

The Touristic E-Promotion to Algeria Via E-applications "Namlatic & Tahwissa" applications as an example

Aya Mansouri*

Echahid Cheikh Larbi Tebessi
university,(Algeria), Laboratory of
Environmental Studies and Sustainable
Development

aya.mansouri@univ-tebessa.dz

Soraya Messani

Echahid Cheikh Larbi Tebessi
university,(Algeria), Laboratory of
Environmental Studies and
Sustainable Development

soraya.messani@univ-tebessa.dz

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Abstract:

This paper aims to identify the reality of use electronic applications in promoting tourist attractions and activities in Algeria as a tool for touristic e-promotion. The objective is to analyze the mechanism of its work and diagnose its current state in Algeria. In our applied study, we analyzed the content of two Algerian applications are: 'Namlatic', which provides hotel booking services app, and 'Tahwissa', which allows users to search for and add tourist offers. The descriptive and analytical methods were employed as they were deemed suitable for the study. An interview was also conducted with the owner of the Tahwissa application. The study concluded with the following findings: The two apps aim to increase awareness of Algeria's tourism assets and offerings without focusing on persuasive aspect. In addition, there is a lack of promotional efforts due to the absence of a clear strategy to reach more users.

Keywords: E-applications, Touristic Electronic Promotion, Tourism Services, E-promotion tools, Namlatic , Tahwissa.

Jel Classification Codes: M31 ; Z30 ; L86.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid and widespread dissemination of information and communication technologies, along with the availability of open sources for learning programming and its languages, has led to the steady emergence of smart technologies and tools that can interact with humans and provide them with services upon request. This shift has impacted business processes and performance, particularly in service sectors where customer interaction and the quality time spent with them are increasingly important. Among the services that have invested well in this development are tourism services, as they have made use of it in many aspects, such as flight reservations, hotel and accommodation reservations, various tourist activities, as well as the multiplicity of digital and electronic tools and their ability to have quick and unlimited access has also influenced the promotional processes. Among these available tools, E- applications are considered with great interest. Apps are important as a e-promotion tool and some of the reasons why the focus-grabbing the applications gets is so interesting are they often available on users' phones and tablets. They can be downloaded in an instant, This makes them easily accessible and convenient so many people rely on them to obtain information or verify possible future decisions. according to that, people with certain aims use it in order to Provide that Expected information and Influence to guide targeted people behaviors.

Some of the Previous studies In Algeria looked at e-applications as part of e-tourism like (Baroud & Boussalem, 2023), as a mechanism to activate a sustainable marketing strategies such as the study of (Benrabah, 2023), While the study of (Aggouni & Belkheiri, 2022) discussed its relationship in Achieving service quality. In this study we seek to answer the following, what is the mechanism used by tourism applications in Algeria to promote the touristic supply and provide information to tourists in a way that maximises their awareness of the tourist attractions and pushes them to visit them? Fundamentally, This paper intends to contribute to the researches on e-applications and their relation to tourism and e-promotion.

- **The Previous studies:**

E-promotion in tourism has recently gained attention due to the various tools available to marketers, such as e-applications. Previous studies have linked this tool to many variables. In this section we present three studies that adopt the same variables as ours.

- The first is (Silem & Aliane, 2023) This study aim was to determine the significance of digital applications for travel and tourism companies focusing on the global company "Hopper" This study conducted a case study to collect and analyze data according to the methodology of descriptive analytical. The

results are included There is an effect of the use of digital applications by Hopper and this shown in The company's position among its competitors. as well as the growth rates achieved by it.

