

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN ENHANCING DOMESTIC TOURISM IN ALGERIA

Noui Rabah^{1*}

¹University of Bejaia, Bejaia, Algeria, rabah.noui@univ-bejaia.dz

Abstract

This article attempts to analyze the impact of digital communication, particularly social networks and travel management platforms, on the promotion and revitalization of domestic tourism in Algeria. The methodology used is mainly, but not exclusively, based on a questionnaire survey of tour operators and regular tourists. The questionnaire was designed online using Google Forms and distributed on various online platforms specialized in tourism. 114 valid questionnaires were retrieved and statistically analyzed using SPSS. The main results clearly show the growing role that digital communication is playing in creating a new culture of domestic tourism. 78% of respondents stated that they were influenced by this digital strategy when choosing their destinations. The use of digital social networks, particularly Facebook and Instagram, together account for around 80-85% of responses. These results illustrate how social media and online platforms are reorganizing the tourism value chain on the one hand and changing the customer experience on the other, which is essential for understanding the new tourism expectations and behaviors, as it is a consumer-centric approach. The study suggests that tourism marketing strategies should focus more on partnerships with local influencers to boost domestic tourism and develop local tourism programs that focus on archeological, historical, cultural, religious and environmental values.

Keywords: domestic tourism, digital marketing, social networks, tourism value chain, customer experience

JEL Classification: M31, Z32

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24818/CTS/7/2025/1.06>

1. Introduction

Considered one of the most important phenomena of our time tourism continues to grow worldwide. Looking back into the past, tourism is not a new activity, but has existed since the history of mankind. Today, tourism plays an essential role in the global economic and social sector. It encompasses all areas of economic activity and also has a significant impact on other sectors such as agriculture, construction, crafts, trade and transportation services. Tourism also has a significant impact on society, as it is seen as a means of communication and cultural exchange.

Like all countries in the world, the Algerian tourism sector has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented health crisis led to a significant decline in international tourism, with a 74% drop in international tourist arrivals worldwide by 2020 (UNWTO, 2020), prompting sector players to focus on domestic tourism in order to revitalize the country's tourism industry.

Against this background, various communication strategies have played a crucial role as promotional and awareness-raising tools to encourage Algerian citizens to discover and explore the riches of their own country. This article offers a systematized and analytically concise collection of 100 innovations that were not invented specifically for tourism, but have nevertheless had a significant impact on tourism. The article is a contribution to the history of tourism and introduces a new facet of tourism innovation research. Scientific and technological progress facilitates the development of tourism, but often with a certain delay. Percolation depends on institutional changes and the absorptive capacity of the tourism sector. The impact mainly contributed to the social and physical performance of tourists, including reducing risks and improving mobility and accessibility. The innovations also laid the foundation for completely new tourism experiences. Numerous innovations have been introduced to increase the productivity and performance of tourism businesses. The article provides examples of

* Corresponding author

Authors' ORCID:

Noui Rabah

innovations that led to the development of new destinations. Institutional and informational innovations led to critical modernization. A deeper understanding of diffusion patterns can be useful for future innovation policy in tourism (Boukherouk and Couret, 2023; Hjalager, 2015).

In this context, communication strategies are essential tools for promoting destinations, influencing travelers' decisions, raising awareness of the need to preserve tourist sites and strengthening a destination's image and reputation. By adapting their communication approaches, players in the tourism sector seek to involve travelers and encourage the discovery of new experiences. (Marcotte, Bourdeau and Sarrasin, 2017)

The aim of this article is to analyze, through an empirical investigation, the new communication strategies adopted by the Algerian tourism sector to stimulate domestic tourism in the post-COVID-19 period. The aim is to analyze and understand how these technologies are used within tourism companies to improve their operations, as well as the different communication strategies adopted by tourism operators to reach their audiences. We are also interested in how customers use the new means of communication to book and organize their trips. We therefore seek to understand how these technologies influence travelers' attitudes, and how tourism companies can adapt to meet their expectations.

2. Literature review

The tourism sector is undergoing a series of changes in the services it offers to its customers, both in terms of prices and the quality of services offered, such as accommodation, transportation and catering, in order to satisfy them (Chirouf and Bobah, 2024). According to the World Tourism Organization, the restriction imposed to meet prevention requirements led to a 98% drop in the number of international tourists in 2019. Since then, the world has witnessed the closure of borders, hotels and travel agencies. Air and sea traffic has experienced an unprecedented decline. By 2020, international tourist arrivals to Algeria had fallen by 78% (UNWTO, 2020).

The integration of digitalization and ICT has fundamentally changed the tourism sector disrupting the traditional tourism value chain and enabling new players to enter the tourism market (Omrani and Touhami, 2024). Travel agencies and tour operators are no longer the only organizers of tourism activities; the internet is also helping to change the way tourists' needs are met and how they travel. Tourism has created a public need for travel and escape. The adaptation of these strategies in this sector has implications for travel companies and the online distribution of travel information and products. Their effectiveness enables tourism companies to offer tourism products and services to many consumers and interact with them and other service providers (Hjalager, 2015).

