

T.C.
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL
SCIENCE



FROM LIKES TO DISCOVERY: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TOURISM
INFLUENCERS ON ALGERIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE.

MASTER'S THESIS
MEROUA TALAH

ISTANBUL 2024

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THESIS ADVISOR
ÖNDER YÖNET

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Program Name:	Marketing
Student's Name and Surname:	Meroua Talah
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Assoc. Dr. Yucel Batu SALMAN

Institute Director

This thesis was read by us, quality and content as a master's thesis has been seen and accepted as sufficient.

	Title, Name	Institution	Signature
Thesis Advisor :	Assist.Prof. Onder YÖNET	Bahçeşehir university	
2nd Member	Assist.Prof. Burçak CEBECİ PERKER	Bahçeşehir university	
3rd Member (Outside Institution)	Assoc. Prof. Selen BUTGEL TUNALI	Nişantaşı university	

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Surname: MEROUA TALAH

Signature:

ABSTRACT

FROM LIKES TO DISCOVERY: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TOURISM INFLUENCERS ON ALGERIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE.

Meroua, Talah.

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Algeria has a rich cultural heritage and a variety of attractions, which makes it an ideal destination for tourism influencers to study. An experimental design with a pretest/posttest within-subjects design and multiple linear regressions is used to investigate the relationship between destination image and source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, and likability) and argument quality. It is clear from the results of this study that tourism influencers influence destination image in a significant way, with trustworthiness being the single most important determinant; other dimensions of credibility and argument quality play a crucial role in shaping perceptions, but do not have a significant impact on perceptions. Tourism influencers play an important role in influencing destination images and maintaining a high level of trustworthiness is fundamental in achieving a positive destination image. In addition, marital status, age, and education level are found to significantly affect the difference in destination image before and after watching the influencer video.

Key words: Source Credibility, Argument Quality, Destination Image, Influencer Marketing, Travel Influencer.

OZ

**BEĞENİLERDEN KEŞFE: TURİZM INFLUENCER'LARININ CEZAYİR'İN
DESTINASYON İMAJİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ.**

Meroua, Talah

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Cezayir zengin bir kültürel mirasa ve çeşitli cazibe merkezlerine sahiptir, bu da onu turizm etkileyicilerinin çalışması için ideal bir destinasyon haline getirmektedir. Destinasyon imajı ile kaynak güvenilirliği (uzmanlık, inanılrlık ve beğenilirlik) ve argüman kalitesi arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmak için ön test/son test grup-ıçı bir deneysel tasarım ve ayrıca çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, turizm etkileyicilerinin destinasyon imajını önemli ölçüde etkilediği, inanılrlığın en önemli belirleyici olduğu; güvenilirlik ve argüman kalitesinin diğer boyutlarının algıların şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığı, ancak algılar üzerinde anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olmadıkları tespit edilmiştir. Turizm etkileyicileri destinasyon imajlarını etkilemede önemli bir rol oynamaktadır ve yüksek düzeyde inanılrlıklarının olması ilgili destinasyon imajının pozitif yönde oluşmasında esastır. Ayrıca, medeni durum, yaş ve eğitim düzeyinin, influencer videosunu izlemeden önce ve izledikten sonra destinasyon imajındaki farkı önemli ölçüde etkilediği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kaynak güvenilirliği, Argüman Kalitesi, Destinasyon İmajı, Influencer Pazarlama, Seyahat Etkisi

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Tourism in Algeria has grown in recent years, with the country offering a diverse range of attractions for visitors. As Africa's largest country, Algeria boasts a rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and a unique blend of Arab, Berber, and French influences. However, Algeria's tourism sector remains weak in terms of accommodation and other services. To remedy this, the government has launched a strategic plan to boost the sector (Manelle & Salah , 2023), entitled "The 2030 Master Plan for Tourism Development" (Quality Tourism Plan in Algeria, 2014). The plan aims to attract foreign investors, improve infrastructure, and promote Algeria as a tourist destination. Lack of awareness of Algeria's attractions is one of the challenges facing its tourism industry. One of the challenges facing the tourism sector in Algeria is the lack of awareness about the country's attractions (Manelle & Salah , 2023). In order to promote Algeria as a tourist destination, tourism influencers can play a crucial role. By showcasing a country's unique culture, history, and natural beauty, tourism influencers can attract additional visitors and boost the industry. Travelers to Algeria have been more numerous in recent years, primarily from France, Spain, and Italy.

Influencer marketing allows destinations to benefit from the reach and influence of influencers and has emerged as a powerful tool for destination branding. Influencers possess the ability to narrate authentic and relatable stories about their experiences at a destination, resonating with their followers and offering a genuine perspective compared to traditional promotional content (Cornellia, Putrianti, & Sinangjoyo, 2024). This authentic storytelling and visually appealing content contribute to shaping positive perceptions of a destination and attracting potential tourists.

The tourism industry is greatly impacted by influencer marketing, which raises brand recognition, encourages travel, and draws more people to tourist attractions and services including lodging, dining, and travel agencies (Cornellia, Putrianti, & Sinangjoyo, 2024) Working with social media influencers has grown in popularity as a branding tactic for destinations, increasing the area's exposure and allure, particularly for specialized tourism markets (Magno & Cassia, 2018)

Influencer marketing's beneficial benefits on traveler intentions and destination image demonstrate how important it is in the highly competitive tourism sector (Cornellia, Putrianti, & Sinangjoyo, 2024).

Tourism influencers play a crucial role in shaping Algeria's destination image by influencing the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of potential tourists (Zaghlami, 2020). People rely more on public opinion and the experiences shared by close acquaintances, vloggers and social media influencers when deciding to visit a tourist destination, rather than on promotions and advertisements shared by tourism companies.

The argument quality and source credibility of tourism influencers have a significant and complex influence on the perception of a location. Potential tourists' impressions of a site are greatly influenced by the perceived credibility of the source. Reliable data from trustworthy destination agencies, which demonstrate the legitimacy of the destination source, can greatly impact the destination's image by eliciting positive attitudes and feelings toward the location (Jiménez-Barreto, Rubio, Campo, & Molinillo, 2020). Additionally, tourists' cognitive and emotive pictures of a place can be significantly impacted by the authority of tourism influencers and the caliber of their arguments, which can result in improved destination perceptions and emotional arousal (Lamia, Faouzi, & Hugues, 2021). The trustworthiness and authenticity of information sources, coupled with the persuasiveness of arguments presented by influencers, contribute to building a positive destination image and influencing tourist behavior. Therefore, maintaining high levels of source credibility and argument quality in influencer marketing efforts is essential for shaping a favorable destination image and attracting more tourists.

Using Algeria as an example, this study will examine how tourism influencers affect the perception of a destination. To comprehensively assess the influence of tourism influencers, we will incorporate dimensions into our analysis. In addition to analyzing the cognitive, emotional, and conative components of destination image, we will assess the argument quality and source credibility. By doing so, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of how tourism influencers impact not only the perception of Algeria as a tourist destination but also the credibility of the information they provide and the quality of their arguments.

This article aims to investigate how Algeria's destination image is influenced by tourism influencers, specifically focusing on the aspects of source trustworthiness and argument.

This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how tourism influencers impact not only the perception of Algeria as a tourist destination but also the credibility of the information they provide and the quality of their arguments. By examining the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of destination image, as well as the dimensions of source credibility and argument quality, this research seeks to contribute to the knowledge on the impact of tourism influencers on destination image.

Based on the given above purposes of the study, the following research questions/ hypotheses have been developed to be analyzed due to literature review and quantitative survey:

RQ1: Does the destination image (Algeria/Algiers) significantly differ before and after watching the travel influencer video?

H1: After watching the video, the destination image will be significantly more positive compared to before.

RQ2: Which dimensions of source credibility or argument quality are more related to destination image?

H2: The expertise of travel influencer has a positive effect on destination image difference.

H3: Trustworthiness of travel influencer has a positive effect on destination image difference.

H4: The likability of travel influencer has a positive effect on destination image difference.

H5: The argument that quality of travel influencer has a positive effect on destination image difference.

RQ3: Which demographic factors, such as age, education level, and marital status, significantly affect the difference in destination image perceptions before and after watching the influencer video?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In recent years, the role of social media influencers in shaping destination image and influencing travel decisions has become increasingly significant. Social media influencers, with their large following and ability to create engaging content, have the power to influence the perceptions and behaviors of potential travelers (Putu Gede & Ida , 2020). This literature review aims to explore the impact of tourism influencers on destination image, with a focus on the strategies and techniques used by influencers to shape brand image, the role of source credibility and argument quality in influencing branding image, and the significance of tourism influencers in shaping travel decisions.

2.1 Tourism and Influencer Marketing

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism marketing is "a management philosophy where tourism businesses research, predict, and select based on visitors' wishes to bring tourism products to the market to suit customer tastes." (Marketing, 2023)

Philip Kotler and John Bowen, authors of "Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism", define tourism marketing as "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives." (Yadav, 2023)

The concept of tourism marketing involves promoting a destination, tourist attraction, or tourism-related business to potential travelers in order to increase their interest in visiting the location and generate revenue for the local economy (Yadav, 2023). It aims to create a positive image of the destination and promote its unique features and benefits to potential tourists, with the goal of increasing the number of visitors and contributing to the growth of the local tourism industry (Marketing, 2023).

“Influencers are individuals who create valuable content, have high reputations in specific fields and are followed by a large number of users on online social networks” (Klaus-Peter & Walter von , 2021).

Influencer marketing refers to a strategy in which a firm collaborates with online influencers, individuals, groups, or virtual avatars with a significant following on social media, to promote the firm's offerings and enhance its performance. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers gain fame through actively sharing content on social media rather than having credentials from formal institutions. The influencers use their unique resources, such as follower networks, personal positioning, and communication content, to engage their audience and influence their attitudes and behaviors towards the firm's products or services (Lee & Eastin, 2020; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022). The firm selects and incentivizes influencers, providing content briefs for the campaign, but also granting them freedom to create content aligned with their personal brand and resonating with their followers (Haenlein & Libai, 2017). This approach differentiates influencer marketing from other strategies like organic word of mouth or traditional celebrity endorsements (Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannam, 2016) (Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022). By leveraging influencers' engagement and trust, firms aim to achieve their marketing objectives and connect with their target audience effectively (Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022)

2.1.1 Types of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is a rapidly growing industry that involves working with people who have a sizable and engaged social media following in order to promote goods and services. Five different sorts of influencers are described in (Campbell & Farrel, 2020) mega-influencers, macro-influencers, micro-influencers, and nano-influencers. A variety of factors, including the quantity of followers, perceived authenticity, accessibility, knowledge, and cultural capital, are taken into account while establishing these categories.

