & Dibb, 2022).

According to several researchers (López García et al., 2019), (Nafiuddin & Hamdan, 2020)(Tabuena et al.,2022).) (Gbandi & Iyamu, 2022) (Hmeidan, 2023) (Kvasova et al., 2023) (Wu et al., 2024) (Ekasari, 2024), this marketing approach offers a large number of advantages to micro-businesses over the years. These include :

- ◆ Eliminating the need for online shops, as social media can be used as a marketing platform.
- ◆ Simplified ways of identifying and reaching consumers on digital devices at the right time.
- ◆ Facilitation of establishing a sustainable presence in the market, especially within the digital 2.0 domain.
- ◆ The potential for direct interaction and communication with consumers, resulting in an expanded market share for companies through improved brand recognition.
- ◆ Reduced cost of operation for online platforms, enabling companies to create personalized content, refine their campaigns in real time, and accurately measure their impact.
- ◆ The ability to anticipate market trends and assess preferences, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of their products and services.
- ◆ The integration of online databases encourages innovation and the creation of unique products.
- ◆ A tool for increasing profitability, market share, and the ability to stimulate growth in the marketplace.

The use of the Internet does not directly improve business performance significantly, but the appropriate application of digital marketing can subsequently optimise this performance. (Nafiuddin & Hamdan, 2020)

1.2. Challenges in the use of digital platforms for microentreprises:

To ensure the success of their digital marketing strategy, microenterprise managers need to emphasize the importance of technological expertise. This entails understanding the appropriate way to use Information and Communication Technologies-ICTs to target consumers, communicate about products on the internet, and develop their market through online marketing.

One of the main challenges for these companies is the lack of resources and skills in new digital technologies, which makes it difficult to choose the right tools and implement effective strategies. (Ekasari, 2024).

According to Trung (2024), one of the main reasons influencing companies' decision to

implement changes in digital marketing tools is the lower cost of different alternatives compared to the traditional ones. Nevertheless, their ability to develop effective plans can be inhibited by issues such as poor knowledge of emerging e-technologies, limited financial resources, and a lack of experience in marketing and data analysis. (Nafiuddin & Hamdan, 2020; Setkute & Dibb, 2022). Microenterprises without marketing experience struggle to create compelling promotional messages, which can lead to a decline in customers, revenues, and long-term business expansion. Microenterprises with little or no marketing background struggle to create compelling promotional messages, potentially leading to a decline in customers, revenues, and long-term business expansion. They need to be aware of the benefits of using specific tools to overcome these challenges. (Laila et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024).

1.3 Digital marketing implementation

Progress in technology and changes in consumer behavior have led to a significant evolution in digital marketing strategies over time, moving from a focus on websites and email marketing to a more complex framework that includes social media, search engines, online content, and various online platforms (Armiani, 2024).

An effective marketing strategy for microenterprises requires a precise and flexible approach that adapts to limited resources and increases awareness and sales. (Ekasari, 2024.)

According to Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2022) in their work entitled 'Digital Marketing,' the key decisions in digital marketing are the same as the strategic decisions in traditional marketing. These involve choosing the target consumers and defining the most accurate approach to delivering value to that target. Segmentation, targeting, differentiation, and positioning are all key elements of effective online marketing.

Clearly identifying the target market is a crucial first step. Ekasari, (2024.) in his study, highlights the need for microenterprises to precisely identify their consumers, their needs and desires, and their purchasing behavior.

A buyer persona is a fictional representation of the ideal customer, used as a strategic instrument for market segmentation and the development of targeted and effective digital marketing campaigns (Roque et al., 2024). The accuracy of a persona is improved when demographic information such as age, gender, income, or location is enhanced by more personal characteristics, including behaviors, motivations, and psychographic traits. (Smith, J, 2020). Its development relies on the analysis of concrete data gathered from surveys, publicly available information, and social media. Regular interaction with users, particularly on social platforms, is an essential practice for creating accurate and reliable profiles, enabling companies to provide a better fit for their customers' needs and expectations. (Fauzi et al, 2023)

The formulation of a strategy involves identifying alternative strategies, analyzing the advantages of each of these options, and then selecting the strategy best suited to the company's business environment and its in-house resources and capabilities. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022) The choice of the digital tool to employ has a significant influence on the sales performance of MSMEs, highlighting the role of digital marketing as a facilitator. In simple terms, it's not primarily the type of online channel that improves business performance, but rather the increased use of digital marketing tools that helps to optimise performance. This emphasizes the strategic importance of increased and structured integration of digital practices to deliver maximum business results. (Wijastuti & Darmaningrum, 2021).