In addition, domestic tourism is driving the recovery of the tourism sector in a growing number of destinations, especially those with a large domestic market. Destinations around the world are opting for domestic tourism development. According to the UNWTO, domestic tourism generates higher revenues than international tourism, which is why more and more countries around the world are developing the latter. According to experts, domestic and local travel as well as outdoor activities, nature-based products and rural tourism are the most important travel trends that will continue to be present in the travel industry in 2022.

The Algerian authorities are gradually recognizing the importance of developing the tourism sector as an economic factor with its great potential in terms of natural and cultural heritage in the different regions of the country (e.g. coast, mountains, Sahara). The results to date show that Algeria's tourism development policy cannot keep up with that of its southern Mediterranean neighbors. To meet the new challenges and realities, the Algerian government has encouraged the various tourism operators to boost domestic tourism and recommends that they attract tourists who are used to choosing foreign destinations for their vacations. It encourages the promotion of tourism to raise the profile of domestic destinations and develop various programs to revitalize tourist spots. To this end, it strongly recommends utilizing archeological, historical and cultural sites as well as religious and environmental factors for tourism activities to develop new economic wealth.

Based on these findings, this study examines how customers perceive the new communication strategies in the tourism sector and which communication strategies are used in this sector to promote domestic

tourism in Algeria. From this perspective, several questions arise to which we will try to provide some answers: Which are the most effective social media platforms for the promotion of domestic tourism in Algeria? How does user-generated content (UGC) influence tourists' perception of local destinations? What is the attitude of customers towards the new communication strategies of tour operators? To answer these questions, an online questionnaire was distributed to Algerian tourists to analyze their use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to choose destinations, organize their trips and share their experiences. The survey examines several aspects: how often travelers consult the networks to prepare their stays, the influence of influencers and online reviews on their decisions and the importance of the images and recommendations published on these platforms.

2.1 Theoretical models

Studies on tourism have been approached differently in the literature. This study therefore focuses on works that have addressed the topic of tourism from the perspective of influencer marketing using the means of digital communication in general and those of digital social networks in particular. Influencer marketing is the strategic use of influential people to promote a brand, product or service to their audience (Egger, Gula and Walcher, 2016). These individuals, often referred to as influencers, have the power to influence consumer opinions and behavior thanks to their credibility and popularity (Carter, 2016). It goes without saying that one of the main pillars and tools of influencer marketing today are digital social networks, a digital platform that encourages people to interact with each other on a personal level by creating, sharing and exchanging knowledge and information (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media refers to communication channels that allow participants and the public to create, share and collaborate on material, leading to widespread change. Social media connects its users in a virtual world that influences people's behavior in real life (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014).

Several theoretical models have attempted to explain and/or understand the role and influence of the introduction of digitalization in the tourism sector. Before turning to the model that research focuses on to analyze the relationship between the use of social networks and digital platforms and tourism decisions, it is worth briefly introducing the main models:

a. Participatory Culture Theory (Jenkins, 2006). The model of digital participation constitutes an original vision that explains the transition from traditional media (e.g., television, radio) to digital media through a process of convergence that transforms passive consumers into active, participatory consumers capable of changing perceptions and representations of their peers (Jenkins, 2006). This model is particularly relevant for explaining the influence of interactions in virtual communities that go beyond a unidirectional view and lead to a participatory and interactive landscape characterized by a new digital culture.

b. Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003). One of the famous approaches frequently used and discussed in the literature is the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which consists of explaining the process by which an innovation emerges and spreads. To this end, Rogers identifies five categories of consumers, depending on how quickly they adopt an innovation: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards. Applied to the tourism sector, this theory proves relevant as we consistently find that there is a minority of innovators and adventurers who adopt cutting-edge technologies or innovative processes to explore new destinations. These are usually followed by another category that quickly integrates these new innovations and disseminates them on a larger scale (Neuhofer, Buhalis and Ladkin, 2012). This diffusion attracts more imitators and allows the innovation to spread and become popular among other majority categories and laggards.

c. The AIDA model. The four stages of effects: Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, later known as the AIDA model, can be used as a model of persuasion for advertising campaigns. The model was first introduced by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898. AIDA is used in marketing and advertising management as the preferred tool for advertising effectiveness. The model presented in Figure 1 describes the different levels of a consumer's engagement with an advertisement (Kulkarni et al., 2020).

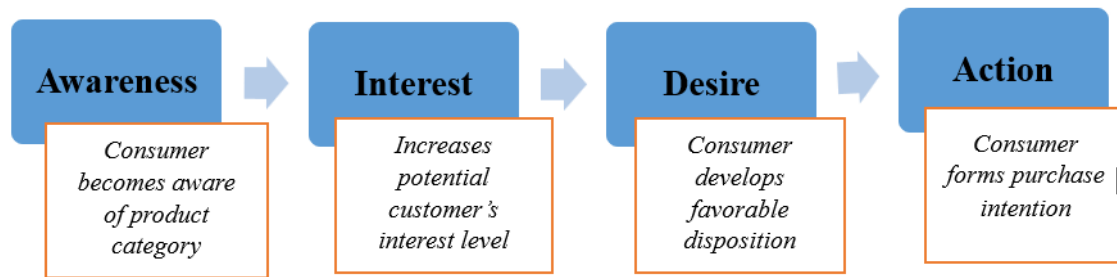


Figure 1. The four factors of AIDA model

Source: drawn from the literature review

The AIDA model (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) applied to digital tourism can be seen as a tool that stimulates action by encouraging the purchase of a specific product or service. It is a good way for advertisers to create effective advertising campaigns by guiding the consumer through four psychological stages, from ignorance to actual purchase. To achieve the desired result, advertisers must use specific actions at each of the four stages of the process. These stages are designed to map the cognitive journey of a consumer (Ghirvu, 2013).

