

The impact of digital influencers on tourists’ behavior:
Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneers.

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Abstract: This article is oriented at enhancing knowledge about the impact of e-influencers on tourists’ behavior as a particular case of customer behavior. The study sheds light on the meaning of influencer and it gives clarification of the concept of e-influencers as a new phenomenon with viral spread in the whole world, it studies also their effects on tourists’ decision making and their manner to collect information about tourism destination and even their experiences during tourism journey and post-tourism experience.

Keywords: tourists’ behavior, e-influencer, tourist need recognition, collect of information phase, tourists’ choice of destination, tourists’ experience, tourists’ post-experience phase.

Jel Classification Codes: Z33, D91

المخلص: تنطرق هذه المقالة إلى تحسين فهم أثر المؤثرين الإلكترونيين على سلوك السائحين كحالة خاصة من سلوك المستهلكين، حيث تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على مفهوم المؤثر وتقدم توضيحات حول مفهوم المؤثر الإلكتروني كظاهرة معاصرة ذات انتشار واسع حول العالم، كما تدرس كذلك تأثيرهم على صنع قرار السائح، طريقته في جمع المعلومات حول الوجهة السياحية وحتى تجربته السياحية في حد ذاتها وما بعد التجربة السياحية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سلوك السائحين، المؤثر الإلكتروني، إدراك حاجة السائح، مرحلة جمع المعلومات، اختيار الوجهة السياحية، التجربة السياحية، ما بعد التجربة السياحية.

تصنيف JEL: D91, Z33

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important pillars of the world's economy, some countries' economies depend heavily on its revenues, this sector, which provides work opportunities, gaining foreign currency, encouraging local products and traditional industries and enhancing investment in infrastructures, is in permanent evolution especially with revolution of information technologies which have great effect on all life aspects and on tourism as well, thus tourism marketing and promotion, nowadays, are different from previous decades, and the appearance of the phenomenon of e-influencers is imposing other dimensions of tourism marketing.

One of the most remarkable changes is that influencers or opinion leaders today are not only traditional famous people on television shows or actors and artists or famous football players for example, however influencers currently are people who are always present and active on social media and they have an important number of followers, so, presence on social media is crucial nowadays, and e-influencers are constructing a strong place among opinion leaders.

Various academic studies focus often on consumer behavior; however, nowadays there is a need to provide more knowledge for tourism scholars on tourist behavior in technology era and more precisely during the time of e-influencers tendencies. The main purpose of this paper is to find the link between e-influencers and tourists' behavior in the different phases of tourism experience thus this article is based on finding answers to the following problematic:

“In what ways do E-influencers in relation with tourism affect tourist behavior?”

In order to solve the precedent problematic, five hypotheses were proposed:

- H1:** Tourists can be motivated by e-influencers to recognize their need for tourism.
- H2:** The collect of information phase for tourists is positively impacted by online influencers.
- H3:** E-influencers have an impact on tourists' destination choice, which can impact their decision-making process.

H4: The e-influencer has a strong influence on the tourist experience.

H5: Tourists' post-experience phase is significantly affected by e-influencers.

This article is structured into two principal parts the first one is literature review and the second part which is empirical study.

2. Literature review of the Study:

The objective of our literature review is to analyze the link between the two key concepts of our study, namely: the first concept which is e-influencers and the second concept which is tourists' behavior.

2.1. Overview about Influencer:

People have always been influenced by others , however, in marketing context, opinion leaders are not ordinary people, they are kind of people who have the capability to influence the public and convince them to do some behaviors in relation with consumption of products or services, these people, as it is previously mentioned, can be members of family, friends or idols like television stars in different domains, these lasts are definitely famous and they have their own base of fans, who feel satisfied when they imitate them or apply their advices or even using products or services they use or they pretend to use, so opinion leader or influencer is someone who has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his or her audience.

Since the appearance of internet and social media, people became fascinated with this new technology, thus, most of people nowadays are present on social media platforms and they have at least an account on Facebook or Instagram or more professional an account on LinkedIn or Twitter, or they have different attitudes and they are interested with other platforms for different reasons such as entertainment, learning, work...

