

Digital Marketing's Influence on Consumer Purchasing Decision: A Case Study in Iraq

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Abstract

Examining the effects of digital marketing on customer purchase decisions was the main goal of this study. Specific objectives guided the study, including the evaluation of digital marketing platforms in Iraq with the ability to impact purchasing decisions and the identification of product categories that customers purchased on digital media platforms. Although the corporation is not completely responsible for the purchase choice process of consumers, it is a comprehensive procedure that takes into account psychological aspects, social influence, word-of-mouth, cultural values, and financial level. A total of 250 questionnaires were delivered, with the exclusion of the unfinished surveys, and 220 usable samples were obtained, yielding an overall response rate of 88%. Multiple regressions, reliability tests, correlation tests, and descriptive analysis were all employed in this study. The findings of this study also demonstrated the major effect of digital marketing on customer purchase decisions, including social media marketing and mobile marketing. Hypothesis testing, however, showed that various well-known digital marketing platforms in Iraq had an impact on students' behavior. Through digital media platforms, students in Iraq make purchases across a wide range of product categories, and digital marketing has an impact. In the end, firms need to implement plans to harness the digital world and technology as well as raise brand recognition through online media in order to compete in today's business climate.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Social Media, Mobile Marketing, Consumer Purchasing Decision

Introduction

Our society has become more dynamic in comparison to previous eras because of improvements in technology. Businesses, in particular marketing strategies, have felt the effects strongly. A wide range of methods have been used to sell products and services, and new approaches are constantly being developed. In addition, there has been a significant transition inbound marketing strategies have replaced traditional outbound methods. When digital marketing was first introduced, it was considered as a novel method of marketing that gave organizations new ways to conduct business. Using digital media, marketers now can reach potential customers all over the world and communicate in real time with them. As the internet, email, mobile, and digital television (DTV) have become more popular in marketing, so has the understanding of how to leverage digital channels in many ways. For instance, some of them use it to attract new consumers, while others concentrate on providing better service to their current ones. Communication in digital marketing has typically been in the shape of product-related information, online advertising, and marketing via email and mobile. There seems to be a lack of understanding of the impact that numerous digital channels have on consumer purchasing decisions when it comes to channels of digital marketing and ideas. Email marketing is still a viable method. With a return on investment (ROI) of 3,800 %, email is one

of the most cost-effective options accessible. Given the foregoing, email marketing is becoming increasingly social, with businesses investing in associated technology. Additionally, Digital marketing refers to a variety of business methods that employ digital technology to reduce costs while simultaneously expanding enterprises around the world (Attaran et al., 2019). Since people are happy shopping online and believe that digital marketing is more safe, it currently has a higher growth potential than conventional marketing (Alzyoud, 2018).

New digital marketing customers enter Iraq every year, giving marketers a great opportunity to advertise their products via digital marketing in a country where people always have their cellphones with them, so they can access the internet at any time and from anywhere. It has been recognized as an innovative marketing approach that provides firms with new ways to reach their customers. Furthermore, Iraq's mobile market is fastest growing because of a growing middle and upper-income population.

Marketers may interact with their target audience regardless of where they are in the world by using digital marketing methods. Aside from that, digital marketing uses many methods to connect with the targeted audience, such as social media, web pages, commercials, online advertising, E-marketing, and other forms of direct communication like polls, game enhancements, and mobile marketing (Kankam, 2022). On the other hand, marketers may use online surveys to collect data from their clients, examine the findings, and take appropriate action depending on client replies to meet their needs. The efficiency of several digital marketing channels for firms was also examined in this study (such as email, online advertising, social media, and mobile). Students at AlKunooze university college are surveyed to see how these outlets influence their buying decisions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how internet marketing affects students from Iraq while making purchases. By concentrating on these four digital marketing channels, it also seeks to fill a study vacuum on how this technology affects consumer decisions in the Iraqi market (Marketing via email, online advertisements, social media, and mobile).

Literature Review

Digital Marketing

According to Camposano et al. (2021) digital marketing is a dual actor that benefits both its consumer and industrial stakeholders. Marketers have found that keeping up with changing client preferences and increasing competition has been critical to their success in the long term. Due to the advent of online advertising, the mediums used to sell items and services have shrunk in size while maintaining their effectiveness.

