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DIGITAL MARKETING THROUGH CONTENT CREATORS: A PREREQUISITE FOR REVITALISING TOURISM LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY - THE CASE OF "KHOUBAI"

Kerrouche Nawal
University Oran 1 - Ahmed Ben Bella
ORCID ID: 0009-0009-7263-7629

ABSTRACT

Compared with its traditional counterpart, digital marketing represents a novel and distinct approach, operating within the digital sphere where interactions and practices unfold. Thus, it has become a vital outlet for institutions, particularly those active in the tourism and cultural sectors, regardless of their domain. Digital marketing offers a platform that saves time and enables broader outreach to local and international audiences. This is especially relevant given the presence of numerous pillars of tourism marketing, such as influencers and content creators, whose extensive follower bases have attracted the attention of institutions incorporating them into their marketing strategies. Given its significance, digital marketing has become an urgent necessity in our increasingly interconnected era, where economic development is often locally and globally driven by tourism.

This research explores the key dimensions that digital marketing, through the inclusion of content creators, brings to the tourism sector. This study focuses on the Algerian content creator Khoubaib Kouas, known as "Khoubai".

Introduction.

Marketing is one of the core activities embedded within public relations and mass communication, as no institution can effectively reach its audience or conduct its operations without promoting its services and products. Marketing has thus become the essential bridge connecting institutions to their external environment, enabling them to disseminate all necessary information regarding their activities. Owing to technological determinism, marketing has witnessed significant and wide-ranging advancements, giving rise to a new direction in digital marketing. This form of marketing embodies a renewed essence that can be seen as an extension of traditional marketing yet surpasses its scope and potential. The information technology revolution has reshaped strategies for audience engagement, compelling institutions to construct new public images and extend their reach from the local to the international level.

Tourism is considered one of the most vital industries upon which countries rely to achieve sustainable economic development. In light of global openness and international competition to attract tourists to various destinations, digital marketing has become a fundamental requirement. It is now imperative for institutions operating within the tourism industry to consider expanding their markets internationally through digital networks and to update their strategies to meet current global demands.

Relying solely on the traditional perspective in formulating a marketing strategy is no longer sufficient. Instead, including new opinion leaders and content creators has become essential for generating influence and reaching a broader audience base.

In this research paper, we aim to highlight the importance of integrating content creators into digital tourism marketing by analysing the Instagram content of the Algerian content creator "Khoubai" on the basis of the following research problem:

Main Research Question:
- What is the significance of integrating content creators into digital tourism marketing, both locally and internationally, as illustrated through Khoubai's Instagram page?

Subquestions:
- What is digital marketing, and what are its requirements?
- How does digital marketing support the tourism sector through tourism content creators?
- What are the dimensions of using the content creator "Khoubai" as a case study in the tourism sector through digital marketing?

Objectives of the Research Paper:
- This paper aims to provide a descriptive overview of digital marketing by exploring its definition, mechanisms, and challenges.
- The importance of this emerging marketing approach within the tourism sector should be highlighted, mainly through the use of tourism content creators.
- The goal is to raise awareness among tourism institutions regarding the significance of digital marketing via content creators and encourage them to reconsider their marketing strategies by integrating content creators as new opinion leaders, especially in the context of today's digital lifestyle.

Methodology and Research Tool:
The study adopts an analytical and descriptive approach based on a sample of content produced by Khoubai in 2025. The primary research tool used was observation.

Introduction to Digital Marketing:
1. Definition of Digital Marketing:
Digital marketing is "a set of marketing activities that rely on electronic media, computer networks, and the internet." Others view digital marketing as "the utilisation of expert knowledge in the field of marketing to develop new, effective, and immediate strategies that allow for the achievement of current goals and objectives more rapidly than traditional marketing, in addition to significantly expanding and growing business operations in a short time and with lower capital investment" (Larous, 2019, p. 39).

Digital marketing has also been defined as "the optimal use of digital technologies including information and communication technologies to enhance marketing productivity and its operations, which encompass organisational functions, processes, and activities directed towards identifying the needs of target markets and delivering goods and services to customers and stakeholders of the organisation" (Maghraoui, n.d., p. 209).

