



THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TOURISM MARKETING ON SHAPING TOURISTS ATTITUDES TOWARD ALGERIAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS



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Abstract

This study examines the impact of digital tourism marketing on shaping Algerian tourists' attitudes toward national tourist destinations, in light of the technological transformation taking place globally and the widespread use of digital media for interaction and influence. The main research question is: To what extent does digital tourism marketing contribute to forming the tourism attitudes of Algerian tourists?

The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach and relied on a questionnaire distributed to **200 Algerian tourists** who use social media platforms. The results revealed that digital marketing plays a crucial role in building mental images and enhancing tourism intention, with an average perception score of the importance of digital marketing reaching **4.08**, and the average of positive attitudes at **4.01**, showing a strong correlation ($r = 0.71$) between digital marketing and tourism attitudes.

It was also found that younger and more educated groups are more influenced by digital content, and that user-generated content and local influencers have a greater impact than official campaigns. The study concluded by emphasizing the need to adopt a **national digital tourism marketing strategy** based on high-quality visual content, the involvement of digital actors, improved tourism services, and the training of human resources to ensure alignment between the digital image and reality.

Keywords: Digital Tourism Marketing – Tourist Attitudes – Algerian Tourist – Social Media – Tourist Behavior

Introduction

Tourism has become today one of the most important economic and social sectors in the world. Its traditional function based solely on leisure has evolved into a tool for sustainable development, cultural exchange, and the stimulation of local economies. With the significant progress witnessed globally in the field of information and communication technologies, tourism marketing has transformed into a digital domain that relies on modern interactive tools such as social media platforms, visual content, and websites. This transformation has made tourists more informed and aware when making their travel decisions.

In Algeria, the tourism sector is considered one of the most promising sectors due to the country's rich natural, cultural, and heritage diversity. However, the exploitation of these assets remains below the desired level compared to the available potential. The ongoing digital transformation worldwide has opened new opportunities for Algerian tourism to promote its destinations and attractions through electronic marketing and digital platforms. Hence, studying the impact of digital tourism marketing on shaping tourists' attitudes toward Algerian destinations becomes essential, given the influential role of digital media in shaping behavior, choices, and tourism orientation.

Main Problem

In recent years, the tourism sector in Algeria has experienced remarkable transformations driven by the digital revolution and the widespread use of social media, which have become major tools for interaction and influence in tourist behavior.

In this context, digital tourism marketing emerges as an effective tool for shaping tourists' perceptions and guiding their intentions and attitudes toward specific destinations within the country. However, this role still raises questions regarding the effectiveness of digital media in influencing Algerian tourists and the nature of the relationship between digital content and behavioral attitudes, especially in light of the limited official campaigns and weak institutional coordination.

◆ Therefore, the main research question of this study can be formulated as follows:

To what extent does digital tourism marketing contribute to shaping tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourist destinations?

Sub-Questions

To explore the problem in depth, the following sub-questions are proposed:

1. What is meant by digital tourism marketing? What are its main components and mechanisms in the tourism field?
2. What is the nature of Algerian tourists' attitudes, and what factors influence their formation?
3. To what extent does digital content (images, videos, social interaction) influence the formation of tourism attitudes?
4. How do social media networks contribute to building the mental image of Algerian destinations?

5. Do tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism vary according to their demographic characteristics (age, gender, educational level)?
6. What is the statistical relationship between the effectiveness of digital marketing and the behavioral intention to visit among Algerian tourists?

Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the impact of digital tourism marketing on shaping Algerian tourists' attitudes toward domestic destinations, by identifying the nature of the relationship between the two variables and the key factors influencing this interaction.

The objectives of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. To define the concept of digital tourism marketing and highlight its importance in promoting Algerian tourist destinations.
2. To analyze the factors affecting tourist behavior and attitudes toward local destinations.
3. To measure the level of Algerian tourists' awareness of the importance of digital media in their travel decision-making.
4. To identify the effect of interactive digital content and electronic credibility in shaping the mental image of destinations.
5. To test the relationship between digital marketing and tourism attitudes using the descriptive-analytical approach.
6. To propose ways to develop a national strategy for digital tourism marketing aligned with Algeria's digital transformation.

SECTION ONE: TOURISM AND ITS COMPONENTS IN THE ALGERIAN CONTEXT

Subsection 1: The Concept, Origin, and Development of Tourism

Many researchers define tourism as a human, social, and economic activity undertaken by individuals outside their usual environment for various purposes such as leisure, recreation, culture, health, or business. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), tourism is one of the leading sectors generating wealth and employment opportunities, contributing to more than 10% of the global GDP.

Throughout history, tourism has gone through several stages. It began with travel for religious and commercial purposes, then evolved into exploratory journeys during the Middle Ages, and took its modern form with the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, when transportation expanded and hotel services improved. With the advent of the digital revolution, tourism entered a new phase known as smart tourism, where technology became an integral part of the tourist experience from searching for information to booking and reviewing travel experiences.

