

The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour: Field Study on Mobile Phone Users in Adrar City

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Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the influence of the reference group on mobile phone consumer purchasing. A structured questionnaire was used to gather opinions from a convenience sample of mobile phone users in Adrar City. The dataset characteristics were summarised by descriptive analysis using the mean and the standard deviation as measures. Additionally, regression analysis was employed to test the study's hypothesis.

The results revealed that the reference group types have a significant influence on consumer decisions to purchase a mobile phone, explaining simultaneously 33.5 % of the variance in purchasing behaviour. The multivariate analysis method was valuably recommended for future research.

Keywords: Reference Group; Consumer Behaviour; Purchasing Decision; Mobile Phone.

Jel Classification Codes: D11, M31.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern marketing thought, consumers are always considered the core of marketing activity and the key part in the exchange process. To successfully complete a transaction, the marketers metaphorically need to anatomise the consumers. This involves understanding certain foremost features such as socio-demographic characteristics, decision-making process, motivation, influences, etc.

Since consumers live in the collective, it is necessary for the marketer to take into consideration the influence of Social factors on their general behaviour. This influence may extend to his purchasing behaviour. In this context, an explanation was found with the concept of reference group.

The existing literature has recognised that the reference groups, as a social factor, have a significant influence on consumer purchase behaviour. In fact, it may happen that the consumer bought a product because it is liked by a certain group membership. As we know, the consumer behaviour process is not identical for every purchase, and it can be influenced by many other factors. In this respect, it seems that the concept of reference group and consumer behaviour is still seen as a topic for further potential and worthwhile studies.

For some time, numerous academic consumer studies have investigated the influence of reference groups on consumer behaviour, and their notable findings have been confirmed. However, it is inaccurate to say that results are sufficient on their own and can provide complete knowledge of such a complex issue. To put it simply, there is a lack of understanding of the influence of reference groups on consumer purchasing behaviour towards different products in different social and cultural contexts.

In this regard, this study is interesting in the influence of the reference group on consumer behaviour to purchase a mobile phone. As far as we know, no academic studies, at least the domestic ones, have discussed the influence of reference group types on consumer behaviour across the purchasing process. Based on this background, the preparation of this research took the title: “The Influence of Reference Group on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour: Field Study on Mobile Phone Users in Adrar City”.

1.1 Research Questions

The core research question is:

Do the reference groups influence the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar City?

The secondary research questions were formulated as follows:

- What is a reference group?
- What are the different types of reference groups?
- What does purchase consumer behaviour mean?
- Which reference group type is the most influential on consumer behaviour?
- Is there a significant influence of each type of reference group across the purchasing process?

1.2 Research Hypotheses

To fit the above study questions, a main hypothesis was formulated as follows:

There is a statistically significant influence of reference group on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar City.

This broad hypothesis can be divided into the following four specific sub-hypotheses:

H₁: There is a statistically significant influence of family on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₂: There is a statistically significant influence of friends on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₃: There is a statistically significant influence of opinion leaders on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₄: There is a statistically significant influence of celebrities on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

1.3 Research Objectives

The main goal of the present study is to investigate the influence of the reference group on the purchasing of mobile phones among a sample of respondents in Adrar city. It addresses the following subsidiary aims:

- To clarify the concept of reference group.
- To clarify the concept of purchasing consumer behaviour.
- To validate any significant impact of the reference group on the

purchasing of a mobile phone.

- To find out the most influential reference group type that highly influences consumers to purchase a mobile phone.
- To partition the influence of each reference group type across the various purchasing steps.

1.4 Significance of the study

The key contributions of this study may be summarised as follows:

- Guide and support marketers to develop their effective strategy of communication by focusing on the most influential referents.
- Determining the referents influencing mobile phone purchase can also be valuable for other companies that produce similar electronic devices.
- Aid marketers to understand the complexity of the consumer purchase process for mobile phones.
- This work can be useful for researchers intending to conduct deeper studies in the same field of consumer behaviour, but in a different cultural context.
- The insights of this kind of empirical study, which is based on individual experiences, can help consumers to become more informed and more empowered in making the right purchasing decisions, and serve as a reference for others by sharing their experiences with many others.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

The study's scope was outlined by the following:

- The study will specifically examine the following types of reference groups that influence consumers to purchase a mobile phone: family, friends, opinion leaders, and celebrities. In consequence, including additional types of reference groups might have extended the scope of the research.
- The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews in Adrar city during the second semester of 2024. The responses were manipulated in the second trimester of 2025. Accordingly, the findings cannot be generalised to other city populations.
- This study did not focus on the purchase intention of potential consumers, but dealt with the actual consumers by choosing respondents who have

already bought and used a mobile phone.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 Overview of Literature

This paper begins with a short review of the literature regarding the influence of reference groups on consumer purchasing. This section summarises some of the previous studies that have tackled the current topic with which the researcher has dealt.