2. Advantages and characteristics of digital marketing
a. Advantages:
The advantages of digital marketing can be classified into two main groups: those related to the consumer and the business organisation itself. To broaden the reader's understanding of these benefits, they are presented as follows:
First: Consumer-related advantages (Naji, 2001, p. 38):
- Providing greater and broader opportunities for consumers to access newly offered goods and services globally and becoming familiar with the comparative advantages of each available product and service alternative.
- Enhancing the consumer's knowledge of markets and the products and services available contributes to developing more informed choices and preferences.
- Reducing the cost of acquiring goods and services: The internet, through the numerous websites of competing businesses, offers consumers wide-ranging opportunities to obtain the most suitable product or service at the lowest possible price.

- By enabling consumers to make purchasing decisions that align with their purchasing power, they can develop a prioritised spending system within their set budgets, which contributes to more rational and efficient consumption decisions.
- Providing opportunities for direct and rapid communication between businesses that showcase their goods and services online and consumers, allowing for immediate feedback regarding their opinions and suggestions about the displayed products. This, in turn, enables greater consumer participation in improving existing products and innovating new ones.

The above findings demonstrate that digital marketing offers considerable value to consumers, not merely businesses.

Second: Advantages related to business organisations (Naji, 2001, p. 38):
- The global reach of digital marketing allows products displayed on websites to achieve international exposure, facilitating easier access to global markets.
- Through its capacity for direct communication with consumers, digital marketing contributes to reducing marketing costs. Electronic communication channels enable businesses to shorten their distribution chains and eliminate the need for intermediaries, thereby saving on the commissions and fees typically paid to such agents.
- Digital marketing helps bridge the spatial gap between businesses and consumers worldwide, making market access easier and less complex.

b. Characteristics (Mounir, n.d., pp. 91–93):
- Digital marketing is characterised by its capacity to offer mass service; clients can interact with a marketing website at any time. However, the company cannot identify who has read its electronic messages unless the customer makes direct contact, nor can it monitor all visitors to its website.
- Owing to the high volume of companies disseminating digital content, it is essential to employ elements of excitement and attention-capturing strategies to draw users to electronic messages, similar to the approach used in television advertising.
- Given the internetInternet's unprecedented ability to reach many customers, avoiding dishonest marketing that lacks genuine or relevant content is increasingly important. Customers who have experienced deception or dishonesty can easily share this information online, potentially harming the company's reputation.
- Electronic communications are interactive and reciprocal. Owing to this two-way communication, the likelihood of building strong relationships with customers worldwide has increased. Within minutes of broadcasting a message, a company may receive a response requesting no further contact, a complaint, a suggestion for improvement, or even an expression of interest in purchasing.
- The most effective websites are engaging and regularly updated to ensure that their content remains fresh, which encourages users to revisit them.
- Small businesses can access international markets via the internet without possessing large multinational corporations' extensive infrastructure, allowing them to compete on equal footing for customer attention.

3. Requirements of Digital Marketing
Digital marketing necessitates the fulfilment of several key requirements, as outlined below (Suwaidan & Haddad, 2003, pp. 373–374):
- The exchange of commercial information between the company and consumers via public networks for purposes such as home shopping, conducting banking operations using secure codes for electronic payments, or issuing debit and credit notifications.
- Commercial transactions between businesses and traders through electronic data interchange (EDI).
- Business transactions involve various forms of information, such as market research, the use of barcode scanners and data processing systems to support managerial decision-making, the ability to solve organisational problems, and the ability to manage operational information.
- Business transactions concerning the dissemination of information to potential customers, including advertising and sales activities.

4. Challenges of Digital Marketing (Mounir, n.d., pp. 96–97):

- **High Costs of Establishing Websites:** A website is akin to establishing a physical location. Designing, developing, and maintaining websites requires highly skilled and specialised experts and extensive marketing and technical studies. Moreover, the website must deliver added value to the customer to provide the company with a competitive advantage.
- **Rapid Technological Developments in Website Design:** The fast-paced evolution of technologies related to website design and development, along with the need to increase website efficiency and competitiveness, constitutes a significant challenge to the sustainability of websites and the overall success of digital marketing initiatives.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Language and culture are among the key obstacles impeding effective interaction between customers and many websites. Software capable of significantly improving the translation of content into languages that customers can understand is urgently needed. Moreover, cultural norms, traditions, and values must be considered so as not to hinder commercial website usability and acceptance.
- **Lack of Trust in Electronic Payment Methods:**
- Credit card payments over the internet are among the most common forms of transactions associated with digital marketing. However, transferring money lies at the heart of any online commercial transaction. This represents one of the most significant challenges facing digital marketing because of ongoing concerns about security and trust in electronic payment systems.

