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Modern Challenges in the Tourism Industry: E-Marketing of Tourism in Algeria (An Analytical Study of a Sample of Tourism Agencies in Constantine).

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of electronic marketing (e-marketing) on the performance of tourism agencies in Algeria, with a particular focus on Constantine. It explores how digital transformation and the adoption of modern information and communication technologies contribute to the growth of the tourism sector, a critical avenue for diversifying national income. Using a descriptive and analytical approach, the study evaluates the extent to which e-marketing strategies are implemented by Algerian tourism agencies Specifically in Constantine and identifies the challenges they face. The findings reveal a positive but limited effect of e-marketing on agency performance, hindered by obstacles such as inadequate digital infrastructure and limited expertise. The study recommends strengthening digital marketing capabilities, improving infrastructure, and ensuring each agency operates a comprehensive online platform to enhance service promotion and customer engagement

Keywords: Electronic Tourism Marketing; Tourism Agencies; Constantine; Algeria.

1. Introduction

The tourism sector is witnessing a tremendous transformation in promotional and marketing methods, thanks to rapid technological advancements and the widespread availability of the internet. As Algeria enters this transformation, new challenges emerge that hinder effective electronic tourism promotion. This academic article focuses on the issue of electronic tourism promotion in Algeria, aiming to analyze these challenges from a digital marketing perspective and highlight possible ways to enhance tourism competitiveness.

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the development of modern economies, serving as an essential source of foreign currency and providing job opportunities. Despite Algeria's rich natural and historical resources, its tourism performance remains weak compared to neighboring countries. This study is significant due to the role that electronic marketing can play in improving Algeria's position on the global tourism map. Moreover, adopting digitalization in the tourism sector has become a necessity dictated by changes in the contemporary business environment. However, this comes with a set of challenges that prevent optimal benefits from this digital transformation and its competitive advantages. Therefore, we pose the research question as follows:

1. Research Problematic:

Constantine, with its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, holds untapped potential in Algeria's tourism sector. However, despite the advancements in digital technologies and the increasing reliance on electronic marketing globally, tourism agencies in Constantine face significant challenges in adopting these tools effectively. This study seeks to address the following question:

To what extent do tourism agencies in Constantine adopt electronic tourism marketing strategies, and how does this adoption influence their sales performance and overall contribution to a competitive and sustainable tourism industry?

1.1. Hypotheses:

- Tourism agencies in Constantine have only partially integrated electronic marketing strategies into their operations.
- The adoption of electronic tourism marketing by these agencies positively impacts their sales and market reach, although this impact is limited by infrastructural and operational challenges.
- Lack of full control of the human resource in digital and right marketing techniques and inability to integrate technological technologies into tourism digital marketing at the level of tourism agencies in Constantine.
- Enhancing e-marketing capabilities and addressing these barriers can significantly improve the competitiveness of Constantine's tourism industry in both national and international markets.
- There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 significance level of electronic tourism marketing on stimulating sales in Algerian tourism agencies.

1.2. Research Aims:

The current study has several objectives, primarily presenting various modern challenges in Algeria's tourism industry based on adopting e-marketing principles. It aims to uncover obstacles and stakes facing e-tourism marketing in Algeria that hinder effective use of e-marketing in the tourism sector. Additionally, it seeks to explore available opportunities for improving e-marketing through studying and analyzing a sample of tourism agencies in Constantine, revealing their level of adoption of e-tourism marketing and how they utilize information and communication technology to stimulate sales and attract more tourists. Finally, it aims to propose practical strategies for enhancing e-tourism marketing and provide recommendations for the government and tourism institutions to overcome existing obstacles and promote the use of digital tools for tourism promotion.