- The second is (Nehari, 2023), The study aimed to identify the reality of Islamic tourism digitally by analyzing a set of 11 Algerian touristic applications to find out their contributions in creating marketing contents that promote tourism development by using content analysis as a method. Some of the most notable findings include a clear absence of a marketing plan also an absence regarding the quality component associated with accompanying multimedia in most applications.
- The third is (Mahi & Nadi, 2023), The study aims to emphasize the importance of digital tourism applications in the improvement and development of tourism in Algeria. Such applications are essential tools that significantly contribute to the presentation of various tourism services. The study, which used an exploratory survey methodology, found that the presentation of Algerian tourism services through tourism applications is not up to the required level. Therefore, institutions should be encouraged to switch to actual digitization, allowing the use of applications for promotional purposes, as is done in international markets.
- **Aim and objective:** This study seeks to achieve some of the next targets:
 - ✓ Demonstrating the mechanism of E-applications, specifically those related to tourism, in promoting tourism in Algeria.
 - ✓ Identifying the significance of E-applications in promoting the demand for tourism services.
 - ✓ Our main aim is spotting light on Algerian experiences and focus on local applications that introduce tourism and booking services despite the existence of multiple international competitors.

1. The Theoretical Framework Of The Study

1.1. Touristic Electronic Promotion

In the digital age, natural tourist attractions alone are no longer sufficient to attract the attention of tourists, especially foreigners. The abundance of tourism content and competition can cause these attractions to become invisible, resulting in reduced demand. The same applies to tourism services. Therefore, countries aiming to develop their tourism sector must compete and promote it by exploiting all available digital possibilities. The internet has transformed people's thinking and transactions, as well as the display and accessibility of tourism services. It has also reduced the impact of geographical barriers and distance. (Mahi & Nadi, 2023,

p. 244) E-marketing communication takes several forms, including websites, social media and mobile applications. By utilizing these marketing options, the tourism entity is in a position to access the intended market more rapidly and efficiently, and to tailor the content to the requirements of the clients. (Đađ'ováa & Soviara, 2021, p. 1792)

1.2 Electronic Applications

According to a French dictionary of terms and concepts related to the Internet and networking, e-applications are a software applications designed to run on a mobile devices, such as a smart phone or touch screen tablet. they are a stand-alone programs that can be installed and run, e-applications after users permission has the right to access to all the native functions on it is devices, such as GPS, camera, and microphone. And such any software the e-applications must be downloaded prior to installation. (Dabi-Schwebel, 2014) The act of downloading involves transferring files from one location to another, resulting in the replication of the data. Meanwhile, installation involves giving instructions for using the downloaded information by modify your device, preparing it for provide a user experience. Without installation, the files remain unchanged and users have no chance to log in and start using the apps (Moore, 2018) The concept of electronic applications became widespread in 2008, coinciding with the launch of Apple's iPhone. The mobile phone was designed with a special application store (App store) for its users, providing them with the ability to download applications that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Apple devices, In the same year, Google launched its own app store (Play store), and other major companies also released it stores as an example Windows and Amazon (Aboelmagd, Abdelfattah, & Elsharnouby, 2022, p. 767) Also it is beneficial to reference that the number of app downloads worldwide continued to increase from 2016 to 2022. However, in 2023, the total number of downloads only rose by 1% from the previous year, reaching 257 billion. (Ceci, Annual number of global mobile app downloads 2016-2023, 2024)

1.2.1 The benefits of electronic applications

Some of the benefits are as follows: (Silem & Aliane, 2023, p. 12)

- The application retains user data for easy access.
- Voice notifications improve in-time interaction with the device user.
- Some applications can function without an internet connection.
- Apps enhance the user experience and contribute to the reputation of the organizations.
- Apps enable organizations to focus on users and optimize their navigation, thereby enhancing company value and profitability.
- The implementation is faster as there is no need to download interface elements from the server.

1.2.2 Tourism E-Applications:

Mobile devices have gained popularity among travelers due to their portability, convenience, and freedom from time and geographical constraints. (Chen, Liu, & Zhang, 2023) In recent years, the use of mobile devices has led to an increased demand for online applications that provide information about tourist attractions and cultural activities. These applications allow users to easily and affordably choose their desired destination, regardless of their location. Individuals desire up-to-date and comprehensive information regarding their tourism experiences, readily accessible on a compact, lightweight, and portable device. (Stefanov, Varbanova, Stefanova, & Tsenkova, 2023, p. 55) Information about tourism services, such as hotel room rentals and tourist attractions, can be shared and learned using tourism applications on mobile devices (Mahi & Nadi, 2023, p. 234)