d. The eWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) model. Word-of-mouth (WOM) is known for its interpersonal influence on purchasing decisions. Studies show that consumers consider word of mouth to be more reliable and persuasive than traditional media (print ads, personal selling, radio and television). With the advent of the Internet, word-of-mouth has expanded to virtual environments, allowing consumers to share their opinions and reviews on various online platforms (blogs, forums, review sites, social networks).

Unlike traditional word of mouth, eWOM spreads quickly and widely and allows for an asynchronous exchange of information where users can read and comment at any time. eWOM information is usually archived so that it is accessible indefinitely, unlike the private conversations of traditional word of mouth. Therefore, eWOM is more measurable as it allows for the analysis of a large volume of online messages, examining characteristics such as tone of voice and style of messages. eWOM is changing the dynamics of consumer communication by providing unprecedented reach and accessibility, while being more measurable and analyzable (Cheung and Thadani, 2012).

e. Adopted Models. In view of the current research and the aims of this article, it was considered appropriate and relevant to link the two models mentioned above, namely AIDA and eWOM. The integration of the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model with the eWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) model allows us to explain how social networks and digital platforms influence tourism decisions through recommendations and interactions between users.

As already mentioned, the AIDA model explains how the customer (the tourist) moves from exploration and discovery to actual consumption (booking) under the influence of marketing and advertising. However, what remains crucial in digital social networks is the effect of interaction and exchange, as well as the opinion of other customers and travelers, i.e. a process of electronic word of mouth, hence the relevance of such an overlap between the two models. It should be noted that eWOM does not only play a role in the final phase of AIDA (action), but supports every phase of the process.

2.2 Domestic tourism in Algeria: potential and diversity

Domestic tourism comprises the activities of a resident visitor within the reference country that are carried out as part of a domestic tourism trip. This activity is of great importance and is promoted by specialized institutions in order to develop the tourism sector. It is a means of economic recovery for destinations around the world. Domestic tourism does not generate additional revenue for the country, but it stimulates local businesses and the economy and redirects funds to new regions. It also creates new jobs and gives visitors the opportunity to learn more about their culture and history (Madi and Bensouilah, 2024). The development of domestic tourism is an important factor for national unity as it

encourages people from different regions to meet and exchange customs and culture. Domestic tourism is seen as a means of meeting, exchanging and promoting the country's cultural heritage.

The development of domestic tourism had several advantages: It was developed during the pandemic as a strategy to maintain tourist activities, thanks to which tourist establishments continued their activities despite the closure of borders and the cessation of international tourism (Faouzi, 2023). On a social level, the development of domestic tourism is a means of social interaction in which members of different regions meet and discover the different areas of the country. The development of domestic tourism is an economic, social and environmental imperative that promotes the enhancement of the country's cultural and natural heritage (Lei, Suntikul and Chen, 2023). It also creates a source of income for the local population and encourages the vocation of young people for tourism by promoting appropriate training. Tourism in Algeria must be analyzed as a development vector, especially in certain regions with enormous tourism potential, making the country a destination in its various forms: Sea, Culture, Wellness, Sahara, Business (Merabet, 2021).

a. Saharan tourism. For Algeria, Saharan tourism is a special feature of the country's tourism heritage. The vast Algerian Sahara offers a variety of natural landscapes that represent a consolidated tourist potential and an ancient civilization that offers all the characteristics of a tourist region par excellence. Sports tourism is developing in the Algerian Sahara, with an international marathon in Hoggar and sand skiing and paragliding in the Bechar region (Merabet, 2021).

b. Cultural and historical tourism. Algeria has considerable cultural resources and historical heritage, but this type of tourism does not exist in the country, it is not in demand by the local population and it does not attract a large group of people. Algeria needs to enhance its cultural heritage in order to develop this type of tourism.

c. Thermal tourism. In the past, thermals were used as an effective, non-aggressive natural medicine. The World Health Organization considers thermalism as a medical treatment, especially for chronic diseases. Algeria is a country rich in thermal springs, with a considerable thermo-mineral potential that has not yet been exploited.

d. Seaside tourism. Algeria, located on the Mediterranean coast, with its enchanting coastline and beautiful beaches, is a perfect destination for beach tourism as well as water and underwater sports. Oran, Skikda, Bejaia, Jijel and Annaba are known for their water sports and underwater sports.

e. Mountain tourism. The mountains of Algeria are a real magnet for visitors. The mysterious Hoggar and Tassili massifs, the Kabylia Mountains and the Aures Mountains offer a wealth of natural treasures... In the east of the country, an annual trekking event has been set up in the Benni-Yaala mountains, while rock climbers enjoy themselves in the Djurdjura massifs.

