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## THE CONTRIBUTION OF DIGITAL TOURISM TO SHOWCASING ALGERIA'S TOURIST ASSETS -A FIELD STUDY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNIVERSITY YOUTH-

**Dr. OKBA SAIDA**

Department of Communication and Information, University of Badji Mokhtar, Annaba (Algeria).

E-mail: [saida.okba@univ-annaaba.dz](mailto:saida.okba@univ-annaaba.dz)

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### **Abstract:**

This article explores the contribution of digital tourism media in highlighting Algeria's rich tourism assets, through a field study based on the opinions of university youth. It aims to clarify the effectiveness of digital platforms—such as social media and tourism websites—in promoting tourist destinations and enhancing Algeria's image as a promising travel destination. The study also seeks to understand the extent of youth engagement with this type of media and its impact on shaping their tourism awareness and motivating them to explore local tourist sites. This is particularly relevant given Algeria's diverse natural resources across various geographic regions, including coastal, desert, and high plateau areas, all of which qualify it to be an attractive destination for tourists from around the world.

The study revealed that digital tourism media is an effective tool for showcasing Algeria's tourism potential, especially when used professionally and in line with the expectations of young people and the developments of the digital age. It recommends strengthening digital tourism content and increasing targeted campaigns aimed at youth in order to raise tourism awareness and promote domestic tourism.

**Keywords:** Contribution, digital tourism media, tourism assets, university youth.

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### **Problem Statement:**

The tourism sector is one of the vital and highly significant sectors due to its position in both the national and global economy. It plays an effective role in supporting the revenue balance and helps diversify the economy beyond hydrocarbons. Thus, it contributes to economic development. For this reason, interest in tourism has increased recently. Like other countries, Algeria seeks to boost this sector by encouraging tourism and investment, which can be achieved through media. Media is a key pillar in shaping and guiding individuals, playing a prominent role in showcasing tourism potential—especially as Algeria possesses all the necessary tourism assets. It has a strategic location in the Mediterranean basin, a long coastline, mountain ranges, vast deserts, attractive tourist areas, and stunning natural scenery. Moreover, its heritage components reflect our Arab cultural identity derived from Islamic roots. Algeria has witnessed various civilizations throughout history, as confirmed by archaeological discoveries across the country.

This specialized form of media is known as tourism media, which contributes to revitalizing the tourism sector by “addressing the domestic and international audience in an objective and intellectual manner, using attractive and engaging elements to present the tourism product, with the

aim of convincing the audience and stimulating their interest in the importance and benefits of tourism for individuals and the state, encouraging them to discover tourism assets, and ultimately spreading tourism awareness and promoting good treatment and support for tourists” (Khaled Abdul Rahman Al-Dughaim, 2015,p59).

Tourism is considered a strategic sector for all countries and a key driver of social and economic development. It contributes to economic growth and reduces dependency on the hydrocarbon sector by diversifying the national economy, particularly today with global technological advances and the emergence of digital media and social networking sites. It is essential to leverage these tools to advance Algeria's tourism sector, as they offer numerous advantages in attracting tourists and promoting tourism. Digital tourism media has become a modern and effective tool for presenting tourism assets and especially engaging young people, who are closely connected to digital platforms.

Hence, there is a need to understand the extent of this media’s contribution to enhancing Algeria's tourism image from the perspective of university students, as they are an active and interactive digital audience.

Based on this, the study raises the following main question:

To what extent does digital tourism media contribute to highlighting Algeria’s tourism assets?

**Sub-questions:**

- How does digital tourism media contribute to highlighting Algeria’s tourism assets?
- What mechanisms does digital tourism media use to promote Algerian tourist areas?
- What obstacles hinder digital tourism media in fulfilling its role in this field?

