Exploring the effectiveness of using e-platforms in promoting tourist destination– An analytical study of Namlatic & Algeria Tours e-platforms

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Abstract:

Our study aims to highlight the importance of using electronic platforms as a modern technique in promoting Algeria tourist destinations, and making them preferential by local and foreign tourists. In order to realize this study, we use analytical study approach, by analyzing the Algeriatours & Namlatic platform. The study based also the descriptive approach that deals with the definitions of the tourism, e-tourism and e-platforms and its effectiveness on promoting tourist destination.

The study concluded with findings that e-tourism should be exploited through e-platforms, which were a promotional tool for Algeria's tourism sector, and that sales through e-platforms should be encouraged by reducing taxes and fees.

Keywords : e-Platform, e-tourism, e-promotion, Algeria Tourist Destination.

JEL Classification Codes : M31, M39, Z39.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Currently, the tourism sector is one of the largest growing sectors in the world, as one of the pillars of any country's economic and social development, as well tourism is Not only a recreational activity, but it is an industry in itself has experienced prompted development and growth. Wears now, With the advent of the development of information and communication technology, the virtual world has become the dominant world, and that imposing various tourism institutions to move from traditional marketing to electronic marketing, and adapt their promotional policies to what the virtual environment imposes. Hence the need to resort to e-tourism and tourism promotion through e-platforms. It is well known that Algeria has a large number of tourist destinations, characterized by its natural beauty and diversity of cultural heritage, which qualifies it to be among the world's most well-known tourist countries, which need to exploit technological development to promote it, especially through electronic platforms.

Through this study, we aim to provide researchers with a perspective on tourism and the efficiency of electronic platforms for the promotion of tourism destinations in Algeria. Hence, the problematic of the study was identified in the following question: How much do e-platforms contribute to the promotion of Algeria as a tourist destination?

To address the problematic of the study, we divided our research into two sections, a theoretical section that addressed each of the generalities about tourism, e-tourism, and e-platforms. The second section was presented an analytical study. We analysed the Namlatic & Algeriatours e-platforms. as well as the study is based on the quantitative approach that help in the analysis of statistical data related to algeria tourism like (number of tourists in Algeria, The value of international and local tourism spending in Algeria. Etc.), and internet use in Algeria. This method was the most appropriate for our research as it allowed us to better understand the promotion of tourist destinations through e-platform. We used secondary sources such as articles, books, and theses that dealt with the problem of tourism promotion through electronic platforms, tourism, and e-tourism.

The importance of this study lies in filling the gap in previous literature and contributing to the field of e-tourism and e-platforms, both theoretically and methodologically. Previous studies have only highlighted certain aspects of tourism and e-platforms and its role in promoting tourism, but none have comprehensively explored the topic by examining e-platforms pages, who publish tourism content and their role in promoting tourism destinations.

2. Review of Literature:
2.1. Tourism:

Initially, Weaver and Lawton (2002), defined tourism as the set of relationships resulting from the interaction of tourists with host governments, the tourism industry, indigenous peoples, universities, community schools and non-governmental organizations in the process of attracting, hosting and managing such tourists (Jönsson, 2005). Furthermore, tourism can be limited to any temporary visitor staying in a country for at least 24 hours, for reasons such as recreation and trekking, religion and worship, sports or family activities, health, holidays, study and scientific, cultural and political conferences (Boukhobza, 2020). Moreover, tourism can also be considered as a modern phenomenon, characterized by the growing need for comfort, recreation, a sense of the value of nature and the pleasure of staying in areas of special natural beauty, and because of the development of transport (Yagoub, 2023). By definition, the Tourism Association proposes a definition that tourism is the short and temporary movement of people to destinations outside of places where they usually live and work. Therefore, tourism involves transporting people for various purposes, including daily visits or trips (Camilleri, 2018).

