



## The Role of Arab Social Influencers in Tourism Marketing for Algeria

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Reçu le:29/05/2023

Accepté le:08/09/2023

Publié le:30/09/2023

DOI: 10.53284/2120-010-003-006

### Abstract:

The current study aims to uncover the roles played by Arab social media influencers on various social media platforms in Algeria tourism marketing by reading the most important content on their official pages analytically. The researcher chose the most influential person who has recently become famous in the field, Egyptian Hamdy Shagie .

According to the study, Arab influencers are very interested in introducing Algerian tourist attractions and presenting Algerian heritage to attract tourists both domestically and internationally.

**Keywords:** Social Media Influencers (SMI); Social Media Platforms; Digital Tourism Marketing; Tourist Attraction.

ملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى الكشف عن الأدوار التي يقوم بها مؤثرون اجتماعيون عرب عبر مختلف شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في التسويق السياحي للجزائر من خلال قراءة تحليلية لأهم محتويات صفحاتهم الرسمية. واختارت الباحثة أكثر مؤثر اشتهر خلال الفترة الأخيرة في المجال وهو: المصري حمدي شجيع.

وتوصلت الدراسة إلى وجود اهتمام كبير لدى المؤثرين العرب بالتعريف بالمقومات السياحية الجزائرية، وتقديم التراث الجزائري بهدف استقطاب السياح داخليا وخارجيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المؤثرون الاجتماعيون (SMI)؛ منصات التواصل الاجتماعي؛ التسويق السياحي الرقمي؛ الاستقطاب السياحي.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is regarded as one of the most important industries in our time, as it has evolved into a cultural, social, and economic phenomenon. It is one of the fastest-growing sectors and serves as the main axis in the economic lives of many countries. It is recognized as one of the world's earliest industries and an effective tool for achieving sustainable development. It is critical to overall economic development because it is capable of generating large amounts of foreign currency, absorbing unemployment, and upgrading entire regions and countries. As a result, many countries have made this sector a pillar of their national economy.

Tourism marketing enables the activation of the tourism movement and the influence of directing tourists to a specific area by providing information related to the characteristics and features of that area in order to elicit a positive response and persuade potential tourists to purchase the offered services and have unique experiences in the face of regional and global competition. Under the conditions of competition and an abundance of tourism offers, research on various new means and methods for effective tourism marketing has begun.

It is clear that electronic tourism marketing is the modern alternative that keeps up with the times, relying on modern media and communication technologies, with social media networks currently being the most important for achieving tourism companies' marketing goals and supporting the modern marketing concept. In comparison to traditional marketing, marketers on social media platforms can easily and freely disseminate information about their products and companies.

Algeria has natural tourist resources that have made it a popular tourist destination. In addition to these natural resources, the country has made significant efforts in recent years to diversify its sources of financing in its economy, including many tourism investments that have had a positive impact on the sector's contribution to the economy, both in terms of GDP and employment.

However, this does not negate the fact that Algeria fluctuates in adopting marketing policies capable of upgrading this sector, as tourism marketing in general remains weak or non-existent in many cases, with the exception of some individual initiatives by sector officials, major tourism agencies, and public figures such as media personalities or social media influencers. The tourism industry is seeing an increase in interest from the latter group - social media influencers - whether Algerian, like influencer Khoubai, or non-Algerian, like Egyptian influencers Hamdy Shagie, Ali Saed, Mahmoud Hegazy, and Mahmoud Ibrahim, Syrian Amjad Al-Asaad, Qatari Khaled Al-Jaber, Malaysian influencer Qadah Asma, and many others.



Based on the foregoing, the current research paper titled "The Role of Arab Social Influencers in Tourism Marketing for Algeria" seeks to uncover the efforts of Arab social influences in promoting tourism in Algeria via their official social media pages.

## **2. Research problem:**

The problem of this research can be formulated in the following main question:

**What role do Arab social influencers play in promoting tourism for Algeria?**

The following sub-questions fall under this problem:

- What is the nature of the marketing content that the Arab social influencer Hamdy Shagie publishes about tourism in Algeria?
- What is the level of interaction of social media audiences with the marketing content published by the Arab social influencer Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria?
- Do the marketing initiatives published by the Arab social influencer Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria resonate with the Algerian authorities?

### **2.1. Research objectives:**

The researcher has identified a series of objectives to answer the current research problem and questions, as follows:

- To uncover the nature of the marketing content published by the Arab social media influencer Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria.
- To determine the level of interaction of social media users with the marketing content published by the Arab social media influencer Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria.
- To focus on the impact of the marketing initiatives published by the Arab social media influencer Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria on the Algerian authorities.

