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The Impact of Digital Marketing on the Customer Purchasing Path - A Case Study of Online Customers-

أثر التسويق الرقمي على المسار الشرائي للزبون دراسة حالة عينة من الزبائن الالكترونيين

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Abstract :

This studyaims to identify the impact of digital marketing on the customer's purchase path, transforming it from four to five stages through the use of modern technology. To understand this, itisal so necessary to examine the effect of digital marketing tools on changing the customer's purchase path, relying on a questionnaire distributed to a sample of customers who regularly shop online, totaling 125 questionnaires.

The study found that digital marketing has a positive effect on the customer's purchase path for online customers, and that websites, phones, and ads also have a positive impact on changing the purchase path.

Keywords: Digital marketing; e-mail; social media; purchasing path.

Jel Classification Codes: M31; M37; M15.

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1. Introduction.

Digital marketing today is no longer an option but rather a necessity imposed bytechnological changes and ongoing scientific revolutions. It is one of the most prominent manifestations of transformation brought about by modern technology in the business world. Institutions adopt it as a tool to reach their target audience due to the widespread use of the internet and various social media platforms. Digital marketing relies on many tools, enabling institutions to stay connected with their customers wherever they are.

On the other hand, the customer's purchasing decision goes through several stages. In order to make a purchase, customers must have information about the products, the brand, and other related aspects. These stages have evolved with the emergence of the internet and its use by institutions to communicate with customers and deliver information to them.

From this perspective, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

How Does Digital Marketing Affect the Purchasing Path of the Online Customer?

Research Hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant effect of digital marketing on the customer purchasing path for the studied sample at the 0.05 significance level.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- There is no statistically significant effect of the website on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.
- There is no statistically significant positive effect of email on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

- There is no statistically significant positive effect of advertisements on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.
- There is no statistically significant effect of social media on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.
- There is no statistically significant effect of phone use on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

Importance of the Study.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that digital marketing acts as a driver and influencer of customer awareness of the brand, while also helping to identify their needs, expectations, and desires. Consequently, it can influence their purchasing decision, as customers gather information about products before making a purchase—either directly from the institution or from other customers who have previously used the brand or product. Continuous communication between the institution and its customers fosters positive and complete loyalty.

Methodology.

This study relied on the descriptive method in the theoretical part to explore digital marketing and its various tools, as well as to examine the foundations of the customer purchasing path. For the field study, the case study method was adopted.

2. Digital marketing.

2.1. Definition of digital marketing.

According to AMA Digital marketing "refers to any marketing methods conducted through electronic devices which utilize some form of a computer, including online marketing efforts conducted on the internet." (AMA, 2026)

Philip Kotler defined Digital marketing as "the ability to use digital technologies to engage with the digital environment and digital using customer. It is managing your internal operations through and supported by technology and also managing technology at the

customer interface and. throughout network". (Kotler & et al, 2016, p. 117)

2.2. Digital Marketing Communication Channels.

a. Social Media.

Social media has become a very popular communication channel for companies to stay connected with their clients. Over the past decade, the emergence of various kinds of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube has provided unprecedented opportunities for organizations to open new digital communication channels and engage in marketing. Using modern social media platforms for digital marketing has many benefits. Most modern social media platforms have built-in engagement and analytics metrics for analyzing data, which is very useful and valuable in terms of understanding the customers. There are many paid ads such as google ads and Facebook ads that provided targeted and personalized marketing services on social media to promote the business. Staying connected with social media is not only a great way to build and improve relationships with customers but also to attract new clients and enhance brand image. Nonetheless, organizations should have specific communication and content development strategies in order to successfully engage with their perspective clients. Such strategies should cover the scope, scale, and frequency of the materials uploaded to the social media platforms. (Feroz, F.Khan, & Sponder, 2024, p. 7)

b. Email.

E-mail marketing is a fusion of marketing savvy and imaginative copy. In its simplest form, it's an e-mail sent to a customer list that usually contains a sales pitch and a 'call to action'. This could be as simple as encouraging the customer to click on a web link embedded in the e-mail. (RYAN & JONES, 2009, p. 135)

c. Mobile.

