



Research Article

# The Effectiveness of Electronic Integrated Marketing Communications on Customer Purchase Intention of Mobile Service Providers: The Mediating Role of Customer Trust.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of electronic integrated marketing communication (E-IMC) on customer buying intention. Furthermore, it explores the mediation effect of customer trust in the relationship between E-IMC and customer purchase intention. Empirical evidence was obtained from 277 mobile phone users in Palestine, and structural equation modeling was applied. The findings of this study revealed that E-IMC positively impacts purchase intention. Further, each of the E-IMC dimensions (online advertising, online sales promotion, and online relationship marketing) were also a significant predictor of purchase intention. The findings also revealed that the positive relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention is mediated by customer trust. We conclude with a theoretical contribution, managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future studies.

## KEYWORDS

*Electronic Integrated Marketing Communications, purchase intention, mobile service*

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## 1. Introduction

Marketing communications are an integral part of the social and economic systems of any society, especially the advanced societies; where it is the most important actions for the organizations to direct their attention to exactly how to deal with its customers to be informed which values and benefits, they have to gain customers loyalty (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012; Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011).

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a notion that incorporates and organizes a company's channels of communication to deliver a clear, proportionate message in which the company and its products are being pushed forward. Integrated marketing communication involves identifying target groups and creates a well-coordinated promotional system to reach the wanted response. Based on the study of Susilowati and Sugandini (2018) communi-

cation aims to create a mutual understanding across communication channels between two or even more communications members towards a message. An integrated marketing communication strategy is aimed at creating, improving, interacting, and building a customer relationship to achieve a strategic positioning advantage (Ngamsutti et al., 2018).

E-IMC is numerous to numerous communications, interactivity, and personally. Thus, all that should ends inefficiency at a workable low cost (Jensen & Jepsen, 2008). E-IMC is a new contracting discipline. Jensen and Jepsen (2008) proposed a typology for E-IMC, which consists of a four-discipline model (online advertising, online sales promotions, and online relationship communications (Direct Marketing). Mixing and utilizing these disciplines are very important to build value. It should be integrated with the traditional IMC by finding the right mix, meanwhile, E-IMC possibility is very



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large if it is used in a targeted way.

The telecommunications world has become competitive and the organizations gradually have to struggle for customers (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014). Thus, the organizations should take into consideration the causes that have a dynamic role in the customer purchase intention, such as the price of the product, knowledge about the product, quality, value, and satisfaction (Haque et al., 2011; Mostafa, 2010); where the purchase intention can be encouraged by the firms through taking into account the customers' feedback. Few scholars studied the relationship between traditional integrated marketing communication on customer outcomes (Sangeetha et al., 2017).

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of E-IMC which is labelled by online advertising, online sales promotion, and online direct or relationship marketing on customer's purchase intention of MSP. Further, it aims to examine the relative effect of E-IMC dimensions on purchase intention. Examining customer trust influences customers' purchase intention (Ogbeide & Omoregbe, 2017; Hosseini & Norouzi, 2017). Hence, this research will check the effectiveness of E-IMC with its selected dimensions on customer purchase intention of the mobile service provider in Palestine from AAUP employee's point of view, under the mediating role of customer trust.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. E-Integrated Marketing Communication

Purchasers are presently more experienced, and complex; at similar markets have fragmented into little portions and specialties, groups of the viewer have turned out to be harder to reach or access, impact, and influence (Kitchen, 2017).

It's not just making suitable products that could meet the market needs, stimuli pricing, and also the distribution network to well target consumers for success in new marketing processes; all of this is not sufficient, as furthermore, marketers are required to interact effectively with the concerned people. Thus, contact between buyers and sellers is the intermediary. Communication aims to create a mutual understanding across communication channels between two or

even more communication members towards a message (Sugandini et al., 2018). Effective communication may persuade the consumer of the message, as IMC is a lengthy and convincing communication mechanism that uses a range of tools such as advertisement, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and persuasion to gain acceptance and decision or willingness to buy goods and services .

