

The impact of digital marketing channels on consumer purchasing decisions: A case study of Apple smartphone users in Algeria

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Abstract:

The study aims to determine the impact of various digital marketing channels on the purchasing decisions of Apple smartphone users in Algeria. A random sample of iPhone customers in Algeria was taken, and an electronic questionnaire was designed to collect data. The SPSS program was utilized to present and analyze the results. The study concludes that digital marketing channels have an impact on the purchasing decisions of Apple users in Algeria, although their influence varies.

Keywords: Digital Marketing; Purchase Decision; Digital Marketing Channels.

JEL Classifications : M310, M300, D12.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tremendous technological advancement witnessed in recent decades has brought about a significant and undeniable change in individuals' lives. One of the most crucial changes is the reliance on digital means to conduct daily transactions. Philip Kotler emphasizes that marketing must adapt to the changing nature of customer pathways in the digital economy. The marketers' role is to guide customers from awareness to eventual endorsement. This has led marketers and businesses to focus extensively on digital channels in an attempt to influence user behavior. This focus has contributed to the emergence of digital marketing, with major companies quickly adopting this modern concept, especially those in the smartphone industry. Given the nature of their business and user interactions, smartphone companies have been compelled to keep pace with marketing evolution to ensure market survival, maintain market share, and, most importantly, retain customers.

Research Problem: Building on the above, the research problem can be formulated through the following main question: How do digital marketing channels impact the purchasing decisions of Apple smartphone users in Algeria?

Hypotheses: Based on the above, hypotheses were formulated as follows:

Main Hypothesis 1: Digital marketing channels influence the purchasing decisions of Apple smartphone users in Algeria.

Main Hypothesis 2: Each channel of digital marketing influences the purchasing decisions of Apple smartphone users in Algeria.

- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 1: Marketing through the website influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.
- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 2: Marketing through search engines influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.
- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 3: Marketing through email influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.
- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 4: Marketing through social media influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.

- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 5: Content marketing influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.
- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 6: Influencer marketing influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.
- ✓ Sub-Hypothesis 7: Mobile marketing influences purchasing decisions for Apple smartphone users in Algeria.

Research Objectives: The study aims to clarify the role played by digital marketing channels in the purchasing decisions of Algerian users of Apple smartphones. It seeks to identify the tools and techniques of digital marketing, including marketing through the website, social media marketing, email marketing, search engine marketing, mobile marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing. The study will also delve into the stages of the purchasing decision in detail.

Research Methodology: To achieve the aforementioned research objectives, we adopted the descriptive-analytical methodology. The descriptive method is suitable for research that aims to describe specific phenomena as they are in reality and analyze them. The analytical aspect focused particularly on using statistical tools for analyzing the collected data.

2. Digital Marketing

2.1 Concept of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is one of the modern concepts and techniques in the field of marketing. This concept emerged with the development of digital media and technologies, particularly the qualitative leap of the Internet in the last two decades. Major economic institutions have primarily relied on digital marketing in their marketing activities, revolutionizing the field of marketing.

The American Marketing Association defines digital marketing as the sum of activities and operations conducted by an organization using digital media aimed at providing value to customers and stakeholders (Ayyad, Fodou, & Qarasha, 2020, p. 627). In the same context, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) state that digital marketing enables direct interaction with the target audience, leading to an immediate response to the marketing activities of the organization (p. 511).

On the other hand, digital marketing is defined as the optimal use of digital channels to increase the effectiveness of the marketing process, applying general marketing principles using digital tools and modern technology (Ghadeer, Aspr, & Mohammed, 2020, p. 448). The researchers believe that digital marketing is the use of modern digital media, tools, and techniques in all marketing activities to provide value to customers and all relevant parties associated with the organization.

It is important to note that digital marketing encompasses many practices found in online marketing, but it extends further to reach those who do not use or cannot access the internet, such as mobile marketing (Cristian et al., 2009, p.1).

2.2 Importance of Digital Marketing

Given customers' significant reliance on digital devices in their daily transactions, organizations focus on providing their products through digital channels to reach a larger target audience more efficiently. Most people rely on the internet to gather information about products and make purchases online (Taleb, Alyasri, & Abdul Ali, n.d., p. 5). Simultaneously, this has facilitated organizations' access to the global market, as the internet provides an opportunity to reach customers in places where traditional marketing struggles to reach. From another perspective, this provides a crucial advantage for organizations, namely, online presence, which provides more information about the organization, its activities, and means of communication (Alyasri et al., 2021, p. 38).

