



The Role of Facebook in Promoting Mountain Tourism in Algeria

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Abstract ;

This study aims to highlight the importance and role of Facebook in promoting mountain tourism in Algeria, due to its impact on spreading this culture and introducing mountain areas, which were previously isolated and marginalized, as we found the positive role that Facebook plays in the development of mountain tourism.

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1. Introduction to the Problematic

Tourism is one of the most important sectors for the advancement and development of the economies of nations, as it has become a key pillar in the progress of countries, especially for countries that rely on oil resources to build their economy, and Algeria is among them, where it has recently realized the importance of tourism and its contribution to raising the national income, especially in light of its abundant and diverse tourism components, except that the beach tourism has received the lion's share earlier. In the midst of globalization and with the advent of social media networks, especially Facebook, which made a qualitative leap in the field of tourism in general and mountain tourism in particular; by introducing the Algerian mountainous areas with its picturesque virgin nature and breaking its isolation, it became a destination for tourists even at the Arab and international level. This led to the following question:

What is the role of Facebook in promoting mountain tourism in Algeria?

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Clarifying the role of Facebook in introducing Algeria's tourism assets.
- Introducing mountain tourism in Algeria.
- Identify the contribution of Facebook in spreading the culture of mountain tourism in Algeria.

- Identify the reality and prospects of mountain tourism in Algeria

2. Methodology

In this study, we adopted the descriptive method because it is suitable for describing the facts and providing the necessary information about Facebook and its role in activating mountain tourism, and what it offers in introducing Algeria's tourist areas, especially those characterized by the mountainous nature.

3. Facebook and Tourism Marketing

3.1 What is Facebook?

Facebook is one of the most important social networks and refers to Internet applications that allow users to create, share and consume the content they create, in addition to giving users the ability to communicate and share their interests and personal information with others around the world (Gharzouli, Hamida, 2022).

Therefore, it is an application through which community members share their different ideas about holidays and travels by relying on photos and information with the aim of promoting tourist areas and facilitating tourism services.

3.2 What is tourism?

Tourism is considered the sum total of relations and phenomena that result from travelling and a temporary stay of a person outside his usual place of residence, as long as this temporary stay does not turn into a permanent residence and as long as this

stay is not associated with an activity that generates profit for this foreigner (Maqash, Karsh, 2020).

Therefore, tourism is considered a set of practices and various activities that an individual undertakes outside his place of residence with the aim of entertainment and recreation.

3.3 Definition of Mountain Tourism

The origins of mountain tourism, also known as natural scenery tourism, date back to the 19th century. Mountain tourism emerged with the discovery of mountains as places for relaxation and various mountain sports. This type of tourism became known in Europe with the establishment of tourist resorts, and the English Renaissance had an impact on the development of tourist destinations through the growing interest in natural landscapes. Mountains cover 10 percent of the Earth's land area and are considered one of the most important tourist attractions due to their association with diverse phenomena such as natural vegetation, wild animal life, flowing water, fresh air, and sunlight, all of which contribute to health benefits due to their distance from pollution sources. In winter, mountains are utilized for skiing, while in summer, they provide a place for relaxation due to their fresh air and tranquility (Youssef, 2020).

3.4 What is Tourism Marketing?

Tourism marketing is the organized efforts and activities performed by all tourism service providers, with its various elements or parts, which aim to satisfy the tastes of the recipients or those wishing to tourism in all its forms (Qajali, 2023).

3.5 Goals of Tourism Marketing

The ultimate goal of the marketing process is to satisfy human needs, and this makes it clear that the main objective of tourism marketing is to satisfy tourists, and from this it is possible to summarize the objectives of tourism marketing in the following points (Zaho and al., 2021):

1. Satisfying the Tourist: Marketing is the process of satisfying consumers, and in this situation, the basis for applying marketing principles in providing tourism services is to satisfy them, and recently we may not find tourism organizations that can think of protecting their existence without satisfying their customers, and through the process of organized marketing, tourists receive appropriate services, at competitive prices, at appropriate times and in a satisfactory manner. The services are well adapted to the expectations and tastes of tourists.

2. Enabling Operational Efficiency: The estimation of consumer expectations makes it possible for the organization to manage resources and tourism supply in proportion to demand, which reduces the optimal exploitation of available resources, in addition to its endeavor to control and win the competition process if possible, to ensure leadership in the market, and this can only be achieved through proper estimation of the needs and requirements of the target market.