Digital marketing, unlike traditional marketing, is constantly evolving and improving. Amidst today's shaky economic climate, digital marketing can be included. It has a wide range of skills that can help a company's sales rise in only a matter of weeks, and all it needs is a steady stream of communication with its targeted audience. Digital marketing aims to deliver exactly what the audience needs because these efforts will be provided to the target audience (Madhu & Verma, 2018).

Data science and technology components, along with the ever-changing needs of the target audience, are what Chaffey & Smith (2017) refer to as the "package" of digital marketing. In today's world of marketing, firms and individuals equally may learn a great deal from each other.

Social media appearance, SEO, and content marketing are among the most common forms of digital marketing but augmented and virtual reality are also common. Technology is still running this marketing method, thus these types of marketing aren't finalized yet.

A study by Gawas et al. (2018) found that digital marketing and customers' buying decisions are intertwined. As previously said, clients are the primary beneficiaries of digital marketing's effects. This means that a company's digital marketing activities should take into account the preferences of its customers. In the same way, customers' purchasing decisions can be significantly influenced in the other direction by digital marketing.

As the prior discussion, it serves mostly as a way to create this study's goal. Customer buying behavior will be shown to be influenced by digital marketing's unique blend of effects, impacts, influences, and driving forces.

Before accumulating, it is essential to conduct a quick appraisal of the location of the clients' purchasing choice pattern.

Digital technology and channels for marketing activities have also evolved the development of digital marketing as a result (Faruk et al., 2021). To put it another way, as online technologies become more integrated into marketing strategy and daily life, digital marketing initiatives become more popular and efficient (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). With the help of electronic communication channels, marketers employ digital marketing to support their product or service offerings. The activity of promoting goods and services through electronic methods which including the internet and computers is known as digital marketing (Nozari et al., 2021).

Email Marketing

E-mail marketing was one of the earliest kinds of digital marketing, and it comprises sending personalized messages to specified recipients at predetermined intervals. Using this strategy, businesses may send out emails that are personalized to the needs of their customers (Tien et al., 2021).

Mailing messages to an audience through the medium of email, also known as E-mail marketing, is an instance of direct marketing. In its broadest definition, e-mail marketing refers to any e-mail addressed to a prospective or present customer. Despite this, the term is frequently used as a synonym for E-mails sent to present or prior customers to improve the relationship between the business and its customers, as well as to encourage consumer the replication industry and consumer loyalty.

Multiple advantages of email marketing include the chance to customise messages for various clients and deliver promotions that are pertinent to their profile. Fariborzi & Zahedifard (2012) the capability to quickly count the number of emails sent, emails that can be observed to be signed, and the number of users that are not registered. Email marketing is referred to as marketing authorisation, and one of its features is that it gives customers the option of deciding whether or not they want to be contacted by email (Kraff et al., 2017).

Many Internet service providers (ISPs) now employ sophisticated junk-mail filters, making e-mail marketing less effective. As a result, you can never be sure that your emails will get at their destination. Additionally, if the addressee does not know the sender of the email, they will most likely delete it. This can eventually turn into an email marketing weakness. Omar & Atteya (2020) because when any email is sent to the consumer, a large number of emails must be adjusted. In general, It is a challenge to distinguish between accepted and unwanted e-mails, not to consider the time it takes to do an e-mail search. Another issue with email marketing is that it transmits a lot of software viruses, making clients suspicious of even reputable channels and markets (Heintie, 2010).

Online Advertising

Online advertising is a type of marketing that informs the audience while simultaneously enticing buyers to make purchases. Information is more readily absorbed when presented in a nice setting (Mishra & Mahalik, 2017). Additionally, online advertising is the act of using the Internet to increase website traffic and send marketing correspondence to the right potential customers (Budiman, 2021). The capacity to advertise items across international borders is its main advantage (Al-azzam & Al-Mizeed, 2021). Online advertising is therefore a crucial component of digital marketing and enables companies to disseminate letters for their goods or services. Because online advertising allows advertisers to engage their customers across a variety of online venues, improving awareness of their products and potentially increasing future purchases (Dhore & Godbole, 2019). It is also easier for companies to update their products, services, and information via online advertising (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). Due to the large variety of products and services available and the growing demands of consumers, businesses must discover more effective strategies to retain customers (Aqsa & Kartini, 2015). To sum it all up, the Jordanian public has grown accustomed to and even favors online advertising due to its effectiveness in informing purchasing decisions. Because of its 24-hour accessibility, In this study, the Internet has emerged as a viable advertising medium.

