

**The role of social media in the local touristic promotion in Algeria
- Outlook study on a sample of social media users-**

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Abstract:

This paper aims at studying the importance of social media in the touristic promotion in Algeria and, thus, lifting up this vital sector. To do this, we conducted an outlook study on a sample of Facebook users. To reach the study objectives, we designed a questionnaire and distributed it to the sample of the study that included 94 Facebook users. Moreover, we used SPSS for data procession. Findings show big importance and benefits for social media in promoting tourism. Finally, the study recommends the touristic agencies to shift towards promotion of their products on internet via social media.

Keywords: social media; touristic promotion; touristic marketing mix.

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1- Introduction:

Due to the fast developments the world is witnessing in the touristic promotion means mainly via internet, social media such as Facebook saw a big increase in marketing with its various types (touristic, political...). Therefore, these sites became media outlets that have an effect on the decisions of the users.

Thus, we shall try in this study to shed light on the use of social media by the touristic agencies, and on the importance of social media in increasing the opportunities of promotion of the products and services of these agencies.

1-1- Problem of the study:

Based on what has been said, the problematic of the study can be stated as:

what is the role played by social media in boosting the touristic promotion in Algeria from the perspective of their users.

From this question, sub-questions arise such as:

- To what extent did the experts of tourism take advantage of Facebook in promoting for their touristic products?
- What are the advantages of using social media in the touristic marketing?
- What are the obstacles that face this process?
- What are the causes of the weak interaction of the members with the social media?
- What are the information that can contribute to the achievement of the interaction and increase the attraction of the members to these sites?

1-2- Importance of the study:

The importance of the study lies within the big importance of the topic of social media and its relation with the touristic sector. Moreover, it draws importance from the fact that it:

- Shows the importance of social media in the promotion for the touristic products and services, and the opportunities of their success in achieving the goals.
- Providing results that urge to use social media to influence the touristic decisions of their users.
- It is important for the tourism experts working in agencies to find a channel on social media to interact and communicate continuously with the customers and market the local tourism.

1-3- Aims of the study:

This study aims at:

- Knowing the role of social media mainly Facebook in boosting the marketing of the local tourism.
- Knowing the reality of using social media in the touristic agencies and the opportunities of success of these sites.
- Knowing the trends of the tourism experts towards their acceptance or refusal of the notion of using social media to market the touristic products.
- Knowing the importance of social media and their effect on the public opinion, namely the customers of the touristic agencies.
- Knowing the obstacles that face taking advantage of social media as a tool for the local touristic promotion.

1-4- Hypotheses of the study:

To answer the above questions and achieve the study aims, we set a hypothesis from which other sub-hypotheses emerged as such:

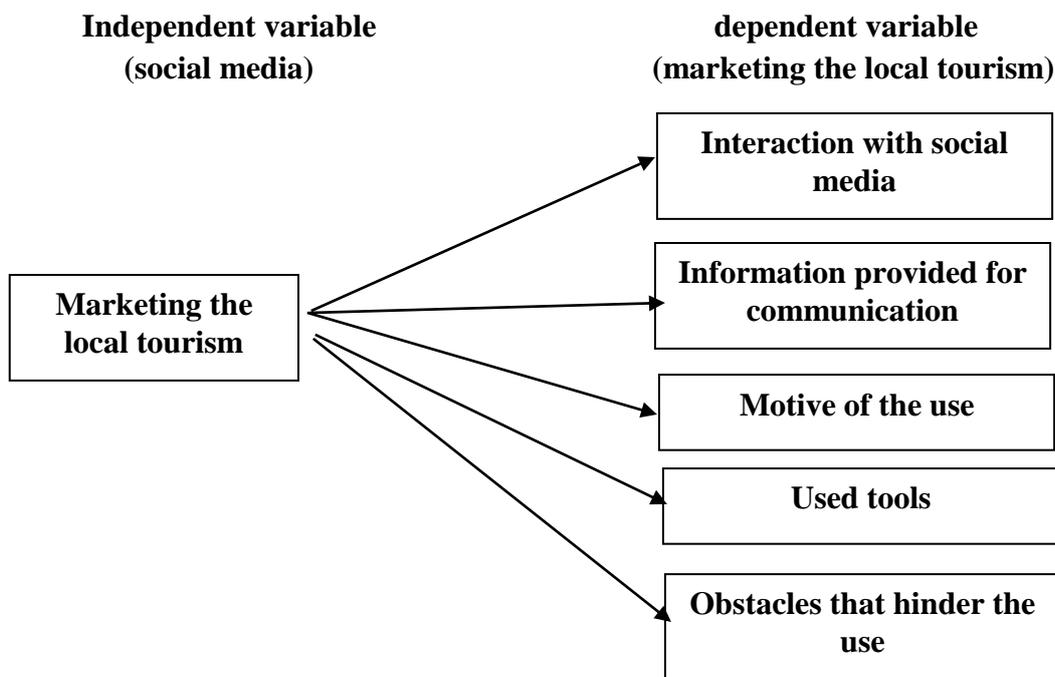
- Main hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant role for social media with their dimensions in boosting the marketing of the Algerian local tourism.