As well, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Statistical Commission (2000), providing the last theoretical definition of tourism as a reference for all member countries, defining tourism as activities made by persons in the way of their travel and stay in places outside their place of residence, for a consecutive period not surpassing one year. For the many motive such as leisure, for business and other motive (Demen Meyer, 2005). As a result of which, we cannot said of a place that it is a tourist

destination without delivering it on tourism products , i.e. the tourism activity depends mainly on the tourist product and services, therefore, Medlik and Middleton (1973) defined tourist products as a variety of activities, services and benefits through which the entire tourist experience arises. This collection consists of five components: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, photos, price, and component model (as Middleton refers to) (Smith, 1994). Therefore, the components that constructs the tourism product are usually cited to as the 4 A's: Attractions, Amenities or hospitality sector i.e. accommodation and F&B/Catering services and retailing, Access or transportation, and supplementary Services or visitor centers, insurance and financial services (Govers, 2005).

2.2. E-tourism:

Firstly, Kazandzhieva & Santana (2019), define e-tourism as the digitization of all commercial and administrative activities, services and value chain phases of the tourism system, which contributes to increasing the effectiveness of interactions between tourism companies, tourists and the public, thereby achieving competitive sustainability (Kazandzhieva & Santana, 2019). In addition, e-tourism determines the competitiveness of organizations by exploiting the Internet to interact with all stakeholders and customers, the external network to develop transactions with trusted partners and the Intranet to reorganize internal operations, and e-tourism contributes to reducing seasonality, effective communication with customers and increasing bookings and sales in general (Madoui & Bendjeroua, 2021). As well as, e-tourism has also been mentioned as an alternative business phenomenon, it includes all the stages of information, booking and payment for tourism products electronically, as well as other stages (e-management, e-planning etc.), thanks to the active participation of the tourist (Kazandzhieva & Santana, 2019). In addition, tourism suppliers, including airlines, hotel chains and car rental companies, have seized new opportunities by developing e-commerce applications, that provide users with direct access to their booking systems (Buhalis & Licata, 2001).

Additionally, e-tourism brings together a number of fields, including business administration, information systems and management and tourism. The concept of e-tourism encompasses several business functions such as e-commerce, e-finance, e-accounting, e-marketing, e-human resources management, e-procurement, e-production and R&D, as well as e-strategy, e-planning and e-management for all sectors of the tourism industry, including transport, leisure, hospitality, managers, intermediaries and public sector organizations (Buhalis & Hyun Jun, E-Tourism, 2011). As well, e-tourism inclusive a large range of digital tools and platforms, for example, the websites, mobile applications, social media, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. Every tools can be utilized to allow tourists with access to travel information, virtual tours of destinations, systems of booking and reservation, personalized recommendations, and other travel services (Koliouska & Andreopoulou, 2023).

2.3. Platforms effectiveness on promoting tourist destination:

According to Wujing, Xiaozhi (2022), e-tourism platforms are platforms used by tourism organizations to integrate traditional tourism resources, and provide all tourism information, including products and booking services to the public. It is also an important tool for cities to build the destination image, promote products and increase popularity (Wujing & Xiaozhi , 2022). Moreover, there is a high likelihood that digital platforms will increase the demand for tourism services, through their impact on tourism costs (financial and non-financial). Such as accommodation, increasing alternative destination options, airfares and time spent planning the trip, or even reducing uncertainty about the quality of the flight to be taken, thereby increasing confidence in the services purchased, as well as in the reliability of the digital platform itself (Lopez Cordova, 2020). As well, digital platforms in the travel industry are widely used by three groups of actors: service providers, digital platforms and users, the following figure is a blueprint for the use of digital tourism platforms as intermediaries in tourism: (World Tourism Organization , 2019)

Fig 01: the use of digital tourism platforms as intermediaries in tourism
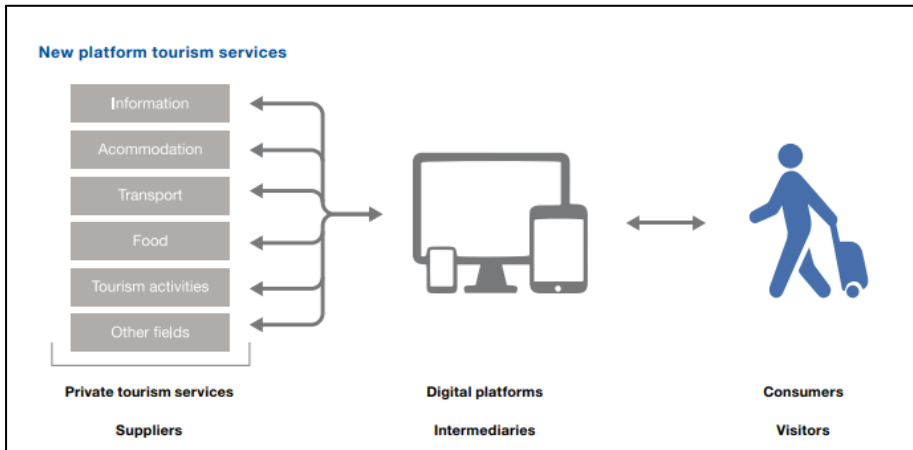
Source: (World Tourism Organization , 2019, p. 09)