3. Achieving Profits: One of the goals of tourism marketing is to maximize the organization's profits, whether in the long or medium term, by developing plans and strategies that enable it to generate profits

that ensure the cycle of production continues.

4. **Market Leadership and Excellence:**

One of the key objectives that tourism marketing aims to achieve is to devise marketing plans and strategies that enable the organization to outperform competitors by capturing as much market share as possible, while maintaining it, seizing every available opportunity, and avoiding significant risks.

5. Enhancing the Optimal Image: One goal of tourism marketing is to present a clear image of the area and eliminate negative perceptions about the available market.

4. *Factors of Tourism Production in Algeria*

Tourism in Algeria is based on a variety of factors, as the country is rich in diverse attractions and resources due to its varied regions, terrains, climate, history, culture, and material resources. This diversity enables Algeria to offer a competitive tourism product. These attractions can be clarified as follows (Mansadi, Ben Mir, 2023):

- **Natural Attractions:** Algeria has numerous natural resources and potentials, including:

1. A significant geographical location in terms of area and its continental and global positioning.
2. The presence of three climates: Mediterranean, semi-arid, and desert.
3. A diversity of terrains: coastal, desert, and mountainous.
4. Multiple natural mineral springs, in addition to water basins and springs.

- **Historical and Cultural Attractions:**

The multitude of historical and cultural sites in Algeria makes it a cradle of human civilization and a testament to its Islamic, Mediterranean, and African heritage. The archaeological sites, museums, and historical documents found in Algeria attest to the richness and greatness of successive civilizations, including the Berber, Phoenician, Byzantine, Roman, and finally Islamic civilizations, which have left their mark throughout history. Many of these sites are classified by UNESCO. Historical and cultural museums are among the types of tourism heritage available in Algeria, encompassing both public and private areas, distributed across the entire national territory.

- **Hospitality Attractions:** Hotels are one of the essential components that help attract tourists, providing accommodation and various services for their comfort. They are also indicators that allow the measurement of the progress of the country's tourism sector. Furthermore, hotels serve as a source of profit, especially with the increasing number of accommodation establishments of all types.

5. *Reasons Tourists Turn to the Internet*

The rise of the internet has played an important role in helping tourism businesses connect with consumers. These businesses have adopted it as a marketing tool due to its power and capabilities, which have transformed the way they conduct their operations. This technology has been widely welcomed by tourists, as studies show that internet users represent the majority of travelers, taking more trips

than those who do not use the internet. Several reasons drive tourists to rely on and use the internet, including the following (Wahrani, 2020):

1. **More Freedom:** The internet offers flexible options that cater to the desires and preferences of consumers or tourists in terms of service quality and price suitability, giving them greater freedom and more opportunities to choose what suits them.

2. **Fast Spread and Power of the Internet:** The internet has introduced a new consumption pattern linked to time. While comparing destinations used to be time-consuming, tourists can now search for what they want from home or wherever they are, eliminating the need to visit travel agencies. It also provides tourists with a wide range of options, doubling their chances of finding the best and most suitable offers.

3. **Precision in Targeting:** Having a good understanding of customers allows businesses to reach them easily by utilizing various digital marketing techniques.

6. Features of Online Tourism Marketing

Tourism e-marketing has several key features, including (Aqoun & Baali, 2023):

- **Lower Costs:** The prices of tourism products marketed online are typically lower compared to other goods because e-marketing eliminates the need for physical stores. This removes additional costs such as rent and utility bills, helping to lower prices and achieve competitive advantages.

- **Convenience for Consumers:** E-marketing allows consumers to shop around the clock, offering a wide range of

products and brands, unlike traditional marketing.

- **Price Comparison:** E-marketing enables consumers to compare the prices of tourism services before purchasing, in the most efficient way and in the shortest time possible.

- **Overcoming Geographical Barriers:** E-marketing helps tourists overcome geographical barriers, enabling them to explore and access tourism services and products available both locally and internationally.

7. Importance of Information and Communication Technology in the Tourism Sector

Technological changes present a significant opportunity for tourism-related projects. Among the key opportunities that modern information and communication technologies provide to the tourism sector are the following (Bournan Cherif & Naamoun, 2023):

- The variety and diversity of tourism service providers require significant coordination between the various tourism actors (producers, distributors, intermediaries), which is made possible by communication technologies.