f. Religious tourism. This type of tourism takes the form of ceremonies around local mausoleums, but Algerian society is increasingly moving away from these events, which can represent a very important cultural heritage.

g. Business convention tourism. The development of the communication network and the liberalization of the Algerian economy are very important factors for the increase in travel, whether for individuals or for events. Algeria must consider a specific offer in terms of the development of its reception capacities, information and communication technologies and design, as this market is booming.

h. Gastronomic tourism. Tasting Algerian cuisine on a trip should be an essential part of the journey, as the country's gastronomy is diverse thanks to the different cultures it has seen. It is a variety of dishes known for their savory, sweet, spicy, rich and colorful flavors. One example of this is couscous, which is a national dish, but its preparation varies from region to region (Leal Londoño, 2015).

2.3 New information and communication technologies in the tourism sector

The tourism industry is constantly evolving. One of the most noticeable trends in recent years has been the integration of new communication strategies into the tourism sector, especially information and communication technologies. This integration of new communication strategies into the tourism sector allows destinations to better target potential visitors, provide a more personalized tourism experience,

increase the visibility of tourism businesses and make it easier for visitors to plan and book trips, as customers are now interested in modern communication tools such as social networks, digital marketing, online advertising, mobile applications and virtual reality technologies (Lee et al., 2021). This section looks at new communication trends in the tourism industry, the integration of these new communication strategies and the increasing use of new communication and information strategies.

All tourism organizations use information to retain their customers, but the advent of the Internet has revolutionized the information system within tourism businesses. The dissemination of information is no longer the sole preserve of tourism businesses, but also of customers. Online resources such as new information and communication technologies have made it easier to find information about tourist destinations. Tourism organizations have taken advantage of this to attract more tourists and facilitate contact with them, as digital media have become an integral part of people's daily lives around the world (Hussain et al., 2024).

The tourism sector uses a variety of communication media to facilitate the dissemination of information and the promotion of destinations, products and services. With the advent of new technologies, communication tools in the tourism sector have evolved and become more efficient and faster, providing opportunities to promote and raise awareness to a global audience (Armutcu et al., 2023). Below is an introduction to the main communication tools used in the tourism sector:

a. Websites. Websites are one of the most frequently used means of communication in the tourism sector. The websites of destinations, travel agencies, hotels, airlines and other players in the sector provide detailed information on tourist offers, prices, availability, itineraries, activities and attractions. You can also make online reservations, ask questions and give feedback on the websites.

b. Social networks. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn have become powerful tools for promoting destinations and interacting with travelers. Tourism businesses use social networks to disseminate information about special offers, events, travel tips and customer testimonials, and to interact with users by answering their questions and providing customer service.

c. Online booking platforms. Online booking platforms such as Booking.com, Expedia, Airbnb and TripAdvisor have become an integral part of the tourism industry. They allow users to search, compare and book accommodation, flights, tourist activities and other services online and offer a quick and convenient way to plan a trip.

d. Mobile applications. Mobile applications specifically for the tourism sector are becoming increasingly popular. They provide users with information about destinations, travel guides, maps, travel tips, reservations and navigation tools, making it easier to plan and manage trips.

e. Newsletters and marketing emails. Newsletters and marketing emails are used by tourism businesses to inform customers about special offers, new products, events and news in the tourism sector. They help to maintain regular contact with customers and keep them informed about the latest offers and travel opportunities.

f. Online advertising. Online advertising, such as Google Ads, banner ads on websites and ads on social networks, is used to promote destinations, special offers and tourism products to a wide audience. They offer increased visibility and make it possible to target users according to their search behavior and interests.

The COVID-19 pandemic has democratized the use of various social networks during lockdown, restrictive measures or social distancing. The online use of social networks is seen as a means to successfully communicate professionally and stay in touch with others despite the pandemic and these obstacles. The number of social networks users has increased significantly during this time as other digital means of communication have had to be found. In turn, companies chose these new means of communication for their marketing and to expand their presence. This is where social media platforms come into play, which they use to continue exchanging and communicating with their customers. Thanks to social networks, digital platforms and professional social networks, individuals, business leaders and employees can stay in touch and connected (Wong, Olusanya and Lyness, 2020). Communication on social networks is essential for companies and professional influencers because it

requires a stronger presence on multiple platforms and a more regular exchange of messages. Thanks to this, companies can increase their visibility, brand image and digital presence strategies, promote their brand and even wait for other targets on websites. Brands are increasingly using social networks to reach more people, generate engagement and also optimize SEO. For influencers, it offers the opportunity to create more content and increase their visibility. Also, they can have a large community on social networks who will do more activity on them and share throughout the day.

3. Methodology

For this study, a document search was first conducted to obtain as much information as possible on our topic. Previous studies on the subject were read and documents on the tourism sector were collected and consulted. Exploratory interviews were then conducted to get a feel for the area and to get to know the attitudes of our interviewees. They were Algerian tourists close to the author (relatives, students and teachers). This provided an opportunity to revise the questions used to create the questionnaire before it was distributed to Internet users via the Internet. The purpose of the questionnaire is, of course, to collect information about the attitudes and habits of tourists.