Mobile technologies have come a long way since their inception. Smartphones and tablets provide an easy access to information online and enable quick communication among various parties. Companies rely on mobile communication channels to carry out digital marketing to reach specific audience through SMS, MMS, social media, mobile applications, and more. Digital marketing through mobile technologies offers marketers direct access to their perspective clients. Through personalized content and location-based

marketing techniques organizations have the opportunity to create highly individualized ads on mobile devices to promote products and services. For instance, many companies rely on location-based marketing techniques to target potential customers who are within a few miles/ close proximities of their business. A unique advantage of mobile channels is that audiences can be reached anytime, anywhere across the globe. Furthermore, mobile communication channel paves way for organizations to utilize other communication channels through it, for example, social media, apps push notifications, and text messaging, etc. (Feroz, F.Khan, & Sponder, 2024, p. 8)

d. Website.

Websites have become an essential communication channel for companies. An online website serves as a central point for a company's online identity, not only displaying the products and services offered but also showing the visual image and values of the company. Website is an opportunity for companies to present themselves as they see fit and make a good impression on visitors.

Company websites can carry on multiple objectives like providing information, building images for companies and their brands and also serving customers. A good website is in the alignment between business goals and needs of the market. In the academic literature, the quality of website has largely been recognized as a crucial step to drive business online. Website represents the face of any business, where often first indirect interaction with a potential customer is happening. Therefore, it is important for any company to make a good first impression and have clear, user friendly interface with right information and clear value proposition which could increase the conversion rate.

3. Digital Marketing Communication and Consumer Purchase Decision.

When a customer buys something, this is a whole process which starts usually from need recognition. The impact of digital media on this stage highlighted in many studies, which agree and disagree about it. For example, while studies of disagreed to the effectiveness of digital media in stimulating the need recognition stage, researches opined that the case is exactly opposite in the case of low-involvement product categories. However, the social media impact on this stage is a fact. In the age of social media and artificial

intelligence, traditional channels are supplanted by mobile phones and search engines such as YouTube and websites, which are an important source nowadays to information needed before making a purchase. In the world of internet, consumers' reviews are becoming an increasingly influential factor as 70% of consumers see the online reviews and count those reviews before making a purchase. According to, there are four sources of power that make up consumer empowerment in digital world—demand, information, network building, and crowd-based influence. Marketers now obtain permission first before sending a digital marketing message to consumers which is designed with relevance to establish a meaningful engagement Consumers now have a great control over their own decision-making process. In most of their purchase decisions, consumers recourse to the use of digital channels more than traditional channels. It is mainly because digital channels are cheap, easy to use and access, and quick in response. More than three quartiles of the whole market population make an online search before buying a product. (Owusu-Kyei, Kong, & Owusu Ak, 2022, pp. 1471-1472)

3.1. The new customer path.

The 4As model represents the stages that the customer goes through in their purchasing journey, which are: Awareness, Attitude, Action, and Again. Customers first become aware of the brand, then form an attitude toward it—either liking or disliking it—then take action by making a purchase, and finally repeat the purchase.

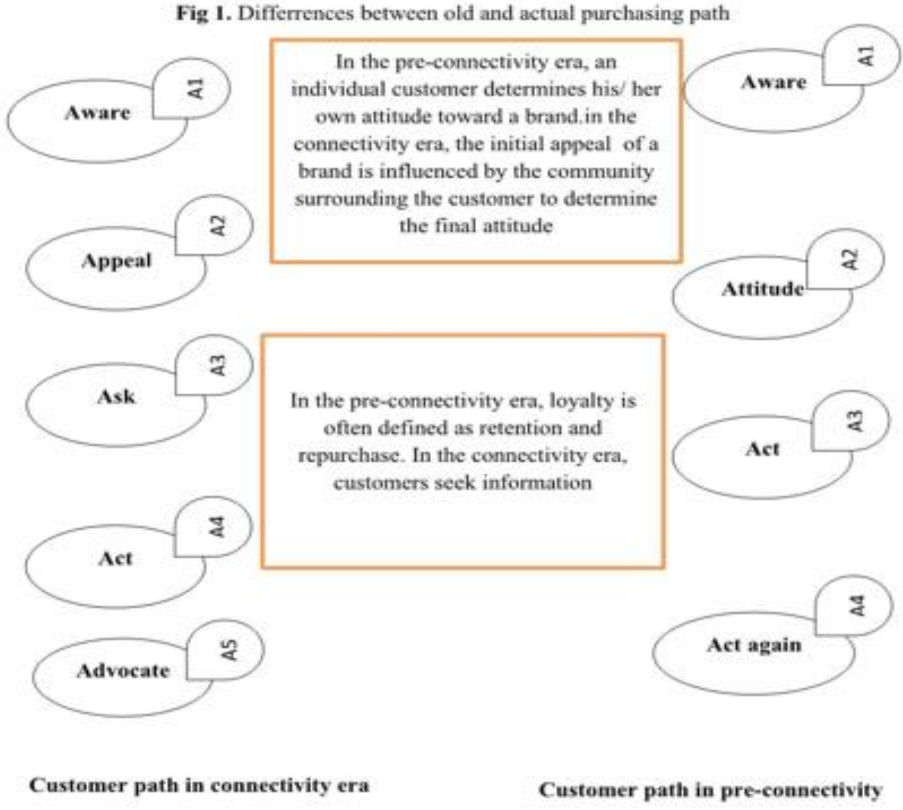
However, there are many criticisms of this model, since the number of customers decreases as they move from one stage to another. In addition, these stages reflect a personal trajectory that is influenced by the tools used by the organization to advertise its brand.