E-IMC is a transfer from old-fashion media into two-way means of communication (Tetteh, 2015). Concerning the term business competency; the abilities of integrated management for different media means will aid to catch greater outcomes and collaborated results (Chun et al., 2014).

### 2.2. Online advertising

Online advertising is about the customer and the producer's interaction by any type of advertising, either by emails, search engines, banners, etc. Internet advertising is more influential on customers than print ads through the possibility of including audio and video (Altstiel & Grow, 2006).

Based on the study of Jensen and Jepsen (2008) online advertising is categorized into three basic sub tools (display advertising for instance banners, search engine optimization (SEO), and affiliate programs in which the potential converted to current customers); There are many categories of the internet advertising such as "Pay Per Click, Social media advertising, Mobile advertising, display advertising where the most familiar ones are the banner ad and Pop-ups; and e-mail advertising (Altstiel & Grow, 2006; Nan & Faber, 2004).

### 2.3. Online Sales Promotion

Online sales promotion, can be shaped in various forms, including e-voucher, e-samples, competitions, and lottery. It was claimed that the objective is to raise traffic and create a database of customers (Al-Shoubaki & Al-Dmour, 2008), whereas Jensen and Jepsen (2008) categorized what he describes as interactive online communications to include online vouchers, samples, competitions and lottery, microsites, and games. Kotler et al. (2012) define direct marketing as "direct marketing consists of connecting directly with carefully targeted consumers, often on a one-to-one,

interactive basis”.

Online sales promotion means several actions that strengthen customer demand, excite the longing to purchase, and encourage the buy by utilizing PCs to express data about the products to the cybernetic market (Hudák et al., 2017). It enhances the sales level; online sales promotion holds numerous favorable benefits when assessing it to usual one; it can push right promotion data to perfect individuals, get through the constraint of existence, and extends far and wide around the entire world (Xu et al., 2017).

#### 2.4. Online Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is an approach to present the goods of the organization and has a few matches with different kinds of promotion. Direct contact generates an open interaction with the customers where they can ask questions that be able to be responded directly through verbally or electronic literature (Brassington & Pettitt, 2013). Kotler et al. (2012) define direct marketing as “direct marketing consists of connecting directly with carefully targeted consumers, often on a one-to-one, interactive basis”. Direct marketing is one of the most active zones of marketing; which in its turns changed its gears during its advancement, because of the technological and IT development; and the internet is the most known and most effective gear in interactive communication with customers; and it can offer everything more than traditional one (Carmen and Al (2011)). It can be via direct e-mail which is a material-based marketing technique. The material will be circulated through a delivery framework for the picked addresses, the majority of the standard email is circulated for the clients, which are obscure for the organization; the probability of mailing similar clients commonly is negative (Lee & Carter, 2011).

#### 2.5. Purchase Intention

Consumers are confronted regularly via a plurality of triggers, most of which are the product of promotional interaction practices undertaken by companies functioning on both the local, regional, or international markets. From television, broadcast, web, or printed media reports to brand-driven strategies, it's all decreased to advertising messaging, to establish a single unified picture of the company, goods, and

brand, with the final objective which attracts and retains clients (Duralia, 2018).

Intention to buy would be the first preference of services and products demonstrating loyalty by consumer behavior. This involves a pre-purchase comparative phase along with economic conditions, bearing in mind the intent to buy, cost, and distinction of rival goods through marketing, comprising the purchase place and terms (Jaideawsangwan et al., 2018).

According to Morwitz et al. (2007), purchase intention is a state in which the client is pushed to purchase something according to specific circumstances. The buyer purchasing intention might be affected from any side; mainly it relays on the idea of the displaying program that made by the promoters to create purchase desire for the buyers themselves; thus, purchasers will be upset by internal inspiration and external condition through the purchasing process likewise, when the purchasers purchase the thing in a certain store, they will be driven by their point (Shah et al., 2012). Too many issues either external or internal are affecting the customer's buying intention, such as trigger which means anything that boosts a buyer to purchase a specific brand, some extraordinary bundling which pulls the client towards the item; the outcome expectation; the third one is the recommendation which means a suggestion from a commendable and dependable source that can assist the client with buying the brand; where the last one is the personal association (Shahid et al., 2017).