3.1 Research Instruments

The methodology used is primarily, but not exclusively, based on a questionnaire survey conducted among tour operators and regular tourists. The questionnaire was designed online using Google Forms and distributed on various online platforms specialized in tourism. A total of 114 valid questionnaires were collected and statistically analyzed using SPSS. The questionnaire developed for the purpose of the study is divided into sections covering different aspects of tourism. It includes tourism activities, the means of communication that customers use to organize their trips, the changes in their travel habits during the COVID-19 pandemic, their appreciation of domestic tourism, etc.

In other words, the questionnaire contains a wide range of questions that are organized according to the desired goal. It consists of 32 varied questions, including both open and closed questions. The first axis of the questionnaire deals with the respondent's personal data. The second axis deals with travel and the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The third section presents the various digital tools used by tourists to organize their trips. The fourth and final section looks at the integration of ICT and its impact on the world of tourism. The questionnaire contains closed and semi-open-ended questions, mainly using a five-point Likert scale to assess respondents' perceptions and behaviors. Binary questions were also asked to categorize the different practices. Some examples of questions concern the influence of digital platforms on destination choice and the use of social networks in travel planning.

The questionnaire was designed online using Google Forms and distributed on various online platforms specializing in tourism in order to reach a broad population. Data collection is an important step in any scientific research. The instrument chosen depends on the type of data the research wants to collect (qualitative or quantitative information).

3.2 Participants

The convenience sample method was preferred for the current research, which is defined as follows: "A convenience sample is a sample chosen in a study for practical reasons of accessibility and cost rather than based on methodological rigor and a desire to statistically ensure representativeness." (Edgar and Manz, 2017). This is a sampling method in which people are selected according to their availability and the respondent's convenience. The reason for the selection was the accessibility of the participants and their availability on the Internet through social networks, specialized websites of travel organizations and websites. The selection of this sample is quicker and easier to carry out and allows the author to collect data more quickly.

The study population consists of Algerian tourists traveling to places that are different from their usual places of stay to visit, explore or relax. As shown in Table 1, the sample is diverse and includes both genders, different age groups and different socio-economic situations. The people selected do not practice the same type of tourism and have a wide range of travel motivations. The sampling is based on a convenience approach, targeting respondents with proven experience in tourism. This method offers the possibility of obtaining relevant answers in relation to the objectives of the study.

Table 1. The sample structure

Variables of the sample	Number of respondents	Percent
Age		
18-25 years	59	51.75%
26-35 years	45	39.47%
36-45 years	7	06.14%
Over 45 years	3	02.63%
Gender		
Male	65	57.1%
Female	49	42.9%
Education		
First Level	3	1.8%
Middle school	3	2.7%
High school	16	14.4%
Higher education	92	81.1%
Total	114	100%

Source: Author's own research

In the current analysis, several characteristics of the respondents who took part in this survey were examined. Table 1 shows that the age of the respondents varies between 14 and 54 years old, demonstrating the existence of different age categories among traveling Algerian tourists. This indicates that Algerian tourist travel appeals to a broad spectrum of generations. In terms of gender breakdown, the survey found that 57.1% of tourists are men, while 42.9% are women. This indicates a slight predominance of men among the Algerian tourists who participated in the study. In terms of education level, the majority of respondents (81.1%) have a college degree, with the remainder spread across education levels from high school to elementary school. This distribution indicates that most of the Algerian tourists surveyed have a high level of education.

4. Results

As shown in Figure 2, Algeria offers a variety of interesting domestic destinations for travelers, as highlighted by our respondents. Recommended cities include Bejaia, Oran, Jijel, Tlemcen, Algiers, Tipaza, Tizi Ouzou, Skikda and many others. These recommendations show that each region of the country has something unique to offer, be it in terms of natural beauty, history or culture.



Figure 2. Destinations most recommended by our respondents

Source: Author's own research

The analysis is based on the responses of Algerian tourists and focuses on their intention to travel within the country. The results show that 22.3% of female respondents are in favor of and plan to travel within the country. This is also the opinion of 31.2% of male respondents. Combining these two groups, 53.6% of the total sample plan to travel within the country (Table 2). On the other hand, 46.5% of respondents

have no plans to do so. Of these, 20.6% are women and 29.9% are men. These results indicate that a relative majority of respondents, 53.6%, plan to travel within the country. However, almost half of respondents (46.5%) have no intention of doing so. Interestingly, men appear to be slightly more inclined to travel within the country than women, with proportions of 31.2% and 22.3% respectively.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender according to their choice of domestic tourism

Gender	Have you considered traveling more within your country since the start of the pandemic?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	20,6%	22,3%	42,9%
Male	25,9%	31,2%	57,1%
Total	45,5%	53,6%	100,0%

Source: Author's own research

In summary, the results show that more than half of Algerian respondents plan to travel within the country. However, a significant proportion do not plan to do so. Furthermore, the results show that travel intentions may vary depending on the gender of respondents, with a slight preponderance of men over women among those planning to travel within the country. These observations provide an interesting insight into the attitudes of Algerian tourists towards traveling within the country.