### **2.2. Research Approach:**

The current study is classified as a descriptive study because it aims to explain and clarify various events and situations that express a phenomenon or a group of important phenomena, as well as to attempt to analyze the reality in which those events and facts revolve in order to develop new ideas, information, and behavioral models. (Al-Taie & Abu Bakr, 2007, p. 95).



### 3. Basic concepts in research

#### 3.1. Social Influencers

##### 3.1.1. Concept of Social Influencers

In society, there are many definitions of influencers or opinion leaders. For example, "Everett Rogers" defines leaders as people with influence in the approval or rejection of ideas. They are also known as people who have a large influence on other people's information, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors in a society. They play an important role in shaping public opinion in the community to which they belong (Halim, 1990, p. 258).

The concept of "social media influencer" or "SMI" has emerged as a result of the development of social media networks and their applications. A person with 10,000 or more followers on any social media platform is referred to by this term. Companies that specialize in creating and monetizing this type of influencer look for bloggers or influencers to use as promoters and marketers for their advertisers' or stakeholders' products or services. They see these influencers as a simple and low-cost advertising tool, as opposed to celebrities, who are paid a lot of money for their fame if they are used as advertising faces for certain products. According to one previous study, marketing through social media influencers (SMI) was one of the biggest trends in 2017 (Amani, 2019, p. 111).

##### 3.1.2. Characteristics of Social Media Influencers

According to many foreign references, social media influencers are characterized by the following (Cholprasertsuk, Lawanwisut, & Thongrin, 2020, p. 237):

- An influencer is a content creator on a social media platform such as YouTube, Facebook, or Instagram who has the potential to influence the behavior of a large number of consumers. They have enough expertise and influence that their followers will listen to their advice and guidance on products and services available in a specific geographical region.
- They are always active on social media platforms in order to reach a larger audience and gain more followers.
- They create an active and loyal community around themselves in order to increase their number of followers, earning their trust and loyalty and frequently forming strong friendships with them.
- They have the ability to acquire an audience based on topics that interest them in all fields: as a result, the influencer's content aligns with the preferences of their followers and the areas that interest them the most.



## 3.2. Digital Tourism Marketing

### 3.2.1. Concept of Digital Tourism Marketing

Digital tourism marketing is a relatively new concept that is gaining traction in the tourism industry. It is distinguished by distinctive features that have made it appealing to both tourism companies and tourists. Most tourism marketing researchers and specialists agree that incorporating digital marketing into tourism activities will result in the development and advancement of tourism services, which will contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of the tourism industry .

To achieve marketing objectives for tourism companies and support modern marketing concepts, digital tourism marketing relies on modern media and communication technologies, particularly the internet. As a result, online marketers have greater ease and freedom in disseminating information about their products and companies than traditional marketers (Noura, 2021, p. 28).

According to our research, digital tourism marketing is a set of activities that social media influencers engage in with the goal of convincing, informing, and influencing their audience to respond to their message, which aims to attract tourists to Algerian tourist sites and develop tourism culture among domestic and international tourists.

### 3.2.2. Digital Tourism Marketing and the Role of Social Media Influencers

A single local study and several foreign studies have found that social media influencers have an impact on marketing various products, including tourism services, as follows:

Scholte-Streekstra and colleagues' 2020 study, "Influencers on social media and the Thai tourism industry: Tourist behavior, travel motivations, and influencing factors." The researchers came to several important conclusions, the most important being that social media influencers have a significant impact on consumer decision-making in the tourism industry. In order to avoid negative travel experiences, most tourists look for reviews or useful information from social media influencers about their travel plans (Cholprasertsuk, Lawanwisut, & Thongrin, 2020, p. 260).

A 2020 study titled "The Role of Influencers on Social Media Platforms in Destination Image: How Digital Marketing Affects Purchase Intention?" by Jaya et al. discovered several significant findings. Researchers discovered that social media influencers have a positive impact on both the destination image and the brand image, with the brand image having a higher correlation coefficient with purchase intention than the destination image. This means that destination managers should take into account the price tourists pay for the features and benefits they receive, and the three indicators of brand image are quality, track record, and reliability. Tourists will try to meet their pre-travel expectations both during and after their trip (Jaya, Trisna, & Prianthara, 2020, p. 17).



A study conducted in 2020 by Zerouati and Sayah, titled "The contribution of social media influencers to sustainable local tourism development: The case of Algerian influencer Mohamed Djamel Talib," discovered that influencer Mohamed Djamel Talib successfully conveyed a positive image of Algerian youth and their important role in contributing to sustainable tourism development, such as increasing awareness of environmental protection and site preservation (Zerouati & Sayah, 2020, p. 14).