#### 2.6. Customer Trust

Nowadays, both trust and communications are significant for businesses, because formation the of communication and the recognition of the individual's collaboration needs trust (Hosseini & Norouzi, 2017).

Trust is carefully connected with “perceived ethics”, Grazioli and Jarvenpaa (2000) terms trust as “a state of perceived vulnerability or risk that is derived from an individual's uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions, and prospective actions of others on whom they depend”. It implicates the readiness to act in a specific mode since the individuals assume that they will get what they have been promised and the

reputation from the exchanger (Bramall et al., 2004). It should be happening between two participants, the one who trusts and the other will be the trustee; the first one wants something from the other while he has the assurance that the other one will do that correctly, and in the online environment, the website operator plays the role of the trustee, with the consumer assuming the role of the trustor (Limbu et al., 2011). Three basic gears should be in trust which is credibility in which the workforces are truthful and dependable; Reliability which indicates delivering the goods in the guaranteed layout, and time; And the last one is intimacy which is linked to the workforces reliability, in other words, the degree or level of the workforces have deep proper ethics (Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). Trust is one of the most basic arguments for the speedy progress and expansion of online businesses (Austin et al., 2006).

Intentions to buy can be affected by trust, it has been argued by scholars that e-loyalty creating relies firstly on the development of customer trust in the supplier (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002; Goode & Harris, 2007; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004); The customer's trust in the seller would also raise his intention to buy indirectly by decreasing the customer expectations of risk (indirect effect). Consumers are going to favor purchasing the product with the brand they recognize well. A customer hesitates to purchase new goods at all times. A smart buyer will always research before buying something or ask the people he trusts and after gathering the information needed of what, how, and where to buy? He is going to purchase the item, to maintain the public informed of their product and their client, a business would need to continue to trigger their brand and promote again and again to let a great proportion of people learn about its products (Shahid et al., 2017).

Later of revising the available studies, it was obvious the lack of studies discussing the E-IMC and its relation with the customers, with / without secondary variables; Concerning to the study of (Khatab et al., 2015) conducted in Jordan to “investigate the impact of E-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC) on customers' attitudes toward electronic products”, suggested to study the online trust of the customer

on E-IMC field and customers outcomes; The study of Porcu et al. (2019) which explored “the influence of firm-wide integrated marketing communication on market performance in the hospitality industry”, stated to investigate the positive link between IMC, and brand and customer outcomes; The study of Sugandini et al. (2018) which examined the impact of “IMC environmental responsibility and voluntariness toward electricity saving behavior intention”, recommended to examine “Perceived behavioral control, social influence, and trust can be considered to be variables in predicting behavioral intention”; Henceforward, this research is derived to study by merging E-IMC with three dimensions (Online advertising, online sales promotion, and online relationship or direct marketing) as dimensions for the independent variable (E-IMC), where the dependent variable is (customer purchase intention), and customer trust as a mediator in MSP in Palestine.

### 3. Hypothesis development

#### 3.1. E-IMC and Purchase Intention

Based on the study of Khatab et al. (2015) there is a noteworthy relationship between E-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC) and consumers' manner for online products in Jordan. Dadzie and Boachie-Mensah (2011) conducted research in Ghana about mobile network providers mentioned some causes that influence the customers to connect to a specific mobile provider such as promotion through ads whether traditional or the new style (online). Sangeetha et al. (2017) pointed in their research about the IMC influence on customer purchase attitude that the celebrities will not aid the ad to be more influential but will encourage the customers in their purchasing attitude. Jerome et al. (2010); Al-Shoubaki and Al-Dmour (2008); Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2012) mentioned in their study that e-advertising has an appositive impact on buying intention. Lim and Lau (2011) stated in their research that web-based advertising might be an amazing advertising instrument with regards to the online condition. Also, the advertisers ought to incorporate web-based publicizing in their publicizing media blend as internet publicizing advances web-based purchasing or web-based shopping.