A celebrity influencer is a person recognized beyond social media, often from fields like entertainment or sports, and is utilized by brands for their substantial follower base. With a strong impact on social platforms due to their extensive fan following, they shape trends and opinions. Their endorsements carry significant weight, instantly boosting brand visibility to millions. While powerful, these collaborations can be costly. Authenticity is crucial, as followers expect genuine connections. Successful celebrity influencers seamlessly blend brand promotions

with content, maintaining credibility. In today's fame-social media landscape, they wield the power to amplify brand messages while upholding personal branding, remaining influential figures in the evolving influencer world.

A mega influencer is a prominent individual who has gained a substantial following on popular social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or Twitter, these individuals are often celebrities, athletes, or public figures who have established a significant presence within the online community (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). They possess the capacity to engage with a massive audience and hold considerable sway over the purchasing decisions made by their followers. They are commonly requested by marketers for cooperation on sponsored content and endorsement deals due to their large audience reach (What is a Mega Influencer?, n.d.). Their endorsements can significantly increase brand visibility and legitimacy, and they are able to collect hefty fees for advertising goods or services to their following.

A macro influencer can be defined as a prominent figure within the realm of social media, particularly Instagram, boasting a follower count ranging from 100,000 to 1 million. These individuals wield substantial influence over their audience, often possessing a heightened engagement rate characterized by a flurry of likes, comments, and shares. Their Instagram feeds bear witness to a plethora of sponsored posts, emblematic of their alliance with various brands seeking to tap into their expansive reach (Nambakhsh, 2022).

Micro influencers are individuals who have carved out successful careers in the realm of social media influence, although their reach is smaller than that of macro influencers. They typically maintain a more localized follower base and generate most of their income through affiliate-link programs and occasional brand partnerships, such as collaborations with companies like Nordstrom or participation in programs like the Amazon Influencer Program (Wissman, 2018). Micro influencers are known for their adaptable influencer brands, often collaborating with diverse industries. With follower counts ranging from 10,000 to 100,000, they rely on social media videos, like Instagram stories, to connect with their audience, emphasizing their accessibility and authenticity. These videos have a substantial impact on sales, as followers perceive micro influencers' recommendations as more genuine than those of larger celebrities, who may be seen as more commercial. Consequently, marketing managers are increasingly turning to micro influencers for

their authenticity, trustworthiness, and stronger alignment with their followers' needs and interests, making them valuable assets in modern marketing campaigns (Wissman, 2018).

2.1.2 Influencer marketing strategies

Influencer marketing, or IM, is a well-known strategy used by companies and marketers in the modern marketing world. Influencer marketing strategies and tactics comprise a wide range of techniques aimed at maximizing the potential of influencers, or those with the ability to sway the opinions and actions of consumers. According to Forbes (2020), IM represents a paradigm change in marketing by emphasizing individual customers above the larger target market. In the past, companies have hired celebrities, like movie stars, sports legends, and well-known musicians, to act as influencers. Their job was to present goods and services to prospective consumers in order to encourage trial and adoption (Jayasinghe, 2021).

A new era of instant messaging transformation has begun with the emergence of new technological advancements and the spread of social media platforms. This shift in fundamental beliefs has created new channels for businesses to engage directly and interactively with consumers, changing the nature of modern marketing. Previous research highlights the fact that social media influence (IM) is now essential to social media marketing (SMM), as SMIs are redefining consumer-brand connections in ways that have revolutionized current marketing (Taillon, Mueller, Kowalczyk, & Jones, 2020).

IM is a term that several writers have used to describe and define social media. Influencers, according to Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg (2011) describe influencers as "a new type of third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media." These influencers have garnered recognition from thousands of social media followers and have cultivated trust and confidence among their audiences by offering genuine recommendations and sharing their personal experiences (Saima & Khan, 2020).

Influencers are not the same as conventional celebrities or public personalities, it is important to note. Influencers are people who actively produce material, interact with their followers through sharing personal anecdotes, and frequently concentrate on specialist subjects that appeal to particular social circles

(Guruge, 2018). The literature has supported the idea that instant messaging (IM) is a more genuine and natural marketing strategy for connecting with potential clients (Lou & Yuan, 2019). (Krasniak, 2016).

A notable trend highlighted in prior research is the transition of SMIs into the forefront of delivering and endorsing branded content, effectively supplanting traditional celebrities (Jayasinghe, *Social Media and Influencer Marketing Strategies: A conceptual Review on Contemporary Applications*, 2021). When selecting social media platforms for IM campaigns, organizations make deliberate choices based on their target audience and campaign objectives. Popular platforms include Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and the emerging force, TikTok. These platforms serve as conduits for SMIs who have honed their expertise in various domains, including leisure, food, entertainment, fitness, and more.

A noteworthy trend in the IM landscape is the utilization of live streaming videos, often associated with Twitch influencers. These SMIs stream live video content to their followers, providing opportunities to promote sponsored content in real-time (Woodcock & Johnson, 2018).

Central to achieving a successful influencer status are three critical characteristics: expertise, authenticity, and intimacy. These attributes play a pivotal role in building larger follower bases (Jayasinghe, 2021). A global consumer survey on influencer marketing conducted by Rakuten Marketing (2019) underscored the impact of IM as a conversion marketing strategy, revealing that 80% of consumers made purchases based on influencer recommendations. Notably, millennials are particularly influenced by influencers, with IM significantly shaping their decision-making processes, even in the context of selecting rural tourism destinations (Jayasinghe, 2021).

Branded content generated by influencers, often referred to as User-Generated Content (UGC), as well as the attractiveness, trustworthiness, and similarity of influencers to their follower base, exerts a positive influence on followers' trust in influencers. This trust, in turn, has a direct and favorable effect on brand awareness and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consequently, numerous organizations recognize the advantages of enlisting SMIs as product endorsers in their marketing strategies, driven by the pervasive popularity of social media influencers (Jayasinghe, *Social Media and Influencer Marketing Strategies: A conceptual Review on Contemporary Applications*, 2021).

In today's digital era, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy for brands to connect with their target audiences. Influencers, the new category of opinion leaders, hold a unique position between celebrities and friends, making them relatable and trustworthy to their followers. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, these self-made "microcelebrities" have gained prominence, presenting a novel and effective approach to advertising (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017).

Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers primarily build their reputation on social media platforms. Their main activity revolves around engaging content creation and collaboration with their followers, establishing authentic connections that conventional celebrities may lack. This authenticity and perceived closeness to their audiences make influencers appear more credible and trustworthy, which significantly impacts their effectiveness in shaping consumer behavior (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Hu, Min, Han, & Liu, 2020).

Social media influencers tend to have more focused and segmented audiences, allowing them to cater to specific interests. As virtual friends, they become opinion leaders and experts within their respective fields, guiding their followers' purchase decisions. Consumers often seek out influencers' advice and opinions, viewing them as reliable sources of information before making buying choices (Rahman, Saleem, Akhtar, Ali, & Khan, 2014).

Influencer marketing campaigns have become increasingly popular on platforms like Instagram, especially in industries that require a level of expertise, such as fashion (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Rahman, Saleem, Akhtar, Ali, & Khan, 2014).

Brands investing in influencer marketing aim for positive returns on their investments, targeting enhanced purchase intentions, recommendations, engagement, favorable brand attitudes, and increased brand awareness among consumers (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

The success of influencer marketing can be attributed to the compatibility, or "fit," between influencers' image and their followers' interests. A strong match leads to followers imitating or taking the influencer's advice, resulting in a more significant impact on consumer behavior (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership, 2020; Choi & Rifon, 2012). Brands also benefit from Instagram's visual features and functionalities

that inspire and engage consumers, making it an ideal platform for influencer campaigns (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017; Hong, Yang, & Feng, 2020).

As influencers' presence continues to grow on social media, they play a pivotal role in shaping advertising effectiveness. Their authenticity, expertise, and targeted audience appeal make them influential partners for brands seeking to connect with consumers in a more personalized and engaging manner. Utilizing influencer marketing as part of their overall advertising strategy, brands can harness the power of social media influencers to create authentic and meaningful connections with their audience, ultimately driving business growth in the digital age.

2.2 Tourism Influencers

The rise of social media, driven by technological advancements, has fundamentally reshaped society by facilitating interaction and content creation. Within this evolving landscape, the concept of Tourism influencers has emerged, and their numbers continue to grow (Backaler, 2018). Tourism influencer also known as a traveler can be defined as an individual who utilizes communication technologies and new media platforms to share their travel experiences with a global audience, overcoming the constraints of time and space. These influencers create content related to various aspects of travel, including destinations, travel routes, tour packages, services offered by tourism businesses, and their personal extraordinary experiences (Asan, 2021). What sets them apart is their ability to amass a substantial following on social media platforms.

These influencers are also referred to by various alternative terms such as 'content creator,' 'talent,' 'YouTuber,' 'blogger,' 'vlogger,' 'Instagrammer,' and 'phenomenon' (Backaler, 2018; Brown & Hayes, Influencer marketing: Who really influences your customers?, 2008; Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

2.2.1 Types of tourism influencers: bloggers/ vloggers/ Social media Influencers.

In the tourism domain, various types of influencers have emerged, each with distinct characteristics and platforms for sharing their experiences and recommendations. These types include Bloggers, Vloggers and Social media Influencers.

A blogger is a digital storyteller who crafts narratives through web posts, sharing insights, experiences, and expertise with a global audience. They engage readers by exploring various topics, offering advice, and commenting on current events. The term "blogger" originated from "blog," which, in turn, derived from "web log" – an online journal or diary shared through personal web accounts. Bloggers post regularly on diverse subjects, including politics, technology, and art, using a mix of text, pictures, links, and videos (Corazon, 2023). Beyond content creation, bloggers foster community engagement, encouraging reader comments and participating in blogger community sites. Collaboration is common, with multiple bloggers maintaining a single blog or joining networks. This collaborative nature infuses blogging with a sense of community, fostering fresh ideas and content. The evolving landscape includes various blogging formats like mobile blogging, photo blogging, videoblogging, and podcasting. Trustworthy bloggers serve as sources for news, gaining recognition from traditional media. Bloggers, initially perceived as individuals discussing mundane lives, have become reliable information sources on diverse topics. They contribute to the dynamic digital content world, embodying creativity, innovation, and a commitment to continual learning. Bloggers, akin to freelance artists, share real, authentic content for free, creating blog posts, articles, and web content. Success in blogging involves producing original material regularly, maintaining a strong social media presence, and thinking innovatively in a growing blogging community. Bloggers exhibit unique personalities – innovative, insightful, flexible, expressive, imaginative, unstructured, original, irreconcilable, and creative (Social Media Marketing Glossary, n.d.).