A study completed in 2022 by Razan Fouad Mohammed Salama titled "The Role of Influencers on Social Media Platforms in Promoting Tourism to Jordan from the Perspective of Their Followers." The researcher discovered several results, the most important of which is that the role of social media influencers in promoting tourism to Jordan is moderate and across all dimensions, ranking first after tourism advertising, second after "tourism propaganda," third after personal tourism sales, and finally after "tourism activation." The findings also revealed statistically significant differences based on gender (in favor of females), age group (in favor of those under 25), and monthly income (in favor of those earning 260 dinars or less). However, no statistically significant differences were discovered when the educational level variable was considered. The study recommended that government agencies use social media influencers to promote Jordan's natural sites, archaeological sites, and tourism programs and campaigns (Razan, 2022, p. 11).

#### **4. Methodology and Tools**

The researcher chose from the descriptive approach the survey method with a sampling system. She conducted a comprehensive survey of all electronic tourism marketing initiatives carried out by non-Algerian influencers during the past year through various social media networks. She collected several foreign names of men and women, including Egyptian influencers Hamdy Shagie, Ali Saed, Mahmoud Hegazy, and Mahmoud Ibrahim. She also included Syrian influencer Amjad Al-Asaad, Qatari influencer and traveler Khaled Al-Jaber, and Malaysian influencer Qadah Asma, who generated significant interaction around their marketing content for tourism in Algeria.

Among all of them, the Egyptian influencer Hamdy Shagie was selected as the main focus. He decided to settle in Algeria and was hosted by major media and even academic institutions to promote tourism while preserving the principles of Algerian culture and heritage. The researcher performed an analytical reading of the official pages of this influencer on Facebook and YouTube, seeking to answer the research's problem statement.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

##### **5.1. Introduction to the Facebook and YouTube pages of the Egyptian Arab influencer "Hamdy Shagie"**

###### **5.1.1. Hamdy Shagie Facebook Page**

Hamdy Shagie is an Egyptian media personality and content creator. His page was founded on September 27, 2011. The majority of its content is tourism promotion for Algeria, with the hashtag #Algeria\_through\_Egyptian\_Eyes. After becoming acquainted with many Algerians through social media following the qualifying match for the 2010 World Cup between the Egyptian and Algerian teams, the Egyptian influencer visited





Algeria for the first time in November 2012 for a month. The page has over 665,000 followers, and the Egyptian influencer uses it to share his daily life in Algeria, where he has lived since 2019. The majority of the content consists of tourism marketing videos for Algerian states visited by the influencer.

Facebook page link of Hamdy Shagie: <https://www.facebook.com/@HamdyShagie>

### **5.1.2. The YouTube channel of Hamdy Shagie**

The channel created on April 12, 2011 by Egyptian media figure and content creator Hamdy Shagie. It contains a wide range of content, including tourism topics with the hashtag "Algeria through Egyptian eyes," cultural and sports topics, as well as statements and interviews with influencers with various Egyptian and Algerian media about Algeria, its people, and its cultural heritage.

The Egyptian influencer describes himself as a journalist, news and program presenter, and has been working in the journalistic and media fields since 2002. He worked as a correspondent and Cairo bureau chief for the Algerian Chourouk channel for more than 5 years before becoming a news presenter on the channel. He also works as a lecturer in journalism and media training courses.

The page has over 308 thousand followers, and he has over 55 million views across all of his 585 videos. He has four social media accounts: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

YouTube channel link of Hamdy Shagie: <https://www.youtube.com/@HamdyShagie>

## **5.2. The nature of the tourism marketing content provided by Hamdy Shagie for Algeria**

The influencer Hamdy Shagie shares his personal experiences and opinions about various tourist destinations he has visited in Algeria, accompanied by the hashtag "Algeria through Egyptian eyes." During his tourism trips, he also shares photos. Furthermore, he exchanges information and gives advice, warnings, and directions about all tourist destinations. This has helped shape his followers' personal opinions about their choice of tourist destinations, as well as helping to shape the mental image of tourism agencies and tourist destinations alike, increasing their ability to acquire more customers who may participate in their tourism programs as a result of the information they gather from his posts and videos.

In his marketing content for tourism in Algeria, the influencer Hamdy Shagie focuses on specific topics, the most important of which are:

- The most important tourist attractions in various Algerian states that he has visited in the east, west, center, and south.
- The Algerian people's most important characteristics, ideas, and cultural trends.
- The most significant historical monuments and civilizations that have passed through the states he has visited.



- The most important tourist service institutions in the states he visited, as well as the most influential social influencers who live there.
- The most important colloquial dialects he encountered in the various Algerian states he visited in the east, west, center, and south.
- The most important types of food and clothing were distributed throughout the Algerian states he visited in the east, west, center, and south.

