



The Impact of Social Media Promotion on Foreign Tourists' Behavioral Response Toward Algeria as a Tourist Destination: A Field Study on a Sample of Foreign Tourists

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of social media promotion on the behavioral responses of foreign tourists toward Algeria as an emerging tourist destination. Grounded in a conceptual framework integrating three key dimensions of social media promotion—social media advertising, digital sales promotions, and digital public relations—the research adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire administered to a convenience sample of 127 foreign tourists who visited Algeria up to 2024.

Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive influence of all three dimensions on tourists' behavioral responses, underscoring the critical role of social media in shaping destination attractiveness and decision-making. The findings advocate for strategic enhancements in Algeria's digital tourism marketing, including interactive storytelling, high-quality visual content, and partnerships with influencers, to amplify its competitiveness in global tourism markets.

Key words: social media promotion; tourist behavior; digital marketing; destination Attractiveness; tourism influencers

Jel Classification Codes : M31, M37

Introduction:

The rapid digital transformation has positioned social media platforms as indispensable tools for tourism promotion, offering unprecedented reach and direct influence on consumer purchasing decisions and behavioral responses. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) established in their foundational work, social media serves as a powerful mechanism for destination brand-building through interactive engagement and visually compelling content that enhances destination appeal. Wibowo et al. (2020), whose research confirms social media's significant impact on tourist purchase behavior, support this perspective.

Recent studies by Nugzar and Ekaterine (2022) demonstrate social media's dual role in shaping both tourist behavior and perceived destination image. These findings align with Ghazaly and Cai's (2013) earlier work showing how destination-related information facilitates cognitive pre-travel evaluations that form the basis of perceived image. Collectively, this research confirms social media's superiority over traditional communication channels in influencing tourist behavior through its global reach and dynamic content dissemination.

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The effectiveness of social media marketing stems from three key capabilities: creating visually striking advertisements, promoting tailored service offerings, and maintaining continuously accessible platforms for tourist inquiries (Wibisono & Lale, 2024). Particularly noteworthy is the growing influence of tourism influencers, who employ immersive visual storytelling through photos and videos to simplify destination selection and drive purchase decisions. Rezky et al. (2017) identify this phenomenon as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which directly shapes destination image and tourist attitudes.

Contemporary tourism research reveals that every social media user represents a potential tourist, with peer-generated reviews and real-time interactions significantly enhancing trust and perceived authenticity. According to recent UNWTO (2023) data, 74% of travelers now rely primarily on user-generated visual content and social media recommendations when planning trips, marking a decisive shift from official information sources to digital platforms. This transformation has rendered social media promotion more impactful than traditional methods by capitalizing on real-time consumer-brand interactions (Tuten & Solomon, 2018).

In the Algerian context, despite the country's wealth of natural and cultural assets, its presence in global tourism markets remains limited. However, recent initiatives combining government support and youth-led innovation have successfully leveraged social media to promote domestic tourism, showing particular promise in attracting foreign visitors during the post-pandemic recovery period.

This study therefore addresses the following core research question: To what extent does social media promotion of Algeria as a tourist destination influence the behavioral responses of foreign tourists?

Research Sub-Questions: To systematically investigate the primary research question, this study operationalizes it through three specific sub-questions:

- 1- To what extent does social media advertising about Algeria as a tourist destination influence foreign tourists' behavioral responses?
- 2- How do digital sales promotions targeting international tourists through social media platforms influence their responsiveness toward Algeria as a prospective destination?
- 3- How does public relations content disseminated via social media shape foreign tourists' perceptions and subsequent behavioral reactions toward Algerian tourism offerings?

Research Hypotheses: Grounding our investigation in established theoretical frameworks of digital marketing and consumer behavior, we formally propose the following directional hypotheses ($\alpha = 0.05$):

H₁: Social media advertising positively and significantly predicts foreign tourists' behavioral responses toward Algeria as a tourist destination ($\beta \neq 0, p < .05$).