1.3. Significance of the Study:

The current study derives its importance from the significance of tourism on several levels, which can be categorized into practical and scientific importance:

1.3.1. Practical Importance:

A. Economic Importance: The study contributes to understanding how electronic marketing can attract more tourists, both domestic and foreign, thereby supporting the national economy through increased revenues from the tourism sector. It will also highlight the importance of information and communication technology in improving marketing performance and enhancing Algeria's competitiveness regionally and internationally.

B. Social and Cultural Importance: Effective electronic tourism marketing can raise awareness of Algeria's cultural heritage and stimulate domestic tourism, thus supporting social and cultural development in the country. The study will also provide proposed solutions to overcome current challenges, such as weak digital infrastructure and underutilization of social

media platforms, enhancing opportunities for tourism institutions to improve their performance.

1.3.2. Scientific and Academic Importance:

The study adds new information on how to adapt e-marketing strategies to the Algerian market, enriching the scientific literature on e-tourism marketing in developing countries.

1.4. Methodology of the Study

Based on the research problem, the most suitable methodology is descriptive analysis using content analysis, along with a case study approach by taking a sample from tourism agencies in Constantine for conducting the study.

This research paper will be divided into the following sections:

2. Tourism - Definition, Types, and Importance:

In this section of the research, we aim to provide a comprehensive definition of tourism as follows.

2.1. Definition of Tourism:

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), "tourism is a set of activities related to an individual's departure from their usual environment for less than one consecutive year for leisure or other purposes" (ONU Tourism, 2019, p. 07).

Tourism is also defined as "a collection of relationships and phenomena resulting from travel and temporary residence outside one's usual place of residence as long as this stay is temporary and does not turn into permanent residence" (Gulapish, 2012, p. 03).

It can also be described as "the term used for all interrelated processes—especially economic—that result from foreigners entering, staying, and moving within or outside a specific city or region" (Baali & Khaled, 2019, p. 04).

From these definitions, it can be concluded that they all agree on essential elements clarifying the term "tourism," which involves an individual's movement from their place of residence to another location for less than one year for leisure or other purposes excluding work or profit-making activities.

2.2. Types of Tourism:

Tourism can be categorized into various types based on its objectives and nature; each type attracts specific groups of tourists relying on different resources and tourist destinations. The most common types include (Mas'oud & Meziane, 2020, p. 59):

2.2.1. Recreational Tourism: Aimed at relaxation and includes visits to beaches, resorts, and destinations offering recreational activities.

2.2.2. Religious Tourism: Involves visiting sacred places or religious sites for worship purposes.

2.2.3. Medical Tourism: Focuses on receiving medical treatment or natural therapies in places known for their healthy climate or mineral waters. (Aissani, 2011, p. 16).

2.2.4. Environmental Tourism: Aimed at exploring nature through visits to natural reserves and parks while raising awareness about environmental conservation.

2.2.5. Business Tourism: Centers around trips made for business purposes such as conferences or meetings.

2.2.6. Educational Tourism: Aimed at obtaining education or training abroad through courses or workshops.

2.2.7. Rural Tourism: Targets visits to rural areas for enjoyment of scenic views and rural life.

2.2.8. Adventure Tourism: Focuses on activities requiring courage such as mountain climbing or diving.

2.2.9. Sports Tourism: Related to participation or attendance at sports events like car races or Olympic games (Ashi, 2011, p. 45).

2.2.10. Cultural Tourism: Aimed at exploring new cultures by visiting archaeological sites, museums, and historical cities.

2.2.11. Shopping Tourism: Focused on purchasing products from a country often featuring discounts aimed at attracting tourists (Hafez, 2010, p. 223).

2.3. Importance of Tourism:

Tourism plays a crucial role in economic growth for many countries due to several reasons:

- **Increased Revenues**: Tourism boosts revenues through an increase in tourists who book accommodations either directly or online.

- **Job Creation**: It provides both direct and indirect job opportunities.

- **Enhancing Other Sectors**: It contributes to strengthening other sectors such as transportation, hospitality, trade, catering, culture, and entertainment.