### **5.3. The level of audience interaction with the tourism marketing content of Algeria presented by Hamdy Shagie**

The tourism marketing content of Algeria presented by the influencer Hamdy Shagie received a high level of interaction on both the Facebook and YouTube platforms via the browsing tool.

We find 12 videos about Algeria in the most popular videos on the channel, with views ranging from 504,000 to 1.3 million. There are five videos with over one million views, all of which are about Algeria and range in size from one million to 1.3 million views. The most viewed video covers two topics: "Watch what journalist Hamdy Shagie says about Algerians in Egyptian media" with 1.3 million views, and "According to an Egyptian.. 5 reasons why you'll love Algerians - reason number 3 will surprise you" with 1.2 million views.

These videos have received between 2,000 and 4,500 comments from various Arab communities, particularly Egyptians and Algerians. The commenters agree to thank both the Algerian and Egyptian peoples, as well as Algerians for their authenticity and upholding of Arab brotherhood values. They also express gratitude to the influencer for his efforts in promoting his country's culture and heritage.

On his personal Facebook page, the influencer shares four promotional videos for tourism in Algeria, including one of his visit to the state of Ouargla on February 3, 2023, one of snowfall in Algeria's Sharya Mountains on January 28, 2023, one of the readiness of the Nelson Mandela Stadium in Algeria's capital, which was built to host the African Cup of Local Players on January 12, 2023, and one of Algeria through Egyptian eyes: the Quran among Amazigh.

The previous videos show interaction with the influencer and his topics, with likes ranging from 7,000 to 79,000. The journalist and influencer receives a significant number of comments on all of his posts, whether they are about tourism in Algeria or personal posts, with hundreds of comments on average and up to 4,000 comments on rare occasions.

### **5.4. The echo of marketing initiatives promoted by Hamdy Shagie about tourism in Algeria with the Algerian authorities**

You will frequently come across marketing content for tourism in Algeria created by the Egyptian influencer Hamdy Shagie and promoted by various Algerian media outlets. He was interviewed by a variety of media outlets, including satellite channels such as Chourouk, Lena Channel, the Economic Channel, and others, as well as Algerian national





radio (the first radio channel, for example). He was also invited to speak at the University of Algeria 2 on February 6, 2023, as part of the "Cultural Tourism in Algeria" event.

His promotion of tourism that respects society and religion in Algeria influenced the Algerian Minister of Youth, Sports, and Tourism in 2022, when he was hosted alongside Egyptian influencers Mahmoud Hegazy and Mahmoud Ibrahim during the Mediterranean Games in Oran, Algeria, from June 25 to July 5, 2022. They were all officially asked to stay in Oran to cover the games and promote the positive image that Algeria presented from an organizational standpoint.

## 6. Conclusion

The topic of "the role of Arab social media influencers in tourism marketing for Algeria" is new, as the researcher could not find any similar studies locally within her scope of research, highlighting the significance of this topic and the need for additional research on it. The majority of available studies on social media influencers focus on promoting products and services, with few studies linking them to tourism and tourism marketing. The researcher came to some important conclusions, including:

- Arab influencer Hamdy Shagie strives to create a positive image of Algeria and its tourism assets, people, and culture through marketing content to his followers using all available methods and techniques.
- The tourist content published by Arab influencer Hamdy Shagie is widely popular and receives a lot of interaction from his followers on various social media platforms.
- Hamdy Shagie's marketing efforts have reached various Algerian media outlets as well as Algerian authorities.

Regarding the study's recommendations, the researcher suggests the following:

- Improving tourism marketing policy in Algeria by focusing on the role of social media networks in promoting tourism for the development of tourism institutions and proper planning of future tourism marketing programs by the government and private entities responsible for the tourism sector.
- Increasing researchers' interest in studying and analyzing the marketing reality of tourism in Algeria, through this and other studies, in order to find solutions and make suggestions to improve this sector.
- Encouraging Algerian media to use a variety of appropriate media to develop various types of tourism institutions, as well as providing adequate margins to content creators in the Algerian and non-Algerian tourism sectors.



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- This study broadens the research horizons of fellow researchers by emphasizing the importance of developing a solid marketing strategy (traditional or electronic) for the stunning Algerian tourist elements.
  - Increasing researchers' efforts to analyze and highlight content creators with a purpose in various fields, particularly tourism.
  - Emphasizing the impact of content creators on various segments of society in all fields, particularly the marketing of ideas and services.



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## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Appendice n°1: Screenshot of Hamdy Shagie page on FB



### 6.2. Appendice n°2: Screenshot of Hamdy Shagie page on YouTube