Digital Tourism Marketing
1. Introduction to Tourism
a. Definition of Tourism:

Experts, researchers, and stakeholders in the field have proposed numerous definitions of tourism. These definitions have evolved and vary depending on differing perspectives, aiming to simplify the concept of tourism. The German researcher *Johann B. Bredelher* defined tourism in 1905 as "a phenomenon of our time arising from the growing need for rest, for fresh air, and for experiencing the beauty of nature, as well as the joy and pleasure of staying in places with distinctive natural features. It is also linked to the growth of communication, especially among different peoples and human groups, resulting in the expansion of trade and industry." This definition highlights the psychological state, appreciation of natural beauty, and economic dimension sought through interactions with diverse communities.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO), on the other hand, defines tourism as a human activity and a social phenomenon involving the temporary movement of individuals from their permanent places of residence to destinations outside their communities for no less than 24 hours and no more than one full year for purposes other than work or study.

Among Arab scholars, Sobhi Abdel Hakim and Hamdi Al-Deeb define tourism in their 1990 book *Geography of Tourism* as "a combination of phenomena and relationships arising from the movement and stay of individuals in different locations, incorporating both elements of movement (the journey) and stability (the stay). This occurs in an attraction area, resulting in activities that differ from those practiced at the point of origin, especially since such temporary movement is unrelated to paid employment" (Hijab, n.d., pp. 21–22).

Tourism is also defined as a temporary movement undertaken by many individuals from various countries, involving travel from their residence to other destinations. These destinations may be within the same country ,referred to as domestic tourism ,or in foreign countries ,referred to as international tourism.

Alternatively, tourism can be understood as a set of phenomena and relationships resulting from the interaction between tourists, business establishments, governments, and host communities, all of which aim to attract tourists and visitors.

Linguistically, the Arabic term for tourism (*siyāḥa*) derives from the triliteral root *sāḥa* (ساح), which encompasses several meanings, including flow and movement, travel and wandering, seclusion in a mosque, consistent fasting, and movement from one place to another. It also refers to the organisation and planning of space (Al-Saidi, 2009, p. 15).

b. Types of Tourism (Al-Saidi, 2009, pp. 5–6):

Tourism can be of various types, shaped by the motivations, desires, and needs that can be stimulated or created. These include cultural, recreational, medical, religious, and sports tourism. Moreover, new forms of tourism have emerged, driven by scientific, political, economic, and social advancements, along with

evolving aspirations and specialised demands that did not previously exist ,such as conferences, exhibitions, and incentive tourism. As a result, there has been a shift towards providing facilities, infrastructure, and attractions that differ significantly in their characteristics from those required by traditional forms of tourism.

Tourism experts classify its types on the basis of several criteria:

According to the number of travelers:
- *Individual or unorganised tourism:* This type of tourism does not follow a specific or structured itinerary and may involve travel by an individual or a small group.
- *Group tourism:* Organised and typically arranged by travel agencies.

According to the mode of transportation used:
- *Land tourism:* Involves private cars, railways, or buses.
- *Maritime tourism* involves travel by ships or cruise liners.
- *Air tourism:* Conducted via various types of aircraft.

According to Gender:
- *Male tourism*
- *Female tourism*

According to economic status and social class:
- *Luxury tourism for millionaires:* Involving private means of travel such as personal jets.
- *Tourism for the affluent class:* Utilising premium services such as five-star hotels and other high-end facilities.
- *Social or general tourism:* Targeted at individuals with limited income, often supported by public or subsidised programmes.

According to the geographical scope:
- *Domestic tourism* refers to travel within the same country.
- *Regional tourism* involves travel between neighboring countries that form a common tourism region (e.g., the Maghreb countries or the Arab world).
- *International tourism* involves receiving foreign tourists from other countries; this type of tourism is the most sought-after by many nations due to its economic benefits.