**Importance of the Study:**

The importance of this study stems from the relevance of the topic itself. Digital tourism media is a current and emerging field that needs to be researched in depth due to the significance of tourism in developing the economy, especially in light of the digital transformation witnessed by media platforms. Tourism media is no longer limited to traditional means; it now relies on digital platforms that are effective and interactive, allowing them to attract audiences, particularly university youth.

Through this study, we aim to shed light on the reality of digital tourism media in Algeria and its contribution to showcasing national tourism resources from the perspective of university students, who are among the most active users of digital media.

**Study Objectives:**

- To identify the reality of digital tourism media and its role in highlighting Algeria’s tourist areas.
- To reveal how digital tourism media helps youth become familiar with Algeria’s diverse tourism assets, from historical landmarks and cultural authenticity to natural diversity including mountains, seas, plains, and vast deserts.

- To present recommendations for improving the performance of digital tourism media to support sustainable tourism development in Algeria.

**Definition of Key Concepts:**

**Definition of “Contribution”:**

Operationally: In this study, contribution refers to the extent to which digital tourism media plays its role in promoting Algeria’s tourism assets to university youth.

**Definition of “Digital Tourism Media”:**

Operationally: Refers to the use of modern technologies and digital platforms (such as tourism websites, social media, travel blogs, etc.) to provide information, promote tourist destinations, and interact with users by offering interactive and informative content that influences the audience—specifically university students. (Al-Muqaddadi, Kazem ,1982,p 41)

**Definition of “Tourism Assets”:**

**Operationally:** Tourism assets are the factors that attract tourists and make them prefer one destination over another. These factors include natural assets (such as landmarks and scenic views), cultural assets (such as ruins and historical sites), and tourism services.

**Digital Media Serving Algerian Tourist Destinations:**

Tourism media has experienced a qualitative shift with the changes imposed by the digital environment, moving from traditional methods to more dynamic and interactive ones. This transformation is due to the widespread use of social media and digital platforms, which have become fundamental in reshaping tourism promotion strategies and altering the relationship between tourism stakeholders and the target audience.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are among the most prominent tools in digital media, now effectively used to present tourism content in engaging ways. These platforms greatly influence the mental image of tourist destinations. Travelers no longer rely solely on brochures or travel agencies; they now seek out authentic travel experiences shared by influencers or other tourists, especially among youth and digital users.

Digital media offers immense opportunities to promote and introduce tourist areas through comments, likes, and shares, creating a form of digital publicity. Previously, travelers relied on limited opinions, but today they can explore numerous experiences instantly, influencing their travel decisions.

Moreover, live streaming and short videos on platforms like YouTube and TikTok provide more realistic and spontaneous views compared to traditional ads, which are often artificial. These methods are more appealing to young people, especially with increasing reliance on smartphones and tourism applications.

Digital media has also empowered local actors, whether individuals or institutions, to promote their tourist areas without needing massive financial resources. Tourism influencers now play a vital role in sharing live images of the characteristics of each region, resulting in diverse content. This shift in tools and strategies requires Algerian tourism institutions to leverage these capabilities

and adopt smarter and more open digital media strategies, while supporting local content and encouraging partnerships with digital influencers and civil society interested in tourism.

### **Digital Transformation Tools in Contemporary Tourism:**

The digital transformation has led to significant structural changes in the tourism sector both locally and internationally. Tourism promotion no longer relies on traditional tools like paper ads, printed guides, exhibitions, or travel agency bookings. Instead, it is now based on a comprehensive set of digital tools that redefine the tourism experience and reshape the relationship between destinations and tourists.

Digital transformation has provided unprecedented opportunities for tourists, such as previewing destinations through clear and detailed interactive videos, exploring reviews and experiences of other travelers via live photos, booking instantly, and easily comparing offers, prices, and services without spending time or effort.

It has also enabled tourism stakeholders to reach wider audiences around the world quickly and at lower costs, boosting the effectiveness and reach of promotional campaigns—especially by targeting specific audience segments based on their interests.