Users can relate that technology has simplified communication among tourism industry players and the tourism process, Tourist attractions have been promoted and their market share has been increased by e-applications. Effective communication through electronic media can be enhanced by incorporating visually appealing graphics and images in promotional materials. (Manadi, 2024) The incorporation of interactive multimedia elements into e-applications is a valuable tool for enhancing tourists comprehension of attractive and important sites in the destination (Stefanov, Varbanova, Stefanova, & Tsenkova, 2023, p. 56) It is important to mention that The design of e-apps is a crucial aspect of the technology's service quality where The structure, layout, and presentation of the content can significantly affect users' dispositions. (Camilleri, Troise, & Kozak, 2023) E-applications present the attributes and descriptions of tourism products and services in a way that meets travelers needs for proximity, visibility and flexibility by adapting to different variables and responding well to the different needs and trends of users (Benrabah, 2023, p. 164)

a) The Taxonomy of Tourism E-Applications:

According to (Kennedy-Eden & Gretzel, 2012, p. 48) Depending on the service provided, there is a classification system for tourism e-applications contains 07 categories are: “Information” category contains Applications that provide tourism information and services are considered a resource with a large volume of searchable information such as event schedules. “Translation/Conversion” tools, “Entertainment”, “Transactional”, “Security/Emergency” Includes location tracking and weather alerts services applications and other apps, “Navigation” to provide the Guidance for visitors on their way around the site, “Social” the category comprises digital spaces that enable sharing,

collaboration, and communication with others, notably social media provides unlimited opportunities for users to share their opinions and recommendations in visual, audible, and written forms, and "mobile Marketing". Additionally, The study of (Belli & Naoui, 2021, p. 42) shows that the prevalence of electronic devices and internet services has led to an increase in the design of electronic applications by service providers and organizations for marketing their services. This is driven by the need to meet users requirements with quality, specialized applications, as generic applications can be confusing. The tourism sector applications have been categorized based on their function and the level of user interaction to: destination e-applications, Transportation, Hotels, Restaurants, Cultural Events, Museums and Social Media e-applications.

E-applications can provide tailored content that reflects specific characteristics of tourists. This customized information allows users to access concise, targeted messages that they are more receptive to. (Yılmaz & Olgaç, 2016, p. 18) Today's tourists can fulfil their travel needs through mobile applications, which previously required assistance from travel agencies, tour guides or printed guidebooks. Mobile devices now allow for booking flights, securing hotel reservations, purchasing tickets for events and attractions, and taking virtual tours of different destinations, among other tourism services that used to require human interaction. (Yılmaz & Olgaç, 2016, p. 14) Furthermore, Corresponds to (Barradas, et al., 2021, p. 20) there is another taxonomy contains 04 categories are: "information and sharing", "Booking", "Services meanwhile the trips" and "Sharing & interaction" applications but despite this division, many applications frequently combine functionality from multiple application categories, There are also applications used for tourism and general purposes, but they do not fit into any of the aforementioned categories.

b) The Significance of Tourism E-Applications in Tourism Services:

The importance of tourism e-applications in the development and optimization of tourism services manifested in: (Mahi & Nadi, 2023, p. 244)

- The activation of campaigns to promote tourism services is facilitated by electronic applications.
- Lessen the challenges associated with promoting and providing tourism services in global marketplaces, and lessen their effects by virtue of their universality and accessibility.
- Applications help hotels and other tourism-related businesses produce higher-quality services that satisfy the demands of the tourism offer.
- Participates in the creation of training programs that prepare staff members and service providers for the reality of international tourism by acclimating

them to the digital revolution and increasing their knowledge with a range of electronic applications.