According to Motivation:
Classifying tourism on the basis of the purpose of the trip is one of the most common and widely adopted methods in the tourism sector. Under this classification, the following types of tourism can be identified:

Recreational Tourism:
- This is one of the most significant and oldest forms of tourism. It provides individuals with an escape from their routine lifestyle and the constant demands of work, allowing them to travel to destinations known for their moderate climate, natural beauty, tranquillity, and scenic beaches. Repeat visits to the exact location often characterise this type of international tourism.

Cultural Tourism:
- Cultural tourism aims to explore ancient civilisations and visit historical and archaeological sites. It attracts eager tourists who want to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, broaden their cultural knowledge, and engage with diverse populations that experience their customs, traditions, arts, and heritage. This form of tourism represents a substantial share of international tourist activity and is typically undertaken once, as the primary objective is educational or experiential enrichment.

Medical Tourism:
- This involves travel for therapeutic purposes or to benefit from natural healing resources such as mineral baths, a healthy climate, sulphur springs, and warm sands. In addition to its natural advantages, it also relies on the availability of well-maintained, quiet environments and medical facilities equipped with modern

technologies and skilled professionals. Medical tourism generally constitutes a smaller portion of the global tourism movement.

Religious Tourism:
- This type of tourism is motivated by the desire to fulfil religious obligations. Key destinations include Mecca and Medina for Muslims (for Hajj and Umrah), Jerusalem for Muslims, Christians, Jews, and the Vatican for Christians.

Sports Tourism:
- Sports tourism involves travelling from one's place of residence to another country to participate in or watch sporting events. This includes attending major global competitions such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games. This form of tourism has flourished due to the proliferation of international sporting events and the desire of supporters to travel alongside their teams.

Conference Tourism:
- Conference tourism is considered a modern form of tourism closely linked to ongoing global development and modernisation. It focuses on attending conferences, seminars, and meetings ,whether scientific, professional, or political. This type of tourism requires the provision of appropriate accommodations and conference facilities.
- It plays a key role in promoting tourism and contributes significantly to economic revenue because of conference tourists' relatively high average spending.

c. Characteristics and Conditions of Tourism (Al-Roumi, 1998, p. 12):
Characteristics:
- Tourism is considered an *invisible export* and one of the few industries where the consumer obtains the product directly from its origin.
- Tourism exhibits *price and income elasticity*, meaning that even slight changes influence tourists' decisions in terms of price and income. Price changes tend to have a more immediate and noticeable impact than income changes do, and their effects on tourism demand appear gradually over time.
- Tourism demand is affected by *economic welfare*, *technological progress in transport and communication*, *economic techniques*, and *cultural and political factors*. This makes managing the tourism sector challenging, as it depends on variables that are often beyond governments' control or prediction. Tourism demand elasticity stems from its responsiveness to prevailing economic conditions in the market.
- Tourism is characterised by the *diversity and complexity of its components* and its *interconnection with multiple economic activities*. It is a composite activity that influences and is influenced by various economic and social sectors. This underscores the importance of adopting a scientifically grounded approach to tourism planning, whereby tourism development must be integrated into the broader framework of national development planning.
- Tourism is an *intangible product*, which means that it cannot be transported from one place to another.
- The *tourism product cannot be stored*, so fluctuations in demand must be addressed by lowering prices and enhancing service quality to stimulate interest in tourism offerings.
- Tourism products face *intense international competition*, requiring the fulfilment of all tourism demand conditions to ensure customer satisfaction.
- T*ourism is exportable* and, therefore, influenced by external factors. However, it involves offering services rather than tangible goods that can be transferred; the consumer must travel to the destination to access the product.
- Specific tourism destinations are characterised by *seasonality*, which affects the volume and timing of tourism activity.
- The *diversity of tourism types and purposes* leads to variations in associated activities and the nature of services needed, making the tourism sector multifaceted and dynamic.

Conditions:

The phenomenon of tourism is subject to a set of conditions, including:

• Tourism is *temporally limited*, with a minimum duration of 24 hours and a maximum duration of one year.

• A journey is considered *touristic* if it is associated with *leisure time* and *holidays*.

• The purpose of travel must not be *to seek paid employment*.

