

Factors Affecting The Behavioral Intention To Visit Sites Among Algerian Tourists Cultural Heritage

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Abstract :

Although Algeria Has Many Cultural Heritage Sites, It Can Make It A Tourist Destination With Distinction For A Wide Range Of Tourists. However, There Is Limited Number Of Local Tourists Flocking To These Sites. This Study Aimed To Examine The Factors Affecting Tourists' Intentions To Visit Cultural Heritage Sites; And To This End A Convenience Sample Of 126 Domestic Tourists In Algeria Was Relied Upon. Multiple Linear Regression Has Been Used To Test The Study's Hypotheses. The Results Revealed That The Behavioral Intention To Visit Cultural Heritage Sites Is Affected By Tourists' Attitudes; Electronic Word Of Mouth; Perception Of Cost Fairness; And Quality Of Tourist Service, Also Indicated That The Perceived Risk Has No Significant Effect On Local Tourists' Intentions. In The End, We Will Provides Some Recommendations To Various Stakeholders Involved In Marketing Cultural Heritage Sites To Improve Their Ability To Attract More Local And International Tourists.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Marketing, Cultural Cities, Electronic Word Of Mouth, Tourists, Algeria.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a smokeless industry and an important economic resource for many Arab and foreign countries, and it is one of the service sectors whose demand has increased in recent years. Algeria is one of the countries with many cities and heritage sites such as Constantine, Timgad, Tlemcen, Ghardaia, El Haqqar, Tassili, etc. However, local tourists still have little interest in these cities and sites. One of the reasons could be the financial crisis as well as increased security concerns.

Cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is an important wealth for all peoples, in addition to its role in protecting the culture and identity of peoples and transmitting it between generations. It is an attraction for foreign tourists who wish to learn about the culture and identity of peoples and visit historical places to get a closer look at the historical and cultural facts of ancient human civilisations.

Some previous studies have sought to explore the factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit archaeological sites in many Arab and foreign countries. For example, (Abuamoud, Libbin, Green, & ALRousan, 2014, p. 150) study aimed to identify the factors influencing tourists' willingness to visit cultural heritage sites located in the Northern Badia in Jordan. The results showed that tourists' willingness was influenced by the level of education, the diversity of sites, the number of heritage tourism destinations, and Cost and reasons for visiting. (Shen, 2009, p. p40) study sought to explore German and Chinese visitors' intentions to visit World Cultural Heritage sites by extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour with two variables: prior experience and city/culture tour participation. Results revealed that attitudes (for Germans); perceived control, prior experience, and city tour participation (for Chinese) are predictive indicators of tourists' intentions to visit a World Cultural Heritage site within the next 12 months. In Ireland, a study by (Kempiak, Hollywood, Bolan, & McMahon, 2017, p. P380) found that heritage visitors are primarily motivated by entertainment, and that their decision to visit is based on advice from friends and family. The results revealed that audio-visual communication, atmosphere, site engagement, information and heritage preservation were the most influential factors during the visit. It was also found that 54% of the respondents were satisfied with their visit, and 85% would revisit the same cultural heritage site.

In Algeria, no study has been conducted to explore local tourists' intentions to visit heritage sites. This study seeks to fill this research gap by answering the following two questions :

- 1- Do tourist attitudes, word of mouth, perceived cost fairness, and tourism service quality positively and significantly influence the behavioural intentions to visit cultural heritage sites among domestic tourists in Algeria?
- 2- Do tourist attitudes, word of mouth, perceived cost fairness, and tourism service quality positively and significantly influence the behavioural intentions to visit cultural heritage sites among domestic tourists in Algeria?
- 3- Does perceived risk negatively and significantly affect behavioural intentions to visit cultural heritage sites .
- 4- The literature review allowed us to develop the hypotheses of the study, as follows :

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive and significant effect of attitudes on tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive and significant effect of online word of mouth on tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites.