- **Local Community Development**: It supports local communities by promoting small and medium enterprises while providing job opportunities that enhance cultural heritage.

- **Promoting Technology and Innovation**: It drives innovation in technology within the sector by utilizing advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

3. Electronic Tourism Marketing - The Conceptual Framework

In this next part of the research, we will address electronic tourism marketing (e-marketing tourism), from its conceptual framework by discussing its definition, components, and significance for institutions.

3.1. Concept of Electronic Tourism Marketing

Experts agree that institutions must quickly adapt to new conditions while facing fierce competition due to changes within the tourism industry; many institutions have adopted new technologies rapidly. Consequently, organizations associated with tourism have shifted towards digital technologies to simplify operations while engaging with their target audience more effectively (Tang et al., 2018).

Since value generation in tourism is closely linked with experiences; these innovations are frequently utilized to enhance encounter quality. Digital marketing promotes launching tourist products while cities develop visitor-friendly mobile applications (Liu et al., 2017). Museums integrate virtual reality exhibits while hotels employ artificial intelligence robots for service automation aimed at improving guest experiences (Hoff & Rasmussen, 2021). More clearly defined by Marwan Basel as "a tourist model where some transactions between one tourist institution or another occur through information technology," which aligns service offerings with tourists' desires via internet networks (Marwan, 2008).

3.2. Components of E-Tourism Marketing

E-tourism marketing consists of several elements that constitute its foundation:

3.2.1. Electronic Tourist Product: A collection of physical and non-physical elements offered by tourist institutions online aimed at meeting customer needs using information technology.

3.2.2. Electronic Pricing: A pricing strategy for products/services offered by tourist institutions based on market studies after assessing service production costs.

3.2.3. Electronic Distribution: One crucial element representing virtual places where services are distributed via electronic channels such as catalogs or social media.

3.2.4. Electronic Promotion: Utilizing modern technologies like the internet by tourist institutions to communicate with existing/potential customers aiming at fulfilling their desires.

3.2.5. Human Element in Electronic Environment: The human factor impacts service performance differently than traditional marketing; service providers now have new roles aligned with their tasks like responding via email.

3.2.6. Physical Evidence in Electronic Environment: The physical evidence shifts from tangible locations to virtual sites utilizing multimedia technology replacing physical environments.

3.2.7. Service Delivery Processes in Electronic Environment: Service delivery has transitioned from direct communication methods towards utilizing modern electronic channels.

3.3. Importance of Electronic Tourism Marketing

The significance of e-tourism marketing is profound for both tourist institutions and travelers alike:

- It provides opportunities for promoting lesser-known tourist attractions.

- Enhances interaction between users within digitized environments especially among domestic/international tourists.

- Expands market share by showcasing local attractions globally.

4. Electronic Tourism Marketing in Algeria: Implementation Mechanisms and Execution Challenges: An Analytical Study of a Sample of Travel Agencies in Constantine.

Travel agencies play a significant role in stimulating tourism activity by promoting the tourism qualifications and facilities available in the province to attract tourists. They also provide essential services for their comfort, such as hotel room bookings, travel tickets, tickets for recreational venues, car rentals, and organized tour program offers.

4.1. Technical Profile of Tourism Components as a Strategic Tourist Destination in Constantine.

Constantine Province is considered a tourist destination rich in natural and historical qualifications. It features archaeological sites that reflect multiple civilizations, including mosques and zawiyas, which are classified as national heritage masterpieces. These landmarks contribute to shaping the city's identity and attracting tourists to discover its history and culture, as the tourist attractions intertwine with stunning natural landscapes, sparking curiosity among visitors. The city also retains distinctive cultural traditions, supported by cultural structures inherited from the French era, aimed at preserving this heritage through various cultural activities. With the increasing tourist influx, Constantine needs to develop integrated tourism facilities that include transportation, accommodation, and guidance services, which the city is working on by encouraging tourism investment. Travel agencies serve as a vital link between the city and its visitors, playing a key role in marketing tourism

services. In summary, Constantine is a historical and tourist city par excellence, combining suspended bridges with rich cultural landmarks, making it an ideal destination for visitors.