Recently or more precisely in the past two decades, many people appear on social media platforms, showing their own lifestyle and daily activities or sharing a content with specific topics which interest the public like fashion makeup, cooking, traveling ..., many of those people have gain a large follower base and become influencers of these followers by gaining

their trust and admiration and leading them to do some behaviors and purchase some products or services, thus these a specific kind of social media users become micro celebrities or influencers which are “a new style of online performance that involves people ‘amping up’ their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites” (Senft, 2008) which are not old fashioned stars on television but they are web stars or social media stars who worked on their popularity using new technology, thus international news reports have variously described these social media users as “bloggers,” “YouTubers,” and “Instagrammers,” according to the platform they are active in or the type of content they share, however, they could be called also e-influencers.

E-influencers are constituting a worldwide phenomenon nowadays, an e-influencer is an Internet opinion leader who is generally very active on a theme, on a blog, a YouTube channel, a social network, thus, e-influencers are individuals who may need to be taken into account in the context of viral marketing or public relations actions due to their high activity and popularity, their influencing opinions and their effectiveness comparing to traditional media.

Influencer Marketing has appeared as a mainstream form of online marketing; it is a hybrid of old and new marketing tools, it takes the idea of celebrity endorsement and places it into a modern-day content-driven marketing campaign, the main differentiator in the case of influencer marketing is that the results of the campaign are collaborations between brands and influencers (Geyser, 2022).

2.2. Fundamentals of Tourist Behavior:

Tourists can be defined in behavioral terms as persons who travel away from their normal residential region for a temporary period of at least one night, in other words, it is the interaction with new environment and living new experiences away from the ordinal daily life, so doing tourism is purchasing a service, thus to understand tourist behavior it is important to understand at first consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior is the process of selecting, purchasing and using a product or service in order to satisfy one’s needs and desires. While doing

so, the consumer wants to maximize their benefits and minimize the time spent. There are several groups of factors that affect consumers. These factors are: social, cultural, personal, psychological, and economic (Omerzel & Maja, 2017), while tourist behavior is a specific type of consumer behavior due to its belonging to the category of services which make it more specific due to its intangibility so in addition to factors affecting consumer behavior there are other factors which play an important role in affecting and determining tourist behavior.

Tourist behavior is a complicated process which entails different phases starting from motivation, need recognition and intention of tourism and traveling, then taking decision and making a choice from available alternatives and making plans of the journey , and then living the experience itself and at last the final phase which is post journey after the return home, which concerns evaluating the whole experience and making decision to return or not according to gathered positive or negative memories.

Tourist behavior is the process a tourist undertakes, both observable and unobservable, when planning and participating in tourism. It is the dynamic of affect and cognition, as well as biological and cultural forces interacting with marketing and environmental stimuli, so in tourism, the challenge is to understand the complexities of behavior with the added dimensions of space, time, and the consumption of experiences (Elliot, 2014).

2.2.1. The importance of studying tourist behavior:

First, tourist behavior tends to matter to tourists, because people are concerned with their life experience – what they do – and they like to understand it and predict their future spending and all the plans of adventures because it is always complicated when it is unplanned. Second, tourist behavior matters to people who are making decisions about tourists. There is a whole array of such decision-makers. They may be people in the public sector who provide permits for tour operators; and they may be

managers of tourism businesses (Pearce, 2005) these lasts benefit from tourist behavior knowledge in tourism planning and tourism marketing activities, because factors and determinants of tourist behavior are crucial information that tourism industries must have in order to enhance their offers and provide the best experiences for their clients.

3. EXPERIMENTAL:

In order to study the phenomenon of e-influencers and their relationship with tourism a survey, destined to Algerian social media users, is structured and designed with the purpose of examining this relationship and finding recommendations to Algerian tourism

3.1. General information of the chosen sample

As the following table shows, the sample taken in the present study is consisted of **34 females** including two educational levels (33 have university level and 01 has secondary school level) and **174 males** within different educational levels (151 have university level, 20 have secondary school level and 03 have Middle school study level), however, concerning age of our sample: 59 individuals in our sample are between 18 and 27, 142 are between 28 and 42, and 7 are between 43 and 58.