A vlogger, short for 'video blogger' is an individual who creates and posts video blogs, or vlogs, on online platforms such as YouTube. Vloggers typically share their thoughts, experiences, and expertise through video content, often engaging with their audience and building a community around their channel. The content of vlogs can vary widely, covering topics such as lifestyle, travel, beauty, fashion, technology, and more. Vlogging has become a popular form of self-expression and communication in the digital age (Frobenius , 2014).

A social media influencer is an individual who has established credibility in a specific industry or niche, and who has a large and engaged following on social media platforms. These individuals have the power to affect the purchasing decisions of their followers because of their authority, knowledge, and relationship with their

audience. Social media influencers can be categorized into various types based on the size of their following, such as nano-influencers, micro-influencers, macro-influencers, and mega-influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). They often share aspects of their personal lives to create a close connection with their audience, and they may receive free products from brands or be paid to promote products, leading to a proliferation of individuals aspiring to become influencers (Freberg K. , Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011).

2.2.2 The role of tourism influencers in shaping travel decisions.

Travel influencers, a term that has gained prominence with the rise of social media, play a pivotal role in shaping travel decisions. Their influence, as outlined in numerous studies, can be attributed to several key factors.

Travel influencers serve as valuable sources of information for their followers, offering insights into destinations, local cultures, and travel formalities that might not be readily available through traditional tourism channels. This reliability in travel information has been noted by Ay et al. (2019), making them a trusted resource for travel planning among discerning audiences.

Beyond providing information, travel influencers are admired for their charisma, communication style, and unique content, which significantly contribute to engaging and retaining their audience, as highlighted by Lou and Yuan (2019).

Travel influencers also function as motivational figures, inspiring their followers with captivating content, unique experiences, and an intense sense of wanderlust. Yılmaz et al. (2020) have underlined this motivational aspect, emphasizing that influencers derive personal satisfaction from the positive reactions and engagement they receive from their followers.

In terms of behavioral influence, travel influencers hold sway over consumer choices, particularly in the realm of travel. They can shape decisions related to destination selection, accommodation preferences, and activity planning, as confirmed by Li et al. (2015).

Travel influencers often cultivate online communities centered around specific travel niches or interests. These communities serve as platforms for like-minded travelers to connect, share experiences, seek advice, and build connections, aligning with Brown & Hayes (2008) concept of "decision-maker ecosystems."

Destination marketing has evolved to incorporate travel influencers as integral components. Destination management organizations and tourism businesses have recognized their effectiveness in marketing efforts. Collaborations with influencers highlight their impact on both consumer behavior and destination image, as demonstrated in the study by Ong and Ito (2019).

Specialization in niche tourism areas is a strategy employed by some travel influencers, such as those focusing on bicycle touring. These experts in specific domains wield substantial influence within their niches, in accordance with Gretzel's (2018) assertion that influencers with specialized knowledge are particularly effective in niche tourism.

Measuring the impact of travel influencers can be done quantitatively through metrics like follower counts, subscriptions, likes, and comments, as highlighted in various studies. However, it is essential to emphasize, as pointed out by Book et al. (2018), the need for a deeper understanding of the nature of their impact.

Reviews, including those authored by travel influencers, hold significant sway over travelers' decisions. These reviews, whether provided by influencers, fellow travelers, or online communities, play a crucial role in building trust and influencing choices, as evidenced by the findings of Zablocki et al. (2019).

Trustworthiness is a cornerstone of influencer marketing. Travel influencers are trusted when they are perceived as credible, authentic, and knowledgeable within their areas of expertise, echoing the insights of various researchers, including Xiao et al. (2018).

Travel influencers establish their unique presence by creating personalized and resonant content that sets them apart. This uniqueness enhances their appeal and impact, consistent with the observations made by Chatzigeorgiou (2017).

2.3 Branding Image

2.3.1 Definition and components of branding image.

Brand image is how buyers see a brand. Brand perception is how consumers see the brand. Over time, this picture evolved. Customer contact with the brand shapes their image. These encounters may take numerous forms and not always entail buying or using items and services. An organization's reputation is the sum of

its consumers' perceptions of it (Pahwa, 2022). Consumers' thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about the brand are encapsulated in it.

“Perceptions about a brand reflected as associations in the minds of consumers” (Keller, 1993). Brand image is how customers perceive your brand after having interactions. It may change without a client buying or utilizing your goods or service. Maintaining a consistent brand image is crucial as consumers may have diverse perspectives.

Brand image is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the attributes and benefits associated with a brand, setting it apart from competitors. It is crucial for a company to establish a clear differentiation from its rivals (Keller & Webster, A roadmap for branding in industrial markets, 2004). Attributes represent descriptive features that define a brand based on consumers' desires, such as purchase or consumption preferences. On the other hand, benefits are the personal value embedded in consumers' perceptions of a brand, encompassing what they believe a brand can offer them (Jaya & Prianthara, 2018).

2.3.2 Importance of branding image for tourism destinations and businesses

Every company wants a good reputation to achieve its goals. Strong brand images provide several benefits.

- Increased income from attracting new clients to the brand.
- Easy to launch new items under the same brand.
- Increases consumer confidence.
- Improved Business-Customer connections.

A bad-image corporation may struggle to function and introduce a new product under the same name. The branding image helps attract visitors and build a destination's reputation. According to Francisco J. Martínez-López et al., social media influencer marketing provides a social and interactive way for firms to share product information. Consumer trust is affected by brand management and commercial content (2020). Trust influences impressions and choices, making branding image management crucial. The social networks influencer value model by Chen Lou and Shupeí Yuan emphasizes advertising value or source credibility (2019). Influencer trust increases followers' confidence in sponsored content, which

boosts brand awareness and buying intentions. The significance of a good branding image on customer trust and behavior is further highlighted.

The social media influencer research found that customer confidence in influencers favorably influences several travel decision-making stages. Trust mediates desire and experience sharing, underlining the lasting impact of a favorable branding image on travel decisions. Trustworthiness, social influence, and argument quality are the three factors that determine the credibility of information, according to studies conducted by Min Xiao, Rang Wang & Sylvia Chan-Olmsted about YouTube marketers with influence (2018). This strengthens the link between branding, influencer reputation, and customer views (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). Joyce Han and Han Chen's millennial research shows that source trustworthiness improves travel inclinations and shows that social media influencer followers improve the connection, highlighting the importance of influencer following on perceptions.

Commercial streets' branding image could play a significant role in inviting new Shoppers, attracting customers and visitors to the community (Yamagishi, *Creating a Branding Image as an Effective Strategy to Revitalize Downtown Commercial Streets*, 2008). It can further transform the image of the declining downtown shopping streets and reclaim a good portion of tenants and customers. It shows that even though famous roads as Newbury Street and Time square could transform their images in a positive way, there is little research into methods for maintaining and changing the pictures of streets to draw tenants and shoppers. The branding image of commercial streets is an important aspect, which determines how visitors and customers will view these areas. Kohichi points out that the branding image as street influences new shops, customers, and other people and may help reinvigoration of dying township high streets. Illustrations based on the example of Downtown Crossing as a tourism destination, and retail businesses based on the example of Newbury Street in the Back Bay sub-center highlight the significance of branding image for tourism destinations and companies. Therefore, these examples show that a properly formulated branding picture can attract the passers-by, contribute to the economy of a street, and even provoke relocation the commercial Centre in one city or another (2008).

2.3.3 The Role of Tourism Influencers in Branding Image

Tourism influencers shape destination branding by influencing customer perception, awareness of the company, and brand image.

2.3.3.1 Tourism influencers on destination perception

Tourism influencers shape destination impressions, according to extensive studies. The research by Francisco J. Martínez-López et al. explores how social media influencers affect customer trust, interest, or purchase decisions (2020). It implies that brand authority over influencers' postings and their commercial direction affects customer trust. Brand control diminishes trust, but perceived commercial orientation does more, according to the research. Destination marketers using influencers need this deep insight. Chen Lou and Shupeí Yuan's research explains advertising value and source trustworthiness in the social media influencer value model. Results show that influencer-generated content's informational value, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and resemblance increase followers' trust (2019). This trust affects brand awareness and purchasing intentions, highlighting the complex connection between influencers with destination perception (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

2.3.3.2 Effects of tourism influencers on brand awareness

Many researchers examine how tourist influencers boost brand awareness. Trust is crucial to consumer travel decisions, according to social media influencer studies. According to customer journey theory, consumer trust in online platform influencers strengthens each trip decision-making phase. This comprises desire generation, information search, alternative appraisal, buying choices, satisfaction, and knowledge sharing. The results underline the role of influencers throughout the process of decision-making and the value of trust in consumer-destination interactions. Princess Elisha S. Abad's research examines travel vlogs' destination marketing effects. Travel vlogs affect location credibility and decision-making, according to studies. The legitimacy of travel vloggers' information influences travel choices (Abad & Borbon, 2021). This shows how influencers, especially video content creators, may boost brand awareness by captivating and credibly presenting places.

2.3.3.3 Tourism influencers change brand image

Destination marketers must understand how tourist influencers affect brand image (Yılmazdoğan, Doğan, & Altıntaş, 2021). The Instagram influencer source credibility research examines attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. It shows that parasocial interaction mediates these characteristics' effects on travel intention. These results emphasize the necessity of building trust and knowledge in influencer collaborations to improve tourism views. The Min Xiao, Rang Wang, & Sylvia Chan-Olmsted research examines YouTube influencer marketing trustworthiness variables. Trustworthiness, political power, argument quality, and information engagement impact YouTube information believability, according to studies (2018). The positive association between perceived data credibility with brand/video attitudes shows that influencers' trustworthy material boosts brand image.