• The *destination must be different* from the tourist's place of residence.

• Tourism is a *composite activity* involving various economic, social, and cultural relationships and phenomena.

• Tourism has *two key components*: a *dynamic element* (the journey) and a *static element* (temporary stay).

• The local population must have *integration, awareness, and environmental educ*ation.

• *Sustainable environmental management* of natural resources and biodiversity is essential.

• *Collaboration among stakeholders* in the tourism sector is necessary for the success of ecotourism.

2. The Role of Digital Marketing in Promoting Tourism

a. Concept of Digital Tourism Marketing:

Digital tourism marketing is a modern concept that strongly intersects with e-commerce. It is defined as a form of tourism in which certain transactions are conducted either between two tourism institutions or between a tourism institution and a tourist through information and communication technologies. In this context, tourism offers and services are presented via the internet and meet the interests of tourists willing to accept these offered services (Chabrou & Drouis, 2017/2018).

b. Motivations for Using Digital Marketing in Tourism

(Chabrou & Drouis, 2017/2018, pp. 67–68) listed the following:

• Tourism services of all types rely heavily on *exchanging information*, which is often *variable and difficult to assess* in terms of quality before experience. The internet provides an ideal medium for conveying such information.

• *Information and communication technologies (ICTs)* contribute to *reducing the cost* of producing tourism services. On the one hand, they enhance the *effectiveness of promotional efforts*; on the other hand, they *lower costs*, particularly those related to communication with tourists and intermediaries.

• The *expansion of technology usage* has led to the emergence of *new needs* that did not previously exist, prompting tourism sector actors to *develop new products* that meet tourists' evolving expectations.

• It helps *attract a new segment of* digitally connected tourists who actively use the internet.

• It enables *ubiquitous presence* and provides *tailored offerings* that suit tourists' needs.

• It allows *entry into the global tourism market*, expanding beyond local or regional limitations.

• It facilitates the *efficient and rapid provision of high-quality services* to tourists without being constrained by geographical boundaries.

3. Digital Tourism Marketing through Content Creators (Salima, 2023)

a. Nature of Content Creators

Definition of a Content Creator:

• According to Johanna Hallgrímsdóttir, a content creator is considered the *official spokesperson of a company on digital platforms*. Companies' and institutions' growing reliance on content creators has become particularly notable, given the creative skills that have made them an integral part of institutional marketing strategies.

Skills of Content Creation:

• These include:
  o Strong writing ability and the capacity to select relevant topics supported by research to access primary information sources.
  o Effective content planning and the generation of *innovative ideas*
  o The use of *linguistically correct and error-free* language in all written content.

Content marketing:

- Kotler and colleagues define content marketing as *an approach that involves creating, managing, distributing, and amplifying engaging and valuable content for a clearly defined audience*. The aim is to stimulate conversations centred around the content's subject matter.

b. Content Creator "Khoubai": Khoubaib Kouas

Khoubaib Kouas, widely known as *Khoubai*, is a 30-year-old content creator specialising in travel and adventure. Originally from Constantine, he has recently gained significant recognition for the purposeful and inspiring content he shares across social media platforms. With an academic background in economics, Khoubai began exploring travel as a passion, eventually turning his journeys into engaging digital content under the slogan *"Travel, for there is so much waiting for you"* (Salima, 2023).