Social Media

It's a new and fast growing trend to use social media marketing quickly and effectively to target specific customers. More simply, social media marketing is the promotion of a company and its products using social media networking sites (Bala & Verma, 2018). A subset of online marketing activities, like email newsletters and online advertising campaigns, can be viewed as part of this sort of marketing (Manoharan & Narayanan, 2021). Businesses will benefit from the creation and enhancement of brand new channels as a result of this innovative strategy for public relations and marketing.

The official social website platform now includes analytics technology that provide social media marketers with more accurate and impactful information (Manzoor et al., 2020). A kind of software platform that promotes involvement and allows for debate is sometimes referred to as social media. There are many different types of social media sites, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Marketing professionals interact with customers on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. Due to the fact that social media has become a crucial component of many organizations' marketing strategy (Ali, & Anwar, 2021). According to Kajan & Maamar (2021), social media is a collection of Internet-based apps built on top of web 2.0 ideology and fundamentals, allowing users to create and exchange information. There are several social sites and programs that allow clients to exchange content quickly and efficiently as well as in real-time.

Assuring customers' willingness to utilize social media infrastructure for various products and services is an important part of the online value proposition (Rajković et al., 2021). A key benefit of online value propositions is that they foster strong bonds between businesses and their customers, particularly through the medium of social media. Engaging with consumers more and more provides the company with an important opportunity to capture market targets and maintain consumer confidence in certain products and services (He & Harris, 2020). While others have produced an offering mix that is essential for the maintenance of particular demands, numerous companies give various sorts of bargains for all these goods (Beltagui, 2018).

Social networking sites play a significant role in the success of online marketing Pandey et al. (2020), promoting brand popularity (Li & Wu, 2018), encouraging word-of-mouth

communication, sales increasing (Coursaris et al. 2016), and building client social support (Naeem, 2019). Instead, social media demonstrates that principles that improve customer confidence may be found there (Seo et al., 2020). Studying consumer trust and purchasing intent on social media and networking platforms is a research agenda with expanding offerings (Barger et al., 2016). Companies could use social media as a marketing strategy to enhance customer confidence, which impacts their propensity to buy online (Ioanas, 2020).

Mobile Marketing

Mobile advertising has fast acquired prominence as newest and most important digital marketing platforms. Consequently, mobile marketing is now the most widespread, fast, inexpensive, and most current marketing platform, allowing users to gain details and characteristics of appealing goods rapidly and effortlessly, along with possibility of finishing the selling and buying process without requiring the buyer to visit to the location of products (Niranjnamurthy et al., 2013). Consumers can learn about their benefits and wants and make purchasing decisions based on this information because of mobile marketing (Sigar et al., 2021). Mobile marketing, on the other hand, is a group of tactics that allow businesses to reach out to and engage with their clients via any mobile device or network in a fascinating and pertinent way (Kumar & Mittal, 2020). One fascinating new communication channel has evolved between businesses and their customers: mobile marketing. It has an impact on their purchasing decisions because of these messages.

Kaplan (2012) "Any marketing activity carried out through a ubiquitous network to which customers are continually linked through their mobile device," according to the definition of mobile marketing. When mobile devices are part of the marketing platform, the mobile device itself is not the primary marketing component; rather, the system of particular application technology is controlled to be described as a one-of-a-kind marketing instrument (Omar & Atteya, 2020). Marketers need to be inspired to learn more about mobile technology, especially the distinctive usability features that customers value highly (Narang & Shankar, 2019).

Consumer Purchasing Decision

Consumers make purchases after assessing the benefits and drawbacks of numerous options. When it comes to purchasing items and services, people have a preference for one brand over another (Stefan, 2019). Marketers can still have an impact on customers who have already made purchases, even though the earlier phases of the decision-making process have an influence on those decisions (Ozkara & Bagozzi, 2021). Marketers now need to provide their goods while making the purchase process as easy and comfortable for their clients as they can (Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010). Digital marketing platforms including email marketing, social media, online advertising, and digital applications may improve the customer shopping experience by expediting speedier product ordering, purchasing, and payment while also saving customers time and money (Al-azzam & Al-Mizeed, 2021). Finally, remember that even if customers have carefully followed each step, the availability of customer support frequently affects their choice of purchase.