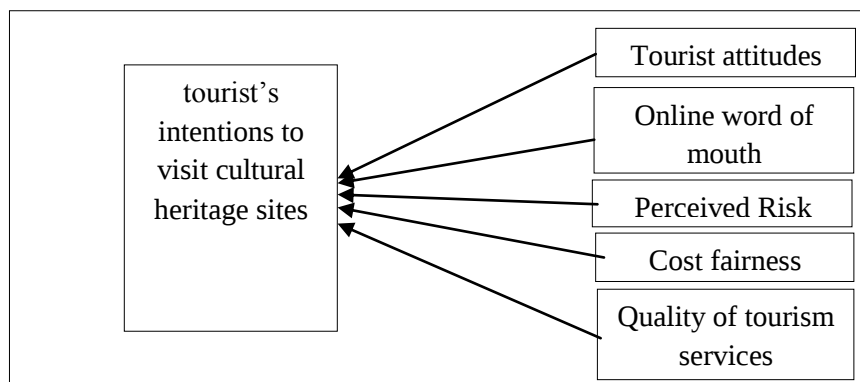
Hypothesis 3: There is a negative and significant effect of perceived risk on tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive and significant effect of perceived cost fairness (price fairness) on tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive and significant effect of tourism service quality on tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites.

The following figure shows the proposed study model:

Fig 1. The proposed study model



Source: prepared by the researchers

A descriptive-analytical approach was adopted to study the intentions of local tourists by relying on a field survey. The rest of the research is organised as follows: The first section deals with the theoretical framework of the study. The second section deals with the methodology and procedures of the study. The third section is devoted to analysing the results and discussion. The fourth section concludes by presenting the findings and providing recommendations for policy and decision makers.

2. The theoretical framework of the study

2.1. The conceptual framework of cultural heritage

It is a distinct cultural form that reflects deep-rooted human characteristics and is passed down from generation to generation, often surviving for a qualitatively different time period and environmentally distinctive, showing internal cultural changes, but always retaining a distinct basic unity (Al-Ebiary, 2006, p. 26). The importance of archaeological heritage stems mainly from the cultural, historical, artistic, social and economic values, meanings and connotations that embody the history of nations and peoples (Al-Zahrani & Qasimah , 2009, p. 28). In this context, (Afifi , 2013, p. 9) defined cultural heritage as "a stock of value that has gained its status and importance through stability and continuity, both material and immaterial (moral)." Therefore, cultural heritage is divided into two parts: material heritage (built heritage, archives) and moral heritage (ideas, beliefs, customs, and cultural values...).

2.2. Defining heritage tourism

(Chhabra, 2010, p. 35) defined heritage tourism as "the phenomenon that focuses on managing the past, heritage and authenticity in order to enhance participation and satisfy consumer needs by evoking feelings of memories and nostalgia". One of the sectors covered by cultural tourism is city tourism, more precisely, city tourism for cultural purposes, and heritage tourism is one of the most important forms of cultural tourism (Kasimoglu & Aydin, 2012, p. 210). Therefore, one of the tools to stimulate cultural tourism is the development of sports events and events (such as organising a festival,

marathon, competition), hosting theatre, scout and music groups, organising exhibitions (such as handicrafts and traditional industries), organising cultural and scientific conferences (lectures on heritage, monuments and cultural identity), and organising visits to archaeological sites (such as museums, castles and palaces).

2.3. Definition of cultural heritage marketing

Historic and archaeological areas are one of the components of heritage due to their historical, cultural and civilisational value, which is not negligible and connects society in the modern era to its historical roots and represents centres of tourist and cultural attraction with great weight (Al-Ebiary, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, cultural marketing has been defined as "the art of establishing a relationship with market segments that are likely to be interested in the product by adapting the variable elements of marketing (price, distribution and promotion) in order to put the product in contact with a sufficient number of consumers, and by this means to achieve the goals set based on the company's mission" (François & Abdelnabi, 2011, p. 33). In this context, researcher (Kolb, 2006, p. 206) stressed that marketing a city as a tourist destination is unique because it is a product consisting of physical goods, services and ideas, where physical goods include buildings, parks, streets, monuments and even the transport system, which are features that help to develop the image of the city, whether as a historical, traditional or modern city, and services include the geographical location of the city (for example, being located on the banks of rivers, oceans or mountains), cultural facilities and religious buildings. The city's geographical location (e.g. on the banks of rivers, oceans or mountains), cultural facilities and religious buildings are also important elements of the city's product, and services include all tourism services such as hotels and restaurants, events such as theatre performances, concerts, festivals and even shopping. The combination of the physical aspects of the city and the services/events creates the image of the city. This image can be beautiful, exciting, charming and artistically valuable. The lifestyles and values of the local population such as ethnic culture and the

friendliness of the residents can also contribute to the image of the city. The product of the city consists of festivals, parades, cultural events, plays, tours, sports, cinema, hotel apartments, food and various leisure activities.