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

When it comes to selecting which digital tools to adopt, some researchers cite the following channels to describe effective and relevant online marketing (Low et al., 2020):

- Search engine marketing, social media marketing, e-mail marketing, web marketing, e-commerce, web communities, Customer Relationship Management-CRM and affiliate marketing.

In our research, we focused on three digital channels: online advertising, search engine marketing, and social media marketing.

Table (1): Characteristics and objectives of the digital channels

	Characteristics	Objectives
Online advertising	This involves the display of advertising messages on the digital screen	Attract the attention of online users. -Increase brand visibility. -Increase sales
Search engine marketing	Includes search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA).	-Allows a website to be visible on the first page of search engine results. -Enables visitors to be converted into potential customers. - Increases sales and online display advertising.
Social media marketing	Actions including text, images, videos for all commercial partners, on platforms such as: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. LinkedIn, Snapchat,	- Freedom of choice of content to share following an editorial plan (a content calendar). -Easy to reach a large audience. -Content targeting and access to statistical data. -Converts subscribers into customers and boosts online sales. - Allows interaction, engagement and collaboration with online communities.

Source : Adapted from the research of Minculete & Olar,(2018); Corral De Zubielqui et al, (2020); Husin et al. (2022) ;Hadi & Pratminingsih, (2023);Ranit Kishore et al., (2023);Armiani (2024) ; Ekasari,(2024.).

Digital marketing trends are shifting from passive advertising to active engagement on digital devices, with a focus on delivering quality rather than quantity (Panchal et al., 2021), and it is crucial that these strategies align with the characteristics of the products being promoted online, which influences the implementation of certain strategies. This comprehension is particularly relevant for MSMEs, as it allows them to adjust and optimize their digital marketing approaches, thus boosting their competitive positioning. This criteria, known as Product Channel Fit (PCI), was suggested by Xavier et al (2024) in their study to identify the factors that influence the adoption of a digital strategy in MSMEs.

1.4. Digital marketing performance measurement

The ability to measure refers to the way in which an organization can collect and evaluate data

regarding its activities in the marketplace (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022).

Key performance indicators in digital marketing serve as essential tools for professionals to establish their objectives and demonstrate that their actions have achieved positive results. Therefore, analyzing the different aspects of marketing performance makes it possible to leverage the strengths while overcoming weaknesses in the company's commercial performance.

When defining the objectives and measurement systems used to monitor and improve the performance of digital channels, it is also useful to consider which performance indicators are predictive and which are retrospective.

A predictive performance indicator is a measure that predicts future performance. such as (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022);

- ◆ Online search rate: the frequency of searches for brands
- ◆ Sales trends compared to market trends: online sales are growing at a lower rate than the overall online audience for a product category.
- ◆ Customer satisfaction.

A retrospective performance indicator is one for which the measurement indicates past performance, such as:

- ◆ Sales volume, turnover and profitability
- ◆ Cost per acquisition (CPA)

1.5. Characteristics of Algerian consumers online behaviour

The latest report from the global creative agency specializing in social media and influencer marketing, 'We Are Social,' that appeared in January 2024, provided a comprehensive overview of the key trends in internet usage, e-commerce, social media, and mobile technology in the world.

The results showed that 33.49 million of the total Algerian population are Internet users. The number of users increased by 1.4 million (+4.3%) between 2023 and 2024. This represents a penetration rate of 72.9% to be precise. Google Chrome is the search engine preferred by 84.62% of Algerian users.

There are approximately 24.85 million social media users, representing 54.1% of the total population, with a growth rate of 9.5% from January 2023 to January 2024.

In total, 48.53 million online Internet connections are made via mobile devices, i.e. 107.2% of the total population.