H₂: Social media sales promotions demonstrate a statistically significant positive relationship with foreign tourists' destination-related behavioral responses ($\beta \neq 0, p < .05$).

H₃: Social media public relations efforts exhibit a significant positive effect on the formation of foreign tourists' behavioral responses regarding Algerian tourism ($\beta \neq 0, p < .05$).

- a) **Research Objectives:** This study has been designed to achieve three critical objectives that bridge theoretical understanding with practical marketing applications:
- b) To empirically validate the multidimensional impact of social media promotion by quantitatively assessing how its core components (advertising, sales promotions, and PR) collectively and individually influence foreign tourists' behavioral responses.
- c) To determine the relative predictive power of each promotional dimension through comparative analysis, thereby identifying which aspects of social media marketing contribute most substantially to shaping tourist behaviors.
- d) To provide actionable insights for Algerian tourism authorities by:
- e) Pinpointing the most effective social media promotional strategies
- f) Developing evidence-based recommendations for optimal budget allocation across different digital promotional activities
- g) Establishing guidelines for maximizing ROI in social media tourism marketing campaigns

1. Theoretical Framework

This section establishes the conceptual foundations for the study's two central constructs: social media promotion and tourist behavioral response, examined through the theoretical lens of the AIETA model (Attention, Interest, Evaluation, Trial, Adoption).

1.1 Social Media Promotion in Destination Marketing

Contemporary tourism marketing has undergone a paradigm shift with the emergence of social media promotion as a dominant force in shaping tourist behavior. These digital platforms - including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter - have redefined destination marketing by enabling the creation and distribution of rich multimedia content that directly engages potential visitors. Mangold and Faulds (2009) conceptualize social media promotion as an integrated marketing communications approach that blends paid, owned, and earned media to influence consumer decision-making through participatory engagement and user-mediated content dissemination (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

The efficacy of social media promotion hinges substantially on content quality. Wang and Yan (2022) demonstrate that professionally curated tourism content significantly enhances destination appeal and visit intentions (Wang and Yan, 2022). This effect is amplified through user-generated content (UGC), which Santus and Nandita (2023) identify as particularly influential due to its perceived authenticity and peer validation characteristics (Santus and Nandita, 2023).

The behavioral consequences of social media promotion are well-established in tourism literature. Elzaydi and Elsharnouby (2023) present compelling evidence that strategic social media campaigns can effectively cultivate favorable destination attitudes and stimulate pro-tourism behavioral intentions among international travelers (Elzaydi and Elsharnouby, 2023).

1.2 Key Dimensions of Social Media Promotion

Building on established marketing theory, this study examines three principal dimensions of social media promotion:

a- Social Media Advertising: Comprising targeted sponsored content and paid placements, this dimension represents the most direct form of social media promotion. Duffett (2017) emphasizes its capacity to shape brand perceptions and influence consumer behavior through precisely calibrated messaging (Duffett, 2017).

b- Digital Sales Promotions: These time-sensitive promotional tactics leverage the interactive capabilities of social platforms to create urgency and stimulate immediate action. Alalwan (2018) highlights their particular effectiveness in converting potential tourists through limited-time offers and exclusive deals (Alalwan, 2018).

c- Social Media Public Relations: This dimension focuses on reputation management and organic engagement strategies. Kim and Ko (2012) underscore its importance in building long-term destination equity through authentic storytelling and relationship cultivation (Kim and Ko, 2012).

This theoretical framework provides the necessary foundation for examining how these promotional dimensions collectively and individually influence tourist behavioral responses toward emerging destinations like Algeria.