In Algeria, interest in tourism dates back to the post-independence period, when the state sought to make it a complementary sector to hydrocarbons. However, economic challenges and limited infrastructure hindered sustainable growth. In recent years, the Master Plan for Tourism Development (SDAT 2030) was adopted, aiming to modernize Algerian tourism within a framework that integrates environmental, digital, and competitive dimensions (Ministry of Tourism, 2023).

Subsection 2: Types of Tourism

Tourism types vary according to motivations and activities, and can be classified as follows:

- **Leisure Tourism:** The most common type, focused on rest and relaxation.
- **Cultural Tourism:** Focused on visiting historical sites, museums, and festivals.
- **Desert Tourism:** A distinctive Algerian specialty, given the Sahara's unique natural and aesthetic diversity.
- **Therapeutic Tourism:** Based on wellness and recovery through mineral waters or healthy climates.
- **Ecotourism:** Aims to protect natural resources through environmentally responsible activities.

According to Draoui (2024), the diversity of tourism in Algeria represents one of its key attraction assets; however, weak internal and external marketing has prevented the translation of these potentials into effective tourism activity.

Subsection 3: Tourism Attraction Components in Algeria

Algeria possesses a diverse wealth of natural, cultural, and material resources that make it qualified to become an integrated tourism destination. These components can be summarized as follows:

1. Natural Components:

These include more than **1,600 km** of coastline, forests, mountains, oases, and the Sahara Desert one of the most beautiful deserts in the world. Areas such as **Tamanrasset**, **Illizi**, and the **Tell Atlas** represent some of the most scenic natural sites (UNWTO, 2023).

2. Historical and Cultural Components:

Algeria enjoys a rich civilizational heritage reflected in its ancient cities (such as **Casbah**, **Djemila**, and **Timgad**), traditions, festivals, and folk arts. It also exhibits a remarkable cultural diversity stemming from the confluence of **Amazigh**, **Arab**, **Mediterranean**, and **African** civilizations.

3. Material Tourism Components:

These include infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, and transportation networks, which are gradually improving despite existing gaps. Recently, attention has shifted toward smart services and digital marketing to enhance the tourism experience (**Ministry of Tourism, 2023**).

4. Tourism Investment:

The Algerian authorities are making efforts to encourage investment in the tourism sector through tax incentives and public-private partnership projects. However, reports from the Ministry of Tourism indicate that international promotion remains weak compared to potential, making the shift toward **digital marketing** a necessary step to strengthen Algeria's tourism appeal.

Subsection 4: The Current State of Tourism in Algeria

Despite Algeria's immense tourism potential, its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains limited, not exceeding 2%, according to the World Bank Report (2023). This is mainly due to

weak promotion, limited presence on international digital platforms, and regulatory and logistical challenges.

However, recent years have witnessed growing interest in domestic and desert tourism, supported by an increasing volume of digital content on social media platforms. Draoui (2024) notes that Algerian youth have become major informal promoters of tourism through platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, reflecting a qualitative shift in tourists' behavior and their active role in interactive marketing.

Hence, it is evident that Algeria possesses a solid base of natural and cultural assets, yet marketing remains the decisive factor in transforming these assets into an economic force. Moreover, the ongoing digital transformation provides a genuine opportunity to develop Algerian tourism through electronic marketing tools capable of reshaping the image of Algeria in the minds of both local and international tourists.

SECTION TWO: DIGITAL TOURISM MARKETING

Subsection 1: The Concept of Tourism Marketing and Its Modern Dimensions

Tourism marketing is one of the key pillars of success for any tourism system. It is the process through which tourists' needs are identified and satisfied in ways that ensure their satisfaction and enhance the attractiveness of the destination. According to Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2022), tourism marketing is "the activity that aims to plan, promote, and distribute tourism services in a way that ensures mutual satisfaction between the tourist and the tourism institution."

In the past, tourism marketing relied mainly on traditional methods such as printed brochures, travel agencies, and participation in international fairs. However, digital transformation has radically changed this equation, as tourists now depend on self-directed online searches and social media platforms to explore and compare destinations before making their decisions. Thus emerged the concept of Digital Tourism Marketing, which employs digital media at every stage of interaction with tourists from promotion to sales to loyalty building.

Digital tourism marketing encompasses a wide range of online promotional activities, including:

- Electronic advertising and digital content;
- Social media marketing;
- Search engine marketing and official websites of tourism institutions;
- Digital reputation management and engagement with tourist reviews.

This modern approach aims to enhance the tourism experience through personalization and direct interaction, aligning with the expectations of the contemporary digital consumer (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2020).

Subsection 2: Characteristics of Digital Tourism Marketing

Digital tourism marketing is distinguished by a set of characteristics that differentiate it from traditional marketing, the most important of which are:

1. Interactivity:

Digital platforms enable tourists to become active participants in the communication process through comments, sharing, and reposting, creating a direct relationship between them and tourism institutions (Hudson & Thal, 2021).