Table (2) :Social media data in Algeria

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microenterprises

	Number of uses in millions	Reach
Instagram	8,40	36.1%
Facebook	24.85	83.2%
Tiktok	17.42	58.4%
Youtube	22,80	67.7%
Linkedin	3.90	13.1%
Snapchat	7,88	21.4%

Source : Adapted according to the digital report 2024

The data highlights the extensive potential of the digital environment in Algeria. This research illustrates the strategic significance of establishing an online presence, indicating the potential to engage a vast consumer base through a social media-centric approach, owing to their extensive reach. This opportunity is particularly relevant in a context where, as the literature indicates, the costs associated with digital marketing are lower than those of traditional marketing. Furthermore, reaching a large number of potential customers via digital channels is a crucial advantage for microenterprises, enabling them to fulfill strategic marketing objectives such as enhancing their brand awareness and improving its image. Additionally, optimized use of digital channels may contribute to improved sales performance and sustainable sales growth.

1.6 Algerian microenterprises context

The Algerian Government Official Publication N°02/2017 defines a microenterprise as “a company employing between one (1) and nine (9) individuals and with an annual turnover of less than forty (40) million Algerian dinars, or with an annual balance sheet total not exceeding twenty (200) million Algerian dinars.”

According to the latest official report from the Ministry of Industry and Pharmaceutical Production, N°42 published in April 2023, “72,318 micro-enterprises account for 98.47% of all MSMEs, making them the most important part of the Algerian economic sector.”. This type of company, adds the report, is more likely to adapt to changes in demand and technological developments. In one year, ‘a total of 80,531 new entities have been created by 2022, with the increase in business creation reaching an annual growth rate of around 5.71%.’. (Ministry of Industry report, N°42 /2023)

Table (3) : Levels of Algerian MSME's

Type of enterprise	Number of employees	Turnover	<u>Balance sheet total</u>
Micro	1 to 9	< 40 million dinars	< 20 million dinars
Small	10 to 49	< 400 million dinars	<200 million dinars
Medium	50 to 250	400 million - 4 billion dinars	200 million - 1 billion dinars

Source : Adapted according to the “official government publication” N°02/2017

2. Empirical study :

2.1. Research methodology :

The existing literature review provided a better understanding of online marketing practices applied worldwide, as well as their benefits in achieving microenterprise's strategic objectives and organizational performance. Our study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research, in order to analyze the effectiveness of the digital marketing practices adopted by Algerian microenterprises.

2.2. Qualitative research and main results

To assess the effectiveness of digital marketing practices, we initially used a qualitative research approach with Algerian microenterprises. 10 managers were interviewed via direct messages on Instagram with the aim of identifying common practices. To ensure sectoral representativeness, the sample included a diverse range of microenterprises operating in different sectors, including fashion, cosmetics, stationery, and food service, covering both product and service activities. By this sectoral diversity, we seek to achieve a relevant analysis of digital marketing practices within the Algerian managerial context.

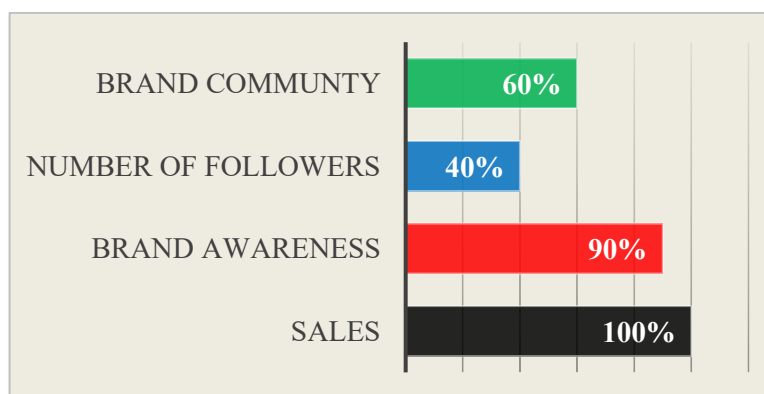
Table (4): Study sample sector of activity

Sector	Number of interviewees
Fashion	3
Services	2
Stationary and publishing	3
Cosmetic	2