Hajli (2014) social networking sites empower the social association of customers, inciting extended trust and intent to buy. Similar to Maoyan et al. (2014) online life advancing enliven external variables and a while later affect the customer's internal perception factors, which will impact customers' buying intent.

Ye and Zhang (2014) stated that via raising the customer's awareness of the ease of use and reducing the risk, e-sales promotion has a considerable influence on his buying intention. Xu et al. (2017) presented in their study that the collaboration among the integral goods and sales promotion will result in a meaningful influence on customers purchasing intent.

Moharam and Shawky (2012) presented in their study that "direct marketing, personal selling" is imperative for forming a credit card buying intent in the Egyptian private banking sector. Salami and Aremu (2006) said that electronic communications have a vital position in direct marketing. Salami and Aremu (2006) said that consumers might be accessed via different means where mobile marketing and e-media are important ones as forms of direct marketing. Internet facilities have limitless possibilities to tell the consumers about the products, through related to teaching potential customers about the product or service, by endorsing first-hand products and performing dialogs on an organization concentration subject (Stanišić, 2015).

From the previously stated studies, we suppose that purchase intention is positively influenced by E-IMC. Hence, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H1: There is a positive impact of E-IMC on customers' purchase intention. And from the main hypothesis, three sub-hypotheses were derived

H1.a: There is a positive impact of online advertising on customers' purchase intention. H1.b: There is a positive impact on online sales promotion on customers' purchase intention.

H1.c: There a significant positive impact of online direct marketing on customers' purchase intention.

### 3.2. Customer Trust as a mediator

Based on the theory of social exchange, social exchanges are viewed in the same way as economic

exchanges and that is because both consist of paid costs and gained recompenses; in the social exchange the interaction will be away from the law so that there are no legitimate contracts that oblige all parties, where there is no guarantee of rewards in this type of exchange, as a result of that, trust must be judged and thus expectations arise from this relationship (Gefen et al., 2003).

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) trust is defined as the main variable that mediates the relationship in every interactive exchange. Hamm et al. (2016) defined trust as a psychosomatic condition that occurs inside the individual "trustor" as directed towards specific targets. As stated by Arnott, Wilson, Mukherjee and Nath (2007) in the online environment, trust performs as a mediating variable in the relationship between "relational dimensions such as communication" and most of the consequences that related to the customers such as including "loyalty and behavioral intentions". In the online banking sector, it was found that customers' trust in online platforms affects their continuance usage intentions in the post-adoption stage (Montazemi & Qahri-Saremi, 2015). As mentioned in the study of Boateng and Narteh (2016) about online relationship marketing the customer commitment, they found that trust plays the mediating role between the "engagement and personalization" on customer commitment. Based on the study of Pratama et al. (2017) where they stated that there is a mediating effect of customer trust on the relationship between social existences and purchase intent. The study of Wang and Nguyen (2018) stated that "Expectation confirmation" has an impact on trust, where trust has a primary role in mediating the relationship between "emotional price and purchase intention", in addition to its role in mediating the relationship between "expectation confirmation and purchase intention". The study of Pramudya and Seo (2018) stated that "Corporate image" has an impact on customer trust, where customer trust has an impact on purchase intention, as a result of that "customer trust" is playing a mediating role between "corporate image" and purchase intention.

From the previous stated studies, the following

hypothesis has been developed:

H3: Customer trust is mediate the relationship between E-IMC and consumers' purchase intention.