What do scholars think about the relationship between the reference group and consumer behaviour? Well, to start with, a study conducted by (OWENDA & SAMBORO, 2024) aimed to determine the effect generated by reference group and product differentiation on Xiaomi Smartphone purchasing decisions in Malang state in Indonesia. Accordingly, the results of the study indicate that both independent variables have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The authors recommended that the company build a good relationship with the relevant reference group to improve marketing performance and consumer loyalty.

Correspondingly, (BASALLAMA & ARIYANTI, 2003) attempted to explore the impact of reference group on the purchasing decision of iPhone products. This study was supported with the help of structural equation modelling in order to delineate the role of lifestyle as a moderating variable. The study results showed that the reference group had a significant influence on iPhone product purchase decisions.

Likewise, a study conducted by (MUYIDEEN et al, 2020) concluded that the reference group positively influenced consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phones among female non-academic staff in Ekiti State University in Nigeria. Also, it was found that word of mouth significantly affected consumer buying behaviour.

Consistently, (HARRIE & HIDAYAT, 2017) through their study on factors affecting the purchasing decisions of touch screen mobile phone among students in Telkom University, found that the family and reference group are the most impactful factors in determining consumer behaviour purchasing decisions.

Ganlari et al (GANLARI et al, 2016), through a study, explained the

factors that impact consumer buying behaviour of mobile phones. The study highlighted the importance of the influence of the reference group in the purchase decision-making process of mobile phones. These results reinforce the literature findings that people consult family and friends before making a purchase decision.

In the same manner, (BISHNOI & MANN, 2015) mentioned in their study that the buyers of mobile phones in rural Haryana in India have been moderately influenced by the reference group. The authors suggested that the companies should focus on these influencers to enhance their market shares.

As well, (MOHD YUSUF et al, 2015) analysed the factors influencing consumers' purchase of mobile phones in the northern regions of Malaysia. The results indicated that social influence, which comes in the form of people, leads to consumer purchasing mobile phone products.

Uniformly, in an empirical study (XIAOE & WENTHE, 2005), the results indicated that the three types of reference group (informational influence, utilitarian, and value-expressive influence) have a significant influence on cell mobile phone purchasing behaviour among Chinese youth. According to the results, the paper suggested that the companies try to persuade the opinion leaders by providing reports that are too crowded with meaningful statistics and numbers.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Concepts

Methodologically, before delving further into the research, it is necessary to identify the relevant concepts that are part of a wider theoretical approach. In the context of the current research, two basic disciplinary concepts need definition, namely: reference group and purchasing behaviour.

Understanding reference group:

Within the general framework, Scholars state that an individual's behaviour is influenced by their social context. So, understanding the consumption behaviour can not be taken in isolation from this context, otherwise it leads to a myopic perspective.

In the social environment, an individual is surrounded by a variety of forces that influence their overall human behaviour, including their consumption. These forces include the family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and many others (SAIBIN ABDULLAH et al, 2021). Due to their knowledge and experience, a consumer who deals with the uncertainty may listen more to and trust those diverse people and views them as referents (BEARDEN & ETZEL, 1982).

From a point of marketing, a reference group is any person or group of people who significantly influences an individual's behaviour (BLACKELL, MINIARD, & ENGEL, 2006). According to (KOTLER & KELLER, 2016), a reference groups influence members in at least three ways: they expose an individual to new behaviours and lifestyles, they influence attitudes and self-concept, and they create pressures for product and brand choices.

Understanding purchasing behaviour:

Consumer purchasing behaviour can be defined as the buying behaviour of individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption (MUYIDEEN et al, 2020). Likewise, consumer behaviour can be defined as the total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service (OZTURK & KARAKAS, 2016). By the same token, consumer purchase refers to a process of choosing and buying a product that meets a particular need (JIN & MIAO, 2018).