2.3.3.4 Engagement and trust building through tourism influencers

Due to their power, tourism influencers may connect with followers personally. Companies may interact with potential passengers more intimately using social media influencers. Martinez-López's study emphasizes trustworthy, non-commercial influencer posts (2017). This suggests influencer content's authenticity and reputation build trust. Lou and Yuan's Social Media Influencer Value Model studies influencer marketing (2018). This model argues that influencers' branded posts are believed owing to their trustworthiness, attractiveness, likeness to followers, and quality content. For brand awareness and purchasing intents, trust matters. According to the survey, influencers are essential to corporate credibility. Han and Chen evaluated millennial influencer source credibility, user perceptions, and travel intention (2022). The statistics suggest that source credibility greatly influences consumers' attitudes and willingness to visit authorized sites. According to the study, influencer followers have stronger trust, attitude, and intention links. Interaction and connection develop brand perceptions in influencer marketing.

2.3.3.5 Factors affecting the brand image promoted by travel influencers

Studies help to explain how travel influencers' brand image is shaped. Abad's research on travel vlogs shows that reliable information influences travel choices

(2021). The research links better travel decisions to better destination selections, showing that influencers boost brand awareness and destination image. Xiao uses a heuristic-systematic paradigm to analyze YouTube information believability (2018). Trustworthiness, social impact, argument quality, and data participation influence customer impressions. This research shows how these elements affect influencer trust and brand or video attitudes.

2.4 Destination Image

Destination image is the mental representation and perception individuals have of a particular destination. It includes cognitive, affective, and conative aspects that influence tourists' attitudes and intentions toward the place. This concept, introduced by Crompton in 1979 (Crompton, 1979), underscores how people mentally construct their views of destinations, which in turn impacts their decision-making process in tourism. Pike (2002) further emphasizes the critical role of destination image, highlighting its significant influence on tourists' decisions and behaviors.

Tasci and Gartner (2007) integrated these perspectives, revealing destination image as a dynamic system comprising cognitive, affective, and conative elements, intertwined with destination attributes. Gunn Clare (1972) elucidated the evolution of destination images, while Fakeye and Crompton (1991) expanded on the final stage image as influenced by tourists' experiences. H. Kim and Chen (2016) proposed driving processes in destination image formation, shedding light on key factors in the process. Overall, destination image is a multifaceted construct influenced by various dimensions and factors, as evidenced by diverse scholarly contributions.

Cognitive image pertains to individuals' knowledge and beliefs about a destination, encompassing its attributes and features. Sources such as travel guides, websites, and personal experiences contribute to its formation (Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This component plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions by providing a mental representation of the destination's offerings.

Affective image, on the other hand, refers to the emotional responses and feelings that individuals have towards a destination (Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This component of destination image is formed through affective experiences, such as the atmosphere, ambiance, and mood of a destination (Rodríguez-Molina, Frías-Jamilena, & Castañeda-García, 2015). Affective image is

essential in shaping tourists' evaluations of a destination, as it influences their emotional attachment and connection to the place.

Conative image, as defined by Gartner, refers to the behavioral intentions and actions of individuals towards a destination (1994), and it represents the actual conduct or intentions of tourists to revisit and recommend destinations. It is characterized by tourists' actions, such as sharing positive feedback or expressing intentions to revisit a destination (Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007).

2.5 The significance of source credibility in influencing destination image

Source credibility is a crucial concept in communication and persuasion. It refers to the extent to which an audience perceives a communicator or a source as trustworthy, reliable, and well-informed (Singletary, 2015). The concept of source credibility has been thoroughly explored in academic research, with scholars delving into its dimensions and importance across different scenarios.

The importance of source credibility resides in its capacity to boost the effectiveness of a message. Studies suggest that a credible source is better positioned to shape opinions and achieve the desired impact on the audience. According to source credibility theory, individuals are more susceptible to persuasion when the source appears credible, with perceived expertise and trustworthiness serving as pivotal factors in establishing credibility (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, *Communication and persuasion*, 1963).

According to Wathen and Burkell (2002) the credibility of the source would influence the reliability of the information. When a message originates from a source that people believe to be reliable, they are more likely to believe its contents than when it comes from a less reliable source. Initially, Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) highlighted trustworthiness and expertise as fundamental dimensions of source credibility.

In addition to expertise and trustworthiness, other researchers have identified likability and homophily as important dimensions of source credibility (Jia, 2022).

Trustworthiness is defined as the receiver's confidence in and acceptance of the speaker, and it is recognized as honesty and believability. Trustworthiness builds trust between influencers and audiences (O'Keefe, 2002)

Expertise, on the other hand, refers to the source's knowledge, abilities, and competency in a certain field. Consumers are more inclined to believe and follow specialists in influencer marketing. The source's expertise lends credibility to the marketing message by providing accurate and useful information (Singletary, 2015).

Likability plays a pivotal role in source credibility, as it has a considerable impact on whether participants intend to engage in a certain behavior (Singletary, 2015). DeSarbo & Harshman (1985) defined likability as it refers to the communicator's charisma, friendliness, and approachability, which can influence the audience's perception of their credibility (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). Research has shown that likeability positively impacts the perceived credibility of the source, which in turn influences attitudes and behaviors. Homophily, or similarity, between the message sender and receiver, can also impact the perceived credibility of the message (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).

Attractiveness, as another dimension of source credibility, refers to the perceived charisma, likeability, and visual appeal of the information provider or communicator (Serman & Sims, 2023). Research has shown that the attractiveness of the source can have a profound impact on how the message is perceived and received by the audience. Numerous studies have demonstrated the power of source attractiveness in persuasion and influence. Credible and attractive sources are often more successful in shaping people's opinions and behaviors (Hovland & Weiss, 1952). Interestingly, even in situations where the source's credibility is incongruent with the message, an attractive source can still be more persuasive than a high credibility but less attractive source (Serman & Sims, 2023).

The influence of source attractiveness extends across various domains, including consumer behavior, technology, media, and information. For instance, research in the hospitality and tourism industry has found that the perceived attractiveness of a destination, hotel, or tourism service provider can significantly impact consumer attitudes, intentions, and actual behaviors (Kim & Kim, 2013).

The significance of source credibility lies in its capacity to enhance the persuasiveness of a message. Studies indicate that a highly credible source can boost the effectiveness of a message, with individuals more inclined to be swayed by a

source perceived as credible. Nevertheless, while source credibility and message credibility are distinct concepts, certain measures of message credibility align with dimensions of source credibility without practical connection (Singletary, 2015).

Creating an ostensibly trustworthy source can be both expensive and unethical, underscoring the importance for a company to uphold its credibility through honesty and transparency. Trustworthiness, a component of source credibility, finds support in experimental studies. However, the notion that a more trustworthy source is inherently more persuasive lacks empirical backing, with attractiveness and expertise emerging as more influential factors in source credibility (Wiener & Mowen, 1986). In the context of branding image, source credibility roles stands as a pivotal factor in marketing and communication, as emphasized by numerous studies in both commercial and social marketing domains (Zhang, 2015). Specifically, in the tourism sector, the source credibility of branding holds immense importance, exerting a substantial influence on the destination marketing process (Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013).

Several studies have found that destination source credibility plays an essential role in building tourists' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions toward destinations. Erdem and Swait (2004) found that destination source credibility has a significant effect on both the cognitive and affective image of a destination. Similarly, Roostika and Muafi (2014) demonstrated that destination source credibility is positively related to both the cognitive and affective image of a destination.

Attractiveness, encompassing the physical appearance and charisma of SMIs, has been identified as a factor that can contribute to building trust with followers. While some studies suggest that attractiveness may not directly impact consumer confidence, an attractive social media influencer can still play a significant role in shaping the destination image and influencing travel decisions (Chen, Silaban, Widya, & Silalahi, 2023).

Social media influencers who demonstrate expertise in presenting and explaining destination information are more likely to be trusted by consumers, thereby positively influencing the destination image (Chen, Silaban, Widya, & Silalahi, 2023).

Other research found that when sources are perceived as credible in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, and likability, audiences are more likely to form favorable impressions of the destination, leading to increased interest, positive word-of-mouth, and ultimately, higher visitation rates (Jia, 2022).

2.6 The significance of Argument Quality in influencing destination image

Argument quality is the evaluative perception of the persuasiveness and strength of arguments within a message or communication, as subjectively interpreted by the audience (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Wang, 2014; Dumani & Schenkel, 2020). This assessment significantly influences the audience's reception and acceptance of the conveyed beliefs or viewpoints. It encompasses various elements including coherence, evidential support, and consideration of counterarguments (Areni & Lutz, 1988). A high-quality argument is characterized by clarity, logical reasoning, substantial evidence, and the acknowledgment and rebuttal of potential counterarguments, indicating a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Dumani & Schenkel, 2020). This definition emphasizes the degree to which the arguments within a message are compelling and convincing, influencing individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022). The components encompass various factors such as logical coherence, factual accuracy, relevance, and the overall persuasiveness of the presented information. In essence, argument quality serves as a critical metric in evaluating the effectiveness of persuasive communication, shedding light on the power of reasoning and evidence to sway consumer opinions and decisions (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022).

The dimensions of argument quality encompass various crucial aspects that collectively contribute to the overall effectiveness of persuasive messages. These dimensions serve as a comprehensive guide for assessing the strength and persuasiveness of arguments, particularly in the context of influencer advertising and consumer responses. The main dimensions of argument quality are:

Strength of argument which refers to the convincing and persuasive nature of the points articulated in a message. This dimension is fundamentally defined by the power and effectiveness of the arguments presented to capture the audience's attention and conviction (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). The significance of

evaluating the strength of arguments lies in its role as a measure of the persuasive power inherent in the message. It serves as a critical gauge of the extent to which the points presented can convincingly influence the audience, shaping their perceptions and ultimately leading to the desired responses. In essence, the strength of arguments is a key determinant of the overall impact and success of a persuasive message in achieving its communicative objectives (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022).

Relevance, in the context of persuasive communication, is defined as the degree of relevance and applicability of the arguments presented in a message to the interests and concerns of the audience (asado-Aranda, Sánchez-Fernández, & Paço, 2021).

Clarity in communication means making arguments both comprehensible and coherent, ensuring that the audience can easily understand the ideas presented. Comprehensibility means using clear language and structuring information in such a way that it is accessible to a diverse audience. On the other hand, coherence involves organizing arguments logically, ensuring that each point flows smoothly into the one that follows (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022). Together, these aspects of clarity contribute to a message that is not only clear on an individual level, but also forms a coherent, comprehensible whole (Sánchez-Fernández, A., & Bastidas-Manzano, 2021). This aspect is crucial in persuasive communication, where the effectiveness of the message depends on the audience's ability to grasp and relate to the information presented.