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1. Research Philosophy and Approach

The Positivism philosophy is operated in this research, by which the needed data will be collected to underline the research purposes among the deductive-quantitative approach (Symonds & Gorard, 2010). The quantitative approach is adopted to assess the participant's features with statistical accuracy, and how they respond to a definite cause. Furthermore, to its appropriateness to test the hypotheses (Currie, 2004). Alongside, it used the descriptive and analytical approach to attain the aims of the research, where the descriptive approach exploited to define the impact of (E-IMC) through inclusive search about the E-IMC with its chosen measurements (online advertising, online sales promotion, and online relationship or direct marketing) at MSP in Palestine, to define the truth of the purchasing intention in those service providers. However, the analytical attribute intends to classify the impact of E-IMC on the purchasing intention of the MSP customers in Palestine via the analysis of collected data.

##### 4.2. Research Design

The population of this research was the customers who are exposed to (E-IMC) of (MSP) in Palestine (Jawwal and Ooredoo), whereas the sample was the employees of AAUP, non-probability convenience sampling technique has been applied. According to AAUP human resource records, the actual number of employees is 350 employees.

A structured online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was utilized to collect the needed data. The measurement of each variable has been adopted from previous studies. Online advertising has been measured by adopting five items from Venkatesh et al. (2012). Online sales promotion has been measured by adopting five items from Yoo et al. (2000). Online relationship has been measured by adopting five items from the study of Boateng and Narteh (2016). The six-item scale of Farzin and Fattahi (2018) has been employed to

measure purchase intention. Finally, customer trust is measured by the employing scales of Harris and Goode (2010). To approve that the participants are exposed to E-IMC and using a Palestinian mobile number, a screening question was asked to them- Do you have a Palestinian mobile number? The data collection took one month and we collect 277 questionnaires.

#### 5. Results

The collected data has been processed by utilizing the statistical software SPSS and SPSS AMOS 24.

##### 5.1. Validity and reliability analysis

First, the instrument, convergent, and discriminant validity have been performed by applying the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The instrument validity has been addressed by evaluating the overall model fit. The cut-off criteria and value of indexes of this study have presented in Table 1. All model fit indices match with cut-off values depend on recommendations commonly used in literature (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

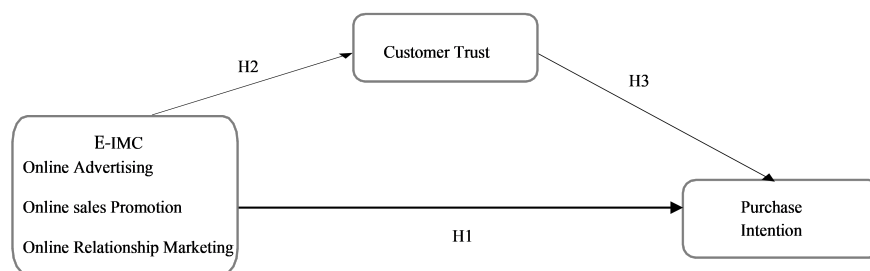
**Table 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Goodness of fit indice

| Goodness of fit | Index  |       | Cut-off criteria | Interpretation |
|-----------------|--------|-------|------------------|----------------|
|                 | Before | After |                  |                |
| $\chi^2/df$     | 2.89   | 1.56  | $\leq 3$         | Excellent      |
| GFI             | 0.82   | 0.92  | $>.90$           | Excellent      |
| NFI             | 0.83   | 0.90  | $>.90$           | Excellent      |
| CFI             | 0.84   | 0.96  | $>.90$           | Excellent      |
| AGFI            | 0.82   | 0.90  | $>.80$           | Excellent      |

Note: cut-off criteria adopted from Hu and Bentler (1999)

We run CFA for the research model, the reported acceptable values which, in turn, indicates a good model fit for the hypothesized structural model (CMIN2/df = 1.62 < 3.00; GFI = .94 > .90; CFI = .97 > .90; NFI = .92 > .90; PCLOSE = .62 > .05)

The construct validity has been examined by a look at convergent and discriminant validity. The standardized loadings of all items for each construct are above the acceptable value and all items are significant on their loading at the level of 0.05 (Table 2.). Besides, as shown in the same table, the values of composite reliability are above the recommended level (.70) (Hair



**Figure 1.** Research model

et al., 2010). The average variance extracted (AVE) for all variables is greater than the recommended value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha values overhead the cut-off point .70 which is measured as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Consequently, the values shaped in our analysis provided an overall indication of the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model.