Therefore, digital tools have brought a qualitative leap in the tourism sector. Understanding and effectively employing these tools is essential to advancing tourism and opening opportunities for new destinations.

### **Functions of Digital Tourism Media:**

Digital tourism media is one of the most prominent modern media tools, playing a crucial role in supporting the tourism industry by offering promotional and tourism services aligned with today's rapidly evolving digital era. With technological advancements, its functions have also diversified. Key functions include (Mohamed Mounir Hijab, 2003, p.6):

- **Informative Function:** Keeps tourists informed with the latest news and updates related to tourist destinations, events, and services.
- **Promotional Function:** One of the main roles, using digital platforms to market tourist sites through attractive images, videos, etc., which generates interest in visiting these destinations.
- **Educational Function:** Provides rich content about the history, culture, customs, and traditions of tourist sites, enhancing the tourist's experience and understanding.
- **Interactive Function:** Offers interactive platforms that allow tourists to express their opinions freely and share their experiences, which helps improve tourism services.
- **Guiding Function:** Provides tourists with guidance and tips to ensure a safe and organized travel experience, contributing to improved trip quality.

### **Applied Framework of the Study**

#### **Methodological Procedures of the Field Study:**

In any field study, the researcher follows a set of methodological procedures appropriate to the nature of their study. Considering the correlation between the subject matter, the method used, and the tools employed in the research, our study has adopted the following methodological steps:

**Research Method:**

This study relies on the descriptive method, as it is most suitable for examining social and media phenomena. This method involves studying the phenomenon as it exists in reality, describing it accurately, and interpreting it to understand the context under investigation. The goal of this method is to highlight Algeria's tourism assets by analyzing the opinions and perspectives of university youth regarding the role of media in shaping their perceptions and understanding of their country's tourism potential.

**Research Population and Sample:****Sample:**

Selecting a sample is a crucial step in scientific research, as conducting a comprehensive study of an entire population is often impractical. Therefore, it is essential to select a sample that represents a portion of the population and aligns with the nature of the study. Since our research addresses the contribution of digital tourism media in showcasing Algeria's tourism assets—through a field study from the perspective of university youth—we selected a sample from this demographic, considering their importance in assessing the impact of digital tourism media on their perceptions of tourism features in Algeria.

A purposive sample was selected, composed of second-year Master's students majoring in Communication and Public Relations, given the relevance of their academic background to the study's content and their ability to understand and analyze media functions in a tourism context. The sample consisted of 55 students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Badji Mokhtar University – Annaba. The questionnaire was distributed to them electronically to facilitate distribution and data collection.

**Research Population:**

The research population refers to the broader group the researcher seeks to study to derive findings that reflect the reality of the phenomenon in question. In this case, the population consists of students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Badji Mokhtar University – Annaba, due to their academic connection to the fields of media and communication, enabling them to interact with and analyze the content of digital tourism media.

**Data Collection Tools:**

Descriptive research of this kind typically relies on a variety of data collection tools. The most prominent among them is:

**Questionnaire Form:**

The questionnaire is one of the primary tools used in this study due to its ability to accurately capture respondents' opinions. It is also one of the most widely used tools in field research. The questionnaire consists of a set of precisely designed questions, answered by the targeted individuals, to collect data on their views and attitudes toward digital tourism media and its role in highlighting Algeria's tourism features. This allows the study to achieve its objectives and reach scientifically grounded conclusions.

A total of 55 questionnaires were distributed, and 53 valid responses were retrieved for analysis, reflecting a high response rate that supports the credibility of the findings.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

Section One: Related to the gender of the research sample.

Section Two: On the contribution of new tourism media in promoting Algeria's tourist destinations.

Section Three: On the mechanisms used by new tourism media to promote tourist sites in Algeria.

Section Four: On the challenges faced by new tourism media in promoting Algeria's tourist destinations.