The consistency of communication is based on logical coherence and the absence of contradictions in the arguments presented. This dimension examines the internal harmony of the message, ensuring that points align logically without introducing confusion or contradictory information (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022). By maintaining a coherent narrative, communication strives to present a unified and reliable front, which reinforces the persuasive power of the message.

Chong et al. (2018) conducted research on the impact of travel review content on destination image, highlighting that argument quality of travel reviews influence cognitive, affective, and conative images of a destination. Positive high rating reviews notably enhance cognitive image, while negative low rating reviews have a significant impact on the affective image. Moreover, the study emphasized that

diverse types of information content lead to different outcomes in the formation of destination image, with positive concrete information significantly improving tourists' perceptions of a location (Guo, 2022)



Chapter 3

Methodology

3.2 Research Design

For the 1st research question (also hypothesis), this study will employ a quantitative research design that includes a pretest-posttest within-subjects experimental model and a correlational model to examine the effect of tourism influencers on the perception of Algeria as a travel destination. The experimental pre-test-post-test model within the subjects will assess whether the perception of Algeria/Algiers as a travel destination change before and after being exposed to a video featuring a travel influencer. Participants will take a pre-test before seeing the influencer's video and a post-test after watching it, with the image of the destination of Algeria being measured using a validated scale.

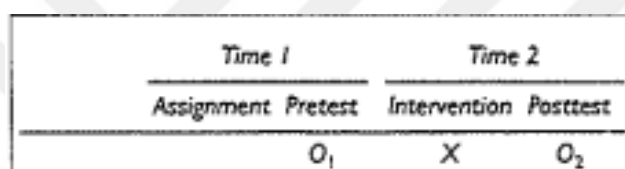


Figure 1 The research design for 1st research question (one group pretest - posttest design).

For the second research question (hypothesis 2-3-4-5), the multiple linear regression model is going to investigate the relationship between the destination's image (a dependent variable) and the attributes of the source's credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, likability) and argument quality (an independent variable). The participants will rate the authority of the source and the persuasiveness of the influencer's argument while also providing their impression of the Algerian/ Algiers destination. This model will allow for the identification of the factors that are most closely linked to the perception of Algeria/Algiers as a travel destination, namely the credibility of the source and the quality of the argument. The quantitative approach was chosen in order to quantify the relationships between the variables and establish cause-and-effect relationships in order to provide objective information about the effects of tourism influencers on the destination's image.

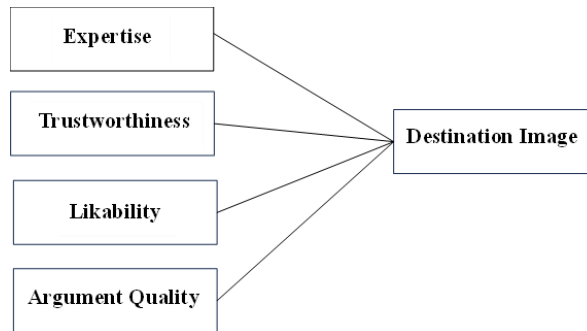


Figure 2 Conceptual research model of the 2nd research question.

For the third research question, the research design will be experimental design that includes only a posttest, to compare between groups on the demographics.

3.3 Universe and Participants/Working Group

The target population for this study comprises individuals who are not Algerian and have never been to Algiers, regardless they have traveled to other parts of Algeria previously.

The study included a total sample of 111 participants who were chosen based on convenience sampling which is one of the non-probability sampling methods, out of which 5 were used as a pilot test group, and 21 participants were automatically excluded from the survey because they already visited Algiers before. Consequently, the final participant count for analysis was 85 individuals who met the specified criteria.

To uphold participant confidentiality and privacy of the participants, the survey was designed to be anonymous. Participants were not required to provide their names, surnames, or email addresses during the survey process. This approach ensured that participants' identities remained undisclosed and protected throughout the research process.

The characteristics of the participants in this study are as follows:

Table 1

Gender Distribution.

	f	%
Male	40	47,10
Female	45	52,90
Total	85	100

The study's participant demographics reveal a balanced gender distribution, with 40 male participants (47.10%) and 45 female participants (52.90%).

Table 2

Age Group.

Age Group	f	%
19-24	50	59,52
25-28	23	27,38
29-41	11	13,10
Total	84	100

In terms of age groups, the majority of participants fell within the 19-24 range, comprising 59.52% of the sample, followed by the 25-28 group at 27.38% and the 29-41 group at 13.10%.

Table 3

Marital Status.

	N	%
Single	55	64,7
Married	15	17,6
Prefer not to answe	15	17,6
Total	85	100,0

The marital status distribution of the study participants shows that the majority, accounting for 64.7%, are single. Married individuals make up 17.6% of the sample, as do participants who prefer not to disclose their marital status. This breakdown

underscores the varied marital statuses within the participant pool, with a significant portion being single, followed by married individuals and those who opt not to reveal their marital status.

Table 4

Occupation.

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent of Responses	
Student	52	49,1%	61,2%
Fulltime	20	18,9%	23,5%
Parttime	19	17,9%	22,4%
Self-Employed	12	11,3%	14,1%
Freelancer	3	2,8%	3,5%
Total	106	100,0%	124,7%

Regarding occupation, students made up the largest segment at 61.2%, followed by full-time employees at 23.5%, part-time employees at 22.4%, self-employed individuals at 14.1%, and freelancers at 3.5%.

Table 5

Education Level.

	N	%
High School or Below	5	5,9
Undergraduate	52	61,2
Graduate	28	32,9
Total	85	100,0

The educational background of the study's participants is diverse, with the larger part holding undergraduate degrees. Particularly, 61.2% of the participants have completed an undergraduate program, while 32.9% have accomplished a graduate-level education. The remaining 5.9% of the participants have a high school diploma or below.

3.4 Data collection

In this study, data collection will include a systematic approach from sampling to analysis, using diverse tools and techniques to analyze the data. The research will use a convenient sampling method to enlist participants who have never been to Algeria, ensuring a different and representative sample.

3.4.1 Data collection procedures

The data collection procedures for this study started on March 29th and concluded on April 23rd. Firstly, a pilot survey was conducted with 5 individuals to test the survey instrument, followed by the official dispatch of the survey on April 1st. The survey was shared using an online platform, which is Google Forms, to facilitate data collection. The survey was distributed through various channels, including WhatsApp groups for the Bahçesehir university classes covering courses such as "Approximation to Consumer Behavior by Experimental Designs," "Introduction to Communication for Dental Healthcare Providers," and "Social Campaigns," which are elective and mandatory undergraduate or master program courses. Additionally, the survey was shared with the Nisantasi university class in the course "Communication Skills and Academic Reporting" and the sales department of the company "Akaylife" to reach a diverse participant pool. Utilizing an online survey format allowed for efficient data collection and broad outreach to participants across different academic programs and platforms.

3.4.2 Data collection tools

For our thesis on Algeria, we chose to feature the video content from the Dabble and Travel YouTube channel for several key reasons:

Firstly, the Dabble and Travel videos provided a comprehensive and immersive look at the city of Algiers and broader Algerian culture. Initially, we considered videos from Algerian influencers, but felt it was important to have a perspective from travelers who had not previously been to the country. This allowed us to capture a more objective and authentic portrayal of the Algerian experience.

In contrast, some of the other videos we reviewed were either focused solely on a single city or region, or were presented entirely in Arabic without subtitles,

which would have limited accessibility for our intended audience. The Dabble and Travel videos, on the other hand, covered multiple popular destinations across Algeria, offering detailed insights and visuals that made viewers feel transported to the country.

Importantly, the Dabble and Travel hosts also collaborated closely with a local Algerian tour guide, Wassim, who provided invaluable on-the-ground expertise and connections. This collaborative approach resulted in a more nuanced and well-rounded portrayal of Algiers and Algeria that we felt would be highly relevant and useful for our thesis.

Overall, the Dabble and Travel video content stood out as the best fit for our needs - providing a comprehensive, immersive, and objective look at Algeria that would engage and inform our target audience. The level of detail, variety of locations covered, and insider access granted by the local guide made this the optimal choice to showcase Algeria in our thesis

This study uses a 7-point Likert scale and data collection tools from two separate sources. The cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions of the destination—in this case, Algeria/Algiers—were assessed both before and after watching a video in the first component of the questionnaire. An 18-item multiform scale covering five dimensions—natural elements, amenities, attractions, accessibility, and social environment—was created by Woosnam et al. (2020) to evaluate the cognitive image of destination image. Woosnam et al. used 17 items in their original research, we replaced two items in the attractions sub-dimensions of the cognitive dimension of the destination image. So, “good nightlife” and “interesting festivals” are changed with “interesting historic sites” and “the variety of tourist activities”. Furthermore, in the social environment subdimension of cognitive image dimension of destination image we added a new item from the original scale which is “friendly local people”. We made these changes because they were more relevant for our study. Four items from the differential semantic scale were used to evaluate the affective image, and three items evaluating the planned, open, and recommendation intentions of the destination were used to capture the conative image. The traits of the social media influencer were the subject of the second section of the questionnaire. In order to evaluate the trustworthiness and the expertise, we

employed a five items of 7-point differential semantic scale (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018) for each scale. Four 7-point items were used to gauge how likable people thought the influencer was (Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). Additionally, four items on a 7-point scale that were modified from Xiao et al.'s (2018) study of online word-of-mouth communication were used to evaluate the influencer's arguments' quality.

3.4.3 Data analysis procedures

The data analysis procedures will be carried out using IBM SPSS version 29, utilizing statistical approaches tailored to the research issues. For the first research question, perceptions of the destination before and after viewing a video featuring a travel influencer will be compared using a test for appearing samples. For the second research question, a multiple regression linear modeling technique will be used to analyze the relationship between the destination's image and the characteristics of the source's credibility and argument quality. These statistical studies will yield invaluable information about the impact of tourism influencers on the perception of Algeria as a destination and the factors influencing travelers' attitudes and perceptions of the area.

3.4.4 Validity and Reliability

In order to evaluate the validity and reliability of the scales used in this study, exploratory factor analyses and Cronbach's alpha calculations were carried out.