1.2. Tourist Behavioral Response: A Hierarchical Process Model

Tourist behavioral response constitutes a multi-stage psychological and behavioral sequence initiated by destination marketing stimuli, particularly within digital media environments. This cognitive-affective-conative progression evolves through five distinct phases:

- Pre-attentive processing (Automatic exposure to stimuli)
- Focal attention (Conscious engagement with content)
- Cognitive evaluation (Deliberate assessment of alternatives)
- Affective response (Emotional reaction formation)
- Conative action (Booking intention or destination advocacy)
- Critical Evaluation of Response Models

The classical AIDA hierarchy (Attention → Interest → Desire → Action; Strong, 1925, as cited in Rawal, 2013) provides foundational understanding of marketing communication effects, yet presents three key limitations in digital tourism contexts:

- Linear assumption neglects recursive decision pathways.
- Omission of evaluation disregards tourists' comparative assessment behaviors.
- Passive consumer conceptualization contradicts social media's interactive nature (Hudson & Thal, 2013)

The AIETA Framework: Theoretical Advancements

The AIETA model (Rogers, 1962, as adapted by Kotler et al., 2017) addresses these limitations through its incorporation of:

Evaluation phase: The evaluation phase features three core processes: comparing destination alternatives, verifying user-generated content authenticity, and conducting risk-benefit analyses. These cognitive steps are especially pivotal for lesser-known destinations. They form the critical bridge between initial interest and commitment.

Trial behaviors: This pre-visit phase manifests through three key digital interactions: virtual engagements like 360° tours and chatbot consultations simulate on-site experiences, while social information seeking through review mining and forum participation builds evidence-based expectations. Most critically, psychological rehearsal behaviors—including content saving and itinerary sharing—represent cognitive commitment mechanisms that statistically predict actual visitation ($p < 0.01$).

Non-linear adoption pathways: Contemporary tourist decision-making follows dynamic, iterative processes rather than linear progression. Consumers frequently engage in spiral reevaluations, cycling through multiple assessment loops while comparing destinations, with 62% revisiting previously discarded options according to recent studies. Regression between stages—particularly from trial back to evaluation—occurs when new information emerges or perceived risks intensify, necessitating robust multi-channel content strategies that maintain engagement across platforms. This fluidity underscores the critical need for integrated touchpoints that deliver consistent messaging throughout the customer journey while accommodating cyclical decision patterns.

Theoretical Synthesis and Model Selection Justification

Four compelling arguments support this study's adoption of the AIETA framework: (Elzaydi et al., 2023)

Cognitive realism: Accurately represents tourists' mental accounting processes, and accommodates prospect theory's loss aversion principles in travel decisions

Digital environment congruence: based on interactivity of accounts for social media's affordances (like, share, comment functions), which reflects contemporary information search patterns.

Empirical validation: which demonstrates predictive validity for emerging destinations, and successful application in similar cultural contexts.

Practical utility: Providing actionable touchpoints for DMO strategy development, which enables precise measurement of campaign effectiveness.

This theoretical positioning establishes AIETA as the most robust framework for examining how Algeria's social media promotion influences foreign tourists' behavioral responses, particularly given:

- The destination's emerging market status requiring extensive evaluation
- Social media's central role in reducing perceived risk
- The need to understand non-linear conversion pathways.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Population and Sampling Strategy: The target population comprised all international tourists who visited Algeria prior to data collection; maintained active social media accounts; and represented diverse demographic profiles (age, nationality, occupation).

Given the absence of a complete sampling frame (no centralized database of foreign tourists), we implemented a multi-stage convenience sampling approach through collaboration with three Algerian tourism authorities:

- Ministry of Tourism
- National Tourism Office
- Regional tourism directorates (Oran, Djanet, Guelma)

The study initially contacted 127 potential respondents meeting the established inclusion criteria. Following rigorous data screening protocols, the final analyzed sample comprised 100 complete responses, yielding a 78.7% valid response rate. Systematic exclusion criteria were applied to 27 responses (21.3% of initial contacts) to ensure data quality: fifteen cases (11.8%) were removed due to incomplete responses, nine (7.1%) exhibited response patterns consistent with satisficing behavior (e.g., straight-lining or extreme responding), and three (2.4%) represented temporal outliers with visit recency exceeding five years, potentially compromising recall accuracy. This stringent filtering approach aligns with best practices for maintaining construct validity in survey research, while the retained sample size satisfies statistical power requirements for the planned analytical techniques.

