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## Digital Influencers as a Mechanism for Tourism Promotion in Algeria: An Analytical Study of a Selection of Tourism Channels on YouTube

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### Abstract:

This research paper aims to clarify the extent to which digital influencers contribute to the promotion of tourism destinations in Algeria through YouTube channels. It presents the key concepts of electronic tourism promotion and digital influencers, and then explores the relationship between digital influencers and tourism promotion. The study also analyzes the content of some Algerian tourism channels on YouTube (Nour Brahimi, Khoubai, KasoEst, Mohamed Djamel Taleb, DuksTv, Karim Chahiani, Naim Dziri) owned by Algerian digital influencers. A descriptive approach was utilized for the theoretical aspect of the study, while the practical part relied on content analysis.

The study concludes that Algerian tourism channels on YouTube represent a modern initiative in Algerian tourism promotion, adopted by a group of independent young digital content creators. This form of promotion plays a significant role in attracting tourists and increasing awareness of Algeria's cultural and natural diversity, thus enhancing the tourism industry. This necessitates cooperation with known Algerian digital tourism influencers on YouTube to promote tourist destinations in Algeria and reach a broader audience.

**Keywords:** Digital Influencers, Electronic Tourism Promotion, Youtube, Algeria.

### Introduction:

Electronic promotion of tourism destinations has become essential in this digital age, as many travellers rely on the internet to discover new tourist destinations and plan their trips. Electronic promotion is an effective way to engage the target audience, attract their attention, and encourage them to visit tourist destinations.

With the increasing reliance on the internet in tourism decision-making, electronic promotion has become a vital tool encompassing a variety of digital platforms and tools such as social media, travel blogs, online booking sites, and smartphone applications. This also includes influencer marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and paid online advertisements.

Promotion through digital influencers is now one of the most significant digital marketing strategies. The idea relies on the personal influence and trust that influencers command over

their audience on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook. They use their popularity to influence the opinions and behaviors of their followers through personal recommendations and experiences about specific products, making the promotion seem more authentic and relatable, thus enhancing its effectiveness.

### **How can digital influencers through YouTube contribute to promoting tourism destinations in Algeria?**

#### **Sub-questions:**

From the main question, the following sub-questions arise:

- \_ What is meant by electronic tourism promotion, and what are its tools and elements?
- \_ Who are the digital influencers, and what is their contribution to promotional activities?
- \_ Is there a direct relationship between digital influencers on YouTube and the promotion of tourism destinations in Algeria? What is the nature of this relationship?
- \_ How do digital influencers on YouTube experience promoting tourism destinations in Algeria?
- \_ What promotional methods do digital influencers on YouTube employ to promote tourism destinations in Algeria?

#### **Study Significance:**

This research paper derives its importance from the growing role that social media platforms, especially YouTube, play in attracting tourists to destinations, the global interest in influencer marketing, and the significance of tourism as an economic sector in the current era.

#### **Study Objectives:**

The objectives of the study are to highlight the following elements:

- \_ To identify the key basic concepts of electronic tourism promotion.
- \_ To explore the significant digital tourism influencers in Algeria on YouTube.
- \_ To examine and evaluate the experiences of these influencers on YouTube in promoting tourism destinations in Algeria.
- \_ To deduce the mechanisms and methods of tourism promotion employed by YouTube tourism channels.

#### **Methodology:**

To address the posed problem and the sub-questions, we relied on a descriptive approach for the theoretical part of the study, while the practical aspect depended on content analysis of a selection of Algerian tourism channels on YouTube.

## **First: Electronic Tourism Promotion**

### **1. Definition of Electronic Tourism Promotion:**

Electronic tourism promotion is defined as "the coordination between the efforts of the seller and the tourist in establishing information outlets to facilitate the delivery of the product to the tourist" (Ohaibia and Khalfawi, 2018, p. 130).

It is also known as the efforts aimed at clarifying the tourist image of a country to influence tourists and stimulate their motives to undertake a tourist trip to satisfy their desires and achieve their tourism goals (Guerziz and Ben Ziane, 2019, p. 594).

Additionally, it encompasses "all media, advertising, and public relations efforts aimed at preparing and transmitting specific messages about the tourist image of a country or organization to targeted markets effectively to attract audiences and motivate them to engage in tourism activities in those targeted areas, thus fostering tourist demand" (Ouhaibia and Khalfawi, 2018, p. 130).

Electronic tourism promotion specifically can be defined as the use of modern technologies to display tourist products and persuade tourists through continuous interaction and communication between the two parties of the promotional process via the information network and modern applications (Ben Ammar, 2021, p. 389).

It also refers to the promotional efforts made by organizations using electronic means to influence the purchasing behavior of customers towards making a buying decision through websites and electronic pages (Woueh, & Kataf, 2023, p. 489).

### **2. Features of Electronic Tourism Promotion:**

Among the advantages offered by electronic tourism promotion are: (Bouzaher, 2022, p. 5)

**2.1 Improving the Mental Image of the Organization:** For the electronic consumer, the internet serves as a mediator between them and the organizations they visit, through their interaction on the network.

**2.2 Reducing Costs:** The internet is a low-cost medium for conducting promotional campaigns and disseminating information, particularly as it saves on printing, postage, labor, and other fundamental expenses associated with traditional media.

**2.3 Speed of Modifying Offers:** The network allows for flexible modification and alteration of information related to promotional campaigns. Organizations can quickly adjust prices, specifications, and locations, a speed that is absent in traditional media.

**2.4 Global Reach:** Utilizing the global nature of electronic tourism promotion results in its effects reaching all parts of the world.

**2.5 Building Brand Equity:** This advantage is particularly suited to small organizations that can compete with larger ones online, as tourists recognize them solely through the quality of services provided on the internet.