We measured the cognitive, emotional, and conative aspects of the Algerian destination's image before and after watching the video using a destination image scale. This scale's exploratory component analysis revealed a clear structure consisting of three factors, with the items pertaining to the expected dimensions.

Additionally, a factorially exploratory analysis was conducted on the variables measuring the characteristics of the tourism influencer, such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attraction. The analysis has shown a clear structure consisting of three factors, with the items pertaining to the expected dimensions.

Table 6.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Cognitive Dimension of

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha	
Cognitive Dimension of Destination Image Before Video								
i1	Algiers has a scenic beauty	83	3,64	1,53	0,839	8,331	62,42	0,959
i2	Algiers has a pleasant weather	79	3,25	1,42	0,874			
i3	Algiers has a good quality of hotels	77	3,19	1,41	0,808			
i4	Algiers has an appealing cuisine and food options	82	3,85	1,41	0,772			
i5	Algiers has an excellent quality of service	79	3,35	1,54	0,920			
i6	Algiers has an interesting historic sites	82	3,50	1,69	0,912			
i7	Algiers has a variety of tourist activities	80	3,26	1,70	0,786			
i8	Algiers is easily accessible	77	2,75	1,43	0,723			
i9	Algiers has a convenient Transport	78	3,06	1,33	0,831			
i10	Algiers has friendly local people	81	3,86	1,69	0,806			
i11	Algiers has a clean environment	81	3,10	1,78	0,906			
i12	Algiers has a good value for money	77	2,90	1,54	0,797			

The factor analyses and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the destination image's cognitive dimension, which was assessed prior to participants viewing the travel influencer movie, are presented in Table 6. Regarding the cognitive dimension of the destination image scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value, which indicates the acceptability of the data for factor analysis, is 0.919. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 821.515$ $df=66$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). 69.42% of the total variance is explained by the identified factor.

Table 7.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of The Affective Dimension Image Scales Before Watching the Video Used In The Study.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha	
Affective Dimension of Destination Image Before Video								
i1	How is your overall impression of Algiers? (Unpleasant/Pleasant)	82	3,50	1,89	0,938	2,627	87,552	0,925
i2	How is your overall impression of Algiers? (Boring/Exciting)	82	3,65	1,60	0,944			
i3	How is your overall impression of Algiers? (Distressing/Relaxing)	79	3,53	1,59	0,925			

The factor analysis results and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the destination image's emotive dimension, which was assessed prior to the participants seeing the travel influencer movie, are shown in Table 7.

The destination image scale's affective dimension has a Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value of 0.762, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Barlet test

indicates significance ($X^2 = 184.00$ $df=3$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklín value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). The discovered factor accounts for 87.552% of the variance overall.

Table 8.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Conative dimension of destination image scale Before Watching the Video Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Conative Dimension of Destination Image Before Video								
i1	How likely are you to visit Algiers at some point in the future?	82	3,50	1,61	0,898	2,148	71,587	0,796
i2	How likely are you to recommend Algiers to your friends and relatives?	67	3,65	1,53	0,880			
i3	How likely are you to visit Algiers in the next 2 years?	76	3,53	1,65	0,753			

The conative dimension of the destination image was measured prior to the participants seeing the travel influencer film, and Table 8 displays the results of the factor analyses and the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this dimension. The value of 0.657 for the conative dimension of the destination image scale indicates that the data is suitable for factor analysis, according to the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklín measure. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 66.267$ $df=3$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklín value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). The discovered factor accounts for 71.587% of the variance overall.

Table 9.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Cognitive Dimension of Destination Image Scale after Watching the Video Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Cognitive Dimension of Destination Image After Video								
i1	Algiers has a scenic beauty	82	6,05	1,20	0,779	6,692	55,763	0,924
i2	Algiers has a pleasant weather	83	5,53	1,15	0,722			
i3	Algiers has a good quality of hotels	82	5,72	1,17	0,859			
i4	Algiers has an appealing cuisine and food options	82	6,37	1,07	0,835			
i5	Algiers has an excellent quality of service	80	5,69	1,01	0,815			
i6	Algiers has an interesting historic sites	82	6,05	1,16	0,728			
i7	Algiers has a variety of tourist activities	82	5,46	1,08	0,613			
i8	Algiers is easily accessible	81	5,11	1,21	0,592			
i9	Algiers has a convenient Transport	80	5,58	1,22	0,735			
i10	Algiers has friendly local people	80	6,39	1,05	0,772			
i11	Algiers has a clean environment	81	6,11	1,19	0,816			
i12	Algiers has a good value for money	81	5,40	1,14	0,639			

The factor analysis results and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the destination image's cognitive dimension, which was assessed after participants watched the travel influencer film, are displayed in Table 9.

With regard to the cognitive dimension of the destination image scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value, which indicates the acceptability of the data for factor analysis, is 0.883. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 613.604$ $df=66$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). 55.763% of the total variance is explained by the identified factor.

Table 10.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Affective Dimension of Destination Image Scale after Watching the Video Used in the Study.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Affective Dimension of Destination Image After Video							
i1	80	5,84	1,13	0,855	2,325	77,505	0,854
i2	81	5,96	0,98	0,860			
i3	82	5,87	1,00	0,924			

The factor analysis results and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the destination image's emotive dimension, which was assessed after participants watched the travel influencer movie, are displayed in Table 10.

The destination image scale's affective dimension has a Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value of 0.688, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 110.675$ $df=66$ $p<0.05$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). 77.505% of the total variance is explained by the identified factor.

Table 11.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Conative Dimension of Destination Image Scale after Watching the Video Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Conative Dimension of Destination Image After Video								
i1	How likely are you to visit Algiers at some point in the future?	81	5,95	1,34	0,928	2,378	79,272	0,857
i2	How likely are you to recommend Algiers to your friends and relatives?	82	5,57	1,31	0,882			
i3	How likely are you to visit Algiers in the next 2 years?	82	5,66	1,72	0,860			

The component analysis results and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the conative dimension of destination image measured after the participants viewed the travel influencer film are displayed in Table 11. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value for the conative dimension of the destination image scale is 0.702, which indicates that the data are suitable for factor analysis. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 122.686$ df=3 p<0.05) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an Eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of the factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). The discovered factor accounts for 79.272% of the variance overall.

Table 12.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Expertise Dimension of Source Credibility Scale Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Expertise Dimension of Source Credibility								
i1	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Not expert/Expert)	85	5,66	1,05	0,823	3,493	69,852	0,891
i2	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Inexperienced/Experienced)	85	5,60	1,13	0,831			
i3	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unknowledgeable/Knowledgeable)	85	5,66	1,08	0,865			
i4	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unqualified/Qualified)	85	5,67	1,26	0,875			
i5	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unskilled/Skilled)	85	5,58	1,08	0,783			

The factor analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the expertise dimension of source credibility, which was assessed after the participants viewed the travel influencer film, are shown in Table 12.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value for the expertise dimension of the source credibility scale is 0.853, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The

Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 233.097$ $df=10$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an Eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of the factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). The discovered factor accounts for 69.852% of the variance overall.

Table 13.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Trustworthiness Dimension of Source Credibility Scales Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Trustworthiness Dimension of Source Credibility								
i1	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Undependable/Dependable)	85	5,58	1,12	0,758	3,608	72,159	0,902
i2	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Dishonest/Honest)	85	5,93	1,16	0,88			
i3	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unreliable/Reliable)	85	5,66	1,06	0,845			
i4	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Insencere/Sincere)	85	5,84	1,26	0,881			
i5	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (untrustworthy/Trustworthy)	85	5,69	1,08	0,758			

The factor analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the source credibility's trustworthiness dimension, which was assessed after participants viewed the travel influencer film, are shown in Table 13. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value for the trustworthiness dimension of the source credibility scale is 0.857, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 257.925$ $df=10$ $p<0.05$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an Eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of the factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). The discovered factor accounts for 72.159% of the variance overall.

Table 14.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Likability Dimension of Source Credibility Scale Used in the Study.

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha
Likability Dimension of Source Credibility								
i1	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unfriendly/Friendly)	85	6,07	1,12	0,891	3,006	75,149	0,884
i2	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Unlikeable/Likeable)	85	5,92	1,00	0,941			
i3	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Not warm/Warm)	85	5,76	1,10	0,723			
i4	You feel the YouTube influencers (Dabble and travel) are (Not approachable/Approachable)	85	5,78	1,23	0,897			

The factor analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the source credibility's trustworthiness dimension, which was assessed after participants viewed the travel influencer film, are shown in Table 14. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value for the trustworthiness dimension of the source credibility scale is 0.803, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 220.178$ $df=6$ $p<0.05$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an Eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of the factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). 75.149% of the total variance is explained by the factor identified.

Table 15.

Factor Analyses and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Argument Quality Scale Used in the Study.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Alpha	
Argument quality								
i1	You feel that the information is convincing	85	5,75	1,14	0,892	3,199	79,969	0,916
i2	You feel that the information is supported by strong arguments	85	5,85	1,09	0,905			
i3	You feel that the information is persuasive	85	5,82	1,06	0,920			
i4	You feel that the information is good	85	5,85	1,03	0,859			

The factor analysis results and the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the argument quality as assessed by the participants following their viewing of the travel influencer's film are displayed in Table 15.

For the argument quality scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin score, which indicates if the data are appropriate for factor analysis, is 0.785. The Barlet test is significant ($X^2 = 247.968$ $df=6$ $p<0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value is higher than the necessary value of 0.60. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was discovered as a consequence of factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). 79.969% of the total variance is explained by the identified factor.

Based on the exploratory factor analysis of the scales associated with the study variables, each scale can be represented by a single factor within itself. As a result, a single component also loads for the dimensions of the destination image, source credibility, and argument quality scales. As a result, the research's validity and that of the original study's scales align. Furthermore, no component analysis shows any assertions with a common variance lower than 0.40 (Pallant, 2013).

For the scales employed in the study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients computed for the credibility test range from 0.796 to 0.959 (Table from 6 to 15). They have values that are higher than permitted rates, as can be observed.