With the changes of the current era, especially the constant communication between customers and organizations, it has become necessary to reconsider the customer journey. Customers now seek more information. Researchers have therefore worked to develop models that align with these developments, where the path now includes five stages**:**

a. **Awareness**
b. **Appeal**
c. **Ask**

d. Action
e. Advocacy

Fig 1. Differrences between old and actual purchasing path



Source: prepared by the researcher based on Philip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya, Iwan Setiawan, 2017, p 62

The figure illustrates the customer purchasing path in the connectivity era compared with the traditional pre-connectivity era. In the pre-connectivity era, customers generally developed their attitudes toward a brand independently, and loyalty was mainly measured through retention and repurchase. In contrast, the connectivity era emphasizes the influence of the surrounding community on customers' perceptions and decisions. The path progresses through several stages: Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate.

4. **Field Study.**

Following the theoretical presentation of the study, it is necessary to practically measure the impact of digital marketing on the purchasing path of customers, in order to demonstrate the importance of the subject and to address the stated research problem.

4.1.Study Population and Sample.

The study population consists of customers who made purchases electronically. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to a random sample, of which 133 were collected. Out of these, 125 were valid for the study, while 17 questionnaires were excluded.

4.2.Testing the Study Instrument.

Table 1. Testing the Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	
Digital Marketing Dimension	0.751
Purchasing Path Dimension	0.800
Questionnaire as a Whole	0.845

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

From the table above, it is evident that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the two dimensions:digital marketing and the customer purchasing pathway estimated at 0.751 and 0.800, respectively. It was also calculated for the questionnaire as a whole at 0.845, which is greater than 0.6 and approaches 1. Therefore, the questionnaire demonstrates validity and reliability, making it suitable for the study.

4.3. Study Data Analysis.

a. **Analysis of Demographic Information.**

Table 2. Analysis of the demographic information of the study sample

Variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	38	30.4
	Female	86	68.8
	Total	125	100.0
Age	18 to less than 24 years	18	14.4
	24 to less than 30 years	31	24.8
	30 to less than 36	23	18.4

	years		
	36 to less than 42 years	34	27.2
	42 years and above	19	15.2
	Total	125	100.0
Number of Purchases	1 to less than 5 times	78	62.4
	5 to less than 10 times	28	22.4
	More than 10 times	19	15.2
	Total	125	100.0

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

from the table above, it is evident that the distribution of the study sample by gender shows that 30.4% are male, while 68.8% are female, indicating a noticeable disparity between the two proportions. Regarding age, the largest group falls between 36 and less than 42 years, representing 27.2%. This is followed by the group aged 24 to less than 30 years at 24.8%, then the group aged 30 to less than 36 years at 18.4%. In the subsequent ranks, the group aged 42 years and above accounted for5.2%, while the youngest group, aged 18 to less than 24 years, represented 14.4%.

As for the distribution of the sample according to the number of electronic purchases, the category of respondents who made between 1 and less than 5 purchases ranked first with 62.4%. The second rank was for those who made between 5 and 10 purchases, representing 22.4%. Finally, respondents who made more than 10 electronic purchases accounted for 15.2%.

b. Analysis of Data Related to the Digital Marketing Dimension.