The discriminant validity analysis has been conducted to check on whether the intercorrelation of the items of each construct is stronger than their correlations with the items of other constructs. As reported in Table 3, there is no sign of discriminant validity.

### 5.2. Demographic Variables Results

The findings of the demographic variables of the participants comprised in this study are accessible in Table 4. As shown in the table, the demographic info gained from participants is concerning age, gender, educational level, mobile service provider, and Mobile Usage. The majority of the replies were collected from males with (208) and females (71) of the sample. The table also shows that the majority of the respondents who answered the survey were in the age range of 26-31 years with 36.1% of the sample. The second-highest percentage of the age range (32-37 years) was % 25.4. Concerning the respondents' education level, the highest percentage was for the bachelor's degree (60.2%) and the percentage of the doctorate was 39.8%. However, the highest percentage of the respondents was for Jawwal Company users (60.9%), while Oredoo's users accounted for 39.1%. Finally, the majority percentage of Mobile usage hours was for the 14-20 hours

category by (30.8%) of the respondents and the lowest one was for those who use the mobile more than 30 hours by (20.1%) of the respondents.

### 5.3. Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modelling method has been used to examine the direct relationships. As shown in Table 5, the goodness of model fit for all indicators reported acceptable values which, in turn, indicates a good model fit for the hypothesized research model (first-order) (CMIN2/df =1.54< 3.00; GFI = .92 > .90; CFI = .96>.90; NFI = .90 >. 90; PCLOSE = .81 >05). The same thing for the second order structural equation model (CMIN2/df =2.67< 3.00; GFI = .90> .90; CFI = .90>.90; NFI = .85 >.90; PCLOSE = .00 >05). All model fit indices match with cut-off values depend on recommendations commonly used in literature (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In sum, the most index value is in the acceptable range, which in turn settles that there is good goodness of fit between the theoretic model and definite data.

As reported in Table 5, overall E-IMC significantly and positively affects purchase intention ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus, we accept H1. The second-order structural equation model also reported for statistically significant relationship between each of E-IMC dimensions and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for online advertising and purchase intention relationship;  $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for online sales promotion and purchase intention relationship;  $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for online relationship marketing and purchase intention relationship). Thus, we accept H1.a, H1.b, H1.c. 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence interval (N = 5000) was estimated to examine the indirect effect of

**Table 2.** Summary of the measurement model

| Items                         | Mean | SD    | $\lambda$ | Cronbach's | CR    | AVE   |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|-----------|------------|-------|-------|
| Online Advertising            |      |       |           | 0.81       | 0.852 | 0.539 |
| OA1                           | 1.91 | .977  | 0.88      |            |       |       |
| OA2                           | 2.20 | 1.00  | 0.63      |            |       |       |
| OA3                           | 1.77 | .855  | 0.73      |            |       |       |
| OA4                           | 1.82 | .935  | 0.69      |            |       |       |
| OA5                           | 1.63 | .765  | 0.69      |            |       |       |
| Online Sales Promotion        |      |       |           | 0.70       | 0.808 | 0.585 |
| OSP1                          | 3.86 | 1.055 | 0.74      |            |       |       |
| *OSP2                         | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| OSP3                          | 3.95 | .936  | 0.81      |            |       |       |
| OSP4                          | 4.01 | .869  | 0.74      |            |       |       |
| *OSP5                         | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| Online Relationship Marketing |      |       |           | 0.84       | 0.76  | 0.521 |
| ORM1                          | 3.29 | .733  | 0.62      |            |       |       |
| ORM2                          | 2.65 | .834  | 0.67      |            |       |       |
| *ORM3                         | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| ORM4                          | 3.10 | .713  | 0.72      |            |       |       |
| ORM5                          | 3.19 | .660  | 0.80      |            |       |       |
| Purchase Intention            |      |       |           | 0.79       | 0.84  | 0.588 |
| *PI1                          | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| *PI2                          | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| PI3                           | 4.15 | .922  | 0.56      |            |       |       |
| PI4                           | 3.83 | 1.15  | 0.76      |            |       |       |
| PI5                           | 3.69 | 1.22  | 0.84      |            |       |       |
| PI6                           | 4.27 | .802  | 0.90      |            |       |       |
| Customer Trust                |      |       |           | 0.77       | 0.825 | 0.545 |
| CT1                           | 4.10 | .636  | 0.82      |            |       |       |
| CT2                           | 4.03 | .699  | 0.81      |            |       |       |
| *CT3                          | -    | -     | -         |            |       |       |
| CT4                           | 3.97 | .850  | 0.71      |            |       |       |
| CT5                           | 3.78 | .761  | 0.59      |            |       |       |