- Sub-hypotheses:

- There is no relation between the interaction with social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.
- There is no relation between the provided information on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.
- There is no relation between the motive of using social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.
- There is no relation between the tools used to activate the subscription of the members on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.
- There is no relation between the obstacles that hinder the use of social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

1-5- The hypothetical outline of the study:



1-6- Study population and sample:

Based on the problem and aims of the study, the population will include a group of social media users while the sample will include 94 Facebook users.

1-7- Methodology of the study:

Based on the nature of the study, we used the analytical descriptive method that relies on collecting facts and information, then comparing, analyzing, and interpreting them to achieve accepted results.

1-8- Study tools:

To process the analytical sides of the study, we collected the primary data through a questionnaire designed for this. Then, we input the questionnaires on SPSS. We relied on

the following statistical tools:

- Cronbach's Alpha test to test the consistency of the study tool.
- The arithmetic means and the standard deviations to describe the study sample.
- Kendall simple correlation to measure the relation between the independent variable (social media) and their various dimensions with the dependent variable (marketing the local tourism).

1-9- Limitations of the study:

Temporal limitations: The study took place in 2022.

2- Definition of the touristic marketing:

It has many definitions such as:

- It is an administrative and technical activity by the touristic facilities inside and outside the state to determine, know, and affect the potential touristic markets in order to increase the touristic movement coming from there and achieve agreement between the touristic product and the tourists (Al-Jallad, 1997, p 82).
- Kridppendrof defines the touristic marketing as the scientific coordinated execution of the business policy by the touristic projects regardless whether they are private or national, local, regional, national, or international in order to achieve the satisfaction of the determined consumers and make a suitable return (Kridppendrof, 2008, p 16).
- Morrisson defines it as an administrative philosophy that embodies the touristic demand through research, prediction, and choice of the market that suits the objectives of the company which can, thus, achieve the biggest revenue.
- Moreover, it is all the organized activities and efforts performed in harmony by all the providers of the touristic service with its various parts or elements. It aims at satisfying the tastes of the receivers or those who want tourism with all its types (Obeidat, 2008, p 16).

Hence, despite the differences in definitions of the marketing and its relation with tourism, most of them focus on the fact that marketing in tourism is directing, planning, and setting policies to satisfy the needs of the tourist. All the previous definitions focus on the tourist as a main axis.

3- The touristic marketing mix:

Building any touristic marketing strategy depends mainly on the study of the elements of the touristic marketing mix and controlling them.

3-1- The touristic product:

It is the most important element in the marketing mix because the rest of the elements are determined based on it. It is a synthesis of tangible and intangible services in the touristic market to satisfy the needs of the tourists. In addition to the tangible and intangible services, the concept of the touristic product includes the people who provide the services, the places, the organizations, the activities, the ideas, the facilities, and the values (Adeeb, 2006, p 34). The touristic product is a set of the tangible and intangible elements in the visited country. These elements can be seen and observed by the tourist for a specific price (Moqabla, 2000, p 276).

3-2- The price of the touristic product:

It is the reasonable acceptable monetary return from the consumer of the place or the site, or the purchaser of the material product or any other related service (Obeidat, 2000, p

86). The touristic companies can adopt a set of price policies according to the circumstances. Among these price policies we find (Al-Hajj, 1997, p 120 - 121):

- **Price skimming:** It is applied when introducing the product into the market with a high price because there is a group of tourists who can pay the price in order to be distinct than the others.

- **Mastering the market:** This policy requires offering the product at a relatively low price to reach the highest number of purchasers and get the biggest market share.