2.3 Digital Marketing Channels

Figure 1: Digital Marketing Channels



Source: Prepared by the researchers based on previous studies

- **Website Marketing:** Website marketing considers the website as a digital access point anytime and anywhere. Websites are used to

interact with customers (Shalali & Saeili, 2009, p. 37). Organizations conducting online activities view the website as part of their promotional and advertising activities, a distribution channel, and a means of presenting an attractive cover for the organization's products (Abu Farah, 2018, p. 205).

- **Email Marketing:** Email marketing involves sending messages about the products and services offered by the organization via email to current or potential customers. These messages typically aim to introduce products, raise brand awareness, and build a trusting relationship between the parties, possibly leading to brand loyalty (Afrina et al., 2015, p. 72).
- **Social Media Marketing:** Social media marketing is an effective digital marketing tool in terms of results and cost-effectiveness. Businesses benefit from the large number of users on these platforms to increase brand exposure, website traffic, and improve search engine rankings by sharing informative posts, daily updates, and attractive marketing content on their company page (Marc & Vecchia, 2021, p. 262). Linda Coles emphasizes that social media is a great marketing tool that allows you to connect with your customers and discover their preferences, thoughts, and feelings at any given time (Coles, 2014/2016, p. 13).
- **Content Marketing:** The digital transformation has made content marketing not just desirable but necessary. Content marketing is a marketing approach that involves creating and disseminating valuable content from the perspective of content recipients (Świeczak, 2012, p. 133). Rani (2022) states that content marketing is a strategic marketing approach that focuses on developing and delivering useful, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain customers (p. 1355).
- **Search Engine Marketing:** Search engine marketing is a digital marketing strategy aimed at placing the company's website on the first page of search engine results. The goal is to increase traffic to

the website (Anonymous, 2019). Search engine marketing methods include two main approaches (Unknown, 2021).

–Paid Results:Paid results involve obtaining targeted visitors by paying for clicks, known as pay-per-click (PPC), such as Google Ads.

–Organic or Natural Results: Organic or natural results are a more complex process compared to paid results. It involves optimizing and configuring the organization's website for search engines to display it in the top search results. Several tactics are employed, primarily relying on the strength of the keyword entered by the user in the search engine. This process is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

–Influencer Marketing: Influencer marketing refers to marketing communications conducted by influencers to promote brand offerings through their social media pages. The impact of these individuals usually stems from their expertise in the field, popularity, or reputation in the market.

–Mobile Marketing: Mobile marketing is defined as the set of practices that organizations undertake to engage with their target audience interactively through any mobile device or network. This includes applications and advertisements targeted specifically for mobile phones.

3. Purchase Decision

The digital transformation witnessed in recent years has provided marketers and organizations with an opportunity to market their products more effectively and gain new customers. This is due to the prolonged and repeated presence of users in the digital environment. Therefore, marketers should capitalize on these available opportunities to increase customer motivation and influence their purchasing behavior (Haj and Benaoula, 2021, p. 343).

3.1 Concept of the Purchase Decision-Making Process

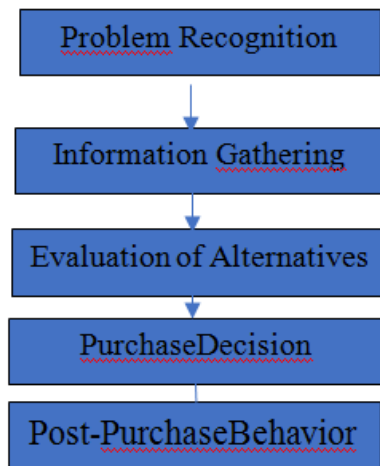
The purchase decision is regarded as the process of choosing the appropriate alternative from the available options, using criteria that vary from one product to another and from one person to another (Al-Dulaimi,

2013, p. 228). According to Al-Juraisi (2008), the purchase decision-making process is characterized by repetition and diversity, ranging from routine and quick decisions to those that require time, effort, and cost (page 85).

3.2 Stages of the Purchase Decision-Making Process

Philip Kotler identifies five fundamental stages in the purchase decision-making process, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Stages of Purchase Decision-Making



Source : (Kotler, Keller, & Manceau, 2015, p201)

- **Problem Recognition:** The decision-making process begins with the consumer's recognition of a problem. The problem here refers to the feeling of a need to satisfy a specific desire. This feeling arises when there is a gap between the ideal state and the actual state, and the larger the gap, the higher the motivation and capability. (Hoyer et al, 2013, p185)
- **Information Gathering:** After recognizing an unsatisfied need, the consumer starts gathering information about products and services that can fulfill their needs and desires. This involves collecting both internal information from previous experiences and external information from sources like friends, family, the internet, newspapers, and magazines. (Abu Jalil, Hekal, Aql, & Al-Tarawneh, 2013, p125)