Source: Our study results

Fig (1): Marketing objectives

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

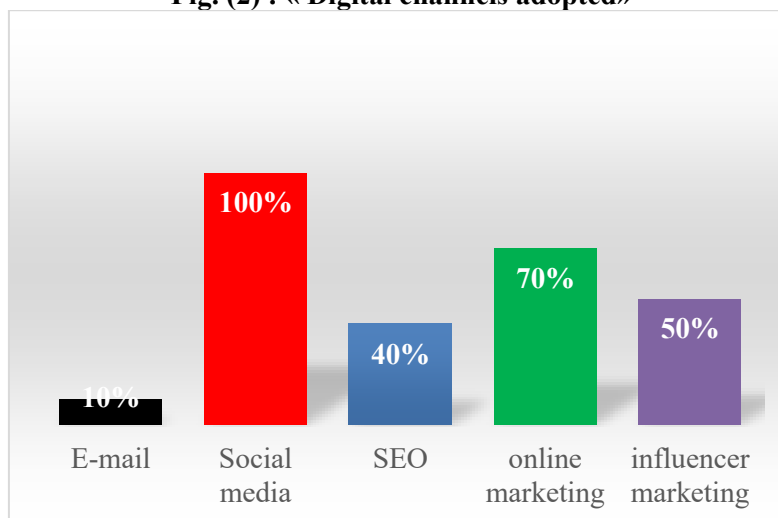


Source: Excel, 2019, based on our results

The main objective of an online marketing strategy is to increase sales, an answer given by 100% of our interviewees. Closely followed by a brand awareness objective (90%), 6 of them said they were looking to create a brand community through digital, and only 4 set an objective for the number of subscribers.

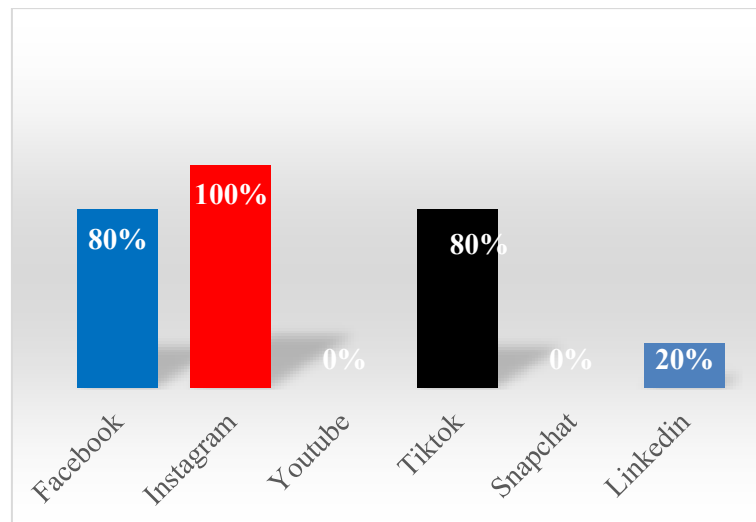
According to the figure below n°2, social media marketing is the main channel adopted by 100% of respondents, 80% admitted to using search engine optimization (SEO) for their websites, 70% prefer online advertising in the form of posting sponsored content on social media, 50% chose to use influencer marketing, 40% have an e-commerce website, and only 10% use email marketing.

Fig. (2) : « Digital channels adopted»



Source: Excel, version 2019, based on our results

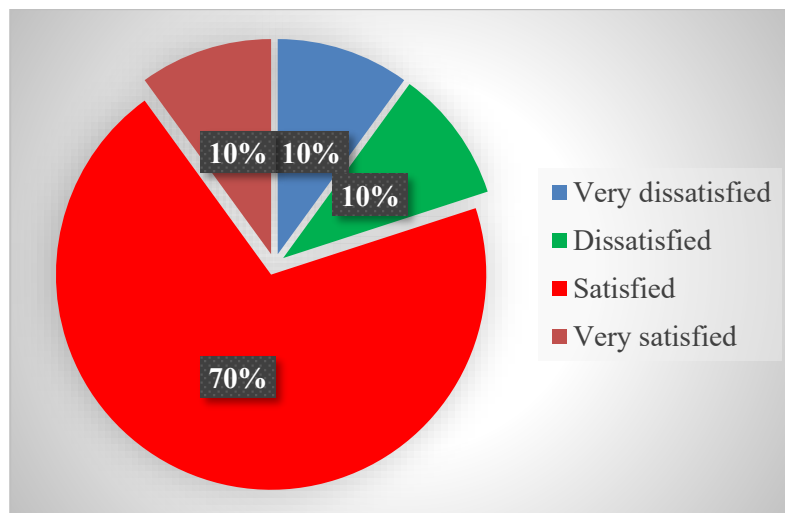
Fig. (3) : Social media channels



Source: Excel 2019, based on our results

Since all respondents use social media marketing, the aim was to examine which platforms they chose to be active on. Figure n° 3 illustrates that 100% of participants are active on Instagram, 80% on Facebook and TikTok, and 20% on LinkedIn. No company currently has a presence on Snapchat or YouTube. This platform choice is mainly driven by the conviction that Algerian consumers are most active on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, along with interviewees perceptions of the user-friendliness of these platforms.