- **The ordinary prices:** When the price of the touristic product is stable for a long time, the price becomes ordinary and gets difficult to increase.

3-3- Distribution of the touristic product:

It is defined as all the activities practiced by the related parts in order for the tourists to get the spatial and temporal benefits in due time and state (Obeidat, 2000, p 97). The touristic product is distributed according to direct and indirect channels that include the touristic operators and the travel agencies.

3-4- Promoting the touristic product:

This means the process of introducing the consumer to the product, its characteristics, functions, advantages, how to use it, and its places of existence in the market. In addition, it aims at influencing, urging, and convincing the consumer to buy the product (Abu Alfa, 2002, p 35). The touristic products are promoted for through the promotion mix that includes the advertising, the personal sale, the public relations, and direct marketing.

4- Social media:

The phenomenon of social media started in 1997. Six Degrees was the 1st site followed by MySpace which had achieved great success since its establishment in 2003. Then, new sites appeared. However, Facebook got the highest success. Social media are among the most modern communication technologies and the most popular. Despite the fact that these products were meant for building relationships, their use expanded and covered various activities such as politics, tourism, etc.

4-1- Definition of social media:

It is a set of electronic nets that allow the subscribers to create their personal sites then link them through an electronic social system with other people who have the same interests and hobbies, or with the college or school friends. Thus, social media allow communication between people (family, colleagues, friends...etc) through sites and electronic services that provide fast information on a large scale. They are sites that do not only give information to the user; rather, they interact with him through providing information. As a consequence, they are a style for exchanging data immediately through internet (Zaher, 2003, P 23).

4-2- The most important social media:

- **Twitter:** It is a social network site that provides the service of a small tweet that allows the users to send updates about their states in no more than 140 letters in the one message directly via Twitter or via sending short messages.

- **Facebook:** It is a free site managed by Facebook LLC. The users can join the nets organized by the city, the work organization, the school, or the territory in order to communicate with the others and interact with them. Moreover, the users can add friends,

send messages, and update the personal files. Mark Zuckerberg had founded it in collaboration with two of his colleagues majoring in computer science at the University of Harvard. Membership was limited to the students of Harvard University and, later, covered the other faculties in Boston, Ivy League, and Stanford. Later, the site expanded and covered any students, then high schoolers, and finally anyone who is above 13 (bin Fath, 2015, p 4).

5- The scientific frame of the study:

In order to test the role of social media in boosting the local touristic promotion, we designed a questionnaire of 04 axes and 20 statements. We relied on Lickert's 05 points scale that contains 05 degrees (strongly agree= 5, agree= 4, neutral= 3, disagree= 2, strongly disagree= 1). The questionnaire was distributed electronically on a random sample of 94 people who have at least one experience in the field of the electronic touristic services.

5-1- Consistency of the study tool:

To check it, we used Cronbach's Alpha. Findings are shown in the table:

Table 01: Cronbach's Alpha to test the consistency of the questionnaire:

| Field | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Social media | 0.712 |
| Promotion of the touristic services | 0.843 |
| The whole tool | 0.891 |

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

From the table we see that Cronbach's Alpha for the dimensions of the study are high, acceptable, and statistically significant compared to the standard ratio (0.60). Thus, the questionnaire has a high degree of consistency and can be distributed for the objectives of the statistical analysis and hypotheses testing.

5-2- Analysis and discussion of the hypotheses of the study:

- The results related to the perceptions of the informants about the dimensions of social media:

Table 02: answers of the informants to the statements of the social media

| No° | Statement | Arithmetic mean | Standard deviation | Agreement degree | General trend |
|-----|--|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 01 | Most of the tourists spend much time on social media daily | 4.33 | 0.78 | High | 01 |
| 02 | There is a big number of tourists who visit the touristic pages on social media | 4.12 | 0.86 | High | 03 |
| 03 | The posts on social media get a big attention by the tourists | 4.25 | 0.65 | High | 02 |
| 04 | Social media allow communication and interaction with the tourists | 3.52 | 0.81 | High | 04 |
| # | Interaction with social media | 4.05 | - | High | 02 |
| 05 | Social media provide information about travel agencies, flights, touristic places, and hotels | 4.18 | 0.71 | High | 02 |
| 06 | There are special sides and experts behind these sites to serve the members, post the information that help them, and attract their opinions | 3.91 | 0.65 | High | 03 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 07 | Social media allow posting information easily and spreading it among people | 4.27 | 0.70 | High | 01 |
| 08 | Social media provide information about the traditions and the security state of the touristic places | 3.45 | 0.69 | Moderate | 04 |
| # | Information provided for communication | 3.95 | - | High | 03 |
| 09 | Social media are among the most important tools that contribute to the touristic marketing and the promotion for the touristic products | 4.01 | 0.56 | High | 01 |
| 10 | Social media satisfy the curiosity of the tourists and allow them to express their experiences with the touristic products | 2.44 | 0.81 | Weak | 05 |
| 11 | Social media allow transmitting real images about the products through photos and videos | 3.81 | 0.70 | High | 02 |
| 12 | Social media allow getting feedback from the tourists | 3.04 | 0.63 | Moderate | 04 |
| 13 | Social media allow predicting the characteristics of the demand and developing the provided products | 3.11 | 0.75 | Moderate | 03 |
| # | Motive of the use | 3.28 | - | Moderate | 05 |
| 14 | The photos and videos of the touristic places posted on social media allow the increase of the users' interaction | 4.49 | 0.81 | High | 01 |
| 15 | The geographical maps of the touristic zones help the tourists who follow social media pages | 4.42 | 0.66 | High | 02 |
| 16 | The videos provided to explain the touristic services allow the increase of the users' interaction | 3.98 | 0.78 | High | 03 |
| 17 | There are links to show the tourist other pages | 3.46 | 0.51 | Moderate | 04 |
| # | Used tools | 4.09 | - | High | 01 |
| 18 | Some officials think that the use of the traditional styles in the promotion for the touristic products is better | 3,23 | 0,73 | Moderate | 03 |
| 19 | The inability to well determine the target market during the touristic promotion through social media is an obstacle | 3,92 | 0,77 | High | 01 |
| 20 | The process of the touristic promotion with social media is costly and needs qualified human resources | 3,65 | 0,72 | High | 02 |
| # | Obstacles that hinder the use | 3,6 | - | High | 04 |

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 02 shows the results of analyzing the dependent variable (social media) with its dimensions. It was measured with 20 questions. The arithmetic mean of this dimension is 4.13 which means that it has a high degree of agreement by the members of the sample of the study and that they are aware of the important role played by social media in boosting the marketing of the local tourism. The 4th dimension of social media “the used tools” came

in the 1st rank with an arithmetic mean of 4.09, then the 1st dimension “interaction with social media” ranked 2nd with a high agreement degree and with an arithmetic mean of 4.06, then the 2nd dimension “information provided for communication” ranked 3rd with an arithmetic mean of 3.95, then the 5th dimension “obstacles that hinder the use” ranked 4th with an arithmetic mean of 3.6, while the 3rd dimension ranked the last with an acceptable degree of agreement and an arithmetic mean of 3.28.

- The results related to the perceptions of the information about the dimension of the local tourism marketing:

Table 03: answers of the informants to the statements of the local tourism marketing

| No° | Statement | Arithmetic mean | Standard deviation | Agreement degree | General trend |
|-----|---|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 01 | Touristic marketing through social media is among the most modern marketing tools | 4.07 | 0.9 | High | 01 |
| 02 | Marketing the touristic products via social media has special advantages that set it in an advanced position continuously | 3.81 | 0.85 | High | 04 |
| 03 | Touristic marketing through social media enables the interaction with the target customers in a good manner | 4.01 | 0.81 | High | 02 |
| 04 | Touristic marketing through social media has services that meet the needs of the customers and their expectations | 3.9 | 0.76 | High | 03 |
| 05 | These modern tools contribute to achieving the local touristic development | 3.72 | 0.78 | High | 05 |
| # | Marketing the local tourism | 3.902 | - | High | - |

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPS

Table 03 shows the results of analyzing the dependent variable “marketing the local tourism” that was measured with 05 questions. The arithmetic mean reached 3.902 with a high degree of agreement. This means that it got a high degree of the informants’ agreement.

5-3- Hypotheses testing:

- Sub-hypothesis 01: There is no relation between the interaction with social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

Table 04: Correlation coefficient between the interaction with social media and boosting the promotion of the local tourism

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no relation between the interaction with social media and boosting the local tourism marketing. | .620 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\infty \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 04 shows that the correlation between the variable “interaction with social media” and the dependent one “marketing the local tourism” is 6200 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is less than the significance level $\infty \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says that

there is no relation between the interaction with social media and boosting the local tourism marketing and accept the alternative one.