### **3. Tools of Electronic Tourism Promotion:**

There are numerous tools used in electronic tourism promotion, among them: (Hamrit, Kadiri, and Fikarcha, 2023, pp. 33-34)

**3.1 Promotion via Websites:** The first step in electronic promotional procedures is to design a website for the tourism organization. Most tourism organizations strive to make their website simple, attractive, and containing useful information that makes customers frequently visit the site to benefit from it and build a close relationship with them. Websites also serve as a means to gather information about tourists and obtain feedback from them, contributing to the development of products and thereby increasing sales.

**3.2 Promotion via Search Engines:** This is an important aspect linked to search engine optimization, making the tourism organization's website more understandable to both tourists and different search engine robots.

**3.3 Using Indexes:** There are many indexes available online that offer different subjects in an indexed manner, allowing the electronic customer to access the tourist product they desire by following the sequence of index topics, providing them an opportunity to explore various alternatives offered by competitors online.

**3.4 Using Email:** The method of email offers many advantages such as the speed of message delivery, the ability to send a message to multiple people within seconds, and serving as an excellent promotional tool to attract customers and target groups through their emails and convincing them to purchase a specific tourism product according to their demands and desires.

**3.5 Promotion via Mobile Phones:** This is one of the best modern methods in promoting tourism products, due to the rapid developments in the mobile phone industry. These advancements in smartphone technology and related applications have led to radical changes in the concept of mobile e-commerce, with smartphone features aiding promotional activities in meeting the actual needs and desires of tourists.

**3.6 Promotion via Chat Spaces:** The spaces created by the internet attract many users of the web, due to their communication, dialogue, and interaction features with people who can only be reached through this technology. Despite the prevalent belief that these spaces primarily appeal to the youth, reality has proven that all segments of society of different genders and ages find these spaces a haven for exchanging ideas and opinions about their interests and orientations, whether through news groups or chat and instant messaging sites that have recently become significant.

### **4. Requirements for Electronic Tourism Promotion:**

There are several requirements that tourism organizations must fulfill when using modern technologies to showcase their tourist products. Among these are: (Mallick, 2023, p. 70)

**4.1 Creating Compelling Content:** When advertising a tourist destination via social media, it is crucial to provide content that captivates and retains the attention of customers. Potential customers will be more interested in the tourist product if provided with enjoyable and educational content.

**4.2 Utilizing Visual Elements:** Promoting tourism through online channels requires the presence of appealing images of all types, and all media used must be of the highest quality, reflecting the beauty and culture of the destination.

**4.3 Targeting the Audience:** For content to resonate and engage the targeted customers, there must be a strong understanding of their demographic composition, interests, and preferences. Understanding the customers allows for specifically tailored communication.

**4.4 Active Participation:** Merely posting material is not sufficient to attract customers. Engaging with customers by responding to their comments, addressing their inquiries, and sharing their content is essential. As a result, there will be a better chance of attracting new customers.

**4.5 Using Paid Advertisements:** Employing paid advertisements is an excellent way to expand customer reach and gain more visibility. Marketing initiatives can be more successful by using targeted ads tailored to individual platforms.

## **5. Elements of the Electronic Promotional Mix:**

The term 'electronic promotional mix' refers to a combination of components that interact and integrate to achieve the promotional objectives of an organization. The electronic promotional mix includes elements that are balanced and coordinated effectively, including: (Woueh, & Kataf, 2023, p. 491)

**5.1 Electronic Advertising:** A non-personal communication method through which promotional forms and offers for tourist products are presented via the internet on specialized websites.

**5.2 Electronic Sales Promotion:** This refers to using various effective means that aim to accelerate or enhance the positive reactions of customers online, such as attaching a temporary feature to the product with the goal of increasing short-term sales, like gifts, prizes, and discounts.

**5.3 Electronic Public Relations:** One of the most significant promotional tools through which an organization can communicate with a wide range of customers to create a favorable image of the organization and its services, such as participating in charity works and press conferences.

**5.4 Electronic Personal Selling:** In the electronic realm, personal selling is known as the use of virtual reality technologies to embody the essence of personal selling and its interactive immediacies.

**5.5 Electronic Direct Marketing:** The concept of direct marketing first emerged in the United States in 1917 with the establishment of the Direct Mail Advertising Association. Kotler defines direct marketing as "the use of email, telephone, fax, and the internet for direct communication with certain customers or potential customers to prompt an immediate response." The current use of direct marketing online has enabled organizations to obtain and utilize databases and marketing messages, facilitating the targeting of current and potential customers with essential information about tourist products and maintaining constant contact with them. (Seba and Almawi, 2021, p. 286)

### **Second: Digital Influencers**

Research on this topic in social sciences dates back to the mid-20th century with pioneering studies at Columbia University by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet in 1944, identifying opinion leaders. These leaders, typically found in small, informal groups, exert their influence in a personal and direct manner.

Leadership is an involuntary, invisible, unconscious activity that relies on relationships of trust and credibility. Most studies have been conducted in the academic field, particularly in political science. In 2003, Keller and Berry promoted this term through a bestselling book titled "The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy."

The advent of the internet and social networks has allowed the theory of social influencers to gain significant momentum among professionals and academics, especially in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the role of digital influencers primarily involves influencing the behavior of their followers through online social network posts, which often rely on their personal consumer experiences.