Table 3. Influence of Digital Tools on Tourist Behaviors and Perceptions

Tourist behavior and perception	Tourism-related digital communications	Spearman Correlation	Significance (Sig.)
Booking a trip via social media recommendations	Use of digital tools	0.350	0.000 (**)
	Recommending tourism to friends	0.290	0.002 (**)
Booking a trip entirely online	Use of digital tools	0.338	0.000 (**)
	Influence of technology on the quality of the trip	0.338	0.000 (**)
Recommending tourism to friends	Use of digital tools	0.362	0.000 (**)
Perceived influence of technology on trip quality	Booking a trip online	0.338	0.000 (**)

Source: produced by the author based on SPSS results

The analysis of the correlation relationships (Table 3) confirms the clear influence of digital technologies and tools on recommendation and booking behavior in tourism. It appears that the adoption of digital technologies influences the likelihood of people booking travel through recommendations on social networks. The correlation of 0.350 ($p=0.000$) describes the extent of this influence. In this case, the influence comes increasingly from digital word-of-mouth communication. People who use more social networks are also more willing to implement recommendations from their social contacts. Social network platforms are becoming important components in the purchasing process.

In a broader perspective, the use of digital tools correlates with online booking of travel services ($p=0.338$, $p=0.000$). This shows the increasing computerization of the tourism industry. Better access to services via digital platforms, a less tangible nature of services and improved user experiences are some of the factors that lead to an increased number of online bookings of services. This effect is even more pronounced when it comes to the perceived impact of technology on the quality of travel ($p=0.338$, $p=0.000$). Those who book online see technology as an integral part of their experience. This means that the digital transformation in the industry is not just limited to the moment of booking, but encompasses the entire duration of the stay through connected services, mobile applications and smart devices.

Another shocking result is the correlation between the use of digital tools and the likelihood of recommending a tourist destination ($p=0.362$, $p=0.000$). This proves that the more connected travelers are, the more they tend to share their experiences, especially by leaving comments or reviews on social media platforms. This phenomenon underlines the role of digital platforms as the birthplace of e-WOM communication, where they influence the perception and beauty of tourist places.

In conclusion, the imagined effect of technology on the quality of travel when booking services via the Internet is positive ($p=0.338$, $p=0.000$). Travelers of this type who use a range of technologies for booking purposes have a positive opinion of the impact of technology on their travel experiences. This alerts us to the fact that trust in the digital solutions offered and their embedding in the traveler's journey is becoming a key differentiator for industry competitors.

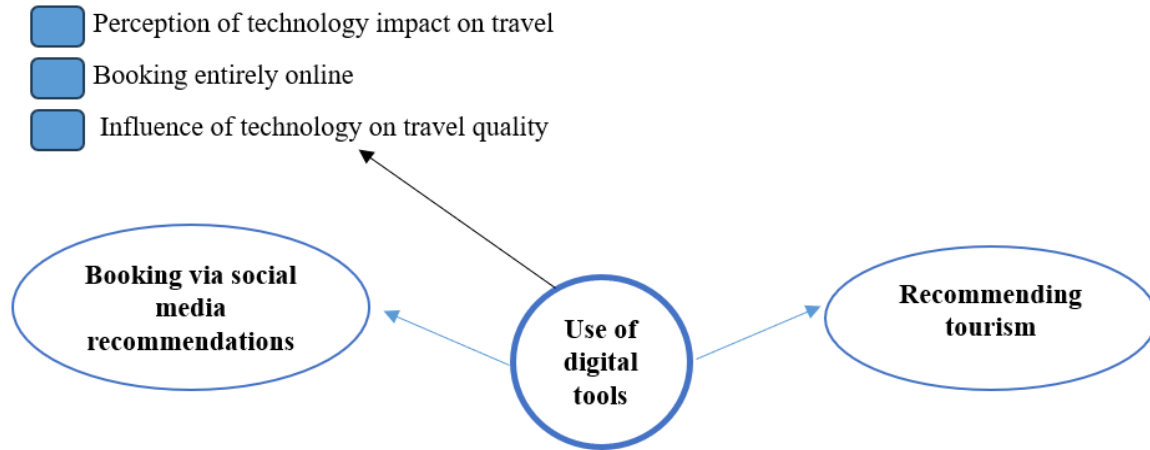


Figure 3. Causal Diagram of Digital Tools' Influence on Tourist Behavior and Perceptions

Source: Author's own research

In general, these outcomes demonstrate changes in customer activity owing to the digitalization of the tourism industry. Information technology is no longer limited to the transaction phase, but is changing the entire decision-making process from inspiration to post-trip recommendations. Companies in the industry are being encouraged to improve their digital visibility and user experience on their websites and to use social media platforms to enhance the offer. They also emphasize the importance of a trust-based, tailored approach where advanced technologies can significantly help travelers throughout their journey (Figure 3).

5. Discussion

The current analysis focuses on the trips that respondents have taken over time and the changes that the tourism sector has undergone. The results indicate a growing tendency to travel and underline that travel has become an integral part of today's society, where more and more people want to get away, discover new places and escape from everyday life.