Approximately 185 travel agencies operate in Constantine Province; however, over 40 agencies were closed in 2022 due to financial reasons and the inability to continue operations because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the number of active agencies decreased to 145 distributed across various parts of the province.

4.2. Methodological Procedures of the Study

This section discusses the steps and procedures used in the field study, focusing on the study community and sample, data collection tools, measurement criteria for the questionnaire, and statistical tools used.

4.2.1. Study Community and Sample

The study community consists of owners and managers of travel agencies in Constantine Province. A non-probability sample of 44 travel agencies was selected.

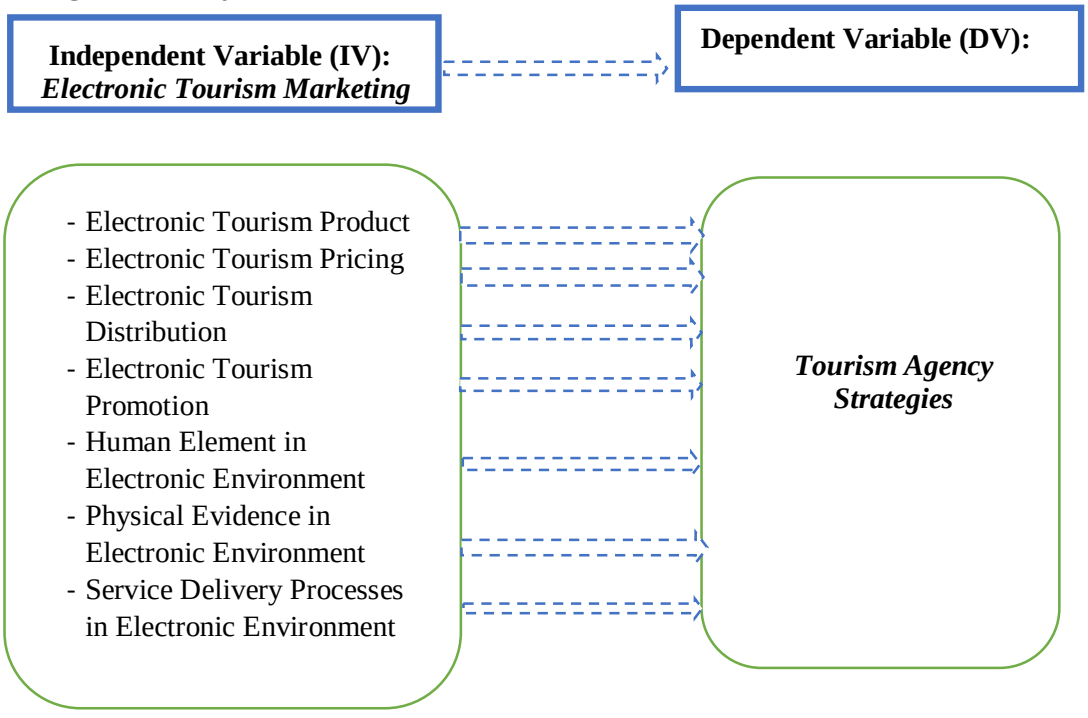
4.2.2. Study Tool and Data Collection

Data was collected using a questionnaire, which is a primary means of obtaining accurate information about the study topic. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first included 42 statements related to independent variables represented by e-tourism marketing mix, while the second part related to personal and demographic data about managers and employees. The questionnaire was distributed in two ways: electronically via Google Drive and directly through visits to tourism agency headquarters. Data analysis was performed using SPSS v20.