These individuals also influence the behavior and decisions of other consumers through person-to-person communication, becoming reference points for those connected to them. It's worth noting that this concept is also referred to in literature by various terms such as leader, informal leader, information leader, consumption leader, influencer, and more. (Guerreiro, Viegas, & Guerreiro, 2019, pp. 242-243)

The presence of digital influencers has led to the emergence of influencer marketing, a marketing practice that capitalizes on well-followed online users who have the ability to influence consumer attitudes and decision-making in favor of brands or ideas. Initially applied to fashion, beauty, and style, this thriving method has penetrated nearly every economic activity, with travel and tourism becoming one of the sectors where influencers have become particularly prominent. In tourism, influencers can be used to attract more or different types of

tourists to a specific geographical area and to shape the perception of the destination. (Femenia-Serra & Gretzel, 2020, p. 65)

## **2. Definition of Digital Influencers:**

According to Cartajay, Kotler, and Setiawan, influencers are respected individuals within their communities, possessing a large following and a committed audience, and they are essentially strong human brands that positively influence the performance of associated companies. (Wielki, 2020, p. 04)

Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman define influencers or opinion leaders as individuals who influence others' buying behaviors within a specific product domain. They are active media users who interpret the meanings of media messages or content for other media users. (Yoo, Gretzel, & Zach, 2011, p. 03)

A digital influencer is an advocate for a brand, an expert, and a pioneer in their field, recognized by their followers. Thus, digital influencers are opinion leaders who describe themselves as a new independent type of endorsers who shape public attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of social networks where they distribute their created content. (Guerreiro, Viegas, & Guerreiro, 2019, p. 242)

Digital influencers are individuals or groups regarded by the community as experts in a specific field, capable of exerting significant impacts on the opinions and actions of others. They are typically active on social media, sharing their views with communities and having substantial influence over them. (Patria, et al., 2023)

Rinka and Pratt refer to digital influencers as official spokespersons for a tourist destination, a marketing strategy that encourages the decision to choose a vacation destination because it helps elevate the place's image. In this context, institutions benefit from the endorsement of digital influencers, as they represent an essential channel for reaching larger or smaller audiences and influencing their behaviors at various stages of the consumer journey. (Guerreiro, Viegas, & Guerreiro, 2019, p. 245)

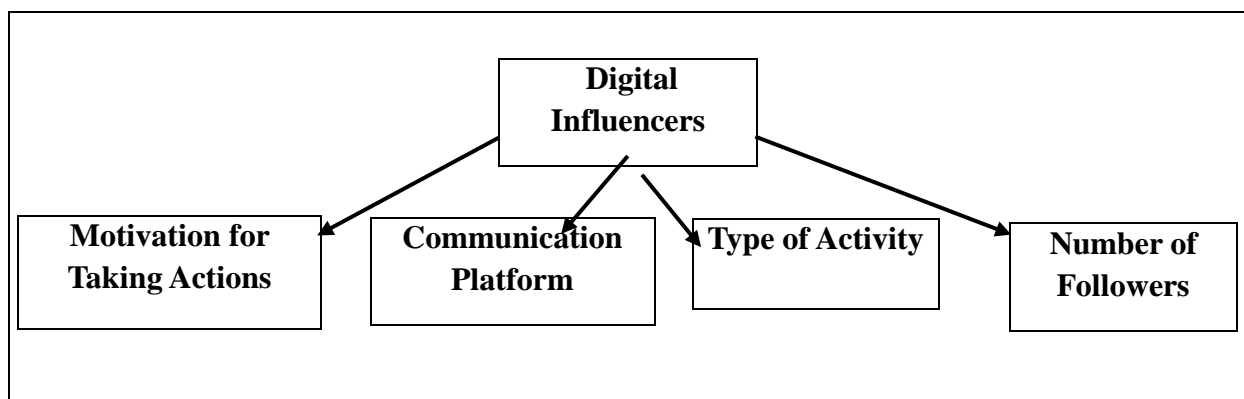
## **3. Characteristics of the Digital Influencer:**

The characteristics of an influencer vary according to the product type and field; however, influencers are generally more innovative, heavy media consumers, socially active, self-centered, younger, and have higher levels of education and income. They often show a greater degree of social mobility. Influencers in the field of nature tourism travel more and participate more in nature tourism and use more information sources. Lyons and Henderson in 2005 found that the characteristics of the digital influencer resemble those of influencers in an offline environment.

The results they arrived at indicate that digital influencers possess much higher levels of ongoing engagement, innovation, exploratory behavior, and self-awareness compared to non-influencers. Additionally, they have greater computer skills and use the internet for longer periods and more frequently. Sun in 2005 found consistent patterns of influencers and seeking behaviors across online and offline environments. (Yoo, Gretzel, & Zach, 2011, pp. 03-04)

**4. Classification of Digital Influencers:** Several categories of digital influencers can be distinguished, classified according to their different characteristics. The basic division will be presented in the following figure:

**Figure 01: Classification of According to Main Categories**



Source: (Wielki, 2020, p. 05)

From the figure above, there are four groups of digital influencers (Wielki, 2020, pp. 04-05):

In the first section, influencers are categorized based on their reach, which relates to the number of followers they have. In this context, several categories of influencers can be distinguished: Celebrities (more than 5 million followers), Major Influencers (1 million to 5 million), Key Influencers (more than 500,000), Macro-Influencers (100,000 to 500,000), Mid-Tier Influencers (20,000 to 100,000), Micro-Influencers (less than 20,000), and Nano-Influencers (1,000 to 10,000).

The second section categorizes influencers according to their motivations for taking action. In this context, the following categories can be distinguished: Idols, Experts, Lifestyle Influencers, Activists, and Artists. The first group includes very well-known and popular individuals who primarily focus on themselves in their messages, incorporating other topics such as political, social, or current affairs.

The second group consists of individuals recognized as authorities in a particular field due to their knowledge or skills, including industry-specific influencers, consultants, reviewers, or testers. Lifestyle individuals engage in discussions about lifestyle and leisure activities, primarily connected to fashion, beauty, health, interior decoration, cooking, and travel.



Activists are characterized by the global perspective they offer, often being internet users interested in topics like environmental protection, minority rights, or the women's movement, promoting specific ideas and lifestyles. As for the artists, they mainly focus on creating content with high aesthetic and visual appeal, often running various types of photo blogs or Instagram profiles, dealing with a wide range of aspects such as travel, nature, people, and architecture.

The third section allows classifying influencers based on the social media platform they use. This group can distinguish between bloggers, YouTubers, Facebookers, Instagrammers, Twitters, Snapchatters, or TikTokers. It is worth noting that different social platforms are developed and used by influencers in various geographical regions and are completely unknown in other areas. Examples include WeChat, Tencent QQ, and Sina Weibo, which are popular in China but virtually unknown in Europe and Africa.