Wharton (2011) describes customers' purchase decisions as being processed and processed into a clear and organized form for more operational activities. The customer is an individual with feelings, thoughts, and the capacity to understand and decode information is what we call a customer. A person's is made up of these perceptual processes, but they have a significant impact on their surroundings because of their sociological, cultural, and environmental context. "Word of mouth" influence is entirely justified because the customer's perception of what he or she is hearing, seeing, or experiencing is influenced by a multitude of factors. The quality of the material a consumer purchases has a big influence on their basic purchasing pattern,

when it comes to purchasing a car, customers "A" and "B" are both likely to spend more time deliberating and hence follow a more extended purchase decision pattern than customers "A" and "B."

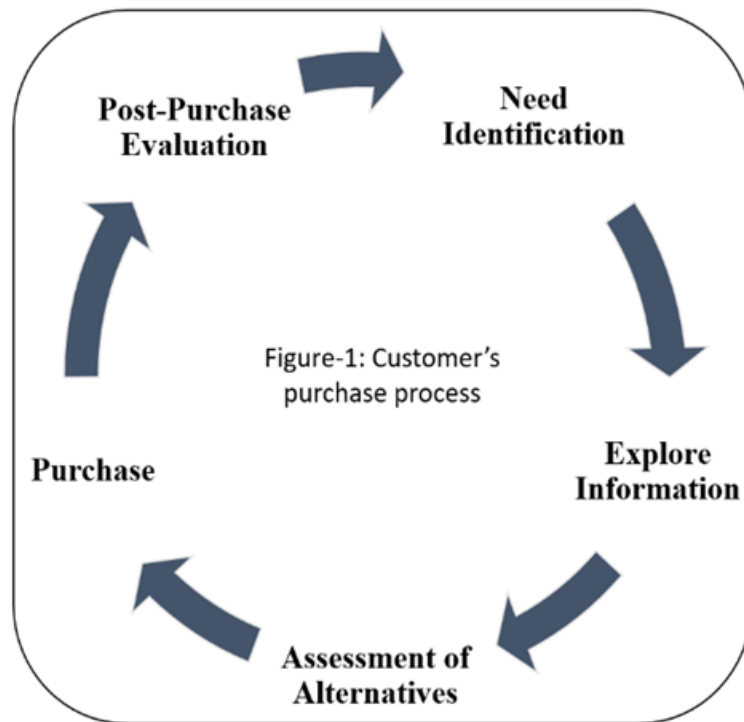


Figure 1. Customer's purchase process (Wharton, 2011)

This means that customers' purchase decisions are indecisive and can be influenced by factors such as cultural, social, and psychological context. However, a typical buyer passes through the stages depicted in the figure-1 before making a purchasing decision.

Marketers that want to grow their companies virtually and increase consumer loyalty can use this method right away as a practical tool.

The relevant hypotheses were developed and derived based on literature reviews and theories:

H1: There is a significant and positive effect of Email marketing on the Purchase Decision

H2: There is a significant and positive effect of Online advertising on the Purchase Decision

H3: There is a significant and positive effect of Social media marketing on the Purchase Decision

H4: There is a significant and positive effect of Mobile marketing on the Purchase Decision

Accordingly, The conceptual framework that follows describes how AlKunooze University college students' buying decisions are influenced by digital marketing platforms. Email marketing, social media, internet advertising, and mobile marketing were among the experiment's independent variables. This is in contrast to the consumer's buying choice, which is the dependent variable. It should be noted that Figure 2 is the conceptual framework.