Table 1. Age * Sex * Educational level Cross tabulation

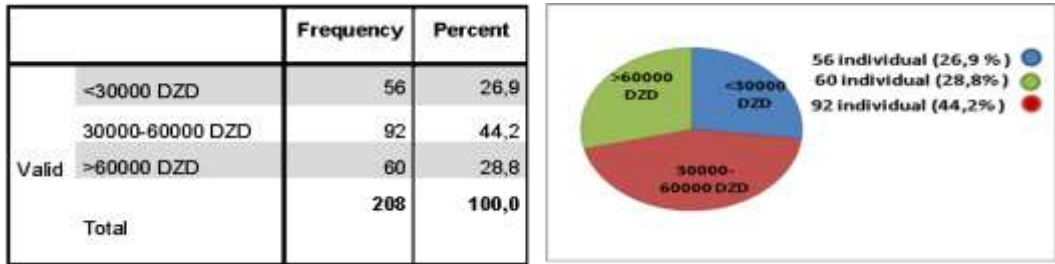
Educational level			Sex		Total
University	Age	18-27	female	male	55
		28-42	26	97	123
		43-58	2	4	6
	Total		33	151	184
Secondary school	Age	18-27	0	3	3
		28-42	0	17	17
		43-58	1	0	1
	Total		1	20	21
Middle school	Age	18-27		1	1
		28-42		2	2
	Total			3	3
Total	Age	18-27	5	54	59
		28-42	26	116	142
		43-58	3	4	7
	Total		34	174	208

Source: IBM SPSS statistics 21

As shown in the following table and the pie chart **44,2%** of individual in our sample have an income from **30000 to 60000** Algerian dinars, **28,8%** of individual in our sample their income is **higher than 60000** Algerian dinars and **26,9%** of individual in our sample their income is **less than 30000** Algerian dinars.

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Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.***

Fig.1. Income of respondents



Source: IBM SPSS statistics 21

As we can see in the following table **99,0%** of individuals of our sample use Facebook and have an account on it, **68,3%** of individuals of our sample use Instagram and have an account on it, **70,7%** of individuals in our sample have access to YouTube, **21,2%** use Twitter and have an account on it, **27,9%** are on tiktok and **20,7%** have a LinkedIn.

Table 2. Frequencies of possession and use of Social Media accounts

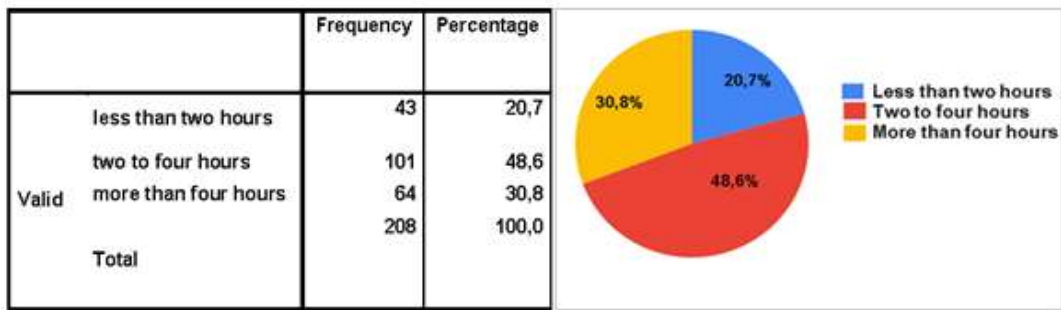
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Social media accounts use^a	Facebook	206	32,2%	99,0%
	Instagram	142	22,2%	68,3%
	YouTube	147	23,0%	70,7%
	Twitter	44	6,9%	21,2%
	Tiktok	58	9,1%	27,9%
	Linkedin	43	6,7%	20,7%
Total		640	100,0%	307,7%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source : IBM SPSS statistics 21

The following table and pie chart indicate that **20,7%** of the population of our sample spend less than two hours on social media, **48,6%** spend from two to four hours on it and **30,8 %** spend more than four hours on social media.