The majority of people are traveling once or twice during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that there is a tendency to limit travel and reduce trips. The survey data underlines the impact of the health crisis on the choice of destinations. Travelers have adopted new habits, such as avoiding local destinations, proximity and complying with health safety measures. Respondents' statements indicate that their behavior and habits in choosing destinations have changed due to the pandemic. Given the health concerns and travel restrictions, travelers now prefer local over international destinations, which is a very positive result for domestic tourism. In terms of behavior, there is a choice of destinations and preferences when it comes to accommodation, tourist activities and length of stay. Regarding domestic tourism in Algeria in the post-COVID period, the survey results show that a clear majority of tourists surveyed are in favor of choosing local destinations. This proves that a large majority of people are in favor of promoting local destinations, and these same people recommend local destinations to family and friends, which is further evidence of a positive trend towards domestic tourism.

The massive use of digital tools in our contemporary societies has become an inescapable reality. Data analysis shows that a high percentage of respondents use these tools for their communication tasks, underlining their importance in our daily lives. Only a minority stated that they do not use them. This could be due to the fact that they belong to a group that is not familiar with the new technologies, that they prefer not to stay connected or that they have difficulties accessing and using them. Digital social networks (DSNs) have become a prominent phenomenon of our time. The findings emphasize how valuable digital social networks are to the daily lives of many people. They play an important role in

communication, leisure activities and other aspects of modern life. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are used most frequently, but other platforms also continue to enjoy great popularity.

The results based on the responses of Algerian tourists regarding their intention to travel within the country show the following results. According to the results, 53.6% of the total sample plan to travel within the country, while 46.5% do not. Of those who do not intend to travel within the country, 20.6% are women and 29.9% are men. The observations show that men are slightly more inclined to travel within the country. When analyzed by age group, the results show that young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are divided: 24.1% favor domestic tourism and 25.9% oppose it. Among 25–35-year-olds, 25% actively support domestic tourism, while 13.5% do not support it. A majority of 7.1% of 35 to 45-year-olds support domestic tourism, while a majority of 1.8% of 45 to 55-year-olds support domestic tourism.

The influence of social media recommendations on booking selection draws attention to the need to re-evaluate marketing methods. Digital advertising campaigns that utilize influencers and content creators can help market destinations more effectively. Promoting shared online experiences through incentives such as discounts or loyalty programs can boost tourism. Booking platforms should focus on providing a fluid and secure intuitive user interface, user guidance and payment options. Local authorities should help local providers with the digital transition by providing adequate support such as training and subsidies. The travel experience can be improved through smart infrastructure, augmented reality, personalized services and the integration of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. Digital marketing can also be leveraged by promoting travelers' content via social networks and authentic user testimonials. To increase the attractiveness of destinations for the connected traveler, it is crucial to meet the demands of the digital world.

Conclusions, practical implications and limitations

This research emphasizes the effects of digitalization on the tourism industry. The results of the study confirm that the use of digital tools influences booking decisions and the evaluation of the tourism experience. It was also demonstrated that social networks are essential for the dissemination of information and for the generation of perceived value, especially the importance of digital word of mouth. In addition, the perception of technology as a tool for travel quality opens up new perspectives for understanding the relationship between digital transformation and user experience.

It is important that policy makers and tourism industry stakeholders take action to improve the digital platform and increase the dimensions of the user experience when booking. The use of online reviews and influencers is also important to attract new guests. Destinations and accommodation providers need to move to a tech-centric perspective by leveraging artificial intelligence, using automated services and incorporating immersive experiences. Public policy should further support this transition by facilitating access to digital solutions and promoting responsible education of industry participants.

Finally, this article examined the communication strategies implemented in the Algerian tourism sector to revitalize domestic tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim was to understand the role of new information and communication technologies, the tourism sector and the use of these technologies by tourism businesses and travelers. The results of the survey confirmed the formulated hypotheses and showed that the transformation of the Algerian tourism value chain through the integration of new technologies had a positive impact on domestic tourism. Digital social networks have played a key role in travel planning and decision making. In addition, Algerian travelers have a positive attitude towards new communication technologies, considering them as practical tools that offer greater proximity and accessibility.

These results underline the importance for players in the tourism sector to take account of technological developments into account and adapt their communication strategies to the changing expectations of travelers. New technologies offer new opportunities to promote tourism destinations, influence travelers and improve the customer experience. However, it is also necessary to consider issues of privacy, security and reliability of the technology used. Although this is an important study on the effects of digital tools and social media on tourism decision making, there are also limitations. This study does not take into account other important social and behavioral factors, such as cultural, economic, and

psychological determinants, which could also influence consumer behavior in tourism. Future studies should be more comprehensive and consider these variables as well. This study focuses on the positive effects of digitalization on domestic tourism in Algeria, but does not consider how the long-term maintenance of these strategies may affect subsequent benefits. Future studies should consider using longitudinal methods to examine how the effects of digitalization on the tourism industry changes over time. In this study, respondents' self-reports may have been biased to some extent. Mixed methods, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative methods (e.g. interviews or observational data) or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, would provide a more meaningful picture. Due to the small number of respondents, the current data set can ideally only provide an initial insight into the data and no generalizations can be made.