- Evaluation of Alternatives: During this stage, the consumer processes information by evaluating and determining the value of available alternatives. This involves comparing the features offered by a product with those offered by competing alternatives, and these features vary depending on each consumer and product. (Laura, 2009, p33)
- Purchase Decision: Purchase decision-making is defined as choosing the appropriate alternative from all the options available. External factors, such as family opinions, friends, or others' experiences with the same product at the point of sale, can influence the actual purchasing process. Here, the marketer's task is to influence the consumer through advertising repetition, training employees and salespeople to speak in a way that attracts and motivates customers. (Zaqai & Waseeni, 2016, p165)
- Post-Purchase Behavior: According to Kotler et al (2015), marketing tasks do not end with the sales process. It is essential to follow up on the stages following the purchase process, such as product use, after-sales services, and customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Marketing communications play a crucial role in confirming the consumers' wise choice of the product and brand. (p208)

4. Field Study on Apple iPhone Users in Algeria

To understand the impact of digital marketing channels on the purchase decision of iPhone users in Algeria, we conducted a survey as it is considered a suitable tool for this type of research. The Likert scale was used in all survey questions.

4.1 Study Sample

The survey was distributed to a random sample of 114 individuals of both genders.

4.2 Tool Reliability

In this research, the reliability of the tool was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which determines the level of acceptance of the measurement tool at 0.60 or above. The results were as follows:

Table 1: Reliability of Survey Items for All Variables

Data	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient
Independent Variable : Digital Marketing Channels	0.791
Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision-Making	0.852
Overall Questionnaire	0.656

Source: Prepared by researchers based on SPSS outputs

Based on the presented table above, it is evident that the alpha coefficient for the questionnaire items exceeds 0.60 for all variables. This indicates a strong correlation and consistency among the questionnaire sections, surpassing the statistically acceptable ratio. This demonstrates the validity and suitability of the study tool for analysis.

4.3 Testing Study Hypotheses

We will now proceed to test the study hypotheses to examine the impact of digital

■ **Testing the First Main Hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of digital marketing channels on purchase decision-making among Apple phone users in Algeria at a significance level of 5%.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Sample Individuals' Responses Between Digital Marketing Channels and Purchase Decision-Making among Apple Phone Users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	5.218	1	5.218	36.567	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	15.982	112	0.143	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.496 ^a	0.246

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The table number (2) above shows that the calculated F-value (36.567) at degrees of freedom (1 and 113) and the significance level (sig= 0.00), is less than (0.05), the adopted level for this study. This necessitates

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the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states the existence of an impact of digital marketing channels on the purchasing decision of Apple phone users in Algeria at a significance level of 5%. This confirms the relationship between the variables, as indicated by the correlation coefficient estimated at (0.496), which represents a somewhat weak positive relationship. The determination coefficient, reaching (0.246), indicates that approximately 24.6% of the variations in the average responses of the sample individuals regarding the purchasing decision variable (dependent variable) are attributed to variations in the use of digital marketing channels (independent variable).

■ **Secondly, Testing the Main Hypothesis (Hypothesis 2):** The hypothesis suggests a statistically significant impact of each digital marketing channel on the purchasing decision of Apple phone users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Testing the First Sub-Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant impact of marketing through the website on the purchasing decision of Apple phone users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis for the Sample Individuals' Responses between E-marketing and the Purchasing Decision of Apple Phone Users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	3.149	1	3.149	19.539	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	18.051	112	0.161	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.385 ^a	0.149

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The results of Table (3) show that the correlation coefficient is estimated at (0.385), thus rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis, which indicates the existence of an impact of marketing through the website on the purchasing decision of Apple phone

users in Algeria. As for the determination coefficient, it explains that approximately 15% of the variations in the average responses of the sample individuals regarding the purchasing decision variable can be attributed to variations in e-marketing.

■ **Testing the Second Sub-Hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of marketing through search engines on the purchasing decision of Apple phone users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis for the Sample Individuals' Responses between Search Engine Marketing and the Purchasing Decision of Apple Phone Users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	2.916	1	2.916	17.863	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	18.284	112	0.163	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.371 ^a	0.138

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The results of Table (4) show that the correlation coefficient is estimated at (0.371), thus rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis, which suggests the presence of an effect of marketing through search engines on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria. The determination coefficient explains that approximately 13.8% of the variations in the average responses of the sample regarding the purchase decision variable can be attributed to changes in the search engine marketing dimension.