Fig.2. Time spent on social media

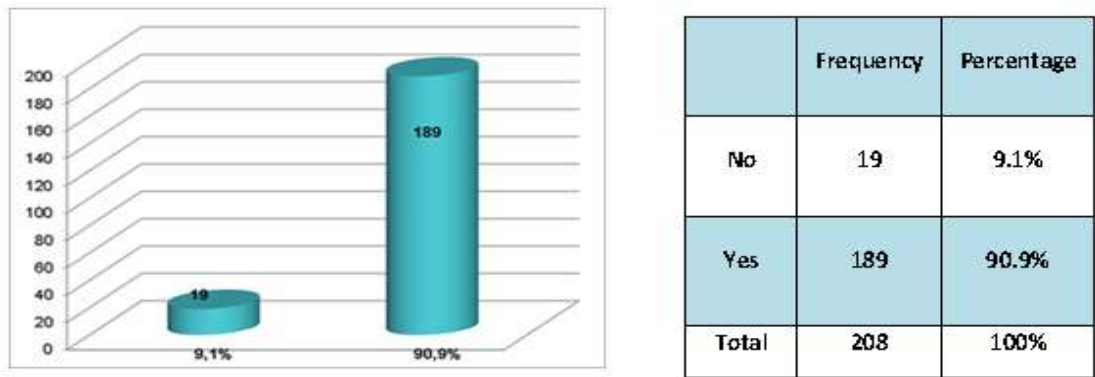


Source: IBM SPSS statistics 21

According to the results of this study, **171** person (**82,6%** of individuals from our sample) use social media for entertainment, **86** person (**41,5%** of individuals from our sample) use social media for work, **65** person (**31,4%** of individuals from our sample) use social media for studying and **132** person from our sample (**63,8%** of individuals from our sample) use social media for Social interaction.

As shown in the following Cylindrical representation and table **90.9%** of respondents on this survey are following influencers on social media however **9.1%** of individuals of our sample are not following any influencers.

Fig.3. Follow of influencers on social media



Source: IBM SPSS statistics 21

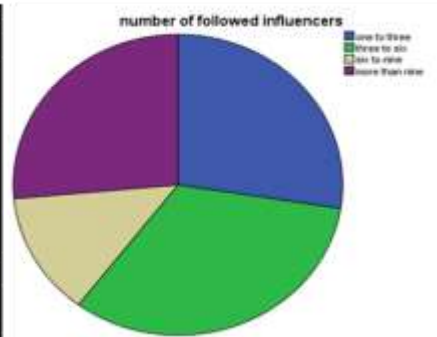
The following table and pie chart indicates that **27.5% (52 person)** of individuals in our sample, who answered yes to the question of following influencers, follow **from one to three influencers** in social media, **32,8%**

***Title: The impact of digital influencers on tourists' behavior:
Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.***

(62 person) follow from three to six influencers in social media, 13,2% (25person) follow from six to nine influencers in social media, 26,5% (50 person) follow more than nine influencers on social media.

Fig.4.Number of followed influencers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid one to three	52	25,0	27,5	27,5
three to six	62	29,8	32,8	60,3
six to nine	25	12,0	13,2	73,5
more than nine	50	24,0	26,5	100,0
Total	189	90,9	100,0	
Missing System	19	9,1		
Total	208	100,0		



Source: IBM SPSS statistics 21

As we can notice in the following table the preferences of individuals belonging to our sample concerning influencers' content are as follows:

- Most of respondents prefer Tourism content **99%**.
- **62.1%** of respondents are interested in technology content.
- **53%** of respondents in this sample are interested in sport content.
- **46.5%** of respondents prefer content about lifestyle.
- **39.4%** of respondents are fans of Cooking content.
- **8.1%** of respondents are fans of beauty content.

Table 3. Preferred content of influencers Frequencies

		Responses		Percentage of cases
		N	Percent	
preferred influencers content	Beauty content	16	2,3%	8.1 %
	Tourism content	196	28,3%	99%
	Sport content	105	15,2%	53%
	Technology content	123	17,8%	62.1 %
	Comedy content	32	11,8%	41.4%
	Cooking content	78	11,3%	39.4%
	Lifestyle content	92	13,3%	46.5%
Total		692	100,0%	349.5%

Source : IBM SPSS statistics 21

The results of our survey show that individuals of our sample follow e-influencers tourism content on different social media platforms:

- **93,1% (188 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **Facebook**.
- **59,4% (120 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **Instagram**.
- **68,3% (138 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **YouTube**.
- **16,8% (34 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **TikTok**.
- **4,0% (8 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **LinkedIn**.
- **2,5% (5 individual)** of them follow e-influencers tourism content on **Twitter**.

The results of our questionnaire shows also that **94,7% (179 individual)** of individuals of our sample who follow e-influencers tourism content on social media are interested in browsing influencers content before choosing tourism destination, however **5,3% of them (10 individual)** are not interested in browsing influencers content before choosing tourism destination.