Note: \* = items removed

**Table 3.** Assessing discriminant validity

|                                  | CR    | AVE   | MSV  | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1-Purchase intention             | 0.846 | 0.588 | 0.01 | 0.76 |      |      |      |      |
| 2-Customer trust                 | 0.825 | 0.545 | 0.01 | 0.11 | 0.73 |      |      |      |
| 3- Online Advertising            | 0.852 | 0.539 | 0.34 | 0.28 | 0.11 | 0.73 |      |      |
| 4-Online Sales Promotion         | 0.808 | 0.585 | 0.02 | 0.20 | 0.06 | 0.18 | 0.76 |      |
| 5- Online Relationship Marketing | 0.765 | 0.521 | 0.34 | 0.12 | 0.27 | 0.58 | 0.14 | 0.72 |



**Table 4.** Percentage of Demographic

| Variables      | Categories         | Number | %      |
|----------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Gender         | Male               | 208    | 74.6 % |
|                | Female             | 71     | 25.4 % |
| Age            | 22_25              | 53     | 19.0%  |
|                | 26-31              | 103    | 36.9%  |
|                | 32-37              | 71     | 25.4%  |
|                | Over 38            | 52     | 18.6 % |
| Education      | Bachelor Degree    | 168    | 60.2%  |
|                | Ph.D. student      | 111    | 39.8 % |
| Mobile service | Jawwal             | 170    | 60.9%  |
|                | Oredoo             | 109    | 39.1 % |
| Usage          | Less than 14 hours | 85     | 30.5%  |
|                | 14-20 hours        | 79     | 28.3%  |
|                | 20-30 hours        | 59     | 21.1%  |
|                | More than 30 hours | 56     | 20.1%  |

**Table 5.** Structural model hypotheses testing results

| Predictor                          | Outcome            | $\beta$ | $p$ | Result   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----|----------|
| <i>First-order SEM</i>             |                    |         |     |          |
| H1: E_IMC                          | Purchase intention | 0.22    | *** | Accepted |
| H2: E_IMC                          | Customer trust     | 0.14    | *** | Accepted |
| H3: Customer trust                 | Purchase intention | 0.12    | *** | Accepted |
| <i>Second-order SEM</i>            |                    |         |     |          |
| H1a: Online Advertising            | Purchase intention | 0.30    | *** | Accepted |
| H1b: Online Sales Promotion        | Purchase intention | 0.14    | *** | Accepted |
| H1c: Online Relationship Marketing | Purchase intention | 0.47    | *** | Accepted |

Note: \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$

E-IMC and purchase intention through customer trust. As shown in Table 6, the indirect relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention through customer trust is statistically significant. Thus, we accept H4.