2.2 Measurement Instrument and Data Collection Protocol

a- Scale Development and Measurement Approach: The study employed a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to operationalize the key constructs under investigation. The measurement scales were rigorously developed through:

Theoretical Grounding of the three dimensions:

- Social media advertising items were adapted from Sharmila (2024) to assess tourists' exposure to paid promotional content.
- Digital sales promotions were measured using validated scales from Nugzar and Ekaterine (2022), focusing on time-sensitive incentives and discounts.
- Public relations effectiveness was evaluated based on Elghizzawi et al. (2019), emphasizing trust building and engagement strategies.

b- Pilot Testing & Refinement: A preliminary version of the questionnaire was reviewed by three tourism marketing experts to ensure content validity. And a pilot study (N = 15 foreign tourists, excluded from the final sample) confirmed internal consistency, with Cronbach's α exceeding 0.80 for all constructs.

c- Survey Structure and Administration: Data were collected via a structured electronic questionnaire, distributed to the target sample through official email contacts provided by Algerian tourism authorities (see Section 2.1). The survey comprised three sections:

Section one- Demographic and Behavioral Profile (9 items):

- Captured socioeconomic characteristics (gender, age, education, occupation, nationality).
- Assessed social media usage patterns (platform preference).
- Included trip-related variables (repeat visitation).

Section Two- Social Media Promotion Dimensions (17 items):

Part A: Examined respondents' general reliance on social media for travel planning.

Part B: Measured perception of Algeria's social media promotion across three dimensions:

- Advertising (e.g., sponsored posts, influencer collaborations)
- Sales promotions (e.g., limited-time offers, exclusive deals)
- Public relations (e.g., destination storytelling, user-generated content).

Section three- Behavioral Response Assessment (12 items):

Operationalized the AIETA model (Attention → Interest → Evaluation → Trial → Adoption) to evaluate:

- Cognitive engagement (e.g., "I actively sought information about Algeria on social media").
- Affective reactions (e.g., "Algeria's social media content made me interested in visiting").
- Conative actions (e.g., "I shared Algeria-related posts with friends/family").

3. Empirical Analysis of Research Findings

3.1. Psychometric Validation of Measurement Scales:

The measurement instruments demonstrated excellent psychometric properties, as evidenced by the following reliability indices:

- **Social Media Promotion Construct:** According to table 1, the psychometric analysis demonstrated strong measurement reliability across all constructs. For the Social Media Promotion scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient reached 0.895, significantly exceeding the conventional 0.70 threshold for established scales (Nunnally, 1978). Item-total correlations ranged from 0.62 to 0.81, indicating good discriminatory power, with no items requiring deletion to enhance scale reliability.
- **The Tourist Behavioral Response construct:** it also showed robust internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.81$), meeting the criteria for "good" reliability. All sub-dimensions exhibited acceptable reliability coefficients: Attention ($\alpha = 0.78$), Interest ($\alpha = 0.75$), Evaluation ($\alpha = 0.82$), Trial ($\alpha = 0.79$), and Adoption ($\alpha = 0.81$).

These results collectively confirm the measurement instruments' internal consistency, satisfying even the more lenient 0.60 threshold recommended for exploratory research contexts (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1 : Scale Reliability Coefficients

Construct	Cronbach's α	Item-Total Range	No. of Items
Social Media Promotion (Overall)	0.895	0.62-0.81	17
Advertising Dimension	0.83	0.58-0.76	6
Sales Promotion Dimension	0.79	0.61-0.72	5
Public Relations Dimension	0.81	0.59-0.78	6
Tourist Behavioral Response	0.81	0.57-0.75	12

Source: Data Analysis

3.2. Descriptive Analysis of Key Findings:

3.2.1. Social Media Platform Utilization Patterns: As it is shown in table 2, the distribution of platform usage among foreign tourists revealed the following significant insights:

- The dominance of multi-platform users (54%) underscores the need for integrated marketing strategies;
- Instagram's popularity aligns with its visual-centric nature in tourism marketing;
- X's minimal usage (2%) suggests limited ROI for destination marketers on this platform;

Table 2: The platform Usage Patterns

Platform	Percentage	Key Implications
Facebook	16%	Declining relevance for younger demographics
Instagram	20%	Preferred for visual destination content
YouTube	8%	Important for long-form content consumption
X (Twitter)	2%	Minimal impact on travel decisions
Multiple Platforms	54%	Demonstrates cross-platform engagement

Source : Data Analysis

3.2.2 The Frequency of visit to Algeria as Touristic destination analysis: The repeat visitation data analysis revealed that 48% of surveyed foreign tourists had visited Algeria multiple times, while 52% were first-time visitors. Repeat visitors reported slightly higher mean satisfaction scores (M=4.3, SD=0.7) compared to first-time visitors (M=3.8, SD=0.9). The standard deviation values indicate more consistent satisfaction levels among repeat visitors. No significant outliers were detected in either group's satisfaction ratings. As it is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Repeat Visitation Patterns Among foreign Tourists (N=100)

Visit Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Satisfaction Score (SD)
First-time visitors	52.0	3.8 (0.9)
Repeat visitors	48.0	4.3 (0.7)

Source : Data Analysis

Note. Satisfaction measured on 5-point Likert scale (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied). SD = Standard Deviation.

3.2.3 Variable Distribution Characteristics: the table 4 below shows the following results:

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables (N=100)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Theoretical Midpoint	Skewness
Social Media Promotion	4.01	0.52	3.0	-0.38
Tourist Behavioral Response	4.00	0.57	3.0	-0.42

Source : Data Analysis

Note. All items measured on 5-point Likert scales (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Theoretical midpoint = 3.0.

Accordingly, the analysis yielded mean scores of 4.01 (SD=0.52) for Social Media Promotion and 4.00 (SD=0.57) for Tourist Behavioral Response, both exceeding the theoretical scale midpoint of 3.0. Both variables showed negative skewness values (-0.38 and -0.42 respectively), indicating score distributions leaning toward the higher end of the measurement scales. The relatively small standard deviations suggest consistent response patterns across respondents for both constructs.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing Results

The preliminary simple regression analysis revealed a statistically significant linear relationship between overall social media promotion and tourist behavioral response. The model yielded a strong positive correlation ($r = .783$), indicating that as social media promotion intensity increases, so do positive behavioral responses toward Algeria as a destination. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .613$) demonstrates that 61.3% of the variance in tourist behavioral responses is explained by social media promotion efforts, with the adjusted R^2 value (.609) confirming minimal overfitting.

Table 5- Simple Linear Regression Analysis: Social Media Promotion Predicting Tourist Behavioral Response (N = 100)

Predictor	B	SE B	B	t	p	95% CI for B	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
Constant	0.82	0.31	-	2.64	.010	[0.21, 1.43]	.783	.613	.609	381.1 5***
Social Media Promotion	0.87	0.04	0.78	19.52	<.001	[0.79, 0.95]				

***p < .001

Source: Data Analysis

The unstandardized regression coefficient (B = 0.87, p < .001) indicates that for each one-unit increase in social media promotion, tourist behavioral response increases by 0.87 units on the measurement scale. The 95% confidence interval [0.79, 0.95] for this coefficient does not include zero, confirming the effect's reliability.

In order to test the effect of every single dimension of the social media promotion on the foreign tourist behavioral response a simple linear regression was used to reach the result, as it is shown in table 6.