2. The case study:

2.1. An Overview of Applications state:

In the first semester of 2023, global users downloaded almost 77 billion mobile apps, which is a growth of over three percent compared to the same semester in 2022, when they downloaded around 74.4 billion mobile apps. (Ceci, Global mobile app downloads 2019-2023, 2023) In addition the travel app industry had a market size of \$556 billion in 2022, an increase of 53% from the previous year, also at the same year 2022, approximately 41.6% of global travel bookings were completed via applications, with a further 10% completed via mobile web. (Curry, 2024) Among them we present the following travel/ tourism apps:

2.1.1 Namlatic" application:

Namlatic is an Algerian hotel booking platform founded in April 2019, The company signed a contract with its first hotel partner in May 2020. Three months later, a comprehensive digital marketing plan was initiated, leading up to the launch of the online booking platform in January 2021. The Android and IOS application was launched in July 2021. In the summer of 2022, Namlatic received approval from the Minister of Tourism and was classified as an innovative project of the Ministry of Startup and digitalization in June of the same year. In September 2023, became an official Google partner. The purpose of the app is to simplify the process of searching and booking accommodation, with the aim of enhancing the enjoyment of tourists. It caters to the diverse needs of tourists, whether they are travelling for business, family holidays, or other reasons. The app's features and interface make it easy to find suitable options for everyone (About Namlatic, n.d.). The platform presents itself as the optimal choice due to its partnership with over 255 hotels, which means a partnership with (+16.2%) of hotel establishments in Algeria during 2022 (Statistiques, n.d.). A 24/7 customer support, free cancellations, and convenient payment options that allow for payment by international card or Algerian Gold Card (Namlatic hotel booking, n.d.). as stated in the official website it have more than 63k download and it based on 3 languages Arabic, English and French.

2.1.2 Tahwisa application:

According to the app's description at the apps store, it is an Algerian application with (+10.000) download aims to simplify and optimize the tourist experience in Algeria by providing personalized recommendations and practical information on the best tours, activities, accommodations, places to visit, and tips available across the country. It caters to users seeking outdoor adventures, historical sites, or relaxing moments. The app provides all the necessary information for tourists to explore and appreciate Algeria's tourism offerings, saving them time and effort (Google play, n.d.). The app includes a variety of well-known establishments such as hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, museums, resorts, sports and leisure facilities, as well as places of art, culture and tour guides. It is available in French and integrates with Google Maps. With the use of GPS technology and the search function, it allows for easy access to information throughout the entire country (Nehari, 2023, p. 17).

Through downloading the study case applications, examining them, and attempting to uncover, we sought to find answers to the research question.

II. Methods and Materials:

These methods and tools must be presented precisely and clearly without exaggeration so that other researchers can re-examine or verify them. The author can describe the tools and methods used in the form of a scheme, table or diagram to explain methods used.

III. Results and discussion :

"Namlati" application interface provides a space to search for hotels by selecting the region (state) to check the number of available rooms Among the hotels according to the selected time period, the number of overnight stays, and the number of patrons. There is a quick search service appears in form of icons represented some of most popular tourist destinations, such as Algiers, Ghardaia, Tamanrasset, Annaba, Constantine, Setif, and Oran. Clicking on them leads to suggested hotels with accompanying data, descriptions, pictures of services and amenities, prices, payment policy, accepted cards, and cancellation conditions. The hotel policy regarding arrival and departure times and registration conditions for both foreigners and Algerians is displayed in the application. Additionally, any available special offers are indicated. While the app helps travelers by streamlining the booking process and offering information, it merely lists the hotels locations, their distance from tourist attractions, and the most notable city landmarks only. Sometimes this can be a successful promotion act.

The application's main contribution to promoting Algerian tourism is providing information, facilitating booking procedures, reducing psychological

effort, and shortening the time for tourists, all of that to make taking a tourism decision easier. The app's partnership with many hotels has established its trustworthiness and reliability, also as it is free and eliminates the need for traditional intermediaries by only requesting registration and creating an account in the application by email. thereby minimizes potential risks and increases footfall. The application offers a service for foreign users to apply for a visa by confirming their hotel reservation. Users can obtain an approved booking voucher to apply for a visa by clicking the 'Book for Visa' button. Since the request for a tourist visa to Algeria according to (Entry visa to Algeria, n.d.) needs to be accompanied by a hotel reservation statement or a certificate delivered by a travel agency highlighting the nature and location of the travel, or a certificate of accommodation from the tourist's host person authenticated by the tourist, this service appears promising and it may be adopted by some.