In the fourth section, digital influencers can be divided according to the type of activity criterion into two groups: active and passive influencers. The former includes those targeted by companies to promote their products or services, whereas the latter includes those who are not directly targeted by companies.

## **5. Benefits of Organizations Collaborating with Digital Influencers in Promotional Activities**

Among the most significant benefits are: (AIContentfy, 2023)

**5.1 Access to New Customers:** One of the greatest benefits of collaborating with influencers is the ability to reach new audiences that the organization might not have been able to access otherwise.

**5.2 Establishing Brand Credibility:** In marketing, establishing credibility with the target audience is key to building long-term relationships and increasing conversions. One of the main benefits of collaborating with influencers is the opportunity to effectively establish brand credibility.

**5.3 Enhancing Brand Visibility and Awareness:** Enhancing brand visibility and awareness is a primary goal of any marketing campaign, and collaboration with influencers can be an effective way to achieve this. Influencers have a large and engaged following, and by partnering with them, organizations can expose their brand to a broader audience and increase visibility.

**5.4 Increasing Engagement with the Target Market:** Engaging with the target audience is essential for building lasting relationships and increasing conversions. Collaborating with influencers is a great way to enhance engagement with the target market as influencers have already established a strong connection with their followers. Through partnership, organizations can leverage this relationship to increase engagement with their target audience.

**5.5 Increasing Traffic and Sales on the Website:** Increasing website traffic and sales is a goal of any marketing campaign, and collaborating with influencers can be an effective way to achieve this. Influencer marketing can help attract visits to the organization's website by exposing the brand to a wider audience and introducing new customers to its products.

**5.6 Cost-Effective Marketing Strategy:** Marketing can be a costly endeavor, but collaborating with influencers can be a cost-effective way to achieve the organization's marketing goals compared to traditional forms of advertising. Influencer marketing often provides a higher return on investment because it allows reaching a highly targeted and engaged audience at a lower cost.

## **6. Prospects and Challenges of Digital Influencers in Organizational Promotional Activities:**

The use of influencer marketing, according to the "State of Influencer Marketing 2023" report, is expected to grow the influencer marketing industry to nearly \$21.1 billion in 2023, up from \$16.4 billion in 2022. The increasing importance of digital influencers is also confirmed by organizations increasing their spending on this type of marketing activity.

Brands of all sizes participate in influencer marketing, so it is not surprising to see some variance in what organizations spend on this activity. According to the survey, 43% of the brands stated that they spend less than \$10,000 annually on influencer marketing, which is up from 37% in 2022; 22% spend between \$10,000 and \$50,000, down from 30% in 2022; another 14% spend between \$50,000 and \$100,000, which is higher than in 2022; 10% spend between \$100,000 and \$500,000, unchanged; and a noticeable 11% spend more than \$500,000, nearly three times more than in 2022 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2023).

Overall, it can be said that influencer marketing has become one of the most common and effective forms of online marketing. With millions of Internet users browsing social media platforms daily for entertainment, inspiration, and product recommendations, it is no wonder that organizations leverage the power of the most popular social media faces to promote their products, whether goods or services.

As the influencer endorsement industry continues to mature, the size and value of influencer marketing platforms also expand each year. TikTok, a recent addition to the social media landscape, has achieved impressive download numbers, thereby reaching a very large audience, and has achieved great engagement rates for influencer content through partnerships with top personalities like Bella Poarch, attracting millions of potential young customers.

Notably, as of 2021, Charli D'Amelio was ranked as the most-followed influencer on TikTok, with nearly 120 million fans. While Instagram remains the leading platform for influencer marketing globally, TikTok is receiving increasing focus and attention from marketers. Not only has the app become a popular way to discover influencers, but organizations can also directly contact potential partners through the app's messaging system.

Instagram also offers several formats that content creators can use to promote a brand's product or service, ranging from images and tags to stories. Additionally, brand sites can be directly linked or accessed via a dedicated shopping tab, highlighting the platform's increasing focus on collaboration with brands.

In 2021, the number of influencer-sponsored brand posts on Instagram exceeded three million, making the global influencer market on Instagram a \$15 billion business. When it comes to long-form video content, YouTube is the first point of contact for both users and influencers alike. With millions of internet users browsing the platform every day looking for videos, tutorials, or vlogs, marketers view YouTube as an extremely fertile advertising ground. In 2020, spending on influencer marketing on YouTube was estimated to be around \$6.6 billion globally (statista, 2023).

At the same time, it is worth noting that despite the relative novelty of activities in the field of influencer marketing, a number of emerging challenges and threats related to this form of online promotion can be observed. Undoubtedly, one of the most significant issues is the phenomenon of influencer fraud, associated with the fact that some accounts or profiles followed by influencers do not belong to real people but are merely fake accounts (fake followers). A large portion of the funds spent on influencer marketing activities is wasted as a result.

According to a report by Points North Group, out of \$744 million spent by brands on influencer marketing in 2018, \$102 million was wasted on fake followers. Trust in influencers is crucial from the perspective of their effectiveness. Another very dangerous trend is the phenomenon of influencers who suggest their participation in promotional activities for a specific company, while in reality, this is not the case. The results of a study conducted for the 2020 Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report show that influencer fraud is an increasing concern for participants.

Another significant challenge related to influencer marketing is the change in "control" or the delivery of content to users on social media platforms (changes in social algorithms), which makes the content provided by influencers less clear to the target groups. (Wielki, 2020, p. 06)

### **Third: The Relationship between Digital Influencers and Tourism Destination Promotion**

#### **1. Overview of Tourism Destination Promotion through Digital Influencers:**

Tourism products are characterized by their intangible nature, as consumers cannot evaluate them without traveling. Therefore, online suggestions and recommendations serve as guides before booking travel products and are considered when making decisions to minimize the risks involved in the process.