In order to check to what extent individuals of our sample are attached to tourism content the following question has been asked:

Browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourist destination:

- Make me thinking about doing tourism
- Wake up my willingness to do tourism
- Motivate me to do the same experience
- Stimulate my decision of doing tourism

The respondents have to classify for each of the previous items on the following scale: Not at all, slightly, moderately, very, and absolutely.

Before interpretation of results of this question it is important to test Cronbach Alpha which verifies if items of our variable are reliable or not, in other words it checks internal consistency between items of this variable which is in our case “**behavior of tourist before tourism experience**”.

Testing Cronbach Alpha of the data of this question shows the following result:

Table 4. Cronbach Alpha test

Case Processing Summary			Reliability Statistics	
	N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Valid	189	100,0	,886	4
Cases Excluded ^a	0	,0		
Total	189	100,0		

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Source: IBM SPSS statistics 2

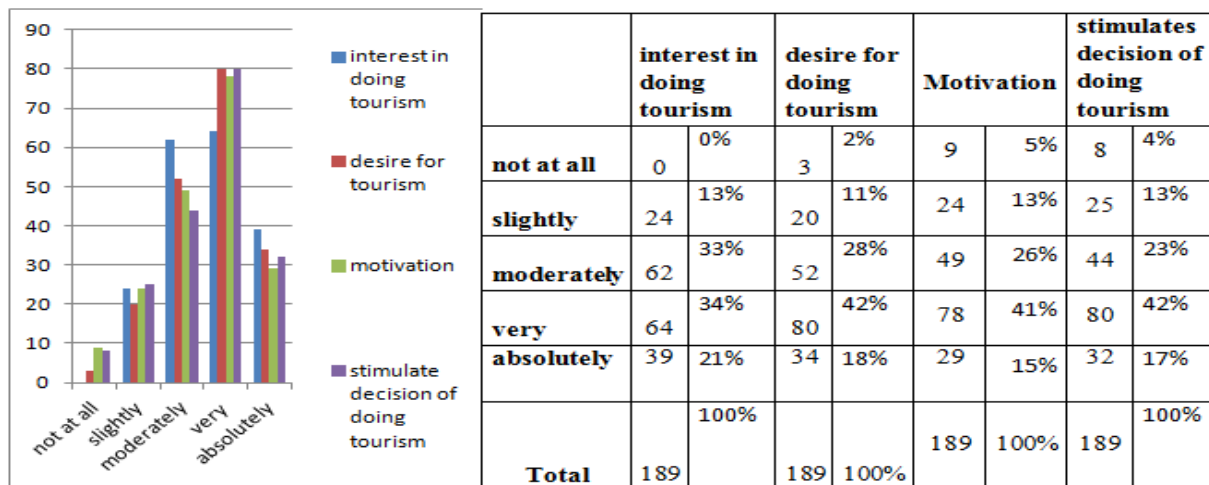
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Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.***

We can notice that the value of Cronbach Alpha is **0.886** which means that internal consistency between items is good.

As we can notice in the following table and chart:

- 64 individual (33,9%) are very agree that browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourist destination makes them thinking about doing tourism, in other words rise their interest in doing tourism.
- Most of respondents 80 individual(42,3%) are very agree with the idea that browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourist destination raises their desire for doing tourism in other words Wakes up their willingness to do tourism.
- 78 individual(41,3%) are very agree with the idea that browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourist destination raises their motivation for doing tourism in other words motivates them to do the same experience of e-influencer.
- 80 individual (42,3%) are very agree with the idea that browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourist destination stimulates decision of doing tourism.

Fig.5. E-influencers effect on behavior of tourist before tourism experience



Source: Microsoft excel 2010

Analyzing the results of this question confirms the significant impact of e-influencers on tourists' behavior before tourism experience thus the hypothesis: «**Tourists can be motivated by E-influencers to recognize their need for tourism**» is approved.

3.2. Choice of tourism destination and the impact of e-influencers:

In order to know to what extent e-influencer affect tourist decision making phase of choosing tourism destination the following question has been asked:

I make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when:

- Content of e-influencers gives details about procedures and dates of future adventures.