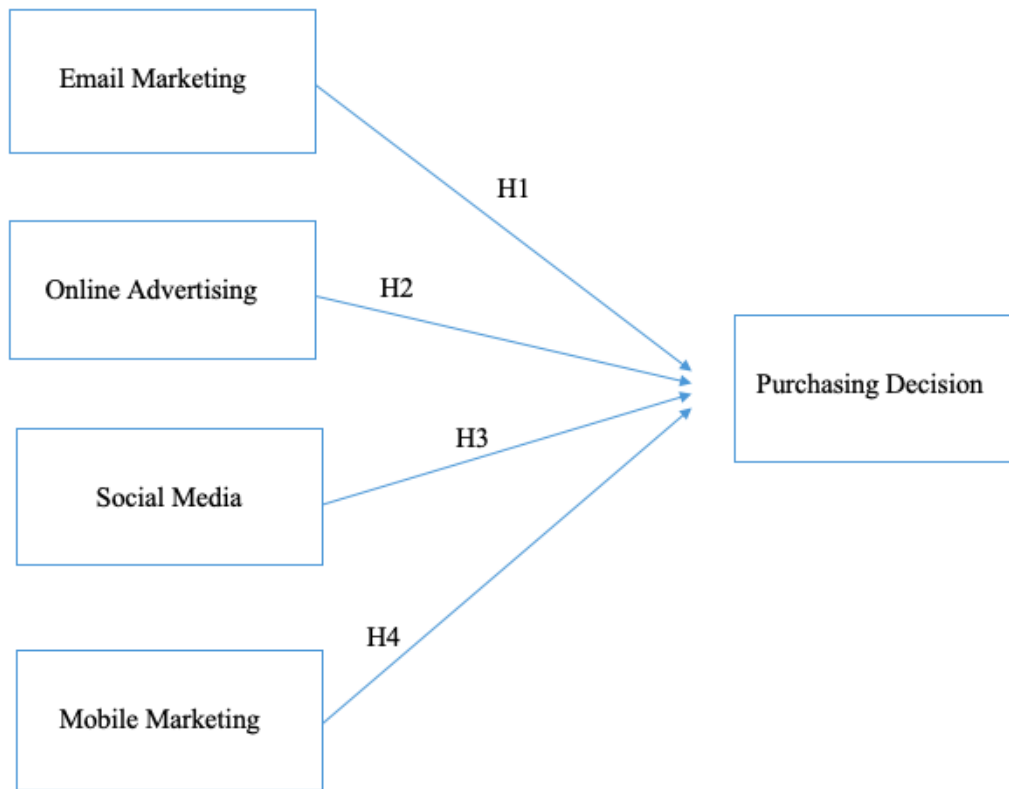


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Methods

The researcher will discuss the best empirical study methods in this part to evaluate the purchase decisions made by a sample of AlKunooze university college students. The statistical techniques indicated below will be used to assess the correlation between independent and dependent variables in order to meet the study's goals. This study used a quantitative approach to look at how variables affected the behavioral gap of the purchasing decision.

Techniques for collecting data from both primary and secondary were used. Additionally, primary data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to AlKunooze university college students. Sections make up the questionnaire. Questions regarding the participants' backgrounds are asked in the first segment. In the second segment, there are evaluation questions for the usage of mobile marketing, social media marketing, internet marketing, and email marketing. Decision-making questions are included in the third segment. The secondary data collected also includes a survey of the literature on related studies.

Data collection involved using an online survey. The data was examined using SPSS. First, data collected from demographic traits and digital marketing campaigns are described using averages and other descriptive statistics, variances, and standard deviations. Second, exploratory factor analysis was used to evaluate the five variables of email marketing, social media, online advertising, mobile marketing, and purchase decision for data reduction (EFA). Third, the validity and reliability of concept discrimination were evaluated by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the five measures. The ultimate strength and direction of the link between the components are determined using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Finally, SPSS was used to investigate the hypothesised hypothesis relationship in this investigation.

The two types of sampling techniques are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The researcher can concentrate on and pick certain demographic traits that appeal to

him and assist him reply to his research questions by using the probability sampling approach to select the study's participants.

Results and Discussion

250 college students at AlKunooze University made up the target population. 250 questionnaires were given out, and 220 of them were returned, or 88% of them. According to Hair et al., (2012) the statistically meaningful number of responses for analyses should be at least 50%.