In practice, cultural heritage tourists are highly educated, have higher than average spending, are mostly from developed and more developed countries (from the Western world), are mostly middle-aged and childless, have shorter length of stay and higher frequency of travel (Kasimoglu M. , 2012, p. 212). Based on the above, cultural heritage marketing can be defined as: All activities aimed at generating behavioural responses in a specific market segment to visit a heritage site for cultural purposes. This means that cultural heritage marketing aims to attract and attract distinct market segments to visit specific sites and learn about their cultural heritage (such as museums, monuments, inscriptions, etc.), and share their customs, traditions, memory and celebrations with the indigenous people of these sites.

2.4. Factors affecting behavioural intention

In the field of tourism studies, tourist behavioural intention is an important concept to understand the tourist choice of tourism products or services, and the future motives of the tourist's behaviour, when we talk about the behavioural intentions of the tourist, we talk about future, expected, approved and planned behaviour. It is the basis for the actual behaviour represented by visiting cultural heritage sites. People who have a stronger intention to activate an overt behaviour are more likely to perform it, as behavioural intentions represent subjective instructions to perform certain actions or to obtain certain results. As it turns out, the concept of tourist intentions refers to: The future behaviour planned by the tourist as an indicator of his/her actual expected behaviour based on previous evaluations of the tourist destination (Al-Baghdadi & Al-Fartous, 2019, p. 6).

The factors influencing tourists' behavioural intention to visit cultural sites are as follows:

- **Attitudes:** Tourists' attitudes are a set of beliefs, ideas and feelings that a tourist believes in and that reflect his positive or negative

tendencies towards the tourist service, and attitudes have a cognitive component, a perceptual component and an emotional component⁽ⁱ⁾.

- **E-Wom:** It is a dynamic process of information exchange that occurs to potential, actual or past consumers regarding a product, service, brand, or company, which is made available to many individuals and organisations online.

Positive word of mouth represents the cognitive construction that leads to the rational evaluation of a potential tourist, so positive word of mouth refers to the positive perception spoken by a tourist about a particular tourist destination (Jawal & Bodhi, 2021, p. 1152).

- **Perceived Risk:** Perceived risk in tourism can be defined as the uncertainty that tourists face when they want to purchase a tourism service and choose a particular destination, and their fear of obtaining unpleasant results in relation to the decision to choose the destination. The types of risk perceived by tourists vary from financial risk, which is paying a sum of money for a tourism service that is not able to fulfil the previous perceptions and expectations that the tourist holds towards that service; to physical risk, which is the impact of the tourist service physically affects the tourist while using or consuming it; functional (performance) risk is the mismatch between the characteristics of the service and its performance; while psychological risk refers to the mismatch between the customer's personality and the actual performance of the tourist service. There are many other risks (Tabani & Habash, 2021, p. 173).

- **Cost fairness:** The determination of costs represents the main factor affecting pricing decisions, because the cost represents the minimum prices for the goods and services provided, as the method of determining prices for tourism services must be realistic and consistent with the ability of the tourist, and this positively affects the intention to visit cultural heritage sites (Haag & Hassani, 2021, p. 257).

- **Quality of tourism services:** It is the set of activities that provide tourists with comfort and facilities when they stay in tourist facilities away from their original place of residence, and tourism services means "everything that is offered to tourists from landscapes, swimming pools, folk arts, memorials, historical monuments, religious monuments, and entertainment, which are considered as raw materials

to be developed in different ways in order to meet the needs of different markets" (Bouchachia & Nouri, 2017, p. 72).

The basic factors determining quality in the tourism sector indicate the need for common and ultimate standards that are vital to the tourist regardless of the category or type of product, organisation or service. These standards would provide a minimum level of protection for the tourist, without which it would be difficult to achieve quality, as these standards are: Safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity, and homogeneity (Khatabet & Lakhlef, 2019, p. 235).

3. Methodology and procedures of the study

3. 1. The measuring tool

The questionnaire was used as a tool to collect primary data from the study sample. The questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first part was dedicated to data related to the characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age group, income group, and educational level. The second part was dedicated to collecting data related to the study variables. Some previous studies were used to develop the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to three referees to give their opinions on its content, and in light of their comments, we drafted the final version of the questionnaire.