2. Wide Reach:

Digital marketing allows access to new markets quickly and at lower costs than traditional methods, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of emerging destinations such as Algeria.

3. Personalization:

Digital data enables tourism institutions to tailor content to tourists' interests and preferences, creating an implicit psychological influence on their decisions and purchasing behavior.

4. Analytics:

User behavior and interests can be analyzed through advanced digital tools, helping organizations develop more effective strategies for promoting destinations.

5. Attractive Visual Content:

Photos, videos, and virtual experiences have become key tools in shaping tourists' perceptions and mental images of destinations.

Subsection 3: The Role of Social Media in Tourism Promotion

Today, social media platforms have become among the most essential communication tools in tourism marketing. They are no longer merely spaces for social interaction but strategic channels for building the destination image and influencing tourists' behavioral attitudes.

According to Javed et al. (2020), social media has become part of the "digital tourist journey," where tourists first consume visual content shared by other users, which stimulates their interest, leading them to search for additional information and eventually make a decision.

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube contribute to disseminating dynamic tourism content based on personal experiences and collective participation, which enhances the credibility of marketing messages.

In the Algerian context, field studies confirm that digital platforms now play a vital role in spreading a culture of domestic tourism particularly through youth-led initiatives and Facebook travel groups that promote natural and historical areas in simple and engaging ways, often proving more influential than traditional official campaigns.

Subsection 4: Digital Tourism Marketing Strategies in Algeria

Amid increasing global competition, Algeria needs to adopt modern digital strategies that highlight its assets and reshape its tourism image. The most prominent strategies include:

1. Content Marketing Strategy:

This involves producing high-quality visual content that reflects Algeria's natural and cultural diversity. Reports from the **Ministry of Tourism (2023)** indicate that visual content showcasing the Sahara and ancient archaeological sites generates the highest engagement rates.

2. Influencer Marketing:

Digital influencers have become key players in tourism marketing, as their personal experiences strongly affect followers' decisions. Algeria can leverage this form of marketing to project a positive image of its destinations.

3. Interactive Marketing:

This strategy engages tourists through contests, reviews, and interactive photos, fostering an emotional connection to destinations and increasing the intention to revisit.

4. Shift Toward Smart Tourism:

This approach involves integrating digital technologies such as interactive maps, online booking systems, and personalized recommendations—a goal Algeria seeks to achieve under its **Tourism Quality Development Plan (SDAT 2030)**.

Subsection 5: The Relationship Between Digital Tourism Marketing and Tourist Behavior

Digital tourism marketing is among the most influential factors shaping tourists' behavior and attitudes. Continuous interaction with tourism content on social platforms generates awareness and positive perceptions toward destinations, which gradually evolve into behavioral intentions and actual travel decisions.

This influence manifests through three key dimensions:

1. Cognitive Dimension:

Reflected in the information tourists acquire about destinations through digital images and reviews.

2. Affective Dimension:

Represented by the impressions and emotions evoked by promotional campaigns and visual content.

3. Behavioral Dimension:

Reflected in tourists' intentions to book or visit a destination, indicating the success of digital marketing in converting perception into action.

Hudson and Thal (2021) confirmed that the affective dimension is the most effective in shaping tourists' attitudes, as images and positive emotions play a decisive role in the final decision-making process.

Conclusion of the Section

This section demonstrated that digital tourism marketing is no longer merely a promotional tool but a comprehensive system that influences tourists' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The ongoing digital transformation represents a genuine opportunity for Algerian tourism to move from traditional promotion to smart interaction based on content, participation, and experience.

The success of any future tourism strategy in Algeria will depend on its ability to harness digital tools to build a positive destination image that reflects the country's rich cultural and natural diversity.

SECTION THREE: TOURIST BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

Subsection 1: The Concept of Tourist Behavior

Tourist behavior refers to the set of actions and decisions made by an individual before, during, and after the travel experience. This behavior involves cognitive and psychological processes related to information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision-making, and post-experience evaluation.

According to Howard & Sheth (2020), tourist behavior is “the individual’s response to marketing and environmental stimuli that determine their attitudes, intentions, and choices toward a tourist destination.”

Draoui (2024) emphasizes that understanding tourist behavior represents the cornerstone of tourism marketing planning, as knowing what motivates and attracts tourists helps design more effective promotional content.

This behavior is influenced by internal factors (psychological and personal) and external factors (social, cultural, economic, and media-related). Generally, the decision-making process begins with a psychological motive that drives the individual to seek a specific experience or pleasure, which then develops into an actual behavior supported by digital information and persuasive visual content.

Subsection 2: Stages of the Tourist Decision-Making Process

A tourist typically goes through several stages before deciding to visit a particular destination, which can be summarized as follows:

4. Awareness Stage:

This stage arises from the tourist’s desire for rest, exploration, or recreation. Here, digital marketing content plays a crucial role in stimulating interest through engaging images and videos.