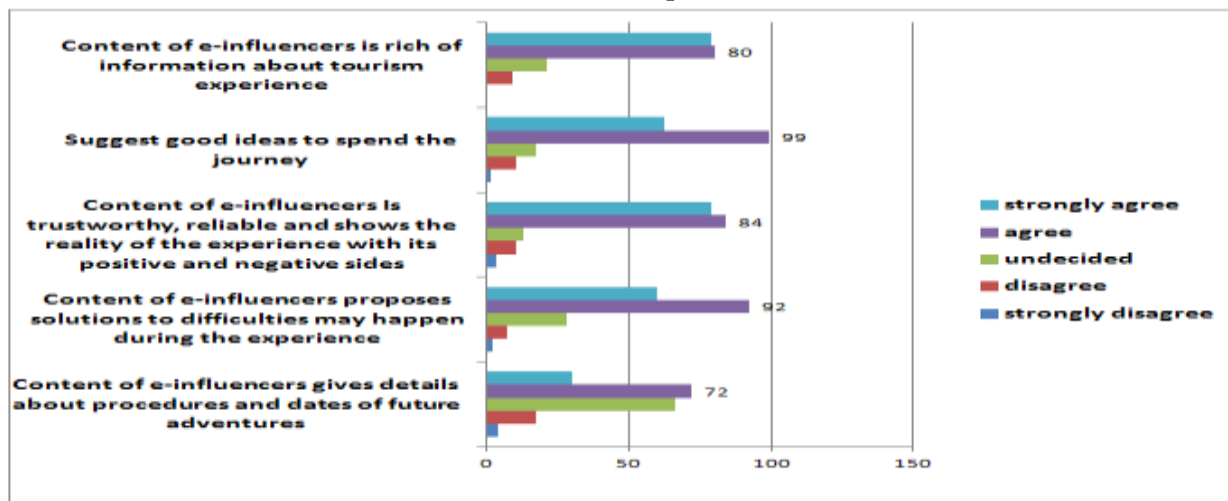
- Content of e-influencers proposes solutions to difficulties may happen during the experience.
- Content of e-influencers is trustworthy, reliable and shows the reality of the experience with its positive and negative sides.
- Suggest good ideas to spend the journey.
- Content of e-influencers is rich of information about tourism experience.

The respondents have to answer to what extent they are agreeing with the previous items: Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and Strongly disagree.

Before interpretation of results of this question it is important to test Cronbach Alpha which verifies if items of our variable are reliable or not, in other words it checks internal consistency between items of this variable which is in our case “**tourist behavior during decision making phase about tourism experience**”.

Testing Cronbach Alpha of the data of this question shows the following result the value of Cronbach Alpha is **0.838** close to one which means that internal consistency between items is good.

Fig.6.The effect of e-influencers on tourist behavior during decision making phase about tourism experience



Source: Microsoft excel 2010

The previous chart shows that:

- 80 person of our sample are agreeing that they make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when Content of e-influencers is rich of information about tourism experience.
- 99 person of our sample are agree that they make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when Content Suggest good ideas to spend the journey.
- 84 person of our sample are agree that they make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when Content of e-influencers Is trustworthy, reliable and shows the reality of the experience with its positive and negative sides.

***Title: The impact of digital influencers on tourists' behavior:
Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.***

- 92 person of our sample are agree that they make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when Content of e-influencers proposes solutions to difficulties may happen during the experience.
- 72 person of our sample are agree that they make the decision to visiting a tourism destination mentioned by an e-influencer when Content of e-influencers gives details about procedures and dates of future adventures.

3.3. E-influencers and tourist behavior during a tourism experience

When i am during a tourism experience

- I follow e-influencers' advices concerning luggage and clothes.
- I inspired from e-influencers in planning my program of the journey.
- I happily imitate e-influencers in doing different activities.
- I like to try food that e-influencers try during their tourism experience.
- I follow e-influencers suggestions when buying different product and services in tourism destination.

The respondents have to answer to what extent they are agreeing with the previous items: Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree.

Before interpretation of results of this question it is important to test Cronbach Alpha which verifies if items of our variable are reliable or not, in other words it checks internal consistency between items of this variable which is in our case “**tourist behavior during tourism experience**”.

Testing Cronbach Alpha of the data of this question shows that the value of Cronbach Alpha is **0.796** close to one which means that internal consistency between items is good.