Regarding the app's interactivity, it does not provide any opportunity to check the booking experiences of previous tourists, their opinions on the quality of hospitality and food services, and the app does not support the customer rating feature for hotels in any way. This may result in the formation of virtual communities and external groups on by users to chat and share information social media platforms -for example-. The app's lack of interactivity creates a sense of rigidity and implies a purely bilateral relationship (app- one user). However, in the service sector, customer often seek intimacy by being part of an audience. The more visible other people's opinions about a service, the more likely they are to promote it and build a mental image of it.

The second app “Tahwissa” interface features a conventional, formal, and uncomplicated design. At the top, the name of the application is displayed along with a square for users, such as entrepreneurs, tourism service providers, and activity organizers, to list their offers and increase their accessibility. Below this is the search area. The centre of the interface displays the categories of activities and tourism services offered by the application, including Activities, Culture, Cinema, Accommodation, Visits, and Nightlife. The application has a time-saving feature that allows users to choose their preferred state (not all the Algerian states are listed) and receive suggestions within the state geographic range. According to (Benramoul, 2024) The purpose was to create a simple, user-friendly interface that could be used by people of all ages. The design process was simplified to ensure that the application is intuitive. For the mobile application, an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) approach was adopted, simplifying all functionalities for a rapid launch. This enabled the application to be launched in the shortest possible timeframe while providing a pleasant and easy-to-use user experience. Upon opening the application, users are immediately presented with the search field, various categories, and relevant ads. No changes in content have been made. This

approach prioritises a seamless and efficient user experience from the outset of interaction with the application. By placing these essential elements at the forefront, the application's usability and navigability are enhanced for all users.

The study of (Benrabah, 2023, p. 170) revealed that the weakness of Algerian tourism services is due to several factors, including the weakness of marketing in general due to the lack of strategic planning for targeted marketing, and the lack of use e-marketing, which aims to normalize citizens involvement in digital life and their contribution to improving the image of the Algerian destination. The Tahwisa app is a potential solution to address some of these issues. The platform serves as a hub for various tourism offerings, providing easy access to exhibitors contact information, addresses, prices, and service details which help in connecting beneficiaries with service providers.

Icons labelled as images of available tourist offers are located at the bottom for browsing. It should be noted that there are fewer than 80 offers available, and that the suggestions are limited to a few images or even a single image per offer, without any multimedia presentations. We concur with the previous study that there are no intentional or deliberate promotional plans. The purpose of this app is to introduce tourism activities and list them with certain classifications in a single digital platform, without making efforts to enhance the chances of demand or convince users of them, This indicates by the fact that the application doesn't require registration or email to log in means that it doesn't store any user data so the app cannot contact them via email or create targeted mailing lists to promote itself or the tourism offers. Also the limited number of Algerian applications similar to its content and the lack of competition within the application itself, due to the limited number of offers, may explain this. As well this leads us to believe that the direct and official nature of the application is due to the fact that it is designed to be part of the administrative processes that streamline the flows of tourism services offered to the public in a simple manner.

And the application owner (Benramoul, 2024) agreed with us on this point by saying that his application contributes to electronic tourism by making local tourism offers more accessible and visible. During the project's study phase, he identified a major problem on the side of travel agencies and tourism activity providers because many of them do not have a good grasp of digital marketing strategies to attract customers. Furthermore, on the client side, the diversity of offers and lack of trust in service providers can pose obstacles. By consolidating all tourism activities on a single platform, as he believe he provide a solution to these issues. Clients can now easily find the offers that interest them, while suppliers have a centralized platform to promote their services. Thus, the application enhances the visibility of local tourism offers and strengthens trust between providers and customers, facilitating the promotion of local tourism. As for the promotion for the application, he pointed out that the Platform is primarily

promoted and user acquisition is mainly achieved through social media channels, such as Instagram and TikTok. Authentic and engaging content, in the form of real videos, is published to reach the target audience.