Table 3. Analysis of sample responses regarding the digital marketing dimension

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	The institution's website is easy to access and navigate	4.1920	0.80016	2
2	The institution's website provides all necessary information about services and products	4.0400	0.83666	6
3	The institution uses email to	3.1360	1.32192	10

	communicate and deliver information to customers			
4	The institution informs customers about new services and products via emails	3.1920	1.22932	9
5	Customers see advertisements of the institution on the internet	4.1210	0.85152	4
6	The institution's advertisements describe various offers with high credibility	3.4720	1.01263	7
7	Advertisements help deliver information about new offers	4.0640	0.91355	5
8	Social media makes communication with the institution continuous and easy	4.3040	0.77485	1
9	Social media allows sharing opinions with other followers	4.1840	0.88340	3
10	Customers receive messages via phone from the institution	3.2640	1.24527	8
11	Customers receive calls from the institution after purchase to gather feedback	2.9120	1.28274	11
Total		**3.7161**	**0.55293**	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

From the table, it is evident that the overall mean score for the digital marketing dimension was estimated at 3.7161 with a standard deviation of 0.55293. This indicates a low level of dispersion, and the mean reflects a relatively high level of agreement among the study sample regarding the statements related to the digital marketing dimension**.**

Customers perceive those social media platforms facilitate continuous and easy communication with the institution, ranking it first in importance. They also find that institutional websites are easy to access and navigate. Furthermore, social media enables customers to learn about others' opinions regarding various services and products, which helps them form an impression about these offerings.

Additionally, respondents believe that institutional advertisements appear online and contribute to delivering information about new offers. These findings highlight the significant role of digital marketing tools,particularly social media and institutional

websites,in shaping customer perceptions and enhancing communication.

c. Analysis of Data Related to the Customer Purchasing Path.

Table 4. Analysis of sample responses regarding the customer purchasing path

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	The internet helps display a wider variety of goods and services	4.4400	0.66478	1
2	Institutional advertisements contribute to better awareness of products/services	4.4240	0.62558	2
3	Endorsements from others in comments make people more interested in products/services	4.2960	0.69589	3
4	Customers admire products after seeing the institution's advertisements	4.0000	0.80322	8
5	Customers admire products based on the amount of information provided	4.0800	0.74704	6
6	New customers seek information from other customers, friends, or media	4.2160	0.78887	5
7	Customers search for product information in online reviews and comments	4.2960	0.70738	3
8	The online purchasing experience was positive	3.8880	0.88186	9
9	Customers can submit complaints electronically and receive attention	3.2800	1.14018	11
10	Customers who purchased electronically receive after-sales services	3.1360	1.13836	12
11	After purchase, customers defend the institution and its products to others	3.5600	0.97881	10
12	After the online purchasing experience, customers may repurchase more products from the institution	4.0720	0.81494	7
Total		3.9740	0.47441	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

The overall mean score for this dimension was **3.9740** with a standard deviation of **0.47441**, which indicates a low level of dispersion. This reflects a relatively high level of agreement among the study sample regarding the statements of the purchasing path dimension.

Respondents strongly agreed that the internet provides them with a wide variety of goods and services (**mean = 4.44**) and that advertisements contribute significantly to increasing awareness of products and services (**mean = 4.424**). They also emphasized the importance of social influence, as comments and reviews from other customers play a major role in shaping purchasing decisions (**mean = 4.296**).

Furthermore, participants expressed high agreement that online reviews and customer feedback are valuable sources of information (**mean = 4.296**) and that their online purchasing experiences were generally positive (**mean = 3.888**).

On the other hand, lower ratings were observed for aspects related to post-purchase support, such as after-sales services (**mean = 3.136**) and the ability to submit complaints electronically (**mean = 3.280**). These findings suggest that while digital marketing tools effectively support the pre-purchase and purchase stages, institutions need to strengthen their post-purchase communication and service quality.
Overall, the results confirm that customers perceive digital platforms—particularly the internet, advertisements, and social media interactions—as essential in guiding their purchasing journey, from awareness and evaluation to decision-making. However, improvements are required in after-sales services and complaint handling to ensure customer loyalty and satisfaction.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing.
a. Main Hypothesis Test.

- H0: There is no statistically significant effect of digital marketing on the customer purchasing path for the studied sample.

- H1: There is a statistically significant effect of digital marketing on the customer purchasing path for the studied sample.

Table 5. Main Hypothesis Test Results

Model / Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F Value / t Value	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	Sig.	R / R^2
Regression	11.857	1	11.857	F = 55.978				0.000	R = 0.619
Error	26.054	123	0.212						R^2 = 0.384
Total	37.911	124							
Constant				t = 3.229	1.126	0.349		0.002	
Digital Marketing				t = 7.482	0.652	0.087	0.559	0.000	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

The correlation coefficient between the two variables, **digital marketing** and the **customer purchasing path**, was estimated at **0.559**, which indicates a moderate positive correlation between them. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination was **0.384**, meaning that **38.4% of the variance in the customer purchasing path is explained by digital marketing**.