### **Scope of the Study:**

Time Scope:

The questionnaire was distributed to respondents during the period from February 1 to February 15, 2025, followed by the data processing and analysis phase to derive results related to the study's objectives.

### **Geographical Scope:**

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Media and Communication, Badji Mokhtar University – Annaba.

After analyzing the data, we arrived at the following:

### **Analysis of Study Results:**

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male          | 30               | 57%                   |
| Female        | 23               | 43%                   |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>53</b>        | <b>100%</b>           |

**Source:** This research

The table indicates that the majority of the sample consists of male respondents, accounting for 57%, compared to 43% female respondents. This distribution highlights a numerical dominance of males, which may explain their greater inclination toward the use of digital media and technology. Nevertheless, the proportion of females remains significant, reflecting their active participation in the field and contributing to the diversity of the sample.

### **Section Two: The Contribution of Tourism Media in Promoting Tourist Areas in Algeria**

**Table 2: Most Preferred Digital Media Platforms by Respondents**

| Media Platform | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Facebook       | 15        | 28%            |
| YouTube        | 13        | 25%            |
| Instagram      | 9         | 17%            |
| WhatsApp       | 10        | 19%            |
| Twitter        | 6         | 11%            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>53</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

**Source:** This research

From the table above, it is evident that **Facebook** is the most preferred platform among respondents, with a percentage of **28%**, followed by **YouTube** at **25%**, **Instagram** at **17%**, **WhatsApp** at **19%**, and finally **Twitter** at **11%**. This preference reflects Facebook’s continued dominance as a multifunctional platform that combines text, visual, and live content, enabling users to easily follow tourism-related pages and groups. This explains why university students favor Facebook: it serves as an interactive platform that provides quick and diverse access to tourism content, along with features for engagement, commenting, and sharing (Salustiano, 2024, p. 23).

**YouTube**, ranked second with **25%**, reflects a clear shift toward **audiovisual content**, as the platform offers a rich array of tourism-related videos that support self-education and provide detailed information on various travel destinations through explanatory videos. This aligns with the preferences of university students.

**Instagram**, ranked third at **17%**, confirms the respondents’ inclination toward **quick visual content**, such as attractive tourism photos and short videos. Although its content is largely aesthetic and entertainment-focused, Instagram remains a popular platform among young people interested in tourism as part of their lifestyle (Abderrahmane, 2021, p. 102).

Following that, **WhatsApp** ranks fourth with **19%**, and it is also considered an important medium for exchanging digital tourism content among students—especially within group chats—which reinforces its role as an interactive platform in the daily lives of university students (Ben Ali, 2020, p. 141).

In last place comes **Twitter**, with **11%**, indicating its weak popularity among students. This can be attributed to its **text-focused nature** and limited visual presence compared to other platforms.

**Table 3: Reasons for Choosing Facebook by Respondents**

| Reason   | Frequency Percentage (%) |             |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|
| Ease of use  | 10                       | 18%         |
| Discovering tourist areas through travel agency pages          | 12                       | 23%         |
| Interaction with others (sharing, commenting, inquiries, etc.) | 11                       | 21%         |
| Credibility of information through users' personal experiences | 9                        | 17%         |
| Availability of attractive visual content                      | 11                       | 21%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>53</b>                | <b>100%</b> |

**Source:** This research

The results in the table above show that the **main motivation** for respondents to use Facebook for following tourism content is to **discover tourist areas through travel agency pages**, which accounted for **23%**. These pages are considered official sources of tourism information and often include reliable content such as photos, service descriptions, and available destinations. This directly meets the needs of university students for **quick, accurate, and visually-supported information**, without having to engage in extensive and scattered searches (Abdelkader, 2022, p. 88).

The next two motivations, each at **21%**, are **the ability to interact with others** (via sharing, comments, and inquiries) and **the availability of attractive visual content**. This highlights the importance of **interactivity and visual appeal** in the platform's attractiveness. Today's user no longer merely receives content passively, but seeks interactive formats that allow information exchange.