5. Information Search Stage:

Tourists rely on the internet and social media to obtain information about destinations such as prices, weather, past experiences, and accommodation options. According to **Hudson & Thal (2021)**, about **70%** of international tourists depend on the internet as their primary source of tourism information.

6. Evaluation of Alternatives:

The tourist compares destinations based on digital content and others’ experiences, where the **destination image** plays a central role in shaping preferences.

7. Decision-Making Stage:

This is the moment when the tourist chooses a specific destination based on personal conviction and perception. Recent studies (**Buhalis & Sinarta, 2020**) have shown that tourism decisions are now “driven more by digital content than by traditional advertising.”

8. Post-Experience Stage:

The tourist shares their experience through social media, creating a new cycle of digital influence that shapes other tourists’ behaviors—a phenomenon known as **Experience Sharing Marketing**.

Subsection 3: Factors Influencing Tourist Behavior

Tourist behavior results from the interaction of multiple interrelated factors, which can be classified as follows:

1. Psychological Factors:

These include motivation, perception, attitudes, and learning. Motivation drives the desire to travel; perception shapes the mental image; and attitudes guide decisions. These psychological dimensions often manifest implicitly in the tourist's interaction with digital content that can evoke emotions or change beliefs (Kotler et al., 2022).

2. Social Factors:

These involve the influence of family, friends, reference groups, and digital communities. Others' opinions on online platforms play a major role in determining destination preferences.

3. Cultural Factors:

These relate to values, customs, and traditions that shape the types of tourism activities considered desirable or acceptable within certain groups.

4. Economic Factors:

Such as income level, travel costs, and digital promotional offers that can encourage immediate booking.

5. Technological Factors:

Currently among the most influential, as digital advancements facilitate research, booking, and the creation of digital experiences that promote positive engagement with destinations.

Subsection 4: Tourism Attitudes and Their Importance

Tourism attitudes are defined as stable mental and emotional responses that tourists express toward a particular destination based on their perceptions, experiences, and feelings.

According to Fishbein & Ajzen (2010), an attitude is “a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward an object.” Therefore, tourism attitudes constitute a primary psychological determinant of tourist behavior.

In the digital tourism context, attitudes are formed through tourists' exposure to content shared across social networks, such as appealing images, positive comments, or user reviews. These elements shape a positive mental image that leads to behavioral intention, meaning the desire to visit the destination.

A study by Javed et al. (2020) confirmed that digital interaction through social media has a direct impact on forming positive attitudes toward destinations, especially when the content is credible and engaging.

Subsection 5: The Tourist's Mental Image and Its Role in Shaping Behavior

The destination image is one of the most closely linked concepts to digital tourism marketing, as it represents the perception formed in the tourist's mind about a destination. This image is not shaped solely by official campaigns but also by other travelers' shared experiences on social media platforms.

According to Gartner (2021), the destination image consists of three dimensions:

- **Cognitive Dimension:** What the tourist knows about the destination (information and knowledge).
- **Affective Dimension:** The feelings and impressions associated with the place.
- **Behavioral Dimension:** The intention or desire to visit.

Digital tourism marketing contributes to building this image through visuals, videos, and interactive storytelling that leave a deep psychological imprint on the tourist's perception.

In Algeria, numerous digital initiatives have helped improve the destination image, such as interactive tourism pages and short video clips highlighting the beauty of the Sahara and historical sites. These initiatives have contributed to increasing interest in domestic tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2023).

Subsection 6: The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and the Formation of Tourism Attitudes

The relationship between digital tourism marketing and tourists' attitudes can be understood across three interrelated levels:

1. Cognitive Impact:

Digital marketing provides an abundance of information, enhancing tourists' knowledge of destinations.

2. Affective Impact:

Visual, musical, and narrative content in digital campaigns evokes emotions and creates positive psychological connections with destinations.

3. Behavioral Impact:

Reflected in the actual decision to visit or recommend the destination to others.

Hudson & Thal (2021) note that these three levels together form what is known as the "Digital Tourism Influence Chain," in which exposure to engaging content leads to the formation of a positive attitude, then to behavioral intention, and finally to actual behavior.

Conclusion of the Section

This section highlights that tourists' behavior and attitudes are no longer shaped by traditional advertising but by shared digital experiences and interactive content that combine information with emotion. Social media now constitutes the new psychological framework that defines tourists' choices and directs their decisions.

Hence, digital tourism marketing goes beyond mere promotion—it exerts cognitive, affective, and behavioral influence that shapes tourists' attitudes toward Algerian destinations and plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable tourism engagement.

SECTION FOUR: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL TOURISM MARKETING AND THE FORMATION OF TOURISM ATTITUDES

Subsection 1: The Communicative Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourist Behavior

The relationship between digital tourism marketing and tourists' attitudes is essentially both communicative and behavioral. Tourism institutions aim to influence tourists' awareness, emotions, and behaviors through targeted digital messages and stimulating visual content. Thus, marketing is not merely an informational process but rather a persuasive and interactive process involving symbols, imagery, and social experiences.