Since the significance level (**Sig. = 0.000**) is less than the threshold (**α = 0.05**), the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This confirms that there is a **statistically significant relationship between digital marketing and the customer purchasing path.**

b.Sub-Hypotheses Testing.

Table 5. Sub-hypotheses testing results

Dependent Variable	**Independent Variable**	**Correlation (R)**	**Determination (R^2)**	**F Value**	**F Sig.**	**Beta (β)**	**Constant (B)**	**Sig.**	**Decision**
Customer Purchasing Path	Website	0.461	0.275	14.821	0.000	0.240	1.818	0.000	Accept H1

	Email					0.089		0.647	Reject H1
	Advertisements					0.561		0.006	Accept H1
	Social Media					0.191		0.398	Reject H1
	Phone					0.716		0.001	Accept H1

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results

Sub-Hypothesis 1.

H0: There is no statistically significant effect of the website on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is a statistically significant effect of the website on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

From the table above, it is clear that the significance level is **0.00**, which is less than the assumed significance level of **0.05**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states that there is a positive effect of the website on the customer purchasing path.

Looking at the coefficient of determination, it was estimated at **0.213**, meaning that the website of the institutions explains **21.3% of the changes** occurring in the customer purchasing path. Moreover, the two variables are linked by a weak positive correlation, as the correlation coefficient was estimated at **0.461**

Sub-Hypothesis 2.

H0: There is no positive effect of email on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is a positive effect of email on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

From the table, it is clear that the significance level was estimated at **0.647**, which is greater than the assumed significance level of **0.05**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted, which states that there is **no positive effect of email on the customer purchasing path**

Sub-Hypothesis 3.

H0: There is no statistically significant positive effect of advertisements on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is a statistically significant positive effect of advertisements on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

From the table, it is clear that the significance level is **0.006**, which is less than the assumed significance level of **0.05**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states that there is a positive effect of advertisements on the customer purchasing path.

Looking at the coefficient of determination, it was estimated at **0.221**, meaning that advertisements explain **22.1% of the changes** occurring in the customer purchasing path. Moreover, the two variables are linked by a weak positive correlation, as the correlation coefficient was estimated at **0.470**.

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Sub-Hypotheses 4.

H0: There is no statistically significant effect of social media on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is a statistically significant effect of social media on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

From the table, it is clear that the significance level was estimated at **0.398**, which is greater than the assumed significance level of **0.05**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted, which states that there is **no positive effect of social media on the customer purchasing path**.

Sub-Hypothesis 5.

H0: There is no statistically significant effect of phone use on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is a statistically significant effect of phone use on the customer purchasing path at the 0.05 significance level.

From the table, it is clear that the significance level is **0.001**, which is less than the assumed significance level of **0.05**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states that there is a positive effect of phone use on the customer purchasing path.

Looking at the coefficient of determination, it was estimated at **0.141**, meaning that phone use explains **14.1% of the changes** occurring in the customer purchasing path. Moreover, the two variables are linked by a weak positive correlation, as the correlation coefficient was estimated at **0.376**.

Accordingly, the regression equation can be written as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y=1.818+\ 0.222X_1+0.\ 561X_3+0.716X_5}$$

5. Conclusion.

It can be said that digital marketing has reduced the steps of the customer's purchasing journey. Through various social media platforms or email, the customer quickly becomes aware of the brands, which can reach them through multiple communication channels. Digital marketing has facilitated the process of obtaining information about the products or services customers desire, convincing them to make a purchase and use the product. At this point, the customer is acquired and their loyalty is achieved with full conviction, as the organization has been very close to them.
From the above, the following results were reached:

- The study sample agrees that digital marketing tools contribute to gathering information about products and services and increase communication between customers and the organization.
- The study sample agrees that online shopping is easy and has reduced the stages of the purchasing process, relying on advertisements, company websites, and various social media platforms.
- There is a positive impact of digital marketing on the customer's purchasing journey.
- There is a positive impact of the website on the customer's purchasing journey.
- There is a positive impact of advertisements on the customer's purchasing journey.
- There is a positive impact of mobile phone use on the customer's purchasing journey.

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