4.2.3. Study Model: Causal and Effects Relationships

To develop a study model that clearly illustrates the causal and effect relationships, we can structure it as follows. This model will address the key dimensions of the independent and dependent variables in the context of electronic tourism marketing in Constantine, Algeria

Figure 1: Study Model



4.2.4. Statistical Analysis Tools

SPSS v20 was used for data analysis, applying the following tools:

A. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The validity of the tool was assessed through the table below, leading to the following statistical values:

Table 1: Validity of the study Tools

Dimension (Axis 1 - Axis 2)	Correlation Coefficient (Min & Max Value)	Significance Level
E-Tourism Product	0.610 - 0.963	0.000
E-Tourism Pricing	0.322 - 0.743	0.033
E-Tourism Distribution	0.280 - 0.824	0.050
E-Tourism Promotion	0.414 - 0.910	0.005
Electronic Operations	0.338 - 0.759	0.025
Physical Evidence	0.374 - 0.760	0.012
Human Element	0.394 - 0.879	0.005
Electronic Sales Activation	0.635 - 0.786	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs

This indicates that all statements were valid and measurable with significance values not exceeding $\alpha = 0.05$ Regarding reliability coefficients, Cronbach's alpha test showed a high value (0.938) for all questionnaire items, indicating high reliability and validity for analysis.

B. Descriptive Analysis of Sample Characteristics

In terms of gender distribution: statistics indicate that most participants are male (63.6%), while females represent (36.4%). The age groups mostly comprised participants under 30 years old, indicating that managers and employees are predominantly young (68.2%). Work experience was noted among individuals with less than five years' experience, reflecting an influx into this field in recent years; from 2013 to 2021, Constantine Province saw an increase in agencies from 42 to 145.

Regarding educational qualifications, most individuals possess a university degree, confirming that tourism institution managers have substantial educational and cultural backgrounds enabling them to manage institutions professionally. Concerning agency staff numbers, most agencies have between one to four employees (84.1%), with branches estimated at 61.4% not having any branches.

C. Data Analysis and Study Results

- Analysis of Responses from Study Sample Members Regarding Electronic Tourism Marketing Mix

The overall mean for all items measuring "*e-tourism product*" falls within a good evaluation range at an average of (3.67) with a standard deviation of (1.122). This reflects agreement among travel agencies in the study sample on the importance of integrating modern technology into tourism products as it offers several advantages such as accuracy and speed while helping organize time effectively and reducing reliance on traditional costly methods.

The overall mean for all items measuring "*e-tourism pricing*" falls within an average evaluation range at (3.21) with a standard deviation of (1.098), indicating a lack of awareness among travel agencies regarding the importance of utilizing electronic environments for pricing tourism products due to their ability to accurately determine price levels which leads to sufficient returns for agencies while allowing them to maintain a moderate customer volume.

In contrast, regarding "*e-tourism distribution*," the overall mean is (3.85) with a standard deviation of (1.036), reflecting agreement among agencies on leveraging electronic dealings effectively in distributing their tourism products including providing electronic services around-the-clock.

The overall mean for "*e-tourism promotion*" is also within a good evaluation range at (3.75) with a standard deviation of (1.146), indicating consensus among most agencies on utilizing modern technology for promoting tourism products.

Concerning "*operations*," the overall mean is rated good at (3.53) with a standard deviation of (1.094), reflecting most agencies' inclination towards forming interactive relationships between service providers and clients via electronic networks.

However, practical application still faces challenges; many agencies have not reached offering electronic payment operations fully covering all service provision aspects.

The overall mean measuring "*physical evidence*" stands at an average level at (3.34) with a standard deviation of (1.162), indicating insufficient attention from travel agencies towards designing effective websites that substitute traditional stores.

Additionally, regarding "*human element*," it falls within good evaluation criteria at an average score of (3.73) with a standard deviation of (1.061), reflecting travel agencies' focus on service efficiency according to promised specifications while enhancing human resources capabilities in dealing with modern technology.