Based on the above-mentioned definitions, it can be stated that the purchasing behaviour is a series of stages through which the consumer spends effort, time, and money in order to make a good decision in each stage. Also, the consumer making a decision may be affected by countless factors. After all, the marketer ought to understand how each factor can influence each decision in each stage.

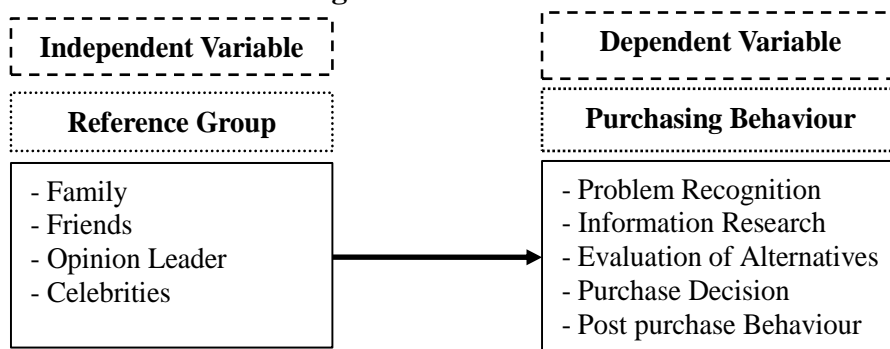
The purchasing behaviour discussed in this paper, as shown on the right side of the Figure below, refers to a series of diverse activities in which the final consumers identify a need to be addressed, gather

information, evaluate alternatives, make a purchase decision, and finally assess their satisfaction and evaluate their experience. These activities can be summarised into three key steps: before purchasing activities, purchasing activities and activities after purchasing.

2.2.2 Research Model

Figure 1 below illustrates a simple model adapted from the theoretical framework and previous studies. It outlines the relationship between two types of variables, where the independent variable (Reference Group) is believed to affect the dependent variable (Purchasing Behaviour).

Fig.1. Research Model



Source: Derived from: (CHILDERS & RAO, 1992), (LEI QIAN et al, 2023), (JIN & MIAO, 2018), (KHOTIB & SOEBANDI, 2019), (Shi-Zhu LIANG et al, 2024).

3. Method and Materials

3.1 Population and Sample

The research population used in this study was the phone users in different socio-demographic groups living in different areas of Adrar City. Similar to many previous studies (BAZLUR & SADIA, 2022), a merely convenience (purposive) sample of 124 participants was applied to collect primary data in the current study. The researcher suggests that the appropriate places for reaching such consumers are the front mobile shops, high-density streets, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and other public spaces. With the aid of a team of interviewers, a questionnaire in paper format was delivered to respondents who were required to complete the questionnaire and return it. However, in some cases, the interviewers themselves filled out the questionnaires.

3.2 Instrument

In order to collect the main data, a structured questionnaire consisting of two parts was generated; the first part was designed to collect data on socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, and monthly income. The second part included two sections, where the first section contains sixteen (16) items related to the four types of reference groups (family, friends, opinion leaders, and celebrities). Four (04) specific items were constructed for each type. The second section contains twenty (20) items related to the five key steps of the purchasing process (problem recognition, information Research, evaluation of alternatives, Purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour). Four (04) specific items were constructed for each step.

All of the items used in the questionnaire were adapted from the existing literature and were modified to adjust the context of the present study (MEI MEI LAU et al, 2016), (Shi-Zhu LIANG et al, 2024), (BISHNOI & MANN, 2015), (SARMAD & MAHREEN, 2017), (ADNANE, 2023), (DING et al, 2020), (MOHAN, 2014).

The statements of the second part of the questionnaire were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A pre-test was run with a small sample consisting of 10 individuals who were similar to those who will be included in the large sample. Necessary changes were made in response to their feedback. In the long run, the questionnaire was ethically approved by ensuring respondents' confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the results of the research were restricted purely for academic purposes.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of the Research Tool

3.3.1 Reliability of the tool

As seen in Table 1 below, the Cronbach's alpha test indicates a high degree of reliability for the entire questionnaire in all variables. Such a high value means that the research tool can be used to investigate what the researchers want.