The reason of **ease of use** follows with **18%**, reflecting users' preference for platforms that do not require high technical skills—especially with frequent application usage.

Lastly, the **credibility of information derived from users' personal experiences** came in at **17%**, pointing to the value of peer recommendations and real-life experiences in shaping perceptions, although this factor was somewhat less influential compared to the others.

### Section Three: Mechanisms Used by Digital Tourism Media to Promote Tourist Areas in Algeria

**Table 4: Preferred and Commonly Used Methods in Digital Tourism Media to Promote Tourist Areas According to Respondents**

| Method                          | Frequency Percentage (%) |     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Posting photos of tourist areas | 24                       | 45% |

| Method  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Videos showcasing new tourist spots           | 19        | 35%            |
| Reportages on recommended travel destinations | 10        | 20%            |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>53</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

**Source:** This research

Analyzing the table above, which outlines the **preferred and utilized methods in digital tourism media** for promoting tourist destinations, it becomes evident that **posting photos of tourist areas** is the most favored option, with **45%** of respondents selecting this method. This indicates a strong attraction among respondents to **visual content**, which possesses the ability to deliver a **clear, immediate representation** of tourist destinations in a short time span.

Ranked second are **videos showcasing new tourist spots**, accounting for **35%**. This reflects the growing interest among young people in **interactive and visual content** that offers immersive and engaging experiences.

In third place, with **20%**, are **reportages on recommended travel destinations**. While reportages provide in-depth and rich information, their lower preference suggests that young audiences favor **concise and visual content** over detailed or text-heavy reports. This could be due to the **longer time required to watch or read reportages**, making them less appealing compared to the quick consumption of photos and short videos.

**Table 5: Evaluation of Facebook’s Contribution in Promoting Tourist Areas in Algeria from the Respondents’ Perspective**

| Role Evaluation               | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Very significant contribution | 14        | 26%            |
| Significant contribution      | 18        | 34%            |
| Moderate contribution         | 12        | 23%            |
| Weak contribution             | 6         | 11%            |
| No contribution at all        | 3         | 6%             |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>53</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

**Source:** This research

The results presented in the table indicate that **the majority of respondents believe Facebook plays a considerable role** in promoting tourist areas in Algeria. Specifically, **34%** of respondents rated Facebook's contribution as **significant**, while **26%** rated it as **very significant**. On the other hand, **23%** considered the contribution to be **moderate**, **11%** viewed it as **weak**, and **6%** believed that Facebook **does not contribute at all**, suggesting a perceived **lack of sufficient effectiveness** among a minority.

These findings are consistent with those of **Fatima Zahraa Abdeljawad (2021)**, whose study highlighted that **Facebook is one of the most influential platforms** in encouraging young people to visit domestic tourist destinations, primarily through **promotional photos and videos**. This underscores Facebook's potential as an **effective tool within digital tourism media**, emphasizing the need to **leverage it more strategically** to portray Algeria's tourism image at the desired level.

#### Axis Four: Challenges Facing Digital Tourism Media in Algeria

**Table 6: Problems Hindering Digital Tourism Media in Showcasing Algeria's Tourism Assets**

| Problems  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Lack of specialized digital platforms for Algerian tourism                          | 16        | 30%            |
| Shortage of digital content reflecting the diversity of Algeria's tourism assets    | 14        | 27%            |
| Weak coordination between the media and tourism sectors in promoting tourism assets | 9         | 17%            |
| Limited media coverage of internal and remote regions                               | 8         | 15%            |
| Weak specialized media training in showcasing Algerian tourism assets               | 6         | 11%            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>53</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

**Source:** This research

The results from the above table reveal that the **primary obstacle** facing digital tourism media in Algeria is the **absence of specialized digital platforms** focused on Algerian tourism, reported by **30%** of respondents. This reflects a clear lack of dedicated digital tools that can highlight the country's rich tourism potential.