Moreover, it can be said that digital platforms is instrumental in promoting services and destinations through: (Hussein Abdel Wahab, 2023)

- Reduce the trouble of tourists searching for things they need to travel, such as hotels, car rentals and tours.
- It has a great role in influencing how tourists consume travel.
- Digital tourism platforms develop new types of interaction between tourists and service providers.
- Big data is collected and delivered through digital tourism platforms.
- Digital tourism platforms contribute to the promotion of uncommon destinations.

According to the research literature, our main objective is to answer the problem of our study, by hypothesizing that electronic platforms actively promote Algeria as tourist destinations.

3. Methodology:

The study examines the effectiveness of e-platforms in promoting tourism destinations in Algeria. To achieve this study, we discussed an analytical study on Namlatic & Algeria tours platforms pages. Our research based on the descriptive approach that deals with the definitions of the tourism, e-tourism and e-platforms. The study also based on an analytical

study approach, by analyzing the Algeria tours & Namlatic platform. We used secondary sources such as articles, books, and theses that deal with the problem of tourism promotion through electronic platforms, tourism, and e-tourism.

In order to discover the reality of The Role of e-platforms in Promoting Tourist Destinations in Algeria, we divided our study into two parts. In the first part, the study tried to give some perspective about tourism and e-tourism and the e-platforms and its efficiencies in promoting tourism. In addition, in the second part, the study give an analytical study about Algeria tours & Namlatic platforms.

4. Findings and Discussion:
4.1. Statistical data related to Algeria tourism:
4.1.1. General information on tourism determinants in Algeria:

Algeria offer a range of tourist attractions, such as magnificent landscapes of the Sahara, heritage sites, Atlas Mountains and comfortable beach destinations on the Mediterranean Sea, tourism in Algeria has become progressively attractive. The tourism industry play a mildly role in Algeria's economy. In 2021, the sector contributed approximately 4% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), this includes travel agencies, accommodation facilities, and tourist attractions, and has employed around 5% of the working population in Algeria, which translates to about 550,000 jobs. Although tourism employment has improved gradually since 2020, it has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels of about 630,000 jobs in 2019 (Statista, 2023).

The statistics published on the website of the Ministry of Tourism represent the main statistical indicators of the tourism sector for 2022, showing the evolution of the sector, the main ones are: (the Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industry, 2022)

- Hotel barracks with 1576 accommodation establishments, gross accommodation card of 145 526 beds.
- Tourism and travel agencies have 4722 accredited agencies.

– The number of tourists in Algeria reached 2.3 million in 2023, including 1.5 million foreign tourists from January to August 2023, the southern states (desert tourism) also saw about 26 thousand tourists per year 2023 (Sabqpress, 2023).

Table 01: Tourism Sector Indicators in Algeria 2022

| Number of hotel establishments	1576
Number of beds	145 526
Number of tourism and travel agencies	4722
Number of tour guides	200
Number of tourism projects in progress	2585

Source: Prepared by the authors using data provided (the Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industry, 2022)

Contribution value of the travel and tourism industry to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Algeria from 2019 to 2021:

In 2021, the tourism industry contributed around 7.2 billion US dollars to Algeria's gross domestic product (GDP), this represents a 33% increase on the previous year. In 2020, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic caused a decline in the tourism sector's contribution to GDP (Statista, 2023).