References

- Armutcu, B., Yildiz, S., Yildiz, H. and Yildiz, M. (2023). Tourist behaviour: The role of digital marketing and social media, *Acta Psychologica*, 240, 104025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104025>.
- Boukherouk, M. and Couret, C. (2023). Le tourisme créatif pour une relance post-Covid-19, des destinations qui tentent de survivre grâce à un nouveau modèle inclusif, étude de cas de deux destinations creative friendly, *Études caribéennes*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudescaribeennes.27828>.
- Carter, D. (2016). Hustle and Brand: The Sociotechnical Shaping of Influence, *social media + Society*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116666305>.
- Cheung, C.M.K. and Thadani, D.R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model, *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), pp. 461-470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008>.
- Chirouf, F. and Bobah, A. (2024). The development of the tourism sector in Algeria and its impact on economic growth during the period 2005-2021, *Dirasat Iqtisadiya*, 18(1), pp. 119-140. <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/243290>.
- Edgar, T.W. and Manz, D.O. (2017). *Chapter 16: Research methods*. In Research methods for cyber security. Cambridge, MA: Syngress, pp. 349-370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-805349-2.00016-9>.
- Egger, R., Gula, I. and Walcher, D. (2016). Towards a Holistic Framework of Open Tourism, in R. Egger, I. Gula, and D. Walcher (eds) *Open Tourism: Open Innovation, Crowdsourcing and Co-Creation Challenging the Tourism Industry*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 3-16. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-54089-9_1.
- Ghirvu, A.I. (2013). The AIDA model for advergames. *The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration*, 13(1), pp. 90-98, Available at: <<http://www.annals.seap.usv.ro/index.php/annals/article/viewFile/497/548>>, [Accessed 27 March 2025].
- Faouzi, H. (2023). Le tourisme interne, bouée de sauvetage en temps de crise ou locomotive du secteur touristique? Cas du Maroc, *Études caribéennes*, <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudescaribeennes.27793>.
- Hjalager, A.-M. (2015). 100 Innovations That Transformed Tourism, *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(1), pp. 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513516390>.
- Hussain, K., Ahmed, W., Zhang, L. and Khan, M. (2024). From likes to luggage: The role of social media content in attracting tourists', *Heliyon*, 10(19), e38914. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38914>.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: NYU Press. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qffwr>, [Accessed 27 March 2025].
- Leal Londoño, M. (2015). Stratégies de promotion gastronomique associées au tourisme dans des zones géographiquement marginalisées, *Via Tourism Review*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.4000/viatourism.451>.
- Lee, C.-C., Chen, M.-P. and Kim, D. (2021). The impacts of ICTs on tourism development: International evidence based on a panel quantile approach', *Information Technology & Tourism*, 23(4), pp. 509-547. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-021-00215-4>.
- Lei, W.S. Clara, Suntukul, W. and Chen, Z. (2023). Tourism development induced social change, *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 4(1), 100088. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2023.100088>.
- Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, *Business Horizons*, 53(1), pp. 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>.
- Kulkarni, K.K., Kalro, A.D., Sharma, D. and Sharma, P. (2020). A typology of viral ad sharers using sentiment analysis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101739. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.008>.
- Madi, S. and Bensouilah, L. (2024). Stimulating Domestic Tourism in Algeria: The Role of social media in Revitalizing Local Destinations, *Majallat al-Risāla li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buhūth al-Insānīyah*, 9(2), pp. 333-349, Available at: <<https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/246980>>, [Accessed 26 March 2025].

- Marcotte, P., Bourdeau, L. and Sarrasin, B. (2017). 'Tourisme et développement durable. Un exercice d'adaptation, d'intégration et de conciliation', *Téoros. Revue de recherche en tourisme*, 36(1). Available at: <<https://journals.openedition.org/teoros/2979>>, [Accessed 26 March 2025].
- Merabet, F. (2021). *Le Sahara algérien à l'épreuve de la mutation touristique: entre attractivité et durabilité. "L'Oasis Rouge" de Timimoun*. PhD thesis. Université Paul Valéry - Montpellier III [online] Available at: <<https://theses.hal.science/tel-03349626>>, [Accessed 26 March 2025].
- Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D. and Ladkin, A. (2012). 'Conceptualising technology enhanced destination experiences', *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 1(1-2), pp. 36-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2012.08.001>.
- Omrani, A.E. and Touhami, L. (2024). 'L'impact de la transition numérique sur le secteur du tourisme', *Revue Française d'Economie et de Gestion*, 5(12). Available at: <<https://www.revuefreg.fr/index.php/home/article/view/1901>>, [Accessed 26 March 2025].
- Rogers, E.M. (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations*. 5th edn. New York: Free Press.
- UNWTO. (2020). *World Tourism Barometer*, 18(1), pp. 1-10, Available at: <<https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/wtobarometereng/18/1>> [Accessed 26 March 2025].
- Wong, A., Ho, S., Olusanya, O., Antonini, M.V. and Lyness, D. (2020). 'The use of social media and online communications in times of pandemic COVID-19', *Journal of the Intensive Care Society*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1751143720966280>.
- Zeng, B. and Gerritsen, R. (2014). 'What do we know about social media in tourism? A review', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 10, pp. 27-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.01.001>.