■ **Sub-Hypothesis Test Three:** There is a statistically significant effect of email marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the responses of the sample between email marketing and the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	.571	1	.571	3.100	0.081 ^b
Within Groups	20.626	112	.184	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.164 ^a	0.027

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The Table (5) above shows that the computed value of (f) is (3.100) at degrees of freedom (1 and 113) and a significance level (sig= 0.081), which is greater than (0.05), the accepted level for this study. This requires rejecting the one-sided hypothesis and accepting the null hypothesis, which states that there is no effect of email marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 5%. This confirms the absence of any relationship between the variables, as indicated by the correlation coefficient estimated at (0.164), and the determination coefficient, which reached (0.027).

■ Sub-Hypothesis Test Four: There is a statistically significant effect of marketing through social media on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the responses of the sample between social media marketing and the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between	5.143	1	5.143	35.878	0.000 ^b

Groups					
Within Groups	16.057	112	0.143	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.493 ^a	0.243

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The Table (6) results show that the correlation coefficient is estimated at (0.493). Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which suggests the presence of an effect of marketing through social media on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria. The determination coefficient explains that approximately 24.3% of the variations in the average responses of the sample regarding the purchase decision variable can be attributed to changes in social media marketing.

■ **Sub-Hypothesis Test Five:** There is a statistically significant effect of content marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the responses of the sample between content marketing and the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	1.059	1	1.059	5.890	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	20.141	112	0.180	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.224 ^a	0.050

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The results of Table (7) indicate an extremely weak positive correlation between the variables, estimated through the correlation

coefficient at (0.224). Therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis becomes necessary. The alternative hypothesis suggests the presence of an effect of content marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria. The determination coefficient implies that 5% of the variations in the average responses of the sample regarding the purchase decision variable can be attributed to changes in content marketing.

■ **Sub-Hypothesis Test Six:** There is a statistically significant effect of marketing through influencers on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the responses of the sample between marketing through influencers and the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	5.268	1	5.268	37.036	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	15.932	112	0.142	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.499 ^a	0.249

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The results from Table (8) reveal a correlation coefficient estimated at 0.499. Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which posits the existence of an effect of marketing through influencers on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria. The determination coefficient indicates that approximately 24.9% of the variations in the average responses of the sample concerning the purchase decision variable can be attributed to changes in marketing through influencers.

■ Sub-Hypothesis Test Seven: There is a statistically significant effect of phone marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the responses of the sample between phone marketing and the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria.

Data	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	Square F-Value	Significance Value (Sig)
Between Groups	1.729	1	1.729	9.946	0.000 ^b
Within Groups	19.471	112	.1740	At a significance level Alpha = 0.05	
Total Variance	21.200	113		R	R square
				0.286 ^a	0.082

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs

The results from Table (9) indicate an extremely weak positive correlation between the variables, estimated at 0.286. Consequently, rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis becomes necessary. This supports the presence of an impact of phone marketing on the purchase decision of Apple users in Algeria. The determination coefficient suggests that approximately 8.2% of the variations in the average responses of the sample regarding the purchase decision variable can be attributed to changes in phone marketing.

5. CONCLUSION

Digital marketing and its various channels are considered among the most important tools that have transformed the concept and methodology of marketing operations and decision-making for users. This is attributed to the tremendous technological advancement that facilitated reaching customers efficiently and distinctively. Different digital marketing channels provide an opportunity for brands to identify the target audience perfectly. They also assisted in delivering messages and products directly and engagingly to the intended audience.

These channels have also contributed to providing convenient and comfortable experiences for users in the purchasing process by improving user experience and facilitating purchasing decisions through research, comparison, and one-click product purchases. To understand the impact of digital marketing channels on purchasing decisions, we focused on one of the most important companies in the smartphone industry, Apple, attempting to assess the influence of digital marketing strategies on user purchasing decisions through a survey conducted with Apple users in Algeria.

In light of these findings, we will highlight some of the key results obtained during this study.

5.1 Results

The study has yielded a set of results, summarized as follows:

- There is an impact of digital marketing channels on the purchasing decisions of Apple users in Algeria.
- Marketing through websites, search engines, social media platforms, and influencers has a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of Apple users in Algeria.
- Content marketing and phone marketing have a weak effect on influencing purchasing decisions for Apple users in Algeria.
- There is no impact of email marketing on the purchasing decisions of Apple users in Algeria.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results, we can provide a set of recommendations summarized as follows:

- Increase investment in content marketing strategies by launching useful and engaging content about the displayed and new phones. This can be achieved by creating informative articles and tutorial videos about iPhones, their features, and common user issues.
- Utilize phone marketing technologies more effectively by sending notifications to users about new offers or providing tips to enhance an optimal user experience.

- Pay attention to email marketing methods by sending notifications about available new offers or special deals. Additionally, email marketing can be utilized to increase the company's interaction with customers by responding to their various inquiries.

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