3.4.5 Limitations

This study includes one key limitation is the sample size. While the final research sample consisted of 85 participants, a larger sample could have provided more robust and generalizable results. Increasing the number of participants would have strengthened the statistical power of the analyses and potentially uncovered additional insights. Another significant limitation is the use of a single video to represent the travel influencers' content. The participants were exposed to only one video featuring Dabble and Travel exploring Algiers, which may have constrained their ability to fully understand and directly perceive the influencers' expertise, likability, and the quality of their arguments. Showing the participants multiple videos of the same influencers discussing different aspects of the destination could have given them a more well-rounded perception of the influencers' characteristics and the persuasiveness of their content. By relying on a single video, the study may have limited the participants' capacity to assess the influencers' expertise and the quality of their arguments. Incorporating a more diverse set of influencer content would have allowed for a more reliable evaluation of these factors, potentially leading to a deeper understanding of how tourism influencers shape destination image perception.

The inclusion of 11 individuals who either didn't watch the video or didn't completely interact with the influencer's content was one of the study's key limitations. Excluding these cases would have made it possible to measure the video's impact on destination image perception more accurately, even if testing revealed that their replies did not significantly affect the results.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1.1 Findings related to the 1st research question: Experimental design

Participants' viewing of the travel influencer video is shown in the frequency table. Most of participants (49.4%) paid close attention to the whole video, not skipping just one moment. A further 28.2% saw most of it skipping some part. Just 9.4% of participants watched some parts of the video. 8.2% of the participants admit that they didn't watch the video. There were also 4 missing responses from the participant, accounting for only 4.7% of them.

Table 16.

Manipulation control table

	f	%
I watched all of it with every second	42	49,4
I watched most of it skipping some parts	24	28,2
I watched only some of it	8	9,4
I actually didn't watch it	7	8,2
Missing	4	4,7
Total	85	100

A t-test is a type of statistical test that is used to compare the means of two groups. We measure the same participants in either two different when we measure all the same participants all the same participants in either two different times or in two different conditions. It is one of the most widely used statistical hypothesis tests in pain studies (Kyoung, Francis, Kyoung, & Soo, 2010).

Table 17.

T-test Paired sample statistics.

*

	Mean	N	Std. deviation
Before Video Destination Image	3,63 ^a	84	1,23912
After Video Destination Image	5,73 ^b	84	0,98879

* $p < 0.01$; Paired Samples T-Test: The different superscripts on the means of before or after destination image of Algiers indicate a statistically significant difference between them.

In our study a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perception of destination image before and after watching the video. There was a significant difference in the scores for the before watching the video condition ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.24$) and current time ($M=5.73$ $SD=0.98$) conditions; $t(83) = -11.632$ $p < 0.01$. These results show that participants' perception level after watching video currently is significantly higher than perception levels before watching the video.

4.1.2 Findings related to the 2nd research question: Multiple linear regression analysis

Sir Francis Galton initially presented the idea of linear regression in 1894. By applying a linear equation to the observed data, linear regression is a statistical technique used to ascertain the connection between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Lawton, 2023) Finding the coherent-fitting line that minimizes the sum of squared differences between the values predicted by the model and the observed values is the primary objective of linear regression. This technique is significant since it is mostly used for prediction, which aids in quantifying new cases and understanding the link between variables by estimating the significant risk factors that affect the dependent variable (Kumari & Yadav, 2018).

There are two basic kinds of linear regression analysis. Simple linear regression is the first type, and multiple linear regression is the second.

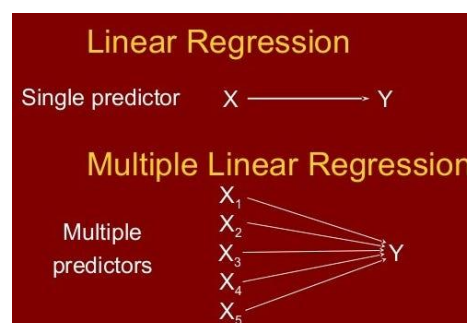


Figure 3. Types of Linear Regression.

Modeling the linear relationship between two quantitative variables, one of which is independent (input) and the other dependent (output), is known as simple linear regression (Xin & Xiaogang, 2009).

Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, β_0 is the intercept, β_1 is the slope, and ϵ is the error term. This equation represents the model: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$ (Chakure, 2019).

A statistical technique called multiple linear regression makes use of several explanatory variables to predict the value of a response variable (Taylor, n.d.). Characterizing the linear relationship between the response (dependent) variables and the explanatory (independent) variables is the aim of multiple linear regression. By include more than one explanatory variable in the analysis, multiple regression essentially builds upon ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression (Chakure, 2019).

A multiple linear regression equation is one that illustrates the relationship between the expected values of variable "y" and variable "p" independent variables.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_p x_p + \epsilon$$

Figure 4. Multiple Linear Regression equation.

We tested the correlations between the destination image, which was the dependent variable in our study, and the independent variables of expertise, trustworthiness, likability, and argument quality using multiple regression analysis. The variable selection method used was the "Enter Method" (Standard Multivariate Regression). First, the regression analysis's underlying assumptions were examined throughout the analysis phase (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 18.

Correlation Coefficients between Variables

	Destination image difference	Expertise	Trustworthiness	Likability	Argument quality
Destination image difference	1,000				
Expertise	0,615	1,000			
Trustworthiness	0,691	0,804	1,000		
Likability	0,656	0,820	0,794	1,000	
Argument quality	0,625	0,784	0,806	0,800	1,000

First, the sample size's suitability was examined. The required sample size for regression analysis is determined by the formula " $N \geq 50 + 8 \times \text{number of independent variables}$ " (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). 85 samples are therefore adequate for the four independent variables in this investigation. Moreover, no data is missing. The existence of a multicollinearity issue between the variables is examined in the second test. Consequently, according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), correlation coefficients between variables shouldn't be higher than 0.90. Upon examination of Table 18, it becomes evident that the correlation coefficients among the variables are not greater than 0.90.

In addition, Tolerance and VIF values were checked to test for multicollinearity. A small Tolerance value (below 0.10) and a large VIF value (above 10) indicate a multicollinearity problem (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

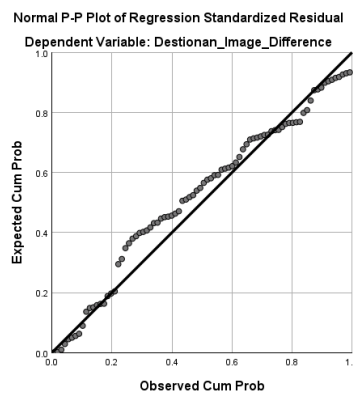


Figure 5. Standardized deviations normal P-P plot.

When the Tolerance and VIF values are analyzed, it is seen that the Tolerance value varies between 0.249 and 0.269 and the VIF values vary between 3.722 and 4.022. The values indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem. Third, normality and linearity assumptions were checked. For the normality test, a "Normal P-P" plot of the observed and cumulative probability distribution for the standardized deviation values was produced (Figure 5). Since the graph shows a linear shape, it can be said that the normality assumption is not violated. Since the normal P-P plot appears linear, the variables included in the regression were not analyzed one by one (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). For the linearity test, a scatter plot of standardized deviance values and standardized predicted values was produced (Figure 6) and it was observed that the plot did not go beyond the square shape. Accordingly, it can be said that the assumption of linearity and normality is not violated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

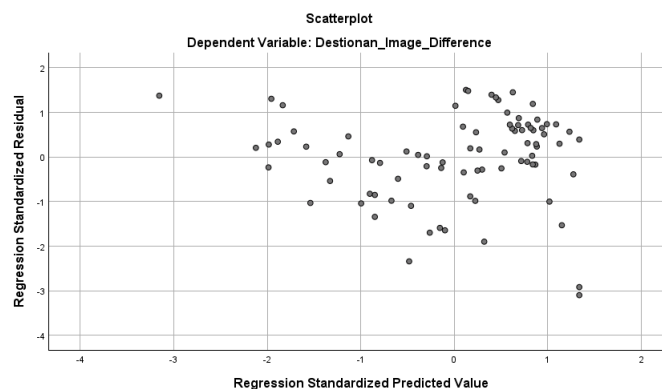


Figure 6. Scatter Plot of Standardized Deviating Values and Standardized Predicted Values.

Finally, the outliers were checked. For univariate outliers for dependent and independent variables, z values were checked and no data exceeding ± 3.29 were found (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007: 73). Mahalanobis value was checked for multivariate outliers. Accordingly, only two data (19.08 and 18.93) exceeding the critical value of 18.47 (Pallant, 2007: 157) were found for 4 independent variables. However, since the values of 19.08 and 18.93 did not differ much from the critical value of 18.47, it was not excluded from the analysis (Pallant, 2007: 157). In addition, Cook's distance values used for multivariate outliers were examined and no value above 1 was found (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Analysis of the model values derived from the regression analysis reveals that 4 independent factors (argument quality, likability, expertise, and trustworthiness) account for 51% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.51$) on the dependent variable. Through the error term, the variables not included in the model account for 49% of the remaining explanation. An ANOVA analysis demonstrates the significance of the model. ($p < 0.01$; $F = 20.599$).

Table 19.

Coefficients Table.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Significance	Correlations		
	β	Std. Error	Beta			Zero Sequential	Partial	Section
(Fixed term)	-5,475	0,862		-6,353	0,000			
Expertise	0,016	0,277	0,009	0,057	0,954	0,615	0,006	0,005
Trustworthiness	0,729	0,267	0,424	2,735	0,008	0,691	0,294	0,215
Likability	0,432	0,272	0,251	1,590	0,116	0,656	0,176	0,125
Argument quality	0,130	0,260	0,076	0,500	0,618	0,625	0,056	0,039

Dependent Variable: Destination image difference.

Table 19 displays the coefficients derived from the regression analysis. Only one variable in the model is significant (at the 5% significance level) when the parameter values derived from the model's estimation in Table 18 and their t-values are examined individually.

The trustworthiness variable has the largest Beta coefficient when the standardized coefficients are analyzed in terms of the factors causing the difference in destination image before and after watching the movie. Put another way, the trustworthiness variable is the independent variable that most significantly contributes to the explanation of the destination image variable, which is the dependent variable, once the variance explained by other variables is taken into account (0.42). Expertise (0.28), likeability (0.27) and argument quality (0.26) come next.

Table 19 shows that the constant term was determined to be -5.475. Expertise has a parameter value of 0.092 ($\beta = 0.009$). The destination image disparity grows by 0.016 units for every unit increase in competence. The destination image difference increases by 0.729 ($\beta = 0.729$) units when trustworthiness increases by one unit. The

destination image difference increases by 0.432 ($\beta = -0.432$) units when likability increases by one unit. The destination picture difference increases by 0.130 ($\beta = 0.130$) units for every unit increase in argument quality.