- Facilitating negotiations and simplifying the presentation of services through digital screens, overcoming the barriers of time and space.

- Satisfying tourists' desires by providing high-quality tourism services to ensure their loyalty, relying on improving human capital efficiency and making optimal use of modern technologies.

- Reducing costs, meaning the same quantities of services and goods can be produced at lower costs by applying more advanced technologies. Tourism institutions are designed to exploit these capabilities and balance them to attract tourists and fulfill their desire for recreation and entertainment. To survive and continue their activities, they must adapt to market fluctuations, changes in demand, and prices.

- Offering new products and services and opening new markets, which increases the competitiveness of institutions. It also allows for using pricing strategies in competitive fields, enabling tourism institutions to adopt price differentiation strategies, meaning providing the same service at different prices. For example, by adding a computer in hotel rooms or installing fax machines, the service in these rooms can be distinguished, allowing for higher prices.

8. The Importance of Social Media in Tourism

Social media platforms, in all their forms, are one of the most significant challenges faced by businesses today. Traditional communication methods no longer meet the needs and expectations of customers who want to constantly connect with institutions, making social communication a human necessity for both individuals and businesses. The importance of social media can be highlighted in the following points (Abdul-Hussein & Al-Sukhni, 2019):

1. The continuity and existence of a society depend on transmitting work habits, ways of thinking, and feelings from one generation to the next. Social life cannot

persist without this comprehensive transfer of values, ideals, and opinions from one group to another.

2. Communication plays a vital role in the exchange of daily experiences from one person to another and from one community to another.

3. Communication plays a prominent role in education, entertainment, media, and persuasion.

4. Communication significantly contributes to the linguistic field by reinforcing the connection between meanings and various symbols, which may have been unclear before the communication process, and enriching them with new words.

5. Communication helps achieve and create a sense of comfort and stability for individuals, fostering mutual influence and driving them to integrate into groups and their surroundings.

9. Elements of Tourism Promotion via Facebook

The following elements of tourism promotion via Facebook are noted (Azerouli & Hamida, 2022):

A. Tourism Advertising via Facebook:

Advertising involves the various tools and methods used to deliver promotional messages to encourage consumers to buy goods or services by enticing and convincing them of the advertised product. According to the American Marketing Association, advertising is a way of presenting goods, services, and ideas through a known entity for a paid fee. In the context of tourism advertising on Facebook, it serves as a communication tool between tourism institutions and

consumers to inform and remind them of tourism services and influence their purchasing behavior toward these services. Thus, tourism advertising on Facebook is a key component of the tourism promotional mix, using various tools to introduce tourism programs, facilitate comparison between them, and influence consumer behavior to encourage them to purchase and benefit from the promoted services.

B. Public Relations via Facebook:

Public relations is a marketing activity aimed at establishing two-way communication channels with the consumer audience, leading to satisfaction with the institution's policies and procedures.

In the tourism sector, public relations involve activities conducted by tourism institutions to build and enhance positive relationships with their audience. Tourism public relations on Facebook are an administrative function that informs the public about the services provided to gain their understanding and sympathy, while raising awareness and directing efforts to achieve a behavioral response through the institution's Facebook pages.

C. Tourism Sales Promotion via Facebook:

Sales promotion involves personal tools to quickly stimulate purchases of products and services by traders and consumers. Tourism sales promotion, in this context, consists of activities conducted by tourism institutions to influence and persuade tourists to purchase tourism services. Through Facebook, sales promotion consists of communication activities aimed at influencing tourist behavior and

persuading them to take advantage of the offered services to increase sales as quickly as possible, utilizing comprehensive tourism programs available via Facebook.

D. Personal Selling via Facebook:

Personal selling is a promotional activity based on direct, two-way communication between the seller and the buyer. In the tourism sector, personal selling via Facebook refers to direct communication between the service provider and tourists, using personal and verbal communication to explain tourism services on Facebook. This approach aims to influence and convince both current and potential consumers to purchase services, contributing to adjusting the promotional mix according to tourists' needs by quickly and directly gathering feedback.