The descriptive analysis approach was used to assess the data. This involved summarizing or explaining the participants' descriptive analyses as a research variable. Additionally, a descriptive analysis of the respondents' responses was carried out using average value scores to ascertain the user's assessment criteria.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Email Marketing	4.11	0.676
Online Advertising	4.31	0.612
Social Media	3.85	0.926
Mobile Marketing	4.15	0.413
Purchasing Decisions	4.21	0.586

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for each variable based on 220 valid responses were evaluated. As a consequence of participants' responses, the highest mean score was used to calculate the findings. In addition, the results suggest that mobile marketing is the most significant variable. It does not appear that there are any low-level mean scores. In other words, participants who scored above the median agree that these factors affect purchase decisions.

The effectiveness, reliability, and internal consistency of the instrument were measured and evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Additionally, the internal consistency of the results, which was determined using measurements based on correlations between the study's component parts, was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha technique. Furthermore, the average of the examined items and their correlations are frequently evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The dependability of the data was evaluated using SPSS. The total scale for the present and chosen conditions should be more consistent than the allowed scale of 0.70, according to Cronbach's alpha. Hair et al. (2006) In this study, the reliability of the items was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. You can see in the table below that the computed Cronbach alpha ranges from 0.72 to 0.83, which is an excellent outcome (see Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Alpha
Email Marketing	5	0.83
Online Advertising	5	0.72
Social Media	5	0.74
Mobile Marketing	5	0.80
Purchasing Decision	5	0.82

Finding the direction and magnitude of a linear relationship between two variables is done via correlation analysis (Zhang et al., 2021). The strength and relevance of their link are revealed by the degree of correlation. This was accomplished using bivariate association, which computes the Pearson correlation coefficient with the degree of significance. A value of 0 denotes the absence of any relationship between the parts, whereas a value of 1 or -1 denotes

the possibility of precisely determining their interchangeability. The analysis's final findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation for Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

	Purchasing Decisions	Email Marketing	Online Advertising	Social Media	Mobile Marketing
Purchasing Decisions	1				
Email Marketing	0.362**	1			
Online Advertising	0.501**	0.521**	1		
Social Media	0.242**	0.292**	0.331**	1	
Mobile Marketing	0.321**	0.263**	0.320**	0.214**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2-tailed).

The results in the previous table show that email marketing has a positive and significant correlation with buying decisions (0.362), online advertising has a strong positive and significant relationship with buying decisions (0.501), social media promotion has a positive and significant correlation with buying decisions (0.242), and mobile advertising has a positive and significant relationship with buying decisions (0.242). (0.242). (0.242). (0.321).

Numerous independent factors can be evaluated in multiple regression analysis, which is a statistical procedure (Shrestha, 2021). This provides insight into the model as a whole, as well as into the relative importance of various components. Digital marketing channel characteristics are tested for their ability to predict purchase behavior using multiple regression analysis in this study (see Table 4).

Table 4. Multiple Regressions between Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Social Media Marketing, Mobile Marketing, and Purchasing Decision

Model	Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision		
Independent variable	B	Beta	Sig
Email Marketing	0.292	0.324	0.000
Online Advertising	0.427	0.463	0.000
Social Media	0.142	0.210	0.000
Mobile Marketing	0.289	0.221	0.000

R Square = 0.475

Conclusion

The efficiency of digital channels including email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, and mobile marketing is examined in this study for the benefit of marketers. This study looks at how various channels affect students from Iraq across the nation while making purchases. Online questionnaires were used to carry out the investigation. Random sampling procedures were used to distribute the questionnaires and data was acquired in the Iraqi market. After removing incomplete questionnaires, a total of 220 viable samples were obtained from 250 participants, resulting in an overall response rate of 88%. To summarize, the findings of this study show that four independent factors favorably influence students' purchasing decisions in Iraq. Targeting is the most critical aspect of students' purchasing decisions among four digital marketing strategies studied. Sometimes user already have some familiarity with the product and is seeking for further details to help them weigh their options and make an informed purchasing decision. It is also worth noting that email marketing as a digital marketing channel has the least impact on the purchasing decisions of students.

The study was limited to students at AlKunooze University College. To provide more reliable results, further studies should be conducted on a sizable sample of young individuals or people of different ages. The field of marketing would benefit greatly from this type of study being extended to different samples. Other factors in the many digital marketing and distribution channels could be investigated in future studies.

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