

MOBILE INTERNET ADOPTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN THE MENA REGION

Rania S. Hussein, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Marketing

Department of Management, School of Business, The American University in Cairo

Abstract

Mobile internet in the Middle East was a distant dream just a few years ago. Now it has progressed so fast that it has transformed the entire structure of the telecommunications industry. Mobile devices have become the traditional communication tools after being considered a luxury for such a long time and, as we live in the information age, the internet has succeeded in providing easy and effective access to satisfy the information needs of millions of users through wired networks. Mobile internet delivers great value to individuals through time and place flexibility. It is not surprising that Mobile Internet is growing very fast since it is driven by the world's two fastest rising sectors: mobile telecommunication and the Internet. Despite the dramatic growth of mobile internet usage worldwide, there is insufficient research on Mobile Internet users and the factors that affect their adoption. In particular, developing countries like Algeria have not been researched at all. Despite the fact that the Algerian government has an objective to support mobile internet, the penetration is still rather low when compared to other countries. A key question to answer is how to motivate customers to adopt and use the service. The purpose of this paper is to test the key determinants of consumers' adoption of Mobile Internet. The model was built based on previous literature, semi-structured interviews and a large-scale quantitative survey conducted on the Algerian market. The model proposes three sets of factors as key determinants of mobile internet adoption namely; innovation attributes, social factors and marketing mix variables. To empirically test the proposed model, the researcher conducted a large scale quantitative survey. In total, 413 valid responses were collected from mobile users in Algeria. The results of the empirical research support the proposed relationships with an exception of three variables; observability, social influence, and marketing communications that were found to be insignificant. This study provides marketers and decision makers working in the telecom industry with useful insights about factors affecting customers' adoption of mobile internet. A good understanding of these factors will enable decision makers to develop appropriate strategies to speed up the adoption and diffusion of the mobile internet service in Algeria.

Keywords: Innovation, Determinants, Mobile Internet, MENA