These often also form the image of a tourism destination for potential tourists, affecting their intent to purchase travel packages. Tourists rely on online reviews to determine the best travel options, using social media to search for information about potential destinations, visualize

images, and access posts about others' past tourism experiences. The involvement of consumers online, especially on social media, has become an intriguing phenomenon for researchers, particularly in the field of tourism marketing.

Researchers and practitioners in tourism marketing pay significant attention to how tourists are influenced by interactions with other consumers, especially those known as social media influencers. This has become a key factor in developing effective marketing strategies for tourism destinations and in building destination images. Currently, marketing through influencers on social media represents a form of modern marketing, focusing on an individual or so-called "micro-celebrities" to influence potential tourists through social media. (Jaya & Prianthara, 2020, p. 09)

Generally, Choosing influencer marketing has become a supporter of promoting tourism products, acting as a more effective communication strategy for open innovation. The use of influencers on platforms such as YouTube allows them to reach millions of followers globally.

For example, during the economic crisis that affected Italy after the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chiara Ferragni, one of the most influential figures worldwide, initiated a campaign to promote Italian food and tourist destinations such as art cities, coastal and rural sites, skiing, thermal baths, museums, galleries, hotels, etc. (Ingrassia, Bellia, Giurdanella, Columba, & Chironi, 2022, p. 01)

## **2. Motivations for Promoting Tourism Destinations through Digital Influencers:**

As reported by Gretzel, influencer marketing has primarily been used by global hotel companies in the travel and tourism sector, while its use by destinations is increasing but still lagging. Influencer marketing in this field has proven to be a strong alternative to direct endorsements of destinations by destination management organizations and has been shown to be more effective.

In the context of global competition, destination management organizations can use influencers to reach a larger number of people and attract demographic segments that are more susceptible to influence via social media, such as women and digital citizens, i.e., Millennials or Generation Z.

Moreover, influencer marketing can enhance the image of the destination, thus forming an important part of the destination's branding strategy. Effective social media management by destination management organizations, including influencers, can combat stereotypes of the destination. Although being one of the actors potentially contributing to overtourism at certain sites, influencers can also be used to drive behavioral change and redirect tourist flows to less saturated areas.

Additionally, due to the overload of information and saturation of direct relationships between marketers and consumers on social media and ad-blocking tools, destinations need to adopt new strategies and adapt to the capabilities of social media. In this context, the right influencer strategy can yield numerous benefits for destination management organizations, as

practitioners consider several factors in their choice of influencers, including the fit between the brand and small to medium-sized enterprises, follower count, type of content created, reliability, and communication style.

Recently, there has been a focus on "micro-influencers" or small influencers considered internet celebrities who exert their influence on a smaller scale but in a highly effective manner. On the other hand, destination management organizations find it challenging to adapt to the current situation, facing difficulties in presenting the desired image of the destination in a crowded information space and managing the many forms and sources of user-generated content, thus making destination marketing management for organizations increasingly challenging to implement.

In this context, influencer marketing emerges as an alternative and modern option available to destination management organizations to regain tourists' attention, stand out from the rest, and potentially regain some control over the dissemination of relevant destination information online. (Femenia-Serra & Gretzel, 2020, pp. 66-67)

### **3. The Role of Digital Influencers in the Tourist Customer's Decision-Making Journey:**

Since the 1960s, numerous authors in the field of marketing (such as Howard and Sheth, 1969) have studied the decision-making process to help organizations design and manage the entire process that a customer goes through. This process includes recognizing the need, finding information on which the customer bases the evaluation of current offers, making the purchase decision, and finally evaluating the post-consumption experience.

The content created by users and shared on social media generally affects the consumer decision-making process or the customer's decision-making journey in the tourism sector. Some scholars suggest that this influence can occur before, during, and after the trip. Moreover, during the first stage of this journey (pre-purchase), consumers first come into contact with the product, organization, or brand, where the desire to purchase is formed based on information conveyed through a variety of connected and unconnected communication sources and techniques.

Social media campaigns aimed at generating traffic during this stage are notable. In the second stage, the impact of the shared content, especially by trusted digital influencers, becomes evident. Travel blogs, review platforms, and online brand communities play a significant role in evaluating the travel and tourism purchase decision process. In the same context, it has been found that people tend to use online reviews before purchasing to search for recommended activities to engage in. It's noted that the awareness and evaluation stages are considered part of the pre-purchase phase.

During the purchase stage, consumers decide what to choose, how to order, and how to pay, where purchases in the tourism sector are often made through online channels. The post-purchase stage refers to the consumption experience where the critical point of contact is the

interaction with the product or service itself. In this phase, consumers use social networks to share their personal consumption experiences through content that can be positive or negative.

Negative reviews can impact the credibility and reputation of the brand and influence consumer decisions regarding brand switching. Organizations here can mitigate negative reviews and comments. The credibility of the source is a fundamental attribute that affects follower behavior and has effective consequences on purchase decisions and brand attitudes. This trait is closely linked to contextual factors, so the digital influencer or blogger needs to be recognized as credible for their followers to consider their recommendations seriously.

Therefore, trust is an essential element of credibility. Hence, it can be said that the source's credibility and the trust placed in the digital influencer or blogger affect the tangible quality of the information shared on social networks. (Guerreiro, Viegas, & Guerreiro, 2019, pp. 244-245)

#### Fourth: Analytical Approach to a Group of Algerian Tourist Digital Influencers on YouTube

This section of the study will detail the phenomenon of Algerian digital tourist influencers on YouTube through an analytical approach to a purposive sample of tourist channels on YouTube, chosen for their large viewership exceeding hundreds of thousands of views for many videos, and significant interaction from the target audience with the digital influencer.