Hypothesis 2 is supported by the regression analysis results. That is, the difference in destination image is positively impacted by the competence element.

4.1.3 Findings related to the 3rd research question: Effects of demographics on destination image difference.

Table 20.

The effect of marital status levels on destination image differences

Marital status	N	Mean *	std. Deviation
Single	54	1,63	1,673
Married	15	3,03	1,000

* $p < 0.001$; The different superscripts that belong to different marital status means differ significantly by their perceptions of the destination image difference of Algiers.

In table 20, it is observed that the married individuals ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.000$) statistically significantly have more positive perceptions of the destination image difference compared to single individuals ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.673$), $t(38.157) = -4.046$, $P < 0.001$.

Table 21.

The effect of age groups on destination image differences

	Age Group	N	Mean	std. Deviation
Destination image difference	19-24	49	1,48	1,666
	25-28	23	2,67	1,298
	29-41	11	3,60	0,672

* $p < 0.05$; The different superscripts that belong to different age groups differ significantly by their destination image difference.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of different age groups on destination image difference before and after watching the video in 19 to 24, 25 to 28 and 29 to 41 age groups. There was a significant effect of age group in destination image difference at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three conditions [F (2,39.675) = 22.664, $p < 0.001$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Games Howell test indicated that the mean score for the 29 to 41 (M = 3.60, SD = 0.672) was significantly different than the 25 to 28 (M = 2.67, SD = 1.298) Furthermore, the 25 to 28 age group deviation (M = 2.67, SD = 1.298) was also significantly different than the 19 to 24 age group (M = 1.48, SD = 1.666). Taken together, these results suggest that age groups seem to significantly influence participants to perceive destination image differences more positively.

Table 22

Effect of education levels on destination image differences.

	Education level	N	Mean	std. Deviation
Destination image difference	High school or below	5	0,56	0,915
	Undergraduate	51	1,88	1,690
	Graduate	28	2,76	1,418

* $p < 0.05$; The different superscripts that belong to different education levels differ significantly by their destination image difference.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of different education level on destination image difference before and after watching the video in high school and below, Undergraduate and Graduate education levels. There was a significant effect of education level in destination image difference at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three conditions [F (2,13.505) = 9.851, $p = 0.002$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Games Howell test indicated that the mean score for the graduate level (M = 2.76, SD = 1.418) was significantly different than both the undergraduate level (M = 1.88, SD = 1.690) and high school or below (M = 0.56, SD = 0.915). Taken together, these results suggest that graduate education levels

participants mean destination image difference is significantly more positive than the other education levels.



Chapter 5

Discussion & conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The findings of the research offer insightful information about how tourism influencers affect Algeria's image as a travel destination. The travel influencer video supports H1 since the paired samples t-test (RQ1) findings show a significant difference in the perception of the destination image before and after seeing it. According to the analysis, trustworthiness was found to be the most significant variable impacting travelers' perceptions of Algeria, which is consistent with hypothesis (H3), which proposed that travel influencers' trustworthiness positively influences travelers' perceptions of the destination, so the (H3) was accepted. However, all three factors—expertise, likability, and argument quality—didn't have a significant effect on destination image, as a result, every hypothesis on how destination image is influenced by expertise (H2), likability (H4), and argument quality (H5) was rejected.

The influencer's video boosted participants' opinions of Algeria/Algiers as a destination, according to the within-subjects experimental pre- and post-test design. This shows that the influencer's content and message was successful in creating more favorable cognitive, emotional, and conative impressions of the location. This result is consistent with other research that shows how influencers can affect consumers' views and decisions when it comes to selecting a vacation, lodging, and activities.

For example, a study by Min Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) found that exposure to influencer content significantly affects customer perceptions and sentiments toward a place. Perceived as credible and trustworthy, influencers are more effective in enhancing destination image and influencing customer behavior, according to the researchers. In a similar vein, Serman and Sims (2023) noted that the persuasiveness of an influencer's message and the subsequent effect on destination image can also be influenced by their likeability and attractiveness.

Regression analysis of the study further investigated the relationship between argument quality and source credibility factors (expertise, trustworthiness, likability) and their effect on destination image. According to the findings, trustworthiness was the lone and most important feature. This suggests that enhancing the perception of

Algeria as a tourist destination is greatly influenced by the travel influencer's perceived credibility. This result is in line with research showing how crucial source credibility—more specifically, trustworthiness—is for affecting message persuasion and modifying consumer attitudes and behavior.

The first to show that source trustworthiness has a major impact on message persuasion was Hovland and Weiss (1952). According to their research, sources with a high degree of credibility had a greater ability to influence audience opinions than sources with a low degree of trust. Subsequent studies have further demonstrated how crucial credibility is in assessing a communicator's impact (Wathen & Burkell, 2002; Jia, 2022). Regarding tourism and destination marketing, studies have demonstrated that the perceived credibility of travel influencers can greatly improve the perception of a destination and raise the probability of travel (Chen, Silaban, Widya, & Silalahi, 2023; Sánchez-Fernández, A., & Bastidas-Manzano, 2021).

It's noteworthy to notice that, although the other aspects of source credibility—expertise and likeability—and argument quality were also positively correlated with the destination's image, each of these factors did not significantly and strongly contribute to the destination's image as much as trustworthiness did. It's interesting to note that while argument quality and the other aspects of source credibility—expertise and likeability—are similarly positively correlated with destination image, their respective contributions are not as great as that of credibility. As supported by the research, this study emphasizes the need of developing credibility and trust with target audiences as a crucial tactic for travel influencers to favorably affect place impressions.

The emphasis on reliability is consistent with the findings of Erdem and Swait, who contend that customer views are significantly influenced by the credibility of the source. They contend that a crucial component of credibility is trustworthiness. Credibility has a big impact on what consumers decide. In a similar vein, Roostika and Muafi (Roostika & Muafi, 2014) discovered that other aspects of credibility are not as good at predicting destination image and intention to visit as the perceived credibility of a tourism service provider.

The findings of this study are also consistent with the research conducted in 2022 by Pozharliev, Rossi, and Angelis (Pozharliev, Rossi, & Angelis, 2022)

regarding the impact of argument quality on consumer sentiments. They discovered that the persuasiveness of the communication and the consequent reactions from customers can be strongly influenced by the arguments' strength, relevance, coherence, and clarity. In this instance, the trustworthiness of the source and the caliber of the influencer's arguments seem to have contributed to the development of Algeria's image as a travel destination, though their effects are not statistically significant.

The literature provides more evidence in favor of the theory that various forms of information content can result in various outcomes in the construction of destination images. According to Chong et al. (Chong, Khong, Ma, McCabe, & Wang, 2018), good travel reviews enhanced the cognitive image of the destination, whereas bad reviews had a substantial detrimental impact on the emotive image. Guo (2022) also made the point that travelers' impressions of a place can be greatly enhanced when good, useful information is provided by travel influencers.

In general, the results of this study add to and broaden the body of knowledge already available on the subject of social media influencers' roles in travel and destination marketing. The results emphasize how crucial argument quality and source credibility are in determining how travelers see Algeria. For destination marketing organizations, travel influencers, and tourism businesses wishing to leverage influencer marketing tactics successfully, these findings have important ramifications.

5.2 Sectoral Implications

For influencer marketers and marketing managers looking to maximize their influencer marketing tactics, the thesis's conclusions give useful insight for the advertising and influencer marketing sectors. One pedagogical consequence is that stressing the influencer's credibility becomes critical when dealing with limitations like limited funds or infrequent exposure opportunities. When compared to argument quality, likability, and expertise, trustworthiness is the single most significant source credibility factor. Thus, highlighting the influencer's credibility can be a smart move if marketers want to use their content selectively or have financial limitations. Choosing an influencer with a solid track record of trustworthiness can improve the efficacy of influencer marketing campaigns, especially in situations where exposure

frequencies are constrained. In the end, putting credibility first will increase the influence of influencer content and make it more relatable to the target audience, which will result in influencer marketing campaigns that are more successful.

5.3 Conclusions

The thesis offers insightful information about how tourism influencers affect Algeria's reputation as a travel destination. The research reveals the important role that tourism influencers play in influencing perceptions of Algeria/Algiers as a tourist destination through a thorough analysis of the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of destination image as well as the dimensions of source credibility and argument quality. The study's conclusions show that watching a film featuring a travel influencer had a favorable effect on participants' opinions of Algeria and Algiers as a destination. Trustworthiness was found to be a critical component, suggesting that the travel influencer's perceived trustworthiness greatly improves the destination's perception of Algeria/Algiers.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the complex ways in which tourism influencers alter location perception, demonstrating the ways in which influencers can affect prospective travelers' cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Influencers may improve the tourism industry by influencing good opinions of a place, drawing more tourists, and using real narrative and visually engaging content.

5.4 Recommendations

In particular, the study's analysis of Algeria/Algiers offers insightful information about the role of social media influencers on destination perception. Nonetheless, the used research design and methods offer prospects for additional investigation in subsequent research endeavors. The use of a single influencer video to evaluate the effect on destination image is a significant drawback of the current study. Although the results show that the selected influencer is useful in forming more positive opinions, it would be beneficial for future study to show participants additional videos of the same or various influencers. This method would enable a more thorough comprehension of the ways in which different influencer traits and content types impact the destination image. Researchers can analyze the relative

impact of various influencers, their distinct persuasive techniques, and the consistency or unpredictability of their impact on destination image by combining many influencer films. Furthermore, the present investigation concentrated on the aspects of expertise, trustworthiness, likability, and argument quality; however, it did not specifically explore the function of influencer beauty. The literature review has emphasized that customer perceptions and behaviors can also be significantly influenced by an influencer's perceived attractiveness. Subsequent investigations may explore the impact of physical and charismatic attractiveness of influencers on the perception of the place. Measuring attractiveness in addition to the other characteristics of source credibility could provide important information about how important each component is in relation to destination marketing. Additionally, the results of this study indicate that one important demographic aspect influencing how influencer material affects impressions of a destination is marital status. In particular, married participants perceived the destination image difference more favorably than single participants did. Building on these findings, further studies could take a more focused approach by comparing the effects of a single influencer on customers who are married versus those who are single. This can entail showing the identical influencer content to participants who are married and single, then comparing how each perceives the destination.

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