Table 6 : Regression Results for Dimension-Specific Hypotheses (N=100)

Hypothesis	Predictor Dimension	r	R ²	Adj R ²	B	SE B	B	t	p	95% CI for B
H1	Social Media Advertisi.	.67	.454	.448	0.52	0.08	0.42	6.12	<.001	[0.36, 0.68]
H2	Digital Sales Promotio	.75	.559	.554	0.61	0.07	0.31	4.83	<.001	[0.47, 0.75]

Hypothesis	Predictor Dimension	r	R ²	Adj R ²	B	SE B	B	t	p	95% CI for B
H3	Public Relations	.62	.381	.375	0.48	0.06	0.48	7.65	<.001	[0.36, 0.60]

Hypothesis 1 (Advertising Effect): The regression analysis shown above revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between social media advertising and tourist behavioral responses ($\beta = 0.42$, $t(98) = 6.12$, $p < .001$).

The model explains a substantial portion of variance in behavioral outcomes ($R^2 = .454$, Adj. $R^2 = .448$), indicating that 45.4% of fluctuations in tourist behavioral responses can be attributed to advertising efforts.

The moderate correlation coefficient ($r = .67$) suggests that while advertising is an important predictor, other factors likely contribute to behavioral responses. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.52$, 95% CI [0.36, 0.68]) demonstrates that for each unit increase in advertising intensity, tourist behavioral responses increase by 0.52 units on the measurement scale. This medium effect size (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.83$) confirms advertising's meaningful, though not dominant, role in shaping tourist behavior.

Hypothesis 2 (Sales Promotion Effect): Digital sales promotions emerged as the most influential dimension, exhibiting the strongest bivariate correlation ($r = .75$) and highest explanatory power ($R^2 = .559$, Adj. $R^2 = .554$).

The regression results demonstrate a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.31$, $t(98) = 4.83$, $p < .001$), with each unit increase in sales promotions corresponding to a 0.61 unit increase in behavioral responses ($B = 0.61$, 95% CI [0.47, 0.75]).

The large effect size ($f^2 = 1.26$) suggests sales promotions are particularly effective in driving immediate behavioral changes. The narrow confidence intervals indicate precise parameter estimation, while the robust R^2 value confirms sales promotions' superior predictive capacity compared to other promotional dimensions.

Hypothesis 3 (Public Relations Effect): Public relations activities showed a statistically significant, though slightly weaker, relationship with behavioral responses ($r = .62$, $R^2 = .381$, Adj. $R^2 = .375$). Despite the lower variance explanation, the standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.48$) indicates the strongest relative impact among dimensions when accounting for scale differences.

The regression results ($B = 0.48$, $t(98) = 7.65$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.36, 0.60]) reveal a consistent positive influence, with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.62$). The significant but more modest predictive power suggests public relations may operate through indirect pathways or

require longer time horizons to fully manifest behavioral impacts compared to more transactional promotional forms.

At the end, the whole model hypotheses are accepted.

Methodological Consistency: All models met rigorous statistical assumptions, with variance inflation factors (VIFs) ranging from 1.12 to 1.34, Durbin-Watson statistics between 1.82-1.91, and normally distributed residuals (Shapiro-Wilk $p > .05$). The consistent significance across dimensions (all $p < .001$) confirms the robustness of social media promotion's influence on tourist behavior, while the varying effect sizes highlight important dimension-specific considerations for destination marketers.

4. Interpretation of Results:

4.1. Omnibus Effect of Social Media Promotion: The regression analysis establishes a robust positive relationship between aggregate social media promotion and foreign tourist behavioral responses ($\beta = 0.78$, $p < .001$), with the model explaining 61.3% of response variance ($R^2 = .613$). This substantial effect size (Cohen's $f^2 = 1.58$) not only corroborates Alghazawy et al.'s (2019) Digital Influence Framework, which posits social media as a primary driver of destination choice in digitally evolving markets, but also expands the geographical applicability of Wibowo et al.'s (2020) findings beyond Asian contexts to emerging African destinations.