3. 2. Study population and sample

The study population consists of all local tourists in six northern Algerian provinces, namely Medea, Blida, Algiers, Tipaza, Boumerdès, and Bouira. Due to the absence of a sampling frame and the inability to contact a large number of respondents, we used a convenience sample (a type of non-random sampling). We distributed the questionnaire to a sample of 200 individuals, with the help of some employees in hotels and tourism agencies, during the period from September 2023 to January 2024, and we reminded the respondents after about a month, and at the end of January 2024, the number of questionnaires returned was 126 questionnaires, all of which were valid for analysis. After processing the data obtained, the

percentage of male respondents (93 respondents) reached 73.81%, 36.51% of the respondents (46) were in the age group 35-45 years, and 49.21% had a monthly income between 45001-65000 dirhams. In terms of educational qualification, 46.03 per cent of the respondents were university graduates.

3. 3. Testing the hypotheses

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha stability coefficients for the study constructs

Study compositions value	Number of phrases	Cronbach's alpha
Tourist trends	03	0.883
Word of Mouth Online	03	0.917
Recognising Cost Fairness	03	0.942
Tourism Service Quality	03	0.932
Perceived danger	03	0.670
Tourists' intentions	03	0.899

Source: prepared by researchers based on the spss statistical program

We note from the above table that all Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all study variables exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold (0.60) as recommended by Malhotra (Malhotra, 2010, p. 627), where the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the perceived risk variable was 0.670 (the lowest value), while the value of the alpha coefficient for the perceived cost variable was 0.942 (the highest value), so the study constructs enjoy validity and stability.

Table 2. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the study variables

Variables	Phrases	Sample mean	Standard deviation
Tourist's trends	I prefer to visit local cultural heritage sites.	3,7460	,79936
	Visiting cultural heritage sites is an opportunity to explore them.	3,8333	,82704
	Visiting cultural heritage sites is fun and a wise decision for me.	3,7937	,793

Word of Mouth Online	I often review what others have said about tourist sites online	3,611	,789
	I trust what other people say online about heritage tourism.	3,619	,767
	My decision to choose a destination is influenced by what others are saying online	3,603	,759
Recognising Cost Fairness	Admission prices to archaeological sites (museum, castle, etc.) are suitable for me.	3,738	,811
	The range of prices for heritage tourism services is favourable.	3,761	,784
	Overall, the fairness of the overall cost of visiting a cultural heritage site motivates me to visit that site.	3,722	,786
Tourism Service Quality	Cultural heritage sites have many facilities (leisure and entertainment, parks, museums, shopping centres, etc.)	2,277	,733
	Cultural heritage sites have convenient hotel services (reception, accommodation and catering).	2,238	,720
	Algeria's cultural heritage sites are easily accessible (e.g. a diverse network of convenient means of transport).	2,261	,760
Perceived danger	I feel uncomfortable at the thought of visiting cultural heritage sites (e.g. because they are located in abandoned places, far from my home, etc.)	2,611	,954
	I think visiting a cultural heritage site is a waste of money and effort	2,349	,832
	Cultural heritage sites lack safety and security	2,428	,852

Tourists' intentions	I am planning to organise a guided tour of one of Algeria's cultural heritage sites.	4,015	,857
	I am willing to visit cultural heritage sites in the future.	4,031	,838
	I encourage others to try visiting a local cultural heritage site.	3,960	,804

Source: Source: prepared by researchers based on the spss statistical program

The results of Tables 2 and 3 indicate that positive attitude towards cultural heritage sites positively and significantly affects the tourist's intention to visit cultural heritage sites ($\beta = 0.283$; $t = 4.193$) at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$), so the first hypothesis is accepted. This means that a positive attitude enhances tourists' intention to visit cultural heritage tourism sites. This result is consistent with (Mahboob, Ashfaq, Khan, & Kamal, 2020, p. 131) Study which found that tourists' attitudes have a positive effect on their willingness to pay to visit cultural heritage sites in Pakistan. The results of this study also revealed that tourists were interested in retaining the beautiful memories, wonderful experiences, and knowledge they gained during their visits to heritage sites. It is also consistent with (Shen, 2009)'s study, which found that tourists' attitudes are an important factor in predicting visitors' intentions to visit world cultural heritage sites in the next 12 months.