Recent studies (Hudson & Thal, 2021; Kotler et al., 2022) confirm that social media has become a formative environment for tourism attitudes, as it allows tourists to explore, interact, and experience destinations virtually before making decisions.

Accordingly, digital marketing functions as a cognitive stimulus that triggers tourists' behavioral responses, following an implicit psychological sequence:

Attention → Perception → Emotion → Behavior.

Subsection 2: Digital Tourism Marketing as a Tool for Shaping Attitudes

From a sociological and communication perspective, digital tourism marketing is viewed as a process of constructing touristic meaning in the tourist's mind. Digital content not only provides information but also builds perception, value, and emotional attachment to a place.

As Govers & Go (2020) assert, digital tourism marketing is “a symbolic process that shapes collective awareness about a place through shared images and emotions.”

This influence operates through three main mechanisms:

1. Digital Persuasion:

Through storytelling and inspiring visuals that evoke curiosity and fascination.

2. Social Influence:

Through others' opinions and user recommendations—tourists tend to trust peer experiences more than official campaigns.

3. Emotional Stimulation:

Through visual and musical content that activates emotional memory and creates affective bonds with destinations.

Hence, digital tourism marketing does not merely shape attitudes it actively creates them by redefining the destination image in the tourist's perception.

Subsection 3: Destination Image and Tourist Behavioral Intention

The destination image is one of the most significant indicators preceding the formation of tourism attitudes. The more positive and coherent the image, the stronger the behavioral intention to visit.

A study by Javed et al. (2020) revealed that 80% of tourists are influenced by positive visual content when choosing their destinations, particularly when the source is credible and consistent with others' experiences.

Behavioral intention represents the stage where perception transforms into desire and desire into readiness for action. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991), attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control jointly shape intention, which in turn leads to actual behavior.

Applied to the digital tourism context, this theory suggests that:

- Positive digital content (attitude),
- User reviews (subjective norm), and
- Ease of online booking (behavioral control) together enhance the tourist's intention to visit Algerian destinations.

Subsection 4: Theoretical Models Explaining the Relationship

1. **Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991):**

This model explains how attitudes contribute to shaping intention and subsequent behavior. In digital tourism, positive online content acts as a motivating factor influencing behavioral intention through cognitive and emotional impact.

2. **Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958):**

This theory explains how individuals are influenced by others' opinions through three mechanisms:

- **Compliance:** Acting to gain social approval.
- **Identification:** Emulating influencers or admired figures.
- **Internalization:** Adopting genuine belief change due to persuasion.

This theory effectively explains the impact of **digital influencers** on tourists' behavior.

3. **Information Processing Model:**

This model posits that tourists undergo a cognitive process that begins with **attention** to digital messages, followed by **comprehension**, **acceptance**, and finally **behavioral translation**. Each stage is affected by the attractiveness and credibility of the message.

4. **Destination Image Theory:**

This theory assumes that a positive image formed through digital marketing strengthens favorable attitudes and behavioral intentions toward visiting a destination.

Subsection 5: The Applied Relationship in the Algerian Context

In the Algerian case, digital tourism marketing takes on a specific dimension due to the relative novelty of digital practices within tourism institutions.

According to Ministry of Tourism (2023) reports, the number of digital tourism platforms in Algeria increased by 45% over the past three years, and about 67% of Algerian youth obtain their tourism information from social media.

Furthermore, Draoui (2024) found that content shared by users particularly photos and short videos significantly influences local tourists' perceptions of destinations such as Tamanrasset, El Tarf, and Tipaza. This suggests that spontaneous digital stimulation now plays a role comparable to that of official campaigns in shaping tourism attitudes.

This relationship is especially evident in domestic tourism, where Algerian tourists are increasingly influenced by digital storytelling and visual experiences shared by others, creating a form of participatory marketing built on authenticity and social interaction.

The analysis shows that digital tourism marketing has become a form of soft power in shaping tourism attitudes, merging communicative persuasion with implicit psychological influence. Creative digital content, social credibility, and visual symbolism collectively generate awareness and attraction toward destinations ultimately translating into actual tourist behavior.

Thus, investing in Algeria's digital tourism transformation is not merely a technical choice, but rather a strategic pathway for building a positive destination image and fostering supportive attitudes toward national tourism.

SECTION FIVE: APPLIED CHAPTER — ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TOURISM MARKETING ON SHAPING TOURISTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD ALGERIAN DESTINATIONS: A VIRTUAL FIELD STUDY ON A SAMPLE OF ALGERIAN TOURISTS

The applied component of this research represents the link between the theoretical and empirical frameworks, as it allows for testing the proposed hypotheses and assessing their applicability to the Algerian tourism reality.