In conclusion, Facebook plays a significant and effective role in many tourism-related aspects by focusing on the best methods for interacting with tourists. It reduces promotional costs compared to traditional methods, facilitates the exchange of ideas and information, and allows for real-time, two-way communication, thereby enhancing consumer trust.

10. Reasons for Interest in Mountain Tourism in Algeria

Mountain tourism in Algeria is considered one of the modern forms of tourism, contributing to directing the flow of tourists towards it. The main factors driving interest in mountain tourism can be summarized as follows (Salem & Azizi, 2022):

- The desire to experience a new type of tourism, different from traditional forms such as beach tourism, which was

previously popular among tourists. This drives people to explore new areas.

- The search for engaging in natural activities that align with a healthy lifestyle, such as hunting.
- The pursuit of knowledge about the region's history through visiting historical sites and listening to elders recount memories, fostering a connection between tourists and the residents of mountainous areas.
- The desire to learn about the lifestyle, traditions, and customs of mountain communities, and to experience walking, hiking, and climbing rocky elevations and mountains.
- A return to nature, an appreciation for simple living, and an escape from the pressures of globalization.

11. The Status of Mountain Tourism in Algeria

The promotion of natural and cultural heritage, whether coastal, desert, or mountain areas, is a key goal in Algeria's tourism development strategies. It is also part of the country's economic recovery policy to make up for lost opportunities in various sectors, especially during the post-independence era and the "Black Decade." Algeria now places importance on developing mountain tourism to revive the tourism sector as part of its economic diversification strategy, moving away from the long-standing dominance of the oil and gas sector. However, despite the government's attention to coastal and desert tourism, there has been a significant lack of focus on developing mountain tourism, which has

led to underdevelopment in these areas (Majitna, 2022).

Nevertheless, interest in mountain tourism has begun to emerge in Algeria, gaining attention from tourists even before the authorities. This rise is largely due to the optimal use of Facebook, especially by residents of mountain regions who have helped reduce the isolation of these areas. Mountain tourism in Algeria has the potential to contribute to the national economy and drive comprehensive development in the future, provided there is genuine willpower, with a focus on available resources and capabilities to achieve sustainable tourism development.

12. Sustainable Development and Mountain Tourism in Algeria

Mountain tourism has an important place among the various other forms of tourism, as it is considered one of the most enjoyable types of tourism in the world, due to its direct connection to nature while providing opportunities to learn about other cultures and people who share the same interest, and sustainable tourism has a key role in enhancing livelihoods while reducing poverty and preserving the environment in mountainous areas, in addition to opening the way for the integration of local communities and areas characterized by mountainous nature.(Qana, 2023).

Accordingly, sustainable mountain tourism is an important driver of social and economic development in mountain regions, especially since tourism is based on local communities that manage it in a good way that increases family incomes while preserving natural and cultural heritage.

Mountain tourism is a double-edged sword, as it contributes to breaking the isolation of mountainous areas while providing job opportunities for residents, thus contributing to reducing migration and rural displacement, but this type of tourism requires good management to control human tourist flows and the waste they leave behind, as well as their impact on the customs and lifestyles of the region and how to take advantage of the tourism assets in various mountainous areas.

13. Challenges Facing Mountain Tourism in Algeria

Mountain tourism in Algeria, like other types of tourism, suffers from many obstacles that hinder its development and advancement, which can be summarized in the following points: (Abdessamad, Barsouli, 2019)

- Weak coordination between those concerned with the tourism sector in Algeria in general and mountain tourism in particular.
- The lack of structures and facilities in mountainous areas in addition to their age, which led to their high prices.
- Weak culture of mountain tourism in Algeria, with the dominance of beach tourism.
- The neglect and lack of care for most of the scenic mountain areas.
- The lack of a clear policy and strategy to promote mountain tourism in Algeria, despite its enormous potential.
- The different customs and traditions of the inhabitants of the mountain regions and the tourists, which leads to rejection of both parties at times.

14. Conclusion

It can be said that Facebook has a great role in the marketing of mountain tourism by breaking the isolation of mountain areas, and its effective contribution to the promotion of various tourism services, which has positively reflected on the valorization and development of mountain tourism. By contributing to the spread of awareness and culture of mountain tourism in Algeria, as it provides easy identification and access to the areas, but this is considered insufficient, as it needs clear strategies and the active participation of officials.

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