He has received numerous awards for his work and was selected as one of *Forbes' 30 Most Creative People in the Middle East and North Africa*.
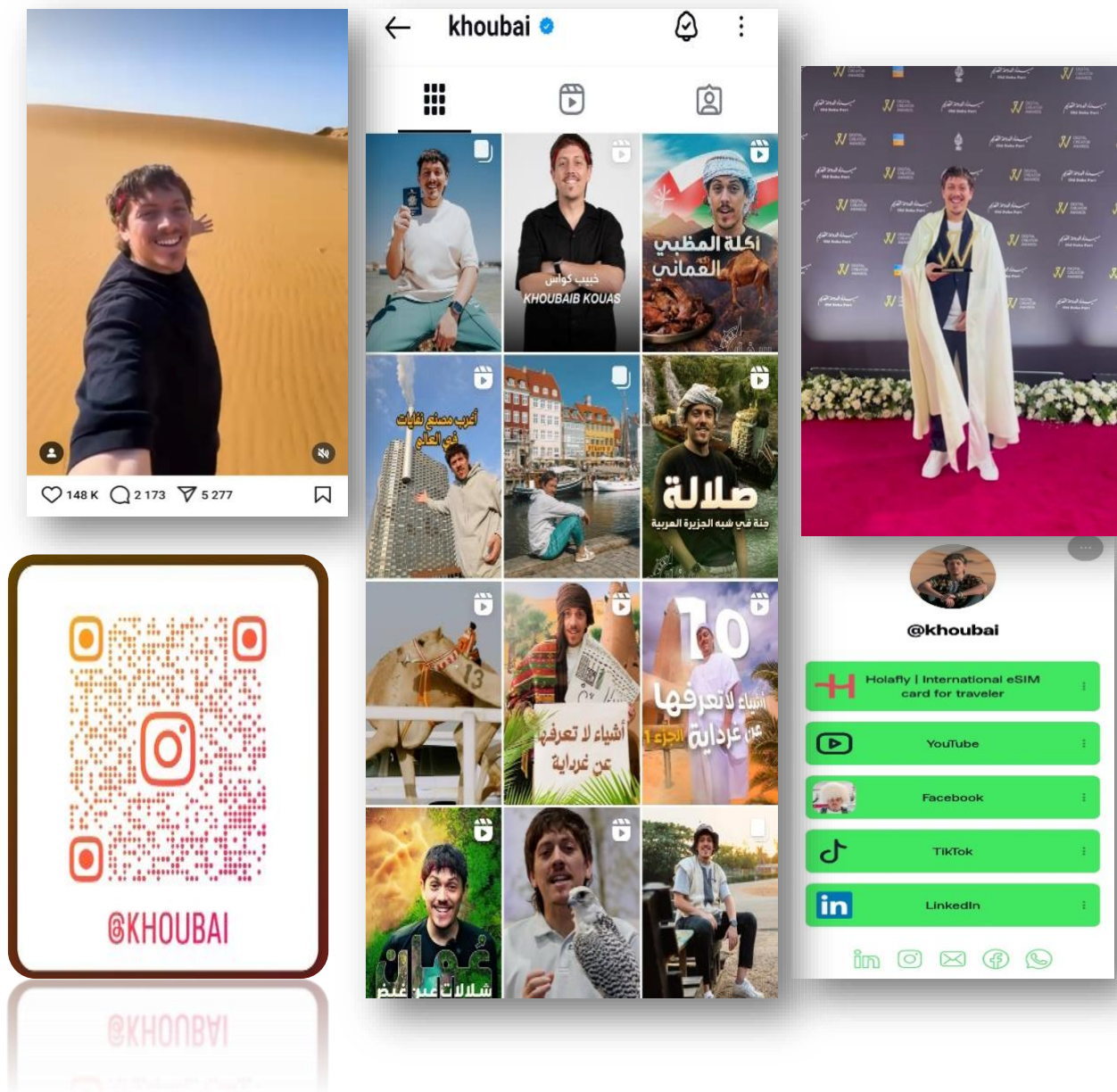
c. Descriptive Study of Selected Content by Khoubaib Kouas on Instagram

The sample selected for this study consists of content published by *Khoubai* between January and March 2025 on his Instagram account. The study adopts a *descriptive-analytical method* using *observation* as the primary tool and is based on the following dimensions derived from the criteria for successful content (Salima, 2023, p. 151):

- **Attractiveness:** This is one of the most essential features of high-quality content, as it captures followers' attention.
- **Credibility:** Credibility represents the quality of content marketing and refers to the authenticity of the information, images, and overall content.
- **Relevance:** Measures the degree to which the content aligns with the usefulness of the information provided.
- **Value:** Emphasises the *functional value* that the content creator aims to deliver through the shared material.
- **Emotion:** Effective content should include elements of entertainment, emotional appeal, and engagement to encourage continued following and to promote the adoption of a product or service.