- **Sub-hypothesis 02:** There is no relation between the provided information on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

Table 05: correlation coefficient between the provided information in social media and boosting the promotion of the local tourism

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no relation between the provided information on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing. | .772 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 05 shows that the correlation between the variable “provided information on social media “and the dependent one “marketing the local tourism” is .7720 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is less than the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says there is no relation between the provided information in social media and boosting the local tourism marketing and accept the alternative one.

- **Sub-hypothesis 03:** There is no relation between the motive of using social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

Table 06: correlation coefficient between the motive of using social media and boosting the promotion of the local tourism

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no relation between the motive of using social media and boosting the local tourism marketing. | .712 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 06 shows that the correlating between the variable “motive of using social media “ and the dependent one “marketing the local tourism” is .7120 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is more than the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says there is no relation between the motive of using social media and boosting the local tourism marketing and accept the alternative one.

- **Sub-hypothesis 04:** There is no relation between the tools used to activate the subscription o the members on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

Table 07: correlation coefficient between the tools used to activate the subscription of the members in social media and boosting the promotion of the local tourism

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no relation between the tools used to activate the subscription of the members on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing. | .640 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 07 shows that the correlating between the variable “tools used to activate the subscription of the members on social media “and the dependent one “marketing the local tourism” is .6400 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is more than the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says there is no relation between the tools used to activate the subscription of the members on social media and boosting the local tourism marketing and accept the alternative one.

- **Sub-hypothesis 05:** There is no relation between the obstacles that hinder the use of social media and boosting the local tourism marketing.

Table 08: correlation coefficient between the obstacles that hinder the use of social media and boosting the promotion of the local tourism

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no relation between the obstacles that hinder the use of social media and boosting the local tourism marketing. | .720 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 08 shows that the correlation between the variable “the obstacles that hinder the use of social media “and the dependent one “marketing the local tourism” is .7200 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is more than the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says there is no relation between the obstacles that hinder the use of social media and boosting the local tourism marketing and accept the alternative one.

- **Main hypothesis:** There is no statistically significant role for social media with their dimensions in boosting the marketing of the Algerian local tourism.

Table 09: correlation coefficient between the strategic vigilance and the sustainable competitive advent

| Hypothesis | Correlation coefficient | Probabilistic value |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| There is no statistically significant role for social media with their dimensions in boosting the marketing of the Algerian local tourism. | .741 | .000* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at significant level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

Source: prepared by the authors based on the outputs of SPSS

Table 09 shows that the correlation between the variable “the social media” and “boosting the marketing of the local sustainable tourism” is .7410 and the probabilistic value is .000 which is more than the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Thus, we refuse the null hypothesis that says there is no statistically significant role for social media with their dimensions in boosting the marketing of the Algerian local tourism and accept the alternative one.

6- Results and discussions:

The study ended up with some findings from which we lead to some recommendations:

6-1- Findings:

From hypotheses testing, we found out that:

- The results of testing the main hypothesis show that there is statistically significant role for social media with their dimension in boosting the promotion of the Algerian local touristic agencies.

- Findings of the 1st sub-hypothesis show that there is a big interaction by the tourists with social media.
- Findings of the 2nd sub-hypothesis show that the information provided by social media about travel agencies, flights, and touristic sites facilitate the promotion of the touristic products.
- Findings of the 3rd sub-hypothesis show that there are motives of using social media in the touristic promotion that benefit the tourists and touristic agencies.
- Findings of the 4th sub-hypothesis show that the reliance on the tools such as photos and videos enables the activation of the subscription of the members through social media to boost the promotion of the local tourism.
- Findings of the 5th sub-hypothesis show that there are obstacles that hinder the use of social media in boosting the local touristic marketing.

6-2- Recommendations:

The study reached a set of recommendations mainly that:

- It is necessary for the Algerian touristic agencies to use internet to promote for their products mainly through social media.
- The touristic agencies must turn towards the use of social media from a complementary perspective, i.e., in collaboration with all the actors of the touristic activity such as transportation companies, hotels, etc.
- Social media must be supported with links that enable linking them and other explanatory electronic tools such as the electronic maps and catalogues that allow the tourist to get detailed information.

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