Table 1. Result of Questionnaire Reliability Test

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha	Results
Reference Group	16	0.701	Reliable
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	20	0.780	Reliable
Total questionnaire	36	0.817	Reliable

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

3.3.2 Validity of the tool

The validity test was carried out by calculating the correlation values between each item score and the total scale score. In the ongoing study, the validity of the questionnaire was tested on two variables: namely, reference group and Consumer Purchasing behaviour, with a total of 36 items. Table 2 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficients were greater than 0.8. That means each item statement can be declared valid. Therefore, the validity of the entire scale was immaculately confirmed.

Table 2. Result of the Questionnaire Validity Test

Variables	Correlation* Coefficients	Level of significance	Result
Reference Group	0.819	0.00	valid
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	0.896	0.00	valid

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

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

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

One hundred and twenty-four individuals at Adrar city participated in the current study; diverse categories of people served as subjects because they own and use a mobile phone. They are widespread across manifold

socio-demographic groups, as shown in Table 2 below. 58.90% of the people being interviewed were male. In terms of age, 18.50% of respondents were below 20 years old, whereas 38.70 % were in the 21-30 years old age interval, 21% fell within the age of 31-40 years, and a little more than this percentage were above 41 years. Regarding the educational level, highly educated respondents accounted for the majority by 62.90%, followed by secondary school graduates with 27.40%, and Middle school education level represents the smallest category at 09.70%. With respect to monthly income, it was observed that 29% of respondents earned 30000 DZD and below, 25.80 % of respondents earned between 31000 DZD and 50000 DZD, 29.80% of the respondents had a monthly income between 51000 DZD and 70000 DZD, and the monthly income of 15.30% was 70000 DZD and above.

Table 3. Sample Profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Gender	Male	73	58.90
	Female	51	41.10
Age	below 20 years	23	18.50
	21 - 30	48	38.70
	31 - 40	26	21.00
	41years and above	27	21.80
Educational Level	Middle school education	12	09.70
	secondary	34	27.40
	higher	78	62.90
Monthly Income	below 30000	36	29.00
	31000 - 50000	32	25.80
	51000 - 70000	37	29.80
	above 71000	19	15.30
Total		124	100.00

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

4.2 Descriptive analysis

Within this portion of work, descriptive statistics results of both independent and dependent variables, respectively, were depicted in the two

tables below. Means and standard deviations were derived from the responses of the sample subjects.

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics Results of the Reference Group:

From Table 4, it was found that the mean score values were all higher than the neutral point (3), indicating that the respondents' opinion about reference group leaned towards agreement, while the celebrities scored the lowest mean, which means that the respondents were less reliant on celebrities as a reference group for their buying behaviour.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of the Reference Group

types	Number of Items	Means	Standard Deviation	Sig	Degree of Agreement
Family	04	03.207	0.684	0.00	Average
Friends	04	03.498	0.795	0.00	High
Opinion Leaders	04	03.443	0.829	0.00	High
Celebrities	04	02.409	0.897	0.00	Low
Total	16	03.066	0.482	0.00	Average

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics Results of the Purchasing Behaviour:

Table 5 below portrays that the mean scores for purchasing behaviour stages ranged from 3.46 to 3.96, and the mean score of all the purchasing process was 03.066. It demonstrated that the respondents' opinion about purchasing behaviour leaned towards strong agreement; in other words, the respondents followed and respected all the mentioned stages to make decisions about purchasing a mobile phone. The recorded standard deviations ranging from 0.578 to 1.06 support those results by suggesting a moderate to high level of consensus among respondents.

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviation of Purchasing Behaviour

phases	Number of Items	Means	Standard Deviation	Sig	Degree of Agreement
Problem Recognition	04	03.675	01.06	0.00	High
Information Research	04	03.691	0.816	0.00	High

Evaluation of Alternatives	05	03.516	0.578	0.00	High
Purchase Decision	03	03.962	0.620	0.00	High
Post-Purchase Behaviour	04	03.469	0.710	0.00	High
Total	20	03.640	0.480	0.00	High

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

4.3 The Test of Normal Distribution

A normal distribution test was conducted to verify the suitability of the data gathered; such a test is crucial for using certain statistical analyses. In the current context, both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used, and their outcomes were displayed in Table 6. The probability values for two variables are greater than the usual cut-off of 0.05, signifying the data fits a normal distribution.