(Chen S. , 2023) suggests that involving users in app design and considering their opinions can increase app sales and its products. This is exemplified by the Tahwissa app, which has received feedback in the App Store about its language options. Currently, the app only offers a French version and based on the statements of (Benramoul, 2024) The decision to propose only one language is based on the fact that it is currently an MVP version. And he chose to focus on a single language to simplify the process of developing and launching the application. In any case, this may explain why the number of downloads has remained stable, particularly given the absence of Arabic and English language options. Regarding the lack of application interactivity (Benramoul, 2024) said that At present, the absence of features such as comments or discussion rooms for each category is due to the fact that the application focuses solely on essential services. This is simply an MVP version that aims to make the application usable while minimizing non-essential features. But in future versions, he plans to integrate more interactive features based on user feedback and the evolution of his goals. This indicates an appreciation for the significance of this advantage in constructing a wider content sharing network that facilitates access to both local and international audiences. The inclusion of comments also extends the duration of engagement with the application, as it encourages users to read on. This is because potential customers can benefit from the experiences of others or former customers who work to assist others, sometimes feeling important by sharing their expertise with new users. In this regard, according to (Manoj & Chauhan, 2023, p. 180) In contemporary travel apps, in-app messaging and push notifications are common features. In-app messaging enables marketers to communicate with customers while they are actively using the app, whereas push notifications only allow communication when the user is not using the app. It is important to note that in-app messaging can be an effective way to attract clients.

IV. Conclusion:

In summary, the study yielded the following:

- The two applications display their travel information and booking similarly to the adverts with a informative purpose because they want travelers to be more aware of the details of the offers and services that are accessible to them rather than purposefully promoting each one individually.

- Both apps have fewer than (80,000)downloads. This is likely due to the lack of promotional efforts, as there is no clear strategy in place to reach more users. For example Tahwisa app uses social media videos to promote itself and has 80,000 Instagram followers—many times more than the number of downloads— this is indicative that promotional efforts are insufficient and that the strategy's objectives are unclear, as evidenced by the fact that a large portion of the target audience's social media followers did not become users. This is due to the app's shallow experience, which encourages users to become familiar with its content alone.
- There are no marketing gimmicks or features aimed at achieving long browsing times this indicates that Algerian tourism material is still reliant on the direct approach and is not very creative in tourism applications.
- Electronic applications that do not attempt to establish a relationship with their users, disregard their data, and lack a comment and chat space are ineffective for promotional efforts in the long term and remain stagnant.
- Tourism applications in Algeria contribute to the electronic promotion of tourism by facilitating access to information, which leads to improved tourists experiences as they have a specialised and up-to-date platform at their fingertips works on-demand and without interruption.
- Tourism applications in Algeria offer solutions that can facilitate the travel process such as hotel reservations, tour bookings, activities and shows in a way that can compete with tourism agencies.
- We concur with the previous studies that Algerian tourism applications are not performing at the necessary level and must boost their promotional effectiveness to achieve higher penetration among tourists in a manner that drives up tourism demand.

Electronic applications are a valuable promotional tool due to their ability to continuously improve since it owners can develop them according to their preferences and user feedback, making them more user-friendly. Applications are popular because they accompany users at all times especially tourists who may experience instability during certain periods that's increase their acceptance as a trip mate. Additionally, they can access its content within seconds, and the feature of sending notifications increases the likelihood of user attachment. Some applications use this feature to encourage frequent browsing and create a habit of continuous use, ultimately leading to user retention. And the fact that the applications are not limited and can be exploited in all sectors, as we have already seen in the tourism sector in particular, emphasizes that it is an important

promotional tool and will remain so as long as mobile devices, and smart phones in particular are important to humans. Particularly in communities that are truly experiencing a digital revolution, which makes its importance and function obvious in tourism, as this makes it simpler for it to proliferate and gain the support of a large user base. This is not the situation in Algeria, where there are still barriers to apps due to the traditional ways that people think and use digital and technology tools, particularly for local tourists. The effectiveness of tourism applications' promotional efforts is influenced by two factors: the applications themselves and the support they receive from users. The audience is the main driver of promotional efforts, and in the two applications studied, it was found that there was a lack of both application performance and user support, as there was no communication process. However, it is worth highlighting their role in introducing the available tourism offers. Algerian tourism apps must keep up with modern technology and developments in the field in order to professionally promote tourism. It is important to prepare effective and accurate contents.

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