Evolution of Algeria's balance of payments - tourism and travel: Tourism has contributed to the country's economic development, making it an important contributor to the national gross domestic product (GDP). This is illustrated by the fact that the balance of payments has evolved as shown in the following figure: (Silem & Aliane, 2023)

Fig 02: Evolution of Algeria's balance of payments - tourism and travel

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Income	209	104,5	169	165	42,9
Expenditure	475	580	494	500	323,6
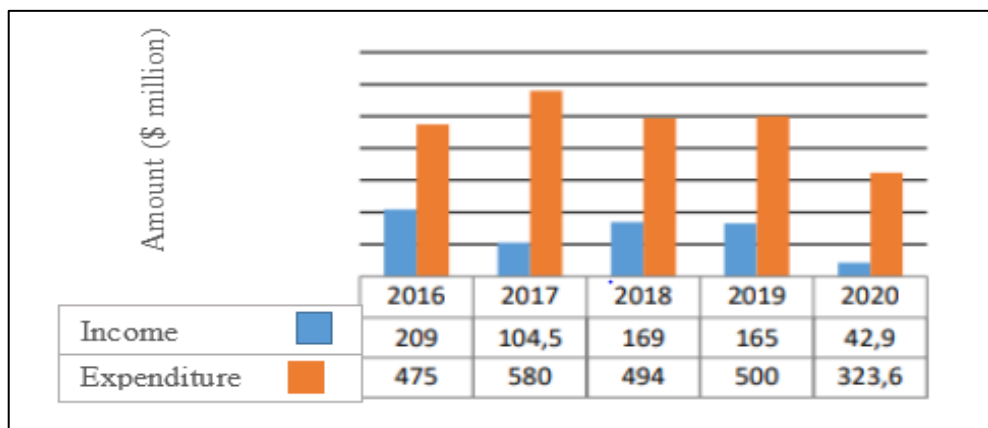
Source: (Silem & Aliane, 2023)

4.1.2. The value of international and local tourism spending in Algeria

Table 02: The value of international and local tourism spending in Algeria for the years 2019 and 2021 (million US dollars):

Characteristic	2019	2021
International	143.3	30.2
Domestic	7,856.3	5,768.5

Source: (Statista, 2023)

Domestic tourism expenditure in 2021 was around US $5.8 billion, compared to only US $30 million in international tourism, this demonstrate that the majority of tourists visiting the country are domestic tourists (Statista, 2023).

4.1.3. Statistics on the use of the Internet for Algeria in 2023

The number of internet users in Algeria stood at around 32.09 million in January 2023, bringing the country's internet penetration rate to 70.9% of the total population at the beginning of this year. This explains the need for tourism companies to use the Internet to promote their services rather than traditional channels, especially tourism agencies, where Statista has announced that the value of online hotel bookings has increased faster in

recent years, explaining the need to shift to electronic rather than traditional transactions, as these are current transactions (DATAREPORTAL, 2023).

4.1.4. Tourism and online travel:

Statistics from Statista showed that global online spending on flights increased by $11 billion in 2021, an increase of 6.8%, to a total of $173 billion in 2022. Despite this, the value of online hotel bookings grew at a faster rate, with global revenue increasing by 45% compared to last year. The world also spend $142 billion on online hotel bookings in 2021, with annual revenue increasing by $44 billion compared to the 2020 total (Data Reportal, 2022).

4.2.   Case study on the Algeria tours & Namlatic platforms
4.2.1. Algeria tours platform definition:

The Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries has developed an electronic platform on tourist routes, called Algeria tours to achieve digital transformation and develop the domestic tourism sector. Algeria is also a tourist product in itself, paving the way for tourists to choose the most appropriate destination for them, whether in terms of cultural, archaeological, natural or religious interests. The main objective is to develop domestic tourism, varying from region to region, the platform will provide the desired complement to promote the tourism product offered by the various local destinations, and will present Algeria as a diverse tourist component of the various tours. The first version of the portal was established in March 2022, with 281 thematic tourist routes (premier ministre dz, 2022).

Description and analysis of the Algeria tours page contents

There are many applications offered by the platform to tourists that we present:

Platform language: For the language is Arabic as well as English and French language.

Platform trademark: For the **symbol (logo)** is a graphic of a colorful Algerian map representing the various climatic terrain of Algeria from blue

at the upper part of the map, which representing the coastal strip, drop to brown below the map which symbolizes the desert climate. The map also introduces a drawing of a man riding camels wearing Algerian Saharan traditional cloth. As for **the slogan**, the platform used its name as a slogan, where the symbol of the platform was placed at the upper part of the page with the full name, followed at the bottom by the words "Discover the most beautiful sites: the most wonderful attractions and the most beautiful land spaces on trips all year round".