In this study, a questionnaire was constructed to measure the impact of digital tourism marketing on shaping the attitudes of Algerian tourists, based on the descriptive analytical method.

This part of the research aims to describe and interpret the studied phenomenon by analyzing quantitative data using a statistical logic that helps understand the relationship between digital marketing and tourist behavior.

Subsection 1: Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of Algerian tourists who use social media networks to search for tourist destinations or to plan their trips.

A **sample of 200 tourists** was selected, representing various categories (**males and females – young and middle-aged groups – with diverse educational levels**).

Table (01): Distribution of the Study Sample According to Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
Age	Under 25 years	70	35.0
	25–40 years	90	45.0
	Over 40 years	40	20.0
Educational Level	Secondary	40	20.0
	University	120	60.0
	Postgraduate	40	20.0
Total		200	100.0

Interpretation of Table (01) It is evident from the table that the study sample consists of 200 Algerian tourists, distributed almost equally by gender (55% males and 45% females), which reflects a balanced representation between both sexes within the study.

The data also show that the dominant age group is 25–40 years (45%), followed by the younger group under 25 years (35%). This indicates that younger generations are the most engaged in consuming digital tourism content and using social media platforms for trip planning.

Regarding educational level, the university group represents the highest percentage (60%), followed by the secondary and postgraduate categories, each accounting for 20%.

This distribution mirrors the reality of digital usage in Algeria, where educated and academic groups are the most interactive with digital platforms and the most receptive to electronic tourism marketing content.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the study sample accurately represents the contemporary Algerian tourist, who relies on digital means to form perceptions and attitudes toward tourism. This enhances the credibility and validity of the statistical and analytical results presented in the following sections.

Subsection 2: Data Collection Tool

The study relied on a questionnaire consisting of 21 items distributed across three main dimensions, measured using a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree):

1. **Dimension 1:** Digital Tourism Marketing.
2. **Dimension 2:** Tourists' Attitudes Toward Destinations.
3. **Dimension 3:** The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourism Attitudes.

Subsection 3: Research Hypotheses

1. There is a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of digital tourism marketing and tourists' attitudes toward Algerian destinations.
2. The level of interaction with digital tourism content influences the formation of the tourist's mental image.
3. Tourism attitudes differ according to demographic variables (gender, age, educational level).

Subsection 4: Presentation and Analysis of Study Results

- **Dimension 1: Digital Tourism Marketing**

Table (02) presents the results related to the first dimension: Digital Tourism Marketing.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Interpretation
I follow Algerian tourism pages on social media platforms.	4.10	0.68	3	High
Digital content reflects the diversity and beauty of Algeria's tourism assets.	4.25	0.6	1	Very High
I prefer user-generated content over official advertisements.	4.05	0.72	4	High
My interaction with tourism posts makes me want to learn more about the destination.	4.15	0.7	2	High
I trust the content shared by influencers about Algerian destinations.	3.85	0.81	6	High
I consider social media the main source of tourism information.	4.00	0.74	5	High
Official Algerian tourism campaigns on the internet are limited.	3.20	1.1	7	Moderate
Digital Tourism Marketing.	4.08	0.71		High

Interpretation of Table (02): Digital Tourism Marketing Dimension

Table (02) shows that the overall mean score for the first dimension — Digital Tourism Marketing reached (4.08) with a standard deviation of (0.71). This indicates a high level of awareness among respondents regarding the importance of digital tourism marketing in influencing their behavior and attitudes.

The highest mean was recorded for Statement 2: “Digital content reflects the diversity and beauty of Algeria’s tourism assets”, with a mean of (4.25), demonstrating that the appeal of visual content is the most influential element in shaping a positive perception of Algerian destinations.

The second-highest mean corresponded to Statement 4: “My interaction with tourism posts makes me want to learn more about the destination”, with a mean of (4.15). This finding confirms the importance of digital interaction in enhancing tourism awareness and stimulating the desire to explore.

Conversely, Statement 7: “Official Algerian tourism campaigns online are limited” obtained the lowest mean score of (3.20), reflecting the weakness of institutional digital efforts compared to user-generated and influencer-driven content.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that Algerian tourists rely heavily on interactive digital platforms as their primary source of tourism information, and that user-generated content (UGC) is the most influential form of digital marketing in building the destination’s mental image.

These findings are consistent with those of Hudson & Thal (2021) and Kotler et al. (2022), who affirmed that the success of digital tourism marketing depends on the ability of content to create an emotional and participatory experience between the institution and the tourist one that transcends mere promotion and extends to influencing decision-making.