Fig. (4): Manager's satisfaction



Source:Excel,2019 based on our results

Lastly, we addressed the question of satisfaction. According to the graphic above, the majority of respondents (70%) are satisfied with the performance of their digital strategy. However, a minority, consisting of one manager who admitted to being dissatisfied and another who was very dissatisfied, felt that their expectations had not been fully met. This brings us to the final

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

statistic: 80% of interviewees, one more company than the satisfied managers, are willing to increase their online marketing budget in order to achieve better results.

2.2.1. Discussion

The literature indicates that digital marketing enables companies to achieve larger market coverage in a cost-effective approach (Oki Dermawan et al., 2024), a fact that our interviewees confirmed through the objective of their approach. Nevertheless, Algerian microenterprises focus their digital strategy mainly on social media, neglecting other channels because of the simplicity of using of these platforms. Our interviews with company managers revealed that their approach disregards the realities of the Algerian digital context, favoring instead their own preferences.

2.3. Quantitative study and main results:

In order to evaluate the impact of digital marketing channels on consumer's purchasing decisions, a quantitative study was conducted through an online questionnaire. A random sample of 334 Algerian consumers, all active users of Facebook and Instagram, were selected to participate in the survey. Data collecting occurred over several weeks from July to August 2024.

The questionnaire has 11 structured items derived from the literature research, findings from the qualitative part of this study, and data from the 2024 edition of the "We Are Social" report. The key factors evaluated were the frequency of exposure to the digital marketing channels and their perceived influence on purchasing decisions.

The data collected was then analyzed utilizing SPSS software (version 26). A descriptive study using frequency distribution was conducted to assess consumer responses across main variables. The results were used to determine the most influential digital marketing channels and measure their effectiveness in shaping consumer behavior.

a. Sample population

Table (5) : Sample population

Age	Number	%
18-24	46	13,8
25-34	177	53,0
35-44	95	28,4
45-54	14	4,2
+55 ans	2	,6
Total	334	100.00

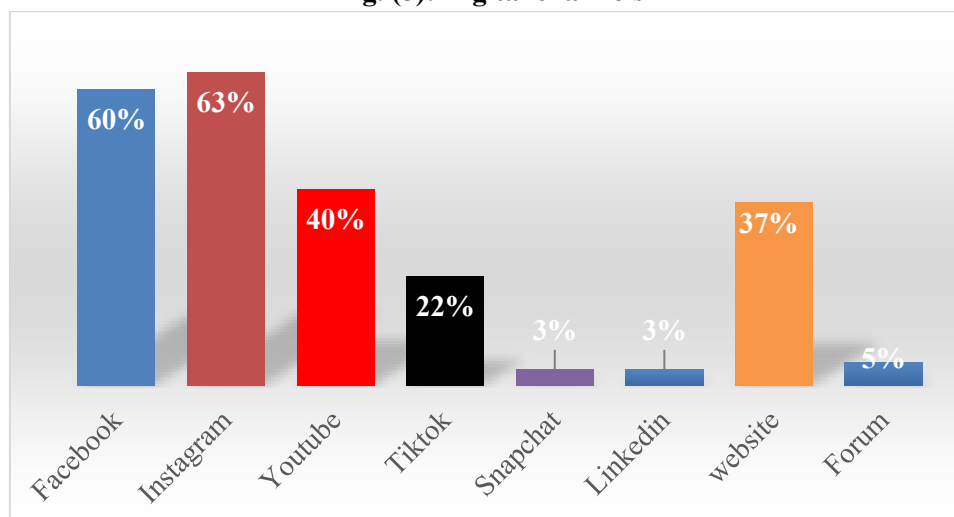
Source : SPSS, 26th version

The study showed that women accounted for 80.5% of respondents, with men making up only 19.5% of the sample. An analysis of the participants by age reveals that adults aged 25 to 34 represent the majority of respondents, accounting for 53% of the sample. The 35-44 age group is also well represented, with 28.4% of respondents, but to a lesser extent than the largest group. Finally, the 45-54 and 55+ age groups are very poorly represented, with 4.2% and 0.6% of respondents, respectively. These discrepancies in profiles can be attributed to the fact that the younger generations represent the largest demographic of internet and social media users, particularly Instagram users, since our survey was published on both Instagram and Facebook. The professional activity of the respondents is categorized as follows: employees 49.7%, students 23.1%, self-employed 16.8%, and housewives 6%, this category remaining marginal, only 0.6% for the retired and 3.9% for the unemployed are part of the last categories.

