



The Importance of Digital Platforms as a Model for Startups in Promoting Local Tourism Heritage

Lilia Ain Souya

University Souk Ahras, (Algeria)

l.ainsouya@univ-soukahras.dz

Abstract ;

This study aims to highlight the importance of digital platforms as a model for startups in promoting local tourism heritage. Startups rely on modern technology to innovate, using digital platforms for electronic marketing across various fields, including tourism. Digital tourism marketing enhances the sector's position by leveraging digital platforms to reach a wider and more diverse audience, providing detailed and useful information to potential tourists in a creative way.

This competitive advantage enables the tourism sector to achieve its goals and significantly improve its performance.

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1. Introduction

The world is witnessing a digital transformation across all fields and business sectors. The impact of this transformation on various institutional structures has become a primary objective that institutions seek to achieve in a short period. Companies face new challenges and opportunities through the use of electronic media to promote their products and services.

Digital marketing aims to attract customers and allow them to interact with a company's products and services via online platforms. It demonstrates modern technological applications, offering benefits such as interactivity, cost reduction, direct customer engagement, and a geographically extensive reach that transcends global borders. Additionally, it allows businesses to customize their offerings, adjust prices based on customer purchasing behaviors, and distribute products at any time and place, while providing sufficient information pre- and post-purchase. Businesses can also monitor customer feedback, assess satisfaction levels, and collect essential data, eliminating the need for extensive preliminary and post-marketing research.

Startups represent one of the most prominent forms of modern enterprises, strongly relying on information and advanced technology. Their role extends beyond production growth and revenue increases to economic renewal, replacing failing businesses, balancing markets, and achieving sustainable development plans. Like other developing countries, Algeria

aims to foster comprehensive economic development across all sectors. It has established support mechanisms to assist entrepreneurs in securing necessary resources, encouraging individuals to create companies of varying sizes and activities to diversify the national economy.

Digital transformation is no longer optional but a necessity for startups. Their success is closely linked to their ability to keep pace with technology and employ digital tools in their activities, particularly in marketing. The tourism sector, one of the most digitized industries, has become increasingly reliant on digital technologies to market tourism services through specialized applications and systems. These platforms provide customers with electronic services by sharing information, images, and videos of various tourist destinations. Additionally, digital users play a role in promoting tourism products, making digital communication technology an essential element for businesses in the sector to enhance competitiveness and differentiation in the market.

How do digital platforms contribute to the promotion of local tourism heritage?

Importance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of a new form of tourism electronic tourism which could positively impact the industry through digital platforms used by tourism startups. The study examines e-tourism as both an alternative and a complement to traditional tourism, emphasizing its

importance as a marketing and promotional tool for local tourism heritage. Startups contribute to strengthening the tourism sector's competitiveness by offering innovative solutions and ideas.

Objectives of the Study:

- Provide a comprehensive understanding of startups.
- Examine the significance of digital platforms and e-marketing.
- Highlight the role of online platforms in marketing tourism heritage.

Research Methodology:

This study employs a descriptive approach to theoretically analyze the subject by collecting data from primary and secondary sources.

The research will address:

- Theoretical Framework of Startups.
- Digital Platforms and Tourism Digital Marketing.
- Role of Digital Platforms in Promoting Local Tourism Heritage.

2. 1: Theoretical Framework of Startups

1.1 Definition of Startups:

There is no universally accepted definition of startups, though several explanations exist:

One definition describes startups as: "Projects that embody innovative and pioneering ideas that offer solutions to existing problems. They serve as a launchpad for research and development and involve high-risk levels, making funding opportunities scarce. These projects are not limited to technology but

can be found in any sector." (Faleq, Fouqa, & Teqrouret, 2021,p254)

Another definition states: "A startup is a newly founded organization, often small and in its early operational phase, striving to establish a scalable, sustainable, and profitable business model. It typically holds high potential for rapid growth." (Brody, 2021,p343)

From these definitions, the key characteristics of startups can be summarized as follows: (Soltani & Bouchikhi, 2022,pp98-99)

- Young companies focused on survival and rapid growth.
- High growth potential, capable of generating substantial revenues in a short timeframe.
- Strong reliance on information technology and artificial intelligence.
- Require minimal initial capital but promise high profitability.
- Exhibit sudden and rapid expansion with unique competitive advantages.