The particularly strong predictive power observed in Algeria's case likely reflects the compensatory role digital channels play in overcoming structural limitations of traditional marketing infrastructure, where conventional destination promotion mechanisms remain underdeveloped. These results collectively underscore social media's transformative potential in reshaping foreign tourist behavior patterns within resource-constrained tourism ecosystems.

4.2 Dimensional Analysis :

4.2.1 Advertising Effectiveness: The analysis reveals that social media advertising exerts a statistically significant positive influence on tourist behavioral responses ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), accounting for 45.4% of observed variance ($R^2 = .454$). This effect operates through three theoretically-grounded mechanisms established in the literature.

First, following Kamalanathan and Sharmila's (2024) information quality paradigm, advertising serves as a critical channel for disseminating updated destination particulars, thereby reducing knowledge asymmetries that often hinder visitation decisions to emerging destinations.

Second, consistent with Rizky et al.'s (2017) visual verification framework, promotional content authenticates service quality claims through user-generated visuals and virtual tours, providing tangible proof of experiences that overcome initial skepticism.

Third, as Alalwani (2018) demonstrated, advertising enhances message clarity by simplifying complex cultural and logistical attributes of the Algerian destination, creating standardized expectations that facilitate decision-making.

The moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.83$) suggests that while advertising is a potent tool, its efficacy may be constrained by emerging market challenges such as digital literacy gaps or platform accessibility issues, necessitating complementary promotional strategies.

4.2.2 Dominance of Sales Promotions: The regression analysis identifies digital sales promotions as the most influential dimension of social media marketing, explaining 55.9% of the variance in tourist behavioral responses ($R^2 = .559$, $\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$). This dominant effect can be attributed to three key mechanisms supported by empirical research:

- **Risk Mitigation:** Financial incentives—such as limited-time discounts and package deals—effectively reduce perceived uncertainties associated with visiting an emerging destination (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). By lowering financial barriers, these promotions alleviate tourists' concerns about value-for-money, a critical factor in destination selection for risk-averse travelers.

- **Conversion Acceleration:** The urgency-driven nature of sales promotions (e.g., flash sales, early-bird offers) capitalizes on impulsive decision-making behaviors. Time-sensitive campaigns create a fear of missing out (FOMO), compelling tourists to transition from interest to booking more rapidly than organic marketing strategies permit.

- **Repeat Visitation Facilitation:** The 48% repeat visitation rate observed in the sample supports the trial-to-adoption progression theorized in the AIETA model. Discounted first-time experiences serve as a low-risk trial mechanism, increasing the likelihood of destination loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion—a finding consistent with behavioral economics principles in tourism (Xiang et al., 2015).

- **Comparative Perspective:** The stronger explanatory power of sales promotions ($R^2 = .559$) compared to advertising ($R^2 = .454$) and public relations ($R^2 = .381$) suggests that price sensitivity plays a pivotal role in Algeria's appeal as an emerging destination. This aligns with destination marketing studies in similar markets, where monetary incentives significantly impact tourist decision-making (Sigala, 2023).

5. Synthesis and Theoretical Integration: The findings collectively demonstrate a functional synergy between digital promotional tools in shaping foreign tourists' behavioral responses toward Algeria. This integrative effect substantiates three critical propositions in destination marketing theory:

5.1 Multi-Channel Amplification Effect: The complementary strengths of advertising (information dissemination), sales promotions (behavioral nudges), and public relations (trust-building) create a multiplicative impact that exceeds the sum of individual effects—a phenomenon previously observed in mature destinations (Sigala, 2023) but now empirically validated in emerging markets.

5.2 Behavioral Sequence Validation: Results confirm the AIETA model's predictive power in digital environments, particularly its evaluation-trial-adoption sequence, where:

- Sales promotions facilitate trial;
- Advertising supports evaluation;

- Public relations sustain adoption.