Key Dimensions Reflected in Khoubai's Content Based on the Descriptive Study:

On the basis of the observation log compiled during the analysis of Khoubai's tourism content on Instagram, the following findings were identified:

Dimension	Content
Attractiveness	• *Style and aesthetic quality*: Khoubai uses a distinctive and engaging style to present tourist destinations through beautifully captured photos and high-quality videos. His language's simplicity, free from complexity, allows him to connect with his followers clearly and effectively. His tourism content features beautiful landscapes and visually appealing design and editing. • *Persuasive power*: The content creator, Khoubai, employs persuasive techniques when presenting the tourism destination featured in the content by providing reliable information supported by photos and videos.

Dimension	Content
Credibility	• *Accuracy of information*: Khoubai provides accurate and reliable information that answers various questions about tourist destinations. His content is, therefore, characterised by a high degree of transparency. • *Interaction*: Khoubai interacts with his Instagram followers by enabling comments and responding to their questions. This not only enhances the transparency of his tourism content but also increases its persuasive power. A noticeable rise in his follower count further strengthens trust in his content. • *Respect for publishing ethics*: Khoubai consistently follows a clear and ethical content strategy, demonstrating respect for publishing standards, his audience, and personal privacy.

Dimension	Content
Relevance	• *Appropriateness of style for tourism marketing*: Khoubai adopts a well-suited style for presenting information about tourist destinations, making it accessible and engaging for a broad audience. • *Encouraging follower participation*: Khoubai actively encourages his followers to share his content, enhancing its reach and engagement. • *Content freshness*: His content is characterised by simplicity and novelty, as he consistently presents new information instead of repeating the same messages in every tourism-related post.

Dimension	Content
Value	• *Meeting audience expectations*: The comments observed on Khoubai's Instagram posts reflect the interests of his followers, particularly in response to their questions. This responsiveness aligns with audience expectations regarding tourism services and adds value to his content. • *Positivity of content*: Khoubai's content is characterised by a positive tone, generating a favourable emotional response among followers and motivating them to consider visiting the featured destinations while increasing their satisfaction with the content.

Dimension	Content
Emotion	• *Guiding tourism content*: Comments reveal that followers frequently refer to Khoubai's content when planning to visit a specific tourist destination, often expressing a sense of reassurance after reading others' feedback. • *Creating emotional engagement*: His content plays a guiding role in tourism and is enriched with an entertaining and engaging narrative style. It reflects the personal experiences of the content creator as a traveller, which inspires admiration and encourages followers to embark on similar adventures.

Key findings:

• Khoubai's content is characterised by seriousness and credibility, aligning with objective and practical tourism marketing requirements.

• His content generates functional value through the guidance it offers in the tourism domain.

• The credibility of Khoubai's content has led to a noticeable increase in his follower base, supporting tourism at the destinations featured in his posts.

• The comments reveal that many followers rely on Khoubai's posts when choosing travel destinations.

• Integrating a content creator such as Khoubai into tourism strategies can significantly serve and enhance tourism locally and internationally.

• The growing audience of Khoubai's social media platforms positions him as an influential intermediary for disseminating tourism-related information. This finding supports two-step flow theory, which emphasises the role of opinion leaders.

• The emergence of successful tourism content creators and their effectiveness in digital tourism marketing presents an opportunity for tourism institutions to include them as new opinion leaders.

• Digital tourism marketing through content creators is an innovative mechanism for reaching the most significant possible local and international audiences, contributing to economic development within the knowledge economy framework.

Conclusions:

Therefore, digital marketing is an integral component of intelligent institutional management. It has become one of the most widely adopted marketing approaches globally because of the advantages and services it offers ,facilitating institutional operations with minimal effort, enhancing profitability without incurring excessive costs, and strengthening presence both locally and internationally.

Tourism content creators have emerged as essential tools that should be integrated into the strategic plans of institutions active in the tourism sector. Their importance lies in their role as new opinion leaders who influence and guide public interest in tourism destinations, particularly when they are selected on the basis of the criteria and dimensions of successful tourism content.

Recommendations:

• Institutions active in the tourism sector must develop a well-structured digital marketing strategy to support tourism promotion both locally and internationally.

• Institutions should benefit from global and Arab experiences in digital tourism marketing.

• Through digital tourism marketing, digital content creators should be integrated into strategies to promote cultural heritage.

• Tourism authorities and institutions are encouraged to formally include content creators in their strategic frameworks, given their potential to enhance tourism and contribute to economic development.

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