1.2.The Importance and Objectives of Startups:

Startups play a crucial role in addressing challenges and boosting national economies by contributing to GDP and accelerating growth. Below is a summary of their importance and objectives:

1.2.1. Importance of Startups:

Startups have economic, social, and scientific significance, as they focus on valuing scientific research to improve modern societies and meet their evolving needs. They serve as an economic model that responds to societal characteristics by accelerating results, fulfilling demands

quickly, and generating profits faster. Many startups have successfully created wealth and added value, supporting the economies of several countries, such as the United States and East Asian nations like South Korea, by developing innovative products and services. These innovations generate new job opportunities and provide accessible solutions to societies at low costs. (Meziane & Aman, 2021,34)

The growing interest in startups is due to their immense value, and their significance can be summarized as follows: (Khebbaba, 2013,54)

- Harnessing individual potential, especially among skilled and talented people.
- Enhancing regional balance, as startups can be easily established in isolated and remote areas.
- Supporting economic structures and promoting economic diversification, as startups operate in various fields, including agriculture and services, contributing to economic stability.
- Creating social stability, as startups generate employment half of the workforce in the U.S. is employed by startups.
- Providing support to large corporations through subcontracting services.
- Direct interaction with consumers, allowing startups to better understand and fulfill essential customer needs.
- Encouraging creativity and innovation.
- Environmental contribution, as many startups recycle waste and byproducts from major industries.
- Generating economic value that supports national development efforts.

1-2.2. Objectives of Startups:

Startups fundamentally aim to achieve the following goals:

- Encouraging individual and collective entrepreneurship through the creation of new economic activities, whether product-based or service-oriented.
- Reducing unemployment by generating permanent and temporary job opportunities for various social groups.
- Enabling economic development in remote regions, making startups an effective tool for valorizing local resources.
- Acting as a key link within economic networks, interacting with surrounding businesses that share similar inputs and processes.
- Transforming ideas from individuals with limited financial and administrative resources into real-world projects.

1.3- Characteristics and Features of Startups:

1.3.1 Characteristics: Startups have several strengths and weaknesses, summarized below: (Qaqrini, 2022,pp108-109)

- **Strengths:**
 - Supporting large companies by providing intermediate products for their activities.
 - Creating real job opportunities and reducing unemployment.
 - Contributing to local development strategies.
 - Fast decision-making, thanks to minimal organizational hierarchy and fewer employees, facilitating rapid information flow and problem-solving.

- **Weaknesses:**

- Limited ability to choose and formulate effective business strategies.
- Struggles in building a strong distribution network due to financial constraints.
- Unable to benefit from economies of scale, as they operate on small scales.

1.3.2. Features of Startups: Startups possess distinctive characteristics, including: (Sultan & Saad Qarmash, 2020, pp151-162)

- **Newly Established Enterprises:** They are generally young companies founded by ambitious entrepreneurs, facing the challenge of either evolving into successful businesses or failing.
- **Growth Potential:** Startups have high scalability, enabling revenue growth that far exceeds initial costs, allowing them to expand production and sales without proportionally increasing expenses.
- **Technology-Oriented Nature:** They are built on pioneering ideas, aiming to address market needs in innovative and smart ways.
- **Low Operational Costs:** Compared to their profit potential, startups require minimal initial investment.

2: Digital Platforms and Tourism Digital Marketing

2-1. Definition of Platforms and Their Types: The term "platform" refers to a set of tools (software, hardware, operating systems, etc.) designed to store and share virtual content (audio, video, etc.).