Table 6. Normal Distribution Test Results

Variables	Normality Test Methods			
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Statistics	Sig	Statistics	Sig
Reference Group	0.115	0.092	0.972	0.102
Purchasing Behaviour	0.109	0.181	0.967	0.052

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

4.4 Statistical Hypothesis Testing

The main assumption of the present study is formally stated as follows: **There is a statistically significant influence of the reference group on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar City.**

Multiple linear regressions were performed to test the main hypothesis. The regression model results were summarised in Table 7. Checking the fit of this model was done beforehand by conducting a multicollinearity test, as seen in the table 7 below, the tolerance coefficients are above 0.2, and the Variance Inflation Factor values (VIF) are below than 5, indicating no problem of multicollinearity between the independent variable in the

regression model (AL-RAWABHA et al, 2021). The Durbin-Watson statistic was also conducted; the test provided a value nearer to the halfway point 2. So, there is no autocorrelation problem (ADHIKARI, 2022).

From Table 7, it is noticed that the R-value is 0.579 and the p-value is less than the threshold of 0.00, indicating a significant relationship between the independent variable (reference group) and the dependent variable (purchasing consumer behaviour). Furthermore, the R-square reached 0.335 and the significance of the test (sig-F) is less than the standard threshold (sig = 0.00 < 0.05), this prove the ability of the all reference group types (family, friends, opinion leaders, and celebrities) to influence together (simultaneously) the consumer to purchase a mobile phone, to put it another way, 33.5% of the variance in purchasing consumer behaviour can be explained by all the four types of reference group, while the 66.5% is explained by other variables (factors) not examined in this study.

In order to understand how each type of reference group can partially influence the consumer to buy a mobile phone, it is beneficial to decompose the above main hypothesis into more focused, testable sub-hypotheses:

H₁: There is a statistically significant influence of family on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₂: There is a statistically significant influence of friends on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₃: There is a statistically significant influence of opinion leaders on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

H₄: There is a statistically significant influence of celebrities on the consumer purchasing behaviour of mobile phone users in Adrar city

As detailed in Table 7 below, the beta coefficient (β_1) of family is 0.097 with $t=1.805$ and $p = 0.074 > 0.05$, which suggests that the family as reference group has no significant influence on purchasing behaviour. So, this finding fails to support the hypothesis H₁. However, the hypothesis H₂ is confirmed true ($\beta_2=0.219$, $t=4.602$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$). Similarly, opinion leaders significantly influence consumers to purchase a mobile phone since ($\beta_3= 0.178$, $t=3.827$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$), this is why the H₃ could be accepted. Finally, the evidence ($\beta_4= 0.002$, $t=0.45$, $p = 0.9654 > 0.05$) suggests it is

unlikely to reject the H4, and celebrities were not significant in explaining purchasing behaviour.

Table 7. Multiple Regression Test Results for the Main Hypothesis

Model variables	B	T	Sig	Collinearity statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.952	8.044	0.000	-	-
Family	0.097	1.805	0.074	0.945	1.058
Friends	0.219	4.602	0.000	0.896	1.116
Opinion Leaders	0.178	3.827	0.000	0.865	1.156
Celebrities	0.002	0.045	0.965	0.924	1.082

Dependent variable: Purchasing Behaviour

Durbin-Watson = 2.062

R = 0.579

R-square = 0.335

Adjusted R-square = 0.312

Sig-f = 0.00

Source: Results from SPSS Analyses, Version 23.

4.5 The influence of reference groups across the purchasing process:

In this breakdown, a detailed analysis is required to understand the influence of each type of reference group at every purchasing stage. Regression analysis was performed to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between every independent variable (family, friends, opinion leaders, and celebrities) and every dependent variable (problem recognition stage, information research stage, evaluation of alternatives stage, purchase decision stage, and post-purchase behaviour stage).

4.5.1 The influence of reference groups at the problem recognition stage:

The multiple regression test results of reference groups and problem recognition stage showed that the consumer is influenced positively in the problem recognition stage by only the friends ($\beta=0.263$, $p=0.024 \leq 0.05$). Conversely, the other factors, family ($\beta=0.228$, $p=0.082 > 0.05$), opinion

leaders ($\beta=0.086$, $p=0.444 > 0.05$), and celebrities ($\beta=0.212$, $p=0.370 > 0.05$) do not appear to have a statistically significant influence in this stage of the purchasing process.