For axis two measuring "*electronic sales activation*," it also falls within good evaluation criteria at an average score of (3.88) with a standard deviation of (0.820), indicating agreement among study sample agencies on all items concerning maintaining continuous presence in electronic markets through effective web design promoting their services.

D. Hypothesis Testing:

As stated at the beginning of this research, the hypothesis posits that there is a statistically significant effect at a significance level of 0.05 for electronic tourism marketing on activating sales for travel agencies.

The hypothesis states: there exists a statistically significant effect at a significance level of 0.05 for electronic tourism marketing on activating sales for travel agencies tested using simple linear regression analysis.

H0: There is no effect from electronic tourism marketing on activating sales for travel agencies.

H1: There is an effect from electronic tourism marketing on activating sales for travel agencies.

Key results from simple linear regression analysis between independent variable (electronic tourism marketing mix) and dependent variable (sales activation) are organized in the following table:

Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis for Testing the Main Hypothesis

Correlation Coefficient r				0.58	
Coefficient of Determination R^2				0.337	
Value(f)=21.310	Significance level 0.000			$\alpha = 0.05$	
Variable	Non-Existent Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	Value (f)	Significance (p-value)
	B	SEB	Beta B		
E-Marketing Mix Tourism	0.081	0.018	0.58	4.616	0.000
Constance	11.166	2.67		4.181	0.000

Source: Prepared by researcher based on SPSS outputs.

The table shows that the explanatory power of the regression model represented by R^2 reached a value of .337 indicating that independent variable contributes to dependent variable behavior by approximately33% while remaining percentage can be attributed to other factors not included in this model.

The table shows that the explanatory power of the regression model, represented by the coefficient of determination (R^2), is 0.337. This indicates that the independent variable (electronic tourism marketing mix) contributes 33.7% to the behavior of the dependent variable (sales activation), while the remaining 66.3% of the influence on the dependent variable is due to factors other than the electronic tourism marketing mix. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.58, indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. The (F) value, which is significant at a 95% confidence level, suggests the suitability of the regression line for the relationship between the variables. The slope parameter (regression coefficient) for the independent variable is 0.081, which also indicates a statistically positive relationship between the variables, with a significance level of 0.000 (less than 0.05), confirming the significance of the slope parameter. The intercept parameter (constant term) is 11.166 with a significance level of 0.000 (less than 0.05), indicating its statistical significance. Therefore, the variable explains the variations in the dependent variable. Consequently, the analyses of the test results presented in the table lead to the acceptance of the statistical hypothesis of the research, which states that e-tourism marketing has an impact on the sales activation of tourism agencies.

After presenting analyzing interpreting results it became evident how crucial electronic tourism marketing is for activating sales among studied travel agencies within Constantine Province.

The study concluded acceptance hypothesis stating significant statistical impact from electronic tourism marketing on activating sales although cautiously; one cannot fully believe complete effect from all elements within electronic marketing mix towards sales activation due considerable deficiencies observed particularly pricing strategy leading customer numbers remaining stagnant or decreasing necessitating greater focus upon this strategy.

5. Conclusion

Tourism is one of highly significant service sectors especially today where revenues from tourism services have seen considerable growth due continuous increase in global tourist arrivals linked scientific technological advancements alongside focus quality improvement aiming retain existing tourists attract new ones; quality assessment occurs from tourist perspective rather than solely institutional viewpoint.

Current success within tourism industry relies primarily upon utilizing tools techniques associated with electronic tourism marketing capable enhancing tourist experiences searching information allowing comparisons between locations prices offered enabling institutions achieve tangible marketing efficiency providing high-quality competitive tourist service within rapidly changing market environment eliminating spatial boundaries.

E-tourism marketing represents dynamic movement significantly meeting tourists' needs desires utilizing internet technology across all elements comprising marketing mix serving effective suitable means promoting distributing tourist services given nature these services reliant success upon providing adequate appealing information capable attracting tourists managing available resources whether economic social aesthetic natural facilitating time effort through direct client contact direct service distribution bypassing traditional intermediary chains additionally internet network eases price comparison thus assisting optimal pricing gaining competitive advantage.