- The wilayas of residency are predominantly Algiers: 111 (33.23%), Tipaza: 19 (5.69%), Tizi Ouzou: 19 (5.69%), Annaba: 18 (5.39%), Oran: 14 (4.19%), Bejaia: 11 (3.29%), Constantine: 9 (2.69%), Blida: 9 (2.69%), and the other wilayas: (less than 2.5% each). This shows the geographical diversity.

b. Digital channels

Fig. (5): Digital channels



Source: Excel, 2019, based on our results

According to the data presented in Figure 6, 212 respondents, or 63% of the population, indicate that Instagram is the most used social media before making a purchase decision, closely followed by Facebook with 60% of visits (201), and YouTube, with 40%, also remains a popular platform, while TikTok is only used by TikTok by 22%, The website is used by 37% of the 334 respondents and forums by 5%

Table (6): Digital channels impact on purchase decision of Algerian consumers

Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

Variables	Mean	STD	Level
Online advertising	3.73	0.74	High
Search engine marketing	3.50	0,82	High
Social media marketing	3,40	0.82	High

Source : SPSS , 26th version

Among the digital marketing channels studied, online advertising scored the highest mean statistics ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.74$). The low standard deviation indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that it had a positive impact, implying that it is the primary channel for Algerian consumers in their purchasing decision process. Search engine marketing (SEO/SEA) ranked second with an average score of 3.50 ($STD = 0.82$). Despite the standard deviation indicating some variance of opinion, most respondents perceive this channel as effective. . Finally, social media marketing received an average score of 3.52 ($SD = 0.76$), revealing a lower perceived impact than the other channel.

2.3.1. Discussion

The results of this study highlight the differentiated role of the digital channels in the purchasing decision process of Algerian consumers. Online advertising appears to be the most influential channel, as its frequent exposure stimulates retention and the development of purchase intentions. Search engine marketing follows, providing easier access to information through keyword optimization and strategic positioning in search engine results. Brand websites, perceived as reliable sources, significantly influence consumer choices, with 37% of respondents considering them to be determining factors. In contrast, social media are seen as having less of an impact, although by no means insignificant, with results that are relatively close to those of the other channels. TikTok, despite having a growing audience of over 50% by 2024, remains marginal in the purchasing process, being used for information purposes by only 22% of consumers. However, YouTube is more used, 40% of our respondents, and is among the top three social media for collecting information, alongside Instagram and Facebook, which dominate with over 60% of respondents

2.4. Study synthesis

The main objective of our empirical study is to determine the relevance of digital marketing approaches applied and implemented by microenterprises in Algeria and their impact on the purchasing decisions of local consumers.

The results highlight a significant difference between the opinions of consumers and those of managers.

- Microenterprises fail to identify their target consumers beforehand, and the fixed digital marketing objectives are not tailored to the characteristics of each channel used, but instead they align it with the company's overall strategic vision.

- While consumers consider online advertising to be the most effective channel, microenterprises are basing their digital strategy around social media marketing.

Nevertheless, the answers from consumers and microenterprise managers questioned agree on

the importance of social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram; the difference arises on the TikTok and YouTube platforms.

- Algerian consumers show skepticism towards TikTok when making a purchase decision, caused by a lack of trust in the credibility of TikTok influencers, as noted by Tahri & Benali (2024), leading to a negative impact of this platform on the commercial effectiveness., whereas businesses rank it 3rd most used social media channel after Instagram and Facebook.

- The digital report by “We are social” indicates that the high number of users does not equal a positive impact on purchase decisions. Also, according to our findings, microenterprises are formulating their strategies and choosing the channels based on the ease of use of these platforms, without taking into account the target audience’s preferences and online behavior. This can be attributed to the lack of knowledge and expertise in marketing in general and digital marketing specifically, which is common in microenterprises around the world.