Digital platforms (Les plateformes digitales) drive digital transformation, enabling businesses to develop using digital tools. They mainly offer products and solutions online, helping businesses enhance sales and customer relationships.

2.2. Types of Platforms: There are several types of platforms:

- **Enterprise Platforms:** Companies based on a platform model, such as Netflix, Facebook, Airbnb, etc.
- **Digital Platforms:** Websites that sell or provide services, improving business performance and client interaction.
- **IT Platforms:** Technical infrastructure platforms that facilitate the implementation of various digital technologies.
- **Business Platforms:** Strategic ecosystems that enable enterprises to expand operations and enhance customer experiences.

Using such platforms allows corporations and public administrations to address consumer diversity, engage in social media interactions, and collect data on purchases and usage patterns.

2.3. Key Elements of Digital Platforms:

According to Francis Napper (Cigref, 2019, p3), digital platforms should focus on:

- Attracting users through innovation and network effects.
- Matching services with expectations, ensuring relevance and enhancing value.
- Enhancing connectivity, minimizing friction in user interfaces, and simplifying platform interactions.

- Facilitating large-scale transactions while ensuring security and scalability.

2.4. Digital Tourism Marketing:

Digital tourism marketing is essentially "an interactive communication process between customers and tourism organizations via the internet and electronic media, fostering sustainable relationships without time or geographic barriers." (Hirsh, 2022, pp 696-697)

It leverages modern marketing trends, adapting to contemporary consumer preferences using advanced digital tools.

2.4.1. Digital Tourism Marketing

Tools: Tourism digital marketing incorporates various techniques, aligned with the preferences and behaviors of modern travelers:

- **Websites:** These serve as the main digital presence for tourism entities, allowing businesses to share stories, updates, branding messages, and attract domestic and international visitors.
 - Websites mirror a company's digital strategy, requiring proper domain selection, search engine optimization, engaging visuals, accurate pricing, and streamlined reservation processes.
 - **Content Marketing:** Businesses develop high-quality articles, infographics, videos, and collaborations with influencers to attract and retain tourists.
 - This method ensures credibility and demonstrates expertise in the tourism sector.
- Promotional videos, industry reports, blog

posts, and partnerships with relevant content creators.

- **Partnership Marketing:**

Companies collaborate with other websites through strategic initiatives such as linking campaigns, boosting their digital visibility.

- **Using Search Engines:** Search engines are programs or web pages connected to vast databases distributed globally, designed to help users find information easily and efficiently. They include videos, images, articles, and even scientific papers written by individuals. Search engines are structured based on the classical library ranking system.

- **Automated Marketing (Le Marketing Automation):**

This concept combines software platforms that automatically execute pre-defined marketing scenarios through automation of marketing campaigns, triggered by specific conditions related to tourist behavior.

- For instance, when a user searches for a specific tourism product, they receive multiple promotional campaigns for that product from different companies, aiming to provide a personalized response. This system automatically sends tailored messages at the right time and place. (Truphème & Gastaud, 2017, p56)

- **Email Marketing & Newsletters:** Businesses use email marketing to retain customers and ensure loyalty. This approach requires a qualified customer database, designed through their website. Companies send emails and

newsletters to their customers, promoting their brand and providing exclusive offers regularly.

Email campaigns are cost-effective, easy to distribute, and provide precise performance tracking.

In tourism, agencies create designated emails to facilitate communication with clients, sending timely messages containing travel deals and exclusive offers efficiently. (Truphème & Gastaud, 2017,p66)

• SEO & Paid Advertising (Referencing):

This technique enhances a website's visibility in search engine results. It takes two main forms:

- SEO (Search Engine Optimization): Improves search engine ranking on Google using targeted keywords and searches, increasing revenue and brand visibility.
- SEA (Search Engine Advertising): Involves purchasing keywords that websites display as advertisements on search engines. It is a paid referral method, where companies pay for every user click on their ad.