The following table shows that:

- Most of respondents (83 individual) are agree that they follow e-influencers' advices concerning luggage and clothes.
- The majority of respondents (107 individual) agree that they are being inspired by e-influencers in planning their program of tourism journey.
- However, most of respondents (79 individual) are undecided when the question is about imitating e-influencers in doing different activities during tourism journey, also most of respondents (75 individual) are undecided about trying the same food that e-influencers try during their tourism experience.
- Also, the majority of respondents (62 individual) are undecided about following e-influencers suggestions when buying different product and services in tourism destination.

Table 5. Frequencies of the degree of the impact of e-influencers on tourist behavior during a tourism experience

	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
I follow e-influencers' advices concerning luggage and clothes	34	83	57	12	3
	18%	44%	30%	6%	2%
I inspired from e-influencers in planning my program of the journey	42	107	31	8	1
	22%	57%	16%	4%	1%
I happily imitate e-influencers in doing different activities	18	35	79	42	15
	10%	19%	42%	22%	8%
I like to try food that e-influencers try during their tourism experience	10	35	75	56	13
	5%	19%	40%	30%	7%
I follow e-influencers suggestions when buying different product and services in tourism destination	24	61	62	35	7
	13%	32%	33%	19%	4%

Source: Microsoft excel 2010

3.4. E-influencers and tourist post experience behavior:

When i finish my tourism experience:

- I compare my tourism experience with the one shared by e-influencers
- I feel satisfied if I succeed in trying all activities mentioned in e-influencers' content
- I decide to return to tourism destination if I miss trying some activities shared by e-influencer
- Usually I find that content shared by e-influencers is trustworthy
- I decide to try other tourism destination based on e-influencers information and advices when I like the experience I tried due to information shared by this e-influencer.

The respondents have to answer to what extent they are agreeing with the previous items: Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and Strongly disagree.

Before interpretation of results of this question it is important to test Cronbach Alpha which verifies if items of our variable are reliable or not, in other words it checks internal consistency between items of this variable which is in our case "**tourist behavior post tourism experience**".

Testing Cronbach Alpha of the data of this question shows that the value of Cronbach Alpha is **0.763** close to one which means that internal consistency between items is good.

***Title: The impact of digital influencers on tourists' behavior:
Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.***

Table 6. Frequencies of the degree of influence on tourist post experience behavior

	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
I compare my tourism experience with the one shared by e-influencers	15 8%	27 14%	67 35%	61 32%	19 10%
I feel satisfied if I succeed in trying all activities mentioned in e-influencers' content	15 8%	33 17%	86 46%	44 23%	11 6%
I decide to return to tourism destination if I miss trying some activities shared by e-influencers	10 5%	40 21%	65 34%	56 30%	18 10%
Usually I find that content shared by e-influencers is trustworthy	25 13%	98 52%	52 28%	13 7%	1 1%
I decide to try other tourism destination based on e-influencers information and advices when I like the experience I tried due to information shared by this e-influencer	35 19%	96 51%	50 26%	7 4%	1 1%

Source: Microsoft excel 2010

Analyzing the results of respondents on this question shows that:

- The majority of respondents (67 individual) are undecided about comparing their tourism experience with the one shared by e-influencers, a general view at the result of this item shows that most of respondents are disagree or even strongly disagree with the question of comparing their tourism experience with the experience of e-influencers.
- Most of respondents (86 individual) are undecided about the feeling of satisfaction when trying all activities mentioned in e-influencers' content.
- Most of respondents (65 individual) are undecided about returning to tourism destination if they miss trying some activities shared by e-influencers, a general view of the responses shows that they don't return to the same destination to try activities which e-influencers recommend and they had not the chance to try it.
- The majority of respondents (98 individual) are agree that they usually find that content shared by e-influencers is trustworthy.
- Most of respondents (96 individual) I decide to try other tourism destination based on e-influencers information and advices when they like the experience they tried due to information shared by this e-influencer.