- The few managers who declared owning websites in their strategy are using to it’s full capacity, focusing exclusively on social media marketing and online advertisements, neglecting in the process organic content and Search Engine optimization-SEO. This digital channel is believed to be the second most effective on purchase decisions by Algerian consumers, and it plays a crucial role in optimizing the website position on Search Engine’s Results Page-SERP, which directly affects conversion rates and sales performance.

The choice of digital channels by the managers interviewed is also explained by limited financial resources: online advertising is one of the most expensive channels for companies, compared with social media and search engine marketing.

As a result of these findings, we can confirm the following hypothesis: **H0: The digital marketing practices adopted by microenterprises have no significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions, making the approach ineffective.**

The findings indicate a divergence between the strategies currently implemented by companies and the digital marketing expectations of consumers in Algeria. Microenterprises that lack marketing expertise may face obstacles in developing effective strategies, which can limit customer acquisition and long-term company growth (Laila et al., 2024). Microenterprises in Algeria tend to plan strategies that mainly reflect their own perspective without conducting an in-depth analysis of consumer preferences and behavior. This approach limits the effectiveness of their marketing initiatives, despite the satisfaction expressed by the managers regarding the objectives achieved.

With the absence of strategic planning, these types of companies practice a reactive and unstructured marketing, concentrating on short-term goals. However, studies have proven that innovative capacity, proactivity, and managerial skills influence the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies (Wu et al., 2024). The implementation of an improved and well-tailored digital marketing strategy driven by the online behavior of Algerian consumers may help local microenterprises achieve better performance.

Conclusion

Progress in digital marketing offers mutual benefits to both announcers and consumers, optimizing engagement and value creation. Digital transformation has redefined commercial interactions, changing buying and selling processes in depth (Minculete & Olar, 2018). In this context, MSEs with advanced technological capabilities are acquiring a competitive advantage that is decisive for their survival in a constantly changing market (Wang et al., 2024). Adopting strategic digital tools and keeping an eye on development in technology enables them to be more competitive by providing them with an opportunity to market their product effectively and reach long-term goals (Rusdana et al., 2022).

The purpose of our paper is to analyze the relevance of the approaches adopted by Algerian microentreprises and to suggest improvements to optimize the effectiveness of online strategies, by measuring the impact of digital channels—social media marketing, online advertising and search engine marketing—on the purchasing decisions of Algerian consumers.

The results of this study highlight several major findings about the digital marketing of Algerian microenterprises:

- The digital strategy adopted by these companies is proving to be of little relevance in terms of its impact on the purchasing decisions of local consumers.
- Algerian businesses' limited expertise in using digital tools reduces the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns.
- A poor knowledge of their target audience prevents them from optimizing sales strategies.
- Online advertising is the digital channel with the most impact on purchase decisions, followed by search engine marketing, with social media marketing having less impact than the first two channels. However, the impact rates of the three are rather close to each other.
- Facebook stands out as the most effective social media platform in influencing Algerian consumers.
- Despite TikTok's significant growth in Algeria, establishing itself as the second most-used platform after Facebook, its influence on purchasing decisions remains minimal. Instagram and Facebook are emerging as the platforms preferred by both parties: businesses use them to share content, while consumers rely on the posts from brands and other users to shape their purchasing decisions.
- Algerian consumers appear to show a significant preference for YouTube over TikTok when searching for pre-purchase information, demonstrating a trend towards using traditional social media platforms for gathering information.

In light of our research findings, we recommend that Algerian microenterprises, in order to improve the relevance of their digital approaches, consider the following:

- **Integrating training and skills development in digital marketing:** to ensure the long-term success of marketing strategies within the company.
- **Enhancing comprehension of Algerian consumers' online behavior** through consistent monitoring to optimize targeting and adjust sales strategies.
- **Creating a 'buyer persona' :** for effective targeting and a better understanding of consumers.
- **Adapting marketing strategies :** to the specific characteristics of the Algerian digital consumer in an effort to achieve objectives more effectively.
- **Improving the development of brand websites:** to achieve optimized positioning on search engine results pages, facilitating visibility.

These suggestions intend to enable Algerian businesses to improve their competitiveness by fully utilizing their current digital resources.

This study's limitations include the refusal of some Algerian microenterprise managers to answer the interview questions, which restricted the sample size analyzed. Further research should be conducted with a comprehensive approach by expanding the sample size of Algerian microenterprises adopting a digital marketing strategy.

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Usage of digital marketing strategies in Algeria: An effectiveness analysis of practices adopted by microentreprises

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