**Table 6.** Mediation path findings (E\_IMC-Customer Trust-Purchase intention)

| Parameter | Estimate | Lower | Upper | P   |
|-----------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| A x B     | .22      | .11   | .42   | .00 |

## 6. Discussion

The effect of E-IMC on the consumer has been increasing in the interest of scholars for a long time. However, little attention has been paid to examine the impact

of E-IMC on purchase intentions- particularly in the mobile service provider. By applying the research conceptual model in two mobile service providers in Palestine, the findings of this study revealed that E-IMC is a significant predictor of purchase intention. Further, each of the three dimensions of E- IMC has also been found as a significant driver of purchase intention. Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that customer trust is a critical variable that plays a mediator role in the relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention.

The findings of this study contribute to the literature in several ways. The findings of this study revealed that E-IMC is a significant predictor of customer purchase

intention. This is important as little attention has been paid to examine such relationships in the mobile service context. Further, online advertising was a significant predictor of purchase intention. This result comes in the line with and confirms the study of [Gong and Maddox \(2003\)](#) who stated that online advertising help to increase customer purchase intentions by 26% on the time. It also comes in parallel with the study of [Kim and Han \(2014\)](#), [Wang and Sun \(2010\)](#), [Nasir et al. \(2011\)](#), and [Nikhashemi et al. \(2013\)](#) where they argued that web-based ads influence customer purchase intention. However, the findings of this study extend the findings of the previous study by applying the research model in the mobile phone services context. Further, the finding of the study contributes to the literature by revealing the online direct marketing impact significantly on customer purchase intention in the mobile services context. These findings come in parallel with the study of [Wongpitakroj \(2017\)](#). Online relationship marketing was a significant predictor of purchase intention in this study. This result confirms the findings of the study [James et al. \(2004\)](#). Moreover, the findings of this study contribute to the literature for the first-time invoking customer trust as a mediating variable that explains the relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention. This is important as this study partially explains why E-IMC affects purchase intention.

Moreover, the findings of this study provide several managerial implications. Because of the positive relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention, the Palestinian MSP (Jawwal and Oreedoo) should pay more attention to enhance and upgrade their E-IMC correctly through improving the usage of specific channels of communication. So, they should design their online ads, news release more simply and attractively to convince the customer to track them, which in its turn will help the customers when evaluating the alternatives, and affecting their purchasing intention. The organizations still need to enhance the efficiency of their E-IMC means and their effectiveness in influencing the public; companies should pay attention to developing the advertising means by comparing it to other means. The MSP should pay more attention to e-mail and mobile marketing strategies, and the organizations

supposed to published monthly or quarterly bulletins on the activities and sponsorships did by them within the community, through brochures or magazines to inform the citizens about their contributions to the community in a way to develop it. The Palestinian MSP should set specific objectives for E-IMC to facilitate their assessment; increase the customer interest care and study their characteristics and purchasing drivers to maintain their market share and enhance customer loyalty. MSP of Palestine should continue doing marketing research related to consumer behavior and motivations, and use the resulted data to form a communication strategy with the customers. The means of E-IMC used in the organizations must be in line with its comprehensive strategy since all the employed means are directed towards identifying customer needs, achieving satisfaction, and loyalty.

### **7. Limitations and suggestions for future studies**

Several constraints faced the researcher during the study preparation. One of the limitations of the study is the lack of previous studies that concentrated on E-IMC in general and the lack of studies specialized in online direct marketing and online public relations directly. Further, the convenience sampling method that the study has followed may generate the issue of generalizability of the study's findings. Future studies may use different sampling methods that may increase the generalizability of the study's findings. Further, the researcher proposes that this study may be applied in different sectors other than mobile phone service providers in the same country, as well as in other countries in the same sector or in other sectors that deal with E-IMC. Moreover, other mediators could be examined in the relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention such as brand awareness and perceived value. This study has not taken into the consideration the conditions under which the relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention may strengthen or weaken. Thus, the future study may examine the moderator effect of variables that may affect the relationship between E-IMC and purchase intention such as customer relationship age and gender.

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