2.4.2. Factors Behind the Growth of E-Tourism:

Several elements contributed to the rise of e-tourism, including:

- Scientific and technological advancements: The growth of e-tourism correlates with increasing usage of computers, emails, mobile phones, and interactive digital television. (Bezqrar & Berkan, 2010,p7)
- Workplace competition: Competition

among various business sectors plays a major role in developing e-tourism, both locally and globally. (Abdelkhaleq, 2004,p33)

- Increase in e-tourism's contribution to global e-commerce. (Rice, Jenan, & Ben Turki, 2010,p6)
- Tourism is one of the best service sectors for digital transformation, as travel products are comprehensive, combining different components like accommodations, flights, and local services. The internet enables customers to access all elements in an integrated format.

2.4.3. Implementation Phases of E-Tourism:

E-tourism requires several practical steps for successful execution: (Bakhti & Shaoubi, 2010,p277)

- Collecting tourism data (offers, prices, maps, reports).
- Digitizing collected data using modern technologies.
- Publishing digitized information online in multiple languages.
- Providing tourism authorities, agencies, travel boards, and hotels with internet-accessible systems, including emails, phone numbers, and fax connections.

3: The Role of Digital Platforms in E-Marketing for Local Tourism Heritage

3.1. Importance of Digital Platforms in Tourism Marketing:

The importance of digital platforms in promoting tourism heritage can be outlined as follows:

- Tourism products are high-cost compared to other online services.

However, digital platforms allow easy booking and delivery from providers to consumers. (Azzam, 2010,p08)

- Consumers now have easy access to all necessary information, such as flight schedules and prices, hotel rates, car rental services, and more—all through online platforms.

- Pricing and service quality during booking are key factors for competitiveness. Owning a modern, innovative website significantly boosts market presence. (Pestek, 2010,p03)

3.2. The Role of Digital Platforms in Activating Tourism Heritage:

Digital platforms play an essential role in enhancing tourism by optimizing travel experiences, streamlining services, and providing comprehensive information to travelers. Some key aspects of their impact include:

- Facilitating global and local tourism, introducing visitors to new tourist destinations they have never explored.
- Increasing tourist influx by showcasing various attractions and available services.
- Promoting diverse tourism products, including recreational, medical, religious, scientific, and cultural tourism.
- Supporting auxiliary industries that are integral to tourism supply chains.
- Improving service quality through feedback mechanisms, including suggestions and customer reviews.
- Boosting tourism efficiency, leading to significant financial returns, helping resolve tourism challenges and stimulate economic growth. (Al-Kasasbeh, Al-Hussein, et al., 2023,p123)

4. Conclusion:

Digital platforms are among the latest modern technologies that startups rely on to market their products in response to new market dynamics. E-tourism has transformed the nature of tourism services, leading to the adoption of new and diverse methods to ensure growth, stability, and adaptation to the continuously changing market demands.

Startups have contributed to developing tourism activities, providing an opportunity to direct this sector toward delivering distinctive services to beneficiaries. E-marketing facilitates building relationships with customers, maintaining their loyalty through direct digital interactions that simplify the exchange of ideas, products, and services.

Consumers today exhibit advanced purchasing behaviors, continuously seeking high-quality services at the lowest possible price. Consequently, gaining customer loyalty has become increasingly challenging unless businesses constantly innovate to fulfill their needs. This study has yielded the following key findings:

- Digital platforms offer round-the-clock electronic marketing for local heritage, providing continuous customer service.
- Digital platforms attract a larger number of tourists, introducing them to local heritage and cultural assets.
- Startups play a crucial role in promoting the tourism sector, particularly domestic tourism.
- Startups contribute to enhancing tourism services, ensuring they meet the needs and desires of customers.

- Startups reinforce sustainable tourism and local heritage, by connecting tourists with local communities.
- Digital platforms integrate programs aimed at improving tourism-oriented startup services, optimizing their operational efficiency.

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