##### 1. General Characteristics of a Group of Algerian Tourist Channels on YouTube:

We will review the technical data of a group of Algerian tourist channels on YouTube through the following table:

**Table 01: A Group of Algerian Tourist Channels on YouTube.**

Channel Name	Channel Link	Creation Date	Subscribers	Total Views	Number of Videos	Language	Target Audience	Content Presentation Method
Nour Brahim	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@NourBrahimi">www.youtube.com/@NourBrahimi</a>	20/07/2014	1.19 million	265,711,492	269	Arabic, English	Local, Foreign	Personal
Khoubai	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@Khoubai">www.youtube.com/@Khoubai</a>	04/10/2011	2 milli	121,340,970	117	Dialect, Arabic	Local, Foreign	Personal

			on			translat ion	gn	
KasoE st	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@kasoest1">www.youtube.com/@kasoest1</a>	26/11/2 018	649,0 00	88,475,5 05	33 8	Arabic, Englis h	Loca l, Forei gn	Person al
Moha med Djame l Taleb	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@MohamedDjamelTaleb">www.youtube.com/@MohamedDjamelTaleb</a>	08/12/2 009	977,0 00	64,554,1 34	16 5	Dialect	Loca l	Person al, through locals
DuksT v	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@-dukstv89tourismdz66">www.youtube.com/@-dukstv89tourismdz66</a>	08/06/2 016	197,0 00	15,394,8 46	20 2	Dialect	Loca l	Person al, through enthusi asts
Karim Chahia ni	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@KarimChahiani">www.youtube.com/@KarimChahiani</a>	22/02/2 017	122,0 00	3,853,23 3	30	Dialect	Loca l	Person al, through enthusi asts
Naim Dziri	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@naimdziri1580">www.youtube.com/@naimdziri1580</a>	17/05/2 020	196,0 00	3,340,99 5	20 6	Dialect	Loca l	Person al, through enthusi asts and locals

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

**Through monitoring a purposive sample of Algerian tourist channels on YouTube, owned by Algerian digital influencers and exploring the mechanisms of tourist promotion through them, we have observed the following points:**

- \_ The reliance on social networks by moral persons not affiliated with any official body or institution represents one of the modern trends in tourist promotion. This form of promotion is characterized by a personal or individual approach, away from institutional promotional mechanisms supervised by specific or government bodies.
- \_ Algerian YouTube tourist channels represent a modern trend in tourist promotion led by a group of young digital content creators. This trend is closer to documenting their

tourist experiences in detail through videos shared by the digital influencer with their followers after being posted on their personal YouTube channels, subsequently transforming into virtual interaction spaces.

- Algerian digital tourist influencers on YouTube are predominantly youthful individuals known for their love of travel and exploration. In terms of gender distribution among the channels in the study sample, all are owned by male digital influencers, except for one channel owned by the digital influencer Nour Brahimi and another mixed channel owned by Ester and Belkacem. This indicates that the presence of women as tourist content creators in Algeria is still modest and very limited, especially when compared to their presence in other fields, confirming the stereotypical interests of women in family-related topics like home affairs, fashion, beauty, etc., in contrast to men's interest in public affairs.
- Most Algerian digital tourist influencers on YouTube promote individual tourism rather than group or family tourism. The majority of video content features solo trips or explorations by the digital influencer, sometimes accompanied by friends, presenting the journey as an adventure motivated by the love of exploration. For example, the digital influencer Karim from the channel Karim Chahiani tried paragliding in Annaba, and Mohamed Djamel from the channel Mohamed Djamel Taleb tried motorized paragliding in Skikda, as well as paddling 22 km from Hussein Dey (Sablettes) to Ain Taya. Sometimes, these journeys reach risky levels by reaching rugged or pristine places that few have visited, such as the influencer Naim Dziri who toured Zoundaia in El Hamdania in Medea Province and visited the Taza forest in Jijel Province, and Khoubai from the channel Khoubai who went to the city of Sefar located in the Algerian desert within the "Tassili n'Ajjer" region. Thus, Algerian digital tourist influencers offer tips to other adventure novices starting from how to gather money, how to spend tourist holidays at minimal costs, to how to camp, among other advice derived from their personal experiences.
- Most tourist channels on YouTube share some specifications; they are videos filmed by the digital influencer using a smartphone or camera or drone, then uploaded to their channel after being given a suitable title and sometimes a generic start and end. The digital influencer appears, speaking spontaneously and smoothly in a casual conversation with their followers, narrating the details of their visit and tourist trip to a particular area, moving from one place to another while giving explanations about the tourist site they are in. This is accompanied by music that varies from video to video, serving as a background to the imagery, especially since it includes sounds from the heart of the event such as the sound of water, chirping birds, sea waves, wind, etc., in addition to sounds of crowds, cars, street noise, and more.
- The predominant language in the tourist videos is the local dialect, presented simply and understandably by everyone. The dialects vary from the dialect of the capital, the western dialect, and the eastern dialect as well, suggesting that Algerian digital tourist



influencers are targeting their content more towards the Algerian user audience only, despite the fact that digital content on YouTube can reach global audiences in the absence of time and space boundaries. Except for the channel Nour Brahimi, which alternately uses English and Arabic or the local dialect in her videos showing tourist areas in Algeria with Arabic subtitles, and the channel KasoEst, which uses English and the local dialect with Arabic subtitles, encouraging further promotion of tourism in Algeria and attracting tourists from outside the country.

**2- Contribution of Algerian Digital Influencers in Promoting Tourist Destinations in Algeria via YouTube Channels:**

The contribution of digital influencers in promoting tourist destinations via YouTube channels is an effective way to attract tourists and increase awareness of the destination. These influencers share their tourist experiences in various destinations through YouTube videos, offering tips and useful information for travellers.

Furthermore, due to YouTube's popularity and its ability to attract large audiences, digital influencers can reach a global audience and encourage them to visit the destinations they promote. They also use video clips to showcase tourist attractions and activities available at the destination, which helps stimulate excitement and interest in the audience.

Below is a table summarizing the key elements and tourist activities targeted by Algerian digital influencers on YouTube, as well as the most promoted tourist regions and the methods used for tourist promotion.