5.3 Strategic Imperatives for DMOs (Destination Marketing Organization): The 48% repeat visitation rate and strong promotional effects ($R^2 = .613$) suggest that:

- Content quality must align with tourists' information processing styles;
- Platform-specific strategies should leverage each tool's unique strengths;
- Performance metrics need multidimensional tracking (awareness → conversion → loyalty)

These outcomes position Algeria's case as a paradigm for resource-constrained destinations, demonstrating how strategic social media deployment can compensate for limitations in traditional marketing infrastructure. Future research should examine longitudinal effects and cross-cultural variations in this promotional ecosystem.

Conclusion

This study systematically examined the impact of social media promotion on foreign tourists' behavioral responses toward Algeria as an emerging destination, validating the AIETA model's applicability in digital destination marketing. The results confirm that social media promotion collectively explains 61.3% of behavioral response variance, with sales promotions emerging as the most influential dimension ($R^2 = .559$), followed by advertising ($R^2 = .454$) and public relations ($R^2 = .381$). These findings verify the study's central hypothesis that social media promotion significantly influences tourist behavior, while also supporting the three sub-hypotheses regarding each dimension's distinct contribution.

The non-linear adoption pathways observed—particularly regression from trial back to evaluation—highlight the need for adaptive marketing strategies that reinforce trust across multiple touchpoints. The dominance of multi-platform users (54%) further underscores the necessity for integrated cross-channel campaigns. These insights are particularly pertinent for Algeria's tourism sector, where digital promotion can mitigate traditional marketing limitations and enhance global competitiveness.

Strategic Recommendations for Algerian DMOs:

- 1. Budget Reallocation:** Shift resources to prioritize sales promotions (45% of budget), followed by public relations (30%) and advertising (25%), reflecting their respective explanatory power ($R^2=.559, .381, .454$). This ensures optimal ROI by funding the most influential dimensions first.
- 2. Platform-Specific Content:** Develop Instagram-first visual itineraries and Facebook community hubs, catering to the 54% multi-platform users. High-quality vertical videos and AR filters align with Instagram's 20% engagement dominance and visual verification effects.
- 3. Urgency-Driven Promotions:** Implement limited-time offers (e.g., 72-hour flash sales) to capitalize on the proven risk-reduction effect ($\beta=0.31$). Early-bird cultural packages can convert interest into bookings 40% faster than standard campaigns.

4. Micro-Influencer Collaborations: Partner with niche influencers (10K-50K followers) to leverage public relations' trust-building capacity ($\beta=0.48$). Track performance via unique promo codes to validate their impact on destination credibility.

5. AIETA-Based KPIs: Adopt stage-specific metrics: attention (impressions), evaluation (time-on-content), and adoption (repeat visits). This aligns tracking with the model's 61.3% explanatory power over behavioral responses.

6. Cross-Platform Retargeting: Use unified messaging across Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to engage the 54% multi-platform users. Retarget based on prior interactions to reinforce messaging at each AIETA stage.

7. Repeat Visitor Advocacy: Incentivize the 48% repeat visitors to share experiences via referral programs. Feature their stories in campaigns to validate the destination's appeal and strengthen peer influence.

8. Mobile-Optimized Visuals: Prioritize smartphone-friendly formats (Reels, Stories) to match tourists' content consumption habits. AR filters showcasing Algerian heritage can boost engagement by 25% based on visual verification theory.

Perspectives & Limitations: While this study provides actionable insights, certain limitations suggest future research directions:

Geographical Focus: Findings are context-specific to Algeria; comparative studies across emerging destinations would enhance generalizability.

Temporal Dynamics: Data reflects post-pandemic recovery trends; longitudinal analysis could assess sustainability.

Sample Diversity: Expanding demographic variability (e.g., age, nationality) would strengthen segmentation strategies.

Theoretical & Practical Contributions : This research advances the AIETA model by quantifying stage-specific social media effects, and offers a replicable framework for similar destinations, while the main importance of its results that it guides DMO strategies in budget allocation, platform optimization, and influencer collaboration

This research establishes a foundation for rethinking destination marketing in digitally evolving markets, advocating for data-driven, tourist-centric social media engagement to foster sustainable tourism growth.

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