Site address: the platform is affiliated with the Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industry, which is located at 119 Didosh Mourad Street, Algiers. For the website, it is as follows: https://algeriatours.dz

Way of communication: For communication or question, you may send an email from the site or call the numbers on the platform page: telephone +213 21 61 45 45 e-mail contact@algeriatours.dz or through the site mta.gov.dz

Icons and links on social media: there are icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter links, but when you press the icon, you do not convert to these links. Therefore we have also searched the site's official page on each of the above social media sites, but we did not find anything, which means that there are not yet any site's official pages on social media sites.

Important indicators on the platform:

Nature of the activity: The Algeria tours is a tourist platform that promote the tourism sector and introduce the Algerian tourist destinations.

Target group: This does not appear specifically and directly within the platform, tourism products are advertised and promoted in general.

Icons: Once you enter the platform's home page, you find three icons:

–   Choose the theme; there are four options for tourist trails: Beach, Desert, Historical, and Cultural.
–   Choose way type: long, medium, or short.

– Choose your preferred destination: Here the platform shows all Algerian states.

The official page also contains the Google maps to identify your location and hence view all tourist sites in your vicinity. The page also features an icon of various popular and recommended tourist routes and destinations, such as the Grand Algiers Collector Cultural Track and the historic track Kaff Al-Zawabiq. When you click on one of these routes, you will see a page containing all the tourist information related to that destination, including historical and cultural identification, the duration of the route and its type, the appropriate seasons to visit it, the presentation of various images of the tourist sites in it. As well as the platform provide comments box about this destination, as well as, it provide access to people's feedback on their opinions and experiences in the tourist sites included in this route or destination.

The platform offers an icon of available hotels in Algeria, showing all possible details of these hotels, including the number of stars, location, number of rooms and capacity, telephone number, photos of the various accommodations of the hotel and offer a box to add comments about their experience in these hotels. Another icon shows various restaurant details, such as the name of the restaurant, its location and address, the type of food it offers, the telephone number and the box to add comments about their experiences in that restaurant.

Methods of people interaction with the platform: There are no clear ways of interacting, but there is an email and telephone number to communicate, according to the nature of the platform and being an official platform for tourism promotion.

Booking and paying on the platform: The platform does not provide booking and payment service through it, but only offers available tourism offers.

4.2.2. The Namlatic platform definition:

"Namlatic" is the first Algerian online hotel booking startup, which offer its services in three languages Arabic, English and French languages, and to book hotels online through this secure online payment methods platform available including the "Eddahabia" card at Algeria Post. It also provides customers with the possibility to cancel the booking without financial consequences. The platform currently works with more than 150 different star and unrated hotel accommodations, range across 38 cities in the country (k.Derkouche, 2022). Namlatic platform digitizes the tourism sector in Algeria with a technological innovation on a hotel reservation platform. Then the Namlatic brand on an international level: Algeria, France, India (Namlatic, 2019).

Namlatic platform provide tourist with innovations so that they can easily: (Namlatic, 2019)

– Book online a room in real time.
– Pay online from Algeria or worldwide.
– In three languages: FR, EN, AR.
– Cancel or modify without worries.

Amara Amaouz, CEO and co-founder of Namlatic, noted in his speeches during the International Exhibition for Tourism, Travel, Transport and Hotel Equipment (SIAHA), which was held recently in Oran, "Namlatic seeks to support the local economy 100% and revive the Algerian economy through the digitization of the hotel sector" (k.Derkouche, 2022).

Table 03: Namlatic identification card

Website	https://namlatic.com
Professional Field	Hospitality
Company Size	Staff member's 11- 50
Headquarters	12 rue des Cèdres, El Mouradia 16035, Algiers
Type	Partnership
creation	2019
Specializations	tourism ‹car Booking ‹hotels Booking ‹payement Gateway ‹innovation technologie, finance
Customer Services	24 hour x 7 Day

Source: Prepared by the authors using data provided on (Namlatic, 2019)

Description and analysis of the Namlatic platform page contents:

There are many applications offered by the platform to tourists that we presented by:

Platform trademark: For the platform **symbol (logo),** the symbol is an orange circle with a large letter N in the center. As for **the slogan** of the platforms, it was "Book your hotel from anywhere, anytime and at the best price!".