4.5.2 The influence of reference groups at the information research stage:

At the information research stage, it is clearly that the respondents diversify their sources of information, they trust more the family member's ($\beta=0.513$, $p=0.000$), followed by opinion leaders where were ranked in the second position ($\beta=0.214$, $p=0.007 \leq 0.05$), then celebrities ($\beta=0.213$, $p=0.003 \leq 0.05$), and finally the friends came in the tail end ($\beta=0.197$, $p=0.015 \leq 0.05$).

4.5.3 The influence of reference groups at the Evaluation of Alternatives Stage:

At the evaluation of alternatives stage, the respondents were significantly influenced by all of the reference groups; they relied more on Opinion Leaders ($\beta=0.224$, $p=0.00$), the Celebrities and family members had quite similar influence with ($\beta=0.181$, $p=0.001 \leq 0.05$), ($\beta=0.180$, $p=0.008 \leq 0.05$), respectively. The friends revealed the lower level of impact in this stage of the purchasing process with ($\beta=0.140$, $p=0.018 \leq 0.05$).

4.5.4 The influence of reference groups at the Purchase Decision Stage:

According to the findings derived from multiple regression test results of reference groups and the purchase decision stage, it can be seen that the interviewed consumers relied more on friends ($\beta=0.207$, $p=0.003 \leq 0.05$) and opinion leaders ($\beta=0.178$, $p=0.008 \leq 0.05$) to make the purchasing decision of a mobile phone. Whilst the members' family and celebrities do not have an effect in this stage with ($\beta=0.057$, $p=0.460 > 0.05$), ($\beta=0.065$, $p=0.271 > 0.08$) singly.

4.5.5 The influence of reference groups at the Post-Purchase Behaviour Stage:

The friends have the high level of influence on post-purchase behaviour ($\beta=0.309$, $p=0.00 \leq 0.05$), compared to opinion leaders ($\beta=0.177$, $p=0.018 \leq 0.05$), and Celebrities ($\beta=0.140$, $p=0.035 \leq 0.05$), while the family

members were not involved in this stage of purchasing process by expressing no significant influence with ($\beta=0.073$, $p=0.697 >0.05$).

5. CONCLUSION

In terms of marketing, understanding the consumer is the first step to ensure marketing success, and then ensuring commercial success. That is why the researchers became aware of the importance of this field of research, and several studies were conducted in this setting. In such a way, the present study was conducted with a primary objective of verifying how reference group types influence the consumer to purchase a mobile phone in Adrar city. To measure the influence in question, suitable statistical tools were employed. The findings of our study are quite convincing and add to a growing body of literature on academic consumer research.

From the outcome of our investigation, it is possible to conclude the following:

- In a mobile phone making decision, the respondents typically followed this process: problem recognition stage, information research stage, evaluation of alternatives stage, purchase decision stage, and post-purchase behaviour stage.
- The respondents were less reliant on celebrities as a reference group for their buying behaviour.
- There is a significant relationship between the reference groups and the purchasing consumer behaviour. In addition, all reference group types (family, friends, opinion leaders, and celebrities) are able to influence the consumer to purchase a mobile phone simultaneously. Furthermore, they can explain the variance in purchasing consumer behaviour by 33.5%, while the remaining 66.5% of the variance refers to other variables that were not included in this study.
- Concerning the influence of reference groups across the purchasing process, the following was discerned: the consumer is influenced positively in the problem recognition stage by only friends. While he is only influenced positively in the problem recognition stage, all the factors are involved. Similarly, in the evaluation of alternatives stage, the respondents

were significantly influenced by all of the reference groups. The friends' and the leader's opinions influence the consumer more in the purchase decision stage. Finally, family members were not involved in the post-purchasing stage.

Based on the study's findings, some recommendations can be proposed:

- For future researchers, they are recommended to conduct future studies including other independent variables. For example, enter the mediation demographic characteristics in the relationship between the reference group and consumers' purchasing behaviour of smartphones.

-For marketers, they are recommended to use the reference group types in advertising campaigns rather than directly targeting the audience.

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