3.5. Results interpretation:

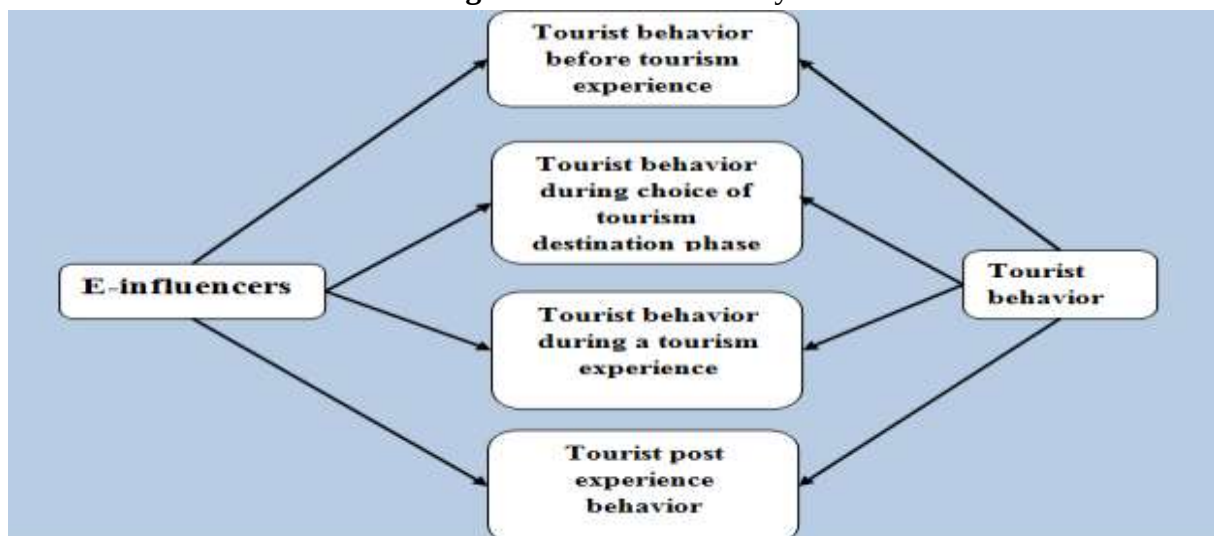
This study focuses on the analyze of tourist behavior and the impact of e-influencers on this last before, during and after tourism experience, thus it divides tourist behavior on four phases which are: Tourist behavior before tourism experience, Tourist behavior during choice of tourism destination phase, Tourist behavior during a tourism experience and Tourist post experience behavior.

Analyzing the results of this study indicates that:

- Browsing tourism content posted by e-influencers before traveling to tourism destination raises tourists' interest, desire and motivation for doing tourism and stimulates their decision of doing tourism.
- When content of e-influencers is rich of information about tourism experience, suggest good ideas to spend the journey, trustworthy, reliable and shows the reality of the experience with its positive and negative sides and gives details about procedures and dates of future adventures, all these factors have positive impact on people' decision making behavior and choice of tourism destination.
- During tourism experience e-influencers have a significant impact on inspiring people about doing some activities and planning their tourism journey and also tourists take into account e-influencers advices concerning luggage and clothes.
- In post tourism experience, tourists find that the e-influencers content is trustworthy, so e-influencers have a notable influence on tourists' future tourism destinations.

The following scheme reflects the structure of the study.

Fig.7.Structure of the study



Source: Self effort.

4. CONCLUSION

In current time and especially in Algeria many e-influencers on social media are pretending not to be influencers and they prefer to be called content creators instead, specifically with the association of the word influencer in Algeria with scandals and bad content however, it is clear that they are influencers whether in positive or negative way.

The focus of this research has been on examining the actual position of these e-influencers in tourism marketing, in other words the purpose of which was studying

Title: The impact of digital influencers on tourists' behavior:
Case study: the Algerian Social media pioneer.

the impact of e-influencers on tourists' behavior before, during and after tourism experience.

This study has proven the remarkable impact of e-influencers on each phase of tourists' behavior, because some people actions nowadays are very related to technology and especially to electronic word of mouth, and e-influences have become a new kind of opinion leaders and they are a sort of journalists that deliver news and information to their followers, and today, in marketing, it is called influencer, and these e-influences occupy a very important position for businesses, and apparently, for tourism also they occupy a significant place especially for travel agencies and all businesses in relation with tourism.

This study has also its limitations, among them the small number of respondents of the sample which means that results cannot be representative when talking about the whole Algerian population, in addition to this, it is preferable to study the impact of e-influencers on tourists' behavior separately in each phase of tourism journey and also it is recommended to study influencer marketing with more precision in other words social media platforms are not all the same and do not deliver the same messages to the audience.

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