**Table 02: Contribution of Algerian Digital Influencers in Enhancing Tourist Destinations in Algeria via YouTube**

<b>Tourist Elements Targeted</b>	<b>Tourist Activities Targeted</b>	<b>Most Promoted Tourist Regions</b>	<b>Destination Evaluation</b>	<b>Tourist Promotion Methods</b>
- Historical and cultural sites (mosques, churches, museums, theatres, castles, palaces, bridges). -Nature (beaches, mountains, deserts). -Traditions and customs.	Camping, fishing, paragliding, skiing, walking, swimming, bathing, food tasting, medical tourism, etc.	-Tourist regions in the North (Algiers -Sidi Fredj - Ain Taya, Chrea, Tipaza - Cherchell, Tizi Ouzou, Bouira - Tikjda, Medea). -Tourist regions in the South (Ghardaia, Jijel, Annaba, Setif, Mila, Guelma, Khenchela, Batna). -Tourist regions in the East (Qalaa, Constantine, Bejaia, Skikda, Jijel, Annaba, Setif,	Providing tips, recommendations, noting difficulties or risks for the target audience.	Advertising, humor and fun, sharing content on YouTube with other platforms, using storytelling and historical narrative.

<p>-Local markets. -Entertainment spaces or tourist facilities (hotels, restaurants, spas, shopping centers, amusement parks, etc.).</p>		<p>Mila, Guelma, Khenchela, Batna).  -Tourist regions in the West (Oran, Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Mostaganem, Chlef - Ténès).</p>		
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Source: Prepared by the researchers.

From the overview provided and through the exploration of videos from Algerian digital influencers on YouTube, it's evident that there is a significant emphasis on promoting local tourism within Algeria. These influencers also highlight various international tourist destinations, underscoring their commitment to enhancing the profile of domestic tourism in Algeria.

The videos strategically focus on displaying the natural landscapes of each tourist area, effectively showcasing their beauty and inviting viewers to explore these locales. Featured landscapes include beaches, lakes, waterfalls, valleys, mystical caves and grottoes, forests, mountains, plateaus, and striking desert rock formations.

Additionally, these videos spotlight the most iconic tourist landmarks within each region, which include a diverse array of mosques, churches, castles, walls, museums, theaters, statues, and bridges. Here are detailed presentations of some landmarks promoted by Algerian digital influencers on YouTube:

- **Landmarks of Algiers:** Algiers is rich with unique tourist attractions that have drawn the attention of digital content creators. Key highlights from the videos include the Martyrs' Memorial, erected in 1982, and the Bardo Museum, one of Algiers' most esteemed museums, which houses an extensive collection of artistic and historical artifacts that span several centuries. Other notable landmarks include the Fine Arts Museum and the Great Mosque, one of the largest and most significant mosques in Algiers, renowned for its exquisite traditional Arab architecture. The Great Cathedral, a major religious site in Algiers constructed in the 19th century, and the Casbah Casino, one of the oldest historical buildings in the city, now serving as a center for culture and art, are also prominently featured.
- **Landmarks of Ghardaïa:** The city of Ghardaïa also captures the interest of digital content creators, thanks to its abundant and notable landmarks. Videos prominently feature the five palaces of Ghardaïa, all recognized as World Heritage sites. These include Beni Ghardaïa, Benoura, Atteuf, Melika, and Beni Isguen palaces, with

foundations dating back to the 11th century. The city's leading mosques and the Zelfana mineral baths are additional focal points.

- **Landmarks of Sefar:** Situated in the Algerian desert in the Jant region, Sefar is an ancient, historical city that has fascinated digital content creators. Known for its breathtaking desert landscapes, caves, and uniquely shaped stones that provide a respite from the urban clamor, Sefar is an ideal destination for history buffs and adventure seekers. It is also recognized by UNESCO as the world's largest museum of prehistoric rock art and the largest rock city globally. The city hosts a comprehensive museum that features over 15,000 mural paintings across 5,000 cave dwellings, along with numerous sculptures, engravings, and drawings that encapsulate its rich historical tapestry and mysteries dating back more than 20,000 years.
- **Landmarks of Constantine:** This city stands out as one of Algeria's most prominent tourist destinations, capturing the interest of digital content creators on YouTube. Known as the "City of Bridges" due to its numerous bridges connecting various neighborhoods, notable examples include the Sidi M'Cid Bridge, constructed in 1909, and the beautiful Sidi Rached Bridge. The city boasts several other intriguing tourist attractions, such as the Ahmed Bey Palace and the stunning Emir Abdelkader Mosque, built in the early 19th century, specifically in 1807. The old city, with its narrow alleys and streets, invites tourists to explore its historical charm. Other significant sites include the Monument to the Dead, the richly historical Cirta National Museum, the Regional Theater, and the Roman ruins of Tiddis.
- **Landmarks of Tlemcen:** YouTube content creators have highlighted the tourist attractions in Tlemcen as a central theme in their videos. Among these landmarks is the fascinating Beni Add Cave, a remarkable underground museum located about 57 meters below the surface. The videos also feature the impressive El Mechouar Palace and several notable mosques, such as the Great Mosque, Sidi Boumediene Mosque, and the historic Mansourah Mosque. The picturesque Lalla Setti Plateau, offering visitors a breathtaking panoramic view, is also frequently showcased.
- **Landmarks of Oran:** Oran is one of Algeria's most celebrated tourist cities, known for its numerous attractions and places of interest, prominently featured in YouTube videos. Highlights include the Santa Cruz Fort, situated on Mount Murdjadjo, and the historic November 1st Square. The videos also spotlight the Bey's Palace in the city center, which attracts many visitors, the Hassan Pasha Mosque, and the Ahmed Zabana National Museum. The Mediterranean City Park and the lush Canastel Forest, along with the captivating Habibas Islands nature reserve and various beautiful beaches like Madagh Beach and Paradise Beach, are also extensively promoted.