Success implementing e-tourism marketing depends upon critical components summarized primarily ensuring prepared technological infrastructure capable updating designing effective attractive websites ensuring trustworthiness offering multilingual content spreading presence across global search engines providing online distribution reservation systems emphasizing safety trustworthiness electronic payment methods training human resource technological expertise.

Through presented study analysis several findings emerged including:

- Recognizing paramount importance associated with e-tourism marketing revolution information communication technologies despite advantages barriers deficiencies persist hindering effective application principles electronic marketing e-tourism.

- Shortage training programs specialized within tourism field;

- Encountering numerous obstacles adopting e-tourism marketing primarily website establishment absence culture digital transactions lack online payment systems along security issues unqualified human resources difficulty tracking technological advancements;

- Lacking integrated infrastructure necessary implementing effective electronic marketing mix resulting inefficient applications impacting service performance levels.

- Embracing technology associated with electronic tourism marketing necessitates financial capabilities skilled human resources competent adapting evolving tourist preferences desires within market landscape.

Recommendations

A. For Tourism Agencies in Constantine:

- **Enhance Digital Infrastructure:** Tourism agencies in Constantine must prioritize investments in robust information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. Reliable, high-speed internet access is essential to support online marketing, reservations, and seamless customer interactions. Agencies should partner with local service providers to improve connectivity, particularly in tourist-heavy areas.
- **Specialized Digital Marketing Training:** Tourism agencies in Constantine should focus on training their staff in digital marketing techniques, including the effective use of social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing. This training should be targeted towards both management and frontline employees to ensure a comprehensive understanding of digital tools.
- **Develop Integrated Online Platforms:** Establishing a unified online presence through well-designed, user-friendly websites and mobile applications should be a priority. These

platforms should not only provide information about services but also integrate online booking, payment, and customer service functions. Agencies should also ensure these platforms are multilingual to cater to international tourists.

- **Implement Secure Online Payment Systems:** The lack of secure, user-friendly online payment systems is a critical barrier. Agencies should adopt trusted digital payment platforms to offer a seamless transaction experience, ensuring security and ease for tourists making bookings and payments online.

- **Leverage Local and National Platforms:** Constantine's tourism agencies should collaborate with national initiatives like the Ministry of Industry and Traditional Crafts to contribute regularly updated content to national tourism platforms. These platforms can aggregate tourism services, allowing greater visibility for Constantine's offerings on a global scale.

B. General Recommendations for the E-Tourism Sector in Algeria:

- **Nationwide Digital Infrastructure Enhancement:** Algeria should invest in the national infrastructure required for digital tourism marketing, ensuring reliable internet coverage in key tourist areas across the country. This investment is vital for the development of online tourism services and will improve access to information and bookings for international tourists.

- **Government-Supported Training Programs:** The Algerian government should introduce nationwide digital marketing training programs for tourism professionals. These programs should focus on digital skills and e-marketing strategies to ensure that the workforce is equipped to meet the demands of the global tourism market.

- **Promotion of Digital Aggregation Platforms:** Algeria should encourage the creation of national digital platforms that aggregate tourism services, such as hotel bookings, tour packages, and cultural information. These platforms will serve as a comprehensive interface for tourists, providing them with easy access to a wide range of services across the country.

- **Security and Trust Development:** Ensuring the safety and trustworthiness of online transactions must be a priority. Government policies should encourage the adoption of secure payment systems, as well as the implementation of online security protocols to protect customer data.

- **Collaboration Between Public and Private Sectors:** Collaboration between public institutions and private tourism agencies should be strengthened. Government support for digital tourism marketing, alongside private sector innovation, will accelerate Algeria's integration into the global digital tourism market, boosting the country's competitiveness.

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