Way of communication: For communication or question, you may send an email from the site or call the numbers on the platform page: telephone +213 770 768 180 e-mail contact@namlatic.com

Icons and links on social media: there are icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter and LinkedIn links

Target group: This does not appear specifically and directly within the platform, tourism products are advertised and promoted in general. However, through research and analysis of the platform page, it targeted at various local and international tourist audiences.

Methods of people interaction with the platform: Once you enter the platform page, you find three icons:

1) Choose Destination.

2) Select Number of Travel Days.

3) Choose Number of People will book at Hotel.

The official page also contains the Google maps to identify all hotel near you.

The process of booking through Namlatic in three specific steps on the platform page by:

– Choose: Here the tourist selects the perfect room in the hotel he prefers.
– Book: Get all facilities after completing the transaction.
– Registration: Go to hotel with ID card and proof of payment document.

The platform offer an icon about available hotels in Algeria (about 245 hotels), showing all possible details of these hotels, including the number of stars, location, number of rooms and capacity, prices telephone number, photos of the various accommodations of the hotel.

Booking and paying on the platform: The platform also offers various payment methods either through:

– International card payment.

– CIB / EDAHABIA card.

– Payment by bank transfer.

– Payment at the Hotel.

As well as it can be paid in Algerian dinars, euros and US dollars.

5. conclusion:

Nowadays, tourism has illustrated how the Internet can change the structure of an entire industry, and in this process, create new business opportunities. Hence, E-marketing in general and e-promotion in particular are recent trends adopted by tourism establishments, through the creation of its own platforms, which perform various functions such as presentation available services, promoting offers, completing the booking process etc.

From this point of view, and Based on the results obtained in this study, we conclude that electronic platforms are important in promoting tourist destinations and influencing the consumer decisions of users, this validates the study's hypothesis that e-platforms play an effective role in the promotion of tourist destinations in Algeria. Especially with the emergence of e-tourism, where it has become the front end of countries' tourism destinations. As is known, Algeria enjoys a variety of tourism attractions that have their place in the regional and international area. Moreover, from our analysis of Algeria tours & Namlatic platforms, it can be said that Algeria is significantly far from the adoption of e-platforms as a tools of promotion, so that the Algeria tours & Namlatic is still unknown and there is a few interaction in it. We have also noted that the Algeria tours platform is not linked to other tourism establishment's websites. Hence, we will make a set of **recommendations**:

- Algeria tourism ministry must Pay attention to the marketing aspect of domestic tourism, by upgrading the tourism services, widen offers, reviewing price policies etc.
- The necessity for cooperation between all tourism institutions and the Algeria tours platform, in order to form an extensive website containing links to all websites of other tourism institutions
- Distribute a proportion of the government spending to develop the e-promotion of the tourism sector.
- Need to provide the Algeria tours platform with social media links, create accounts and broadcast information programs with the aim of promoting the tourist culture and the destination in Algeria.
- The Algeria tours & Namlatic platforms must intensify promotional efforts for various tourist destinations in Algeria, by presenting it high quality videos (HD technology) and keeping update with modern promotional technics.
- Encourage sales through electronic platforms, by lowering taxes and fees such as fees on value added.
- Both government agencies and the Ministry of Tourism should work together to raise awareness of e-commerce through training and education of tourism stakeholders and employees, as well as tourists. We cannot

implement e-tourism without enabling tourism stakeholders to benefit from new technologies for the Internet and e-commerce.

6. Suggestions for further research

This paper analyses the effectiveness of online platforms in promoting Algeria as a tourist destination. However, the use of digital platforms in tourism is growing rapidly. Therefore, it is suggested that further research be carried out on this topic, as it may reveal new results and ways to develop and improve tourism services. The data of this study were collected only through an analytical study of the homepages of the Namlatic & Algeria Tours platforms (qualitative data), in order to provide more in-depth ideas on this subject, further research can be carried out in a statistical way (quantitative data). The thematic study will be most useful for tour operators who already work with electronic platforms, will attract new users and partners of the companies, and will show ways to develop tourist services.

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