In terms of customs and traditions, Algerian digital influencers have diligently showcased the distinctive customs and traditions of each region visited. This includes an emphasis on local culinary delights, traditional crafts, regional attire, jewelry, and decorations, complemented by tours of local markets to further promote what is unique about each region, especially

considering that shopping and acquiring souvenirs form essential parts of the travel experience.

While YouTube videos did not place significant emphasis on the tourist facilities available in each area since Algerian digital influencers predominantly promote more personalized, adventure-focused, and cost-effective forms of tourism, there was still notable promotion of facilities such as commercial complexes, amusement parks, water parks, artificial beaches, rest areas, and restaurants.

It is important to note that Algerian digital influencers generally avoid discussing pricing, despite the critical role of pricing as a fundamental component of the marketing mix in any tourist destination.

Regarding the tourist activities most promoted by Algerian digital influencers on YouTube, camping has been highlighted as a predominant activity. Influencers often engage in camping as a favored tourist activity, typically set in forests, alongside lakes, or on beaches, offering an invitation to enjoy the tranquility of nature away from urban hustle and bustle. They highlight essential camping equipment, ways to ensure enjoyable and safe outdoor experiences, and provide necessary tips for adherence.

Reflecting on the promotional areas highlighted through Algerian tourism channels as sampled in the study, it is evident that the travel videos on YouTube have covered a wide range of locales from the north to the south, and from the east to the west of the country. Here's an overview of the regions that have been prominently featured:

- **Northern Tourist Areas:** Among the cities and areas most promoted on the YouTube platform are Algiers (the capital city), Sidi Fredj, Ain Taya, Chrea, Tipaza, Cherchell, Tizi Ouzou, and Tikjda in Bouira.
- **Southern Tourist Areas:** In the south, the cities most heavily featured include Ghardaia, Jant, Seffar, Laghouat, Bou Saada, Taghit, Djelfa, Biskra, and Ouargla.
- **Eastern Tourist Areas:** In the eastern part of Algeria, the most promoted cities on YouTube include El Qala, Constantine, Bejaia, Skikda, Jijel, Annaba, Setif, Mila, Guelma, Khenchela, and Batna.
- **Western Tourist Areas:** In the west, the cities of Oran, Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Mostaganem, and Chlef are frequently highlighted.

The YouTube influencers sampled in the study rely on several factors such as the quality of content and information provided, the channel's ability to inspire and attract an audience, and professionalism in filming and editing.

These elements have enabled them to build robust channels on YouTube that offer rich and engaging content to promote Algerian tourist destinations and attract attention to them. Moreover, these channels serve as excellent resources for exploring Algeria more broadly and

understanding its culture. Supporting these channels is beneficial for enhancing awareness of Algeria's riches and boosting the tourism sector.

Furthermore, the promotional techniques employed by these digital influencers, such as creating engaging and attractive ads for tourist destinations, using humor and fun to capture viewers' attention, and making them excited about visiting these destinations, sharing content on YouTube and other platforms like Instagram to increase their presence, and attracting more viewers interested in travel, have significantly contributed to increasing engagement and attracting a broader audience, thereby enhancing Algeria's image as an exceptional tourist destination.

### **Conclusion:**

This research paper has explored the significant role of digital influencers in promoting tourist destinations in Algeria through YouTube channels. It has detailed key concepts surrounding electronic tourism promotion and digital influencers, examined the relationship between influencers and tourism promotion, and analyzed content from various Algerian tourist channels on YouTube, including Nour Brahimi, Khoubai, KasoEst, Mohamed Djamel Taleb, DuksTv, Karim Chahiani, and Naim Dziri.

The study's findings reveal several key points:

- \_ YouTube tourism channels are a recent initiative in Algerian tourism promotion, adopted by several young digital content creators.
- \_ The reliance on digital platforms by individuals not affiliated with any official body is considered one of the key trends in modern tourism promotion.
- \_ The majority of tourism channels on YouTube promote individual tourism rather than group or family tourism.
- \_ The language used in the videos by digital influencers is predominantly colloquial, targeting primarily a local audience.
- \_ Most channels focus on promoting domestic tourism in Algeria, indicating a desire to enhance awareness of local tourist attractions and attract local visitors.
- \_ There is a diversification in the coverage of tourist areas in Algeria by digital influencers, encompassing regions from the north to the south and from the east to the west.
- \_ Efforts by digital tourism influencers have significantly enhanced awareness of the country's beauty and cultural and natural diversity, attracting more visitors for an exciting tourism experience.

- \_ Digital tourism influencers in Algeria have not placed significant emphasis on the tourist facilities in each area, despite their importance in attracting visitors and enhancing their tourism experience.
- \_ Influencer channels that engage with their viewers through comments and queries tend to be more popular and have a broader follower base, such as Khoubai and Nour Brahimi channels. Regular updates also play a crucial role in attracting viewers and maintaining a wide fan base.

Building on the previous insights, the following recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of promotional activities by Algerian digital tourism influencers:

- \_ Algerian digital tourism influencers should employ data analytics tools to measure the performance of their YouTube content and evaluate outcomes. Utilizing these insights can optimize results and enhance the effectiveness of tourism promotion.
- \_ Influencers need to pay close attention to the tourism facilities available in each area, which includes hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, and recreational activities, underscoring their importance in the tourism sector.
- \_ It is crucial for influencers to use both Modern Standard Arabic and English, even as subtitles in videos, to enhance the promotion of tourism in Algeria and attract tourists from abroad.
- \_ Influencers should include comprehensive pricing information as an integral part of their tourism content due to its importance in any tourist destination.
- \_ Influencers should ensure they interact with their audience by responding to comments and queries to enhance communication and increase attractiveness.
- \_ There is a need for cooperation with well-known digital tourism influencers on YouTube to promote tourist destinations in Algeria and reach a broader audience.
- \_ Enhancing cooperation between digital tourism influencers and partners in the tourism sector, such as hotels and travel companies, is essential to boost visible tourism marketing.
- \_ It would be beneficial for the Algerian government to support digital tourism influencers to increase awareness about Algeria and enhance the tourism sector.

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