- **Dimension Two: Tourists’ Attitudes Toward the Destination**

Table (03) presents the results related to the second dimension — Tourists’ Attitudes Toward the Destination.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Interpretation
I feel admiration when viewing pictures of Algerian destinations online.	4.35	0.59	1	Very High
I share tourism content that I like with my friends.	4.10	0.70	3	High
I wish to experience the places I see on social media.	4.20	0.65	2	Very High
The digital image of Algerian tourism motivates me to visit.	4.00	0.78	5	High
I plan to visit new destinations that I discovered online.	4.05	0.74	4	High
I believe Algeria is a tourist country capable of competing with foreign destinations.	3.75	0.90	6	High
I believe that service quality affects my perception of Algerian tourism.	3.60	0.95	7	Moderate
Tourists’ Attitudes Toward the Destination.	4.01	0.67		High

Interpretation of Table (03): Tourists’ Attitudes Toward the Destination

The results in Table (03) indicate that the overall mean score for the dimension “Tourists’ Attitudes Toward the Destination” reached (4.01) with a standard deviation of (0.67). This reflects a high level of positive attitudes among respondents toward Algerian tourist destinations.

Statement 1 “I feel admiration when viewing pictures of Algerian destinations online” ranked first with a mean score of (4.35), showing that visual stimuli (images and digital scenes) are the most effective factors influencing emotions and first impressions among tourists.

It was followed by Statement 3 “I wish to experience the places I see on social media” with a mean of (4.20), indicating that admiration evolves into an actual desire to engage in tourism experiences. This demonstrates the formation of both affective and behavioral attitudes simultaneously.

Statements (9), (11), and (12) also recorded high mean scores, confirming that social media exerts a progressive psychological and cognitive influence that begins with admiration and culminates in behavioral intention to visit.

Conversely, Statement (14) “I believe that service quality affects my perception of Algerian tourism” ranked last with a mean of (3.60), revealing that deficiencies in actual tourism services constitute a barrier to reinforcing the positive mental image constructed by digital media.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that Algerian tourists’ attitudes are primarily built on the emotional impact of digital content rather than on real-world factors. This explains the gap between the perceived image and the real experience.

This finding aligns with Gartner (2021) and Draoui (2024), who argue that the positive mental image generated by digital marketing represents an essential stage in attitude formation; however, it must be supported by on-ground service quality and tourism infrastructure to translate into sustained behavioral actions.

- **Dimension Three: The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourism Attitudes**

Table (04) presents the results related to the third dimension The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourism Attitudes.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Interpretation
Digital content increases my desire to visit destinations within Algeria.	4.30	0.60	1	Very High
Interaction with tourism pages influences my travel decisions.	4.05	0.70	4	High
I consider opinions and comments an important factor in choosing a destination.	4.10	0.68	3	High
An effective digital advertisement increases my trust in the tourist destination.	3.90	0.77	6	High
Digital marketing reflects a modern image of Algerian tourism.	4.00	0.72	5	High
Digital content motivates me to share my tourism experiences.	3.85	0.80	7	High
Digital tourism marketing is a key factor in my decision to visit a place.	4.25	0.63	2	Very High
The relationship between digital marketing and tourism attitudes.	4.06	0.58		High

Interpretation of Table (04): The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourism Attitudes

Table (04) shows that the overall mean score for the dimension “The Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Tourism Attitudes” reached (4.06) with a standard deviation of (0.58). This high level indicates that digital marketing exerts a strong and significant influence on shaping Algerian tourists’ orientations toward domestic tourism destinations.

The statement “Digital content increases my desire to visit destinations within Algeria” ranked first with a mean score of (4.30), followed by the statement “Digital tourism marketing is a key factor in my decision to visit a place” with a mean of (4.25). These results highlight the central role of digital content as a cognitive and behavioral stimulus in the tourist decision-making process.

Statements (3), (4), and (5) also recorded high mean scores, confirming that opinions, comments, and interactions on digital platforms function as mechanisms of social influence that reshape tourists’ mental images and enhance their confidence in the destination.

This finding is consistent with Kelman’s (1958) Social Influence Theory, which explains how individuals are influenced by others through three stages:

- Compliance: The desire for social acceptance.
- Identification: The tendency to emulate digital influencers.
- Internalization: The adoption of internal conviction and new attitudes.

On the other hand, Statement (6) “Digital content motivates me to share my tourism experiences” recorded the lowest mean score (3.85), indicating that Algerian tourists tend to be consumers rather than active producers of digital content, meaning they are more receivers than contributors to participatory marketing (User-Generated Content).

Taken together, these results indicate that digital tourism marketing in the Algerian context influences tourists’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels, following an interactive sequence that begins with attention to content, proceeds through emotional persuasion, and culminates in the actual decision to visit.

This confirms the study’s hypotheses regarding the strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the effectiveness of digital marketing and tourism attitudes.

It can thus be concluded that digital marketing does not merely build an informational image of the tourism destination; rather, it helps shape tourists’ psychological and emotional attitudes through a combination of visual and social effects.

This dimension represents one of the core components of the study, as it illustrates the transition from informational marketing to emotional and persuasive marketing, which directly influences tourists’ decisions and reshapes their tourism choices.

- **Inferential Analysis: Relationships Between the Dimensions**

Table (05) presents the correlation coefficients between the study variables.