Coming second is the issue of a **shortage of digital content** that reflects the **diverse tourism resources** of Algeria, with **27%** of responses. This suggests a **weakness in digital media production** when it comes to portraying a realistic and comprehensive image of Algeria's tourism richness, thus failing to offer content that adequately captures the **value and appeal** of these destinations.

**Weak coordination between the media and tourism sectors** was identified as the third major challenge (17%), highlighting the **absence of a unified communication strategy** between stakeholders, which hinders collective efforts aimed at effective tourism promotion.

The issue of **limited media coverage of internal and remote regions** was selected by 15% of respondents, pointing to a clear **geographical marginalization** in media strategies—areas rich in tourism potential are often ignored or underrepresented.

Finally, **weak specialized training for media professionals** in the field of tourism ranked last, with 11%, signaling a gap in the **technical and domain-specific knowledge** required for effective tourism journalism. This points to the **urgent need for targeted training programs** to enhance media professionals' ability to promote tourism in a knowledgeable and compelling manner.

### Study Findings

After presenting and analyzing the data, the study arrived at several key findings:

- The study revealed that **Facebook is the most preferred digital platform** among respondents, ranking first among all media tools, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. The reasons behind this preference lie in the platform's ability to provide **diverse tourism content**, which helps users discover tourist areas through the pages of tourism agencies. Additionally, its high level of interactivity allows for the **engaging and efficient dissemination** of images and information about tourism assets.
- The results also showed that the **most commonly adopted method** in digital tourism media for promoting tourist sites is the **publication of photographs** of tourist destinations. These visuals possess strong expressive and aesthetic power capable of attracting the audience's attention and encouraging exploration. They are followed by **video clips** that present new tourist attractions in a realistic and detailed manner, allowing the audience to virtually explore sites from afar. The study also noted the use of **tourism reports** as an informative tool that enhances knowledge of destinations and recommends new places to visit through in-depth content.
- It was further concluded that **Facebook plays a significant role** in highlighting Algeria's tourism assets by facilitating the widespread distribution and circulation of digital tourism content. This contributes to **enhancing the visibility** and reputation of Algerian destinations within the digital tourism space.
- Lastly, the study identified **several obstacles** limiting the effectiveness of digital tourism media in Algeria. Chief among them is the **lack of specialized digital platforms** dedicated to Algerian tourism, which hampers effective promotion efforts. Moreover, the digital content suffers from a **lack of diversity**, which restricts the comprehensive representation of the country's tourism resources. Another challenge is the **weak coordination** between the media and tourism sectors, which impedes the delivery of coherent and impactful media messages. In addition, **limited media coverage** of internal and remote regions deprives these areas of promotional opportunities. Finally, the study highlighted a **deficiency in specialized media training**, which negatively affects the **quality of tourism content** being produced.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, digital tourism media represents a key tool for showcasing Algeria's rich tourism assets, including its diverse natural landscapes, cultural variety, and unique civilizational heritage. However, the findings of this study, which drew upon the perspectives of university youth, reveal a **notable gap between the country's vast tourism potential and the current digital media strategies** used to highlight and promote it in an effective and innovative manner.

Given the increasing use of digital platforms among young people, there is a pressing need for **modern communication strategies** that integrate technology with engaging tourism content. This must be accompanied by the development of specialized media professionals in digital tourism and support for startups operating in this field.

Among the recommendations proposed in this context are: establishing a **national policy for digital tourism media** in collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism and Communication; creating **interactive, multilingual platforms** that professionally present Algeria's tourism image; encouraging students and researchers to produce **targeted digital tourism content** for both local and international youth audiences; and training **digital media professionals** capable of effectively promoting tourist destinations. Moreover, it is essential to **engage university youth** as a driving force in this developmental movement.

The **smart and effective use of digital tourism media** could open new global horizons for Algeria within the tourism sector.

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