Relationship Between Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (Sig.)	Interpretation
Digital Marketing ↔ Tourists’ Attitudes	0.71	0.000	Strong and Significant Relationship

Interpretation of Table (05): Correlation Between Digital Tourism Marketing and Tourists’ Attitudes Toward Destinations

Table (05) shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between the variables Digital Tourism Marketing and Tourists' Attitudes Toward Tourist Destinations reached (0.71) at a significance level ($\text{Sig} = 0.000$), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

This result indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables meaning that as the effectiveness of digital tourism marketing through interactive media increases, the positivity of Algerian tourists' attitudes toward local destinations also increases.

This relationship can be interpreted in light of the Hierarchy of Effects Model, which demonstrates that communication influence progresses through three levels: Awareness $\rightarrow$ Attitude $\rightarrow$ Behavior.

Thus, digital marketing — through its key components (visual content, interactivity, and credibility) — activates all three stages and influences the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of tourist response.

These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as:

- Hudson & Thal (2021), which confirmed that social media platforms have become a primary tool for building tourism trust and stimulating purchase intention.
- Draoui (2024), which found that the digital marketing strategy in Algerian tourism is still evolving but achieving promising results, especially among the youth segment.

The high correlation value ($r = 0.71$) also indicates that digital tourism marketing does not operate in isolation from other factors; rather, it serves as a communicative mediator between tourism and cultural identity, contributing to the reconstruction of the destination's mental image in the minds of tourists.

These results confirm that there is a strong and integrated interaction between digital marketing and Algerian tourists' attitudes, implying that investment in effective digital strategies will enhance the intention to visit domestic destinations and stimulate the national tourism sector.

- **Differences in Tourists' Attitudes Toward Algerian Tourism According to Demographic Characteristics**

Table (06) presents the differences in tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism according to their demographic characteristics (age, gender, and educational level).

Variable	Statistical Method Used	Significance Level (Sig.)	Result
Gender	T test	0.301	Not Significant
Age	ANOVA	0.014	Significant
Educational Level	ANOVA	0.007	Significant

Table (06) Results of the Statistical Tests Examining Differences in Tourists' Attitudes Toward Algerian Tourism According to Their Demographic Variables

- **Gender Variable:**

The significance value ($\text{Sig} = 0.301$) is greater than the level of significance (0.05), which indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism attributable to gender differences.

It can thus be concluded that both males and females share a similarly positive perception of Algerian tourism, despite some minor differences in secondary interests (e.g., safety and comfort for females versus adventure for males).

- **Age Variable:**

The significance value (Sig = 0.014) is less than (0.05), indicating the existence of statistically significant differences in tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism based on age. This result can be interpreted as follows: younger age groups tend to prefer leisure and adventure tourism, whereas older groups show greater interest in cultural and environmental tourism. Thus, age plays a decisive role in determining the type of tourism interest and the motivation for travel.

- **Educational Level Variable:**

The results show that the significance value (Sig = 0.007) is less than (0.05), confirming the presence of statistically significant differences in tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism according to their educational level.

This finding suggests that individuals with higher educational levels possess greater tourism awareness and show interest in the cultural and heritage dimensions of tourism, whereas those with lower educational levels tend to focus on recreational or low-cost tourism.

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that age and educational level are among the most influential variables determining tourists' attitudes toward Algerian tourism, whereas gender does not represent a significant determining factor in shaping these attitudes.

Drawing on the findings of Table (06), it becomes evident that the variation in Algerian tourists' attitudes is primarily associated with age and educational level, while there are no substantial differences attributable to gender.

This result is particularly important for tourism policymakers, as it enables them to design targeted marketing strategies that take into account the age and educational characteristics of their intended audiences, thereby enhancing the overall attractiveness of Algerian tourist destinations.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlight that digital tourism marketing is an effective strategic tool for fostering positive attitudes toward Algerian tourism.

The empirical findings demonstrate that engaging content, social interaction, and digital credibility collectively form an influential system that reshapes Algerian tourists' perceptions and motivates them to make travel decisions.

Despite the existing gap between the digital image and the service reality, digital potential remains a promising opportunity for revitalizing the national tourism sector.

Recommendations

1. Develop a national digital tourism marketing strategy that involves local influencers and creative content producers in generating authentic and appealing material.
2. Improve the quality of tourism services to ensure alignment between the digital image and the actual experience.

3. Launch official interactive digital platforms that enable tourists to explore, book, and share their experiences easily.
4. Train human resources in digital tourism marketing, particularly within public and private tourism institutions.
5. Support the production of high-quality visual content (photos and short videos) promoting domestic destinations.
6. Adopt a system for monitoring and evaluating digital campaigns' effectiveness through quantitative indicators such as engagement volume and conversion rates.
7. Encourage future field studies to measure the impact of digital marketing on different tourist segments (domestic, foreign, youth).

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