4. Discussion and analysis of results

Table 3. Linear regression of factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites

variables	signification	T value	B value	Results
Constant	,451	,756	,196	-
Tourist's trends	,000	4,193	,283	Hypothesis 1 is acceptable
Word of Mouth Online	,000	3,596	,215	Hypothesis 2 is acceptable
Recognising Cost Fairness	,000	4,291	,268	Hypothesis 3 is acceptable

Tourism Service Quality	,000	4,660	,323	Hypothesis 4 is acceptable
Perceived danger	,199	1,293	,091	Hypothesis 5 is not acceptable

Source: prepared by researchers based on the spss statistical program

The results of the study show that online word of mouth positively and significantly influences tourists' intention to visit cultural heritage sites ($\beta = 0.215$; $t = 3.596$) at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$), so the second hypothesis is supported. This means that positive online word-of-mouth about heritage tourism (in various social media sites and others) can contribute to generating the intention to visit a heritage tourism site among tourists.

The results of the study also revealed that the perception of cost fairness positively and significantly affects tourists' intention to visit cultural heritage sites ($\beta = 0.268$; $t = 4.291$) at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$), so the third hypothesis is also supported. This means that tourists' perception of the fairness of the cost they will pay to visit a cultural heritage site will contribute to the formation of tourists' intention to visit one of these sites. This result supports and agrees with the result of (Mahboob, Ashfaq, Khan, & Kamal, 2020, p. 130) 's study which found that the total cost of the visit was negatively related to the willingness to pay to visit cultural heritage sites, and that tourists' income is a major factor in positively influencing the intention to visit. This explains that the perception of the high cost of visiting may reduce tourists' intention to visit cultural heritage sites, and that higher income may encourage tourists to visit these sites. In addition, it is consistent with the result found in Abuamoud et al (2014) study that the cost of visiting Jordanian cultural heritage sites has a significant impact on international tourists' intentions to visit these sites.

In addition, the results indicated that tourists' perception of tourism service quality positively and significantly affects their intention to visit cultural heritage sites ($\beta = 0.323$; $t = 4.660$) at the

0.05 level ($p < .05$), so the fourth hypothesis was also accepted. This means that providing cultural heritage sites with appropriate quality services (at acceptable prices) is a prerequisite for generating the intention to visit these sites, given the value of the coefficient (β), which reached 0.323, it appears that the quality of tourist service is the most important factor influencing the intention to visit cultural heritage sites among tourists, followed by the variable of tourists' attitudes towards cultural heritage tourism, followed by the variable of tourists' attitudes towards cultural heritage tourism. This result supports the findings of (Hernández Rojas, Ibenez , & Vergara, 2021, p. 16), which found that perceived quality (perceived heritage quality and perceived cultural quality) mediates the relationship between perceived value and tourist satisfaction.

On the other hand, contrary to what was expected, the results of the study revealed that perceived risk by tourists did not exert any significant influence on their intention to visit cultural heritage sites ($\beta = 0.091$; $t = 1.293$), as the level of significance was 0.199, which is greater than 0.05, and therefore the fifth hypothesis was rejected. This means that local tourists do not feel threatened when visiting cultural heritage sites. One logical explanation for this result is that cultural heritage sites in Algeria are safe due to the stability of security, which may make tourists feel reassured and comfortable while visiting these sites.

5. Conclusion

Algeria has the potential to become an important player in the international heritage tourism market. Although the tourism sector in general and heritage tourism in particular suffers from a lack of interest (especially by foreign tourists) as a result of many economic, social and political factors, the possibility of promoting heritage tourism is still possible. Encouraging and convincing local tourists to visit various cultural heritage sites seems to be the first step in the strategy to develop this type of tourism. Therefore, this study sought to explore the factors influencing local tourists' intentions to visit cultural heritage sites. For this purpose, we relied on a convenience sample consisting of 126 individuals from domestic tourists in Algeria, and the study hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression after verifying the validity and stability of the study instrument.

Findings and recommendations:

The study conducted found the following results:

- Algerian tourists' attitudes towards cultural heritage tourism have a positive impact on their intention to visit cultural heritage sites.
- Positive online word of mouth about cultural heritage tourism has a positive impact on tourists' intention to visit cultural heritage sites.
- The perception of cost fairness has a positive impact on the tourist's intention to visit cultural heritage sites.
- The quality of the tourist service (accommodation, transport, and food) has a positive effect on the intention to visit cultural heritage sites.
- The perceived risk factor does not have a significant impact on the intention to visit cultural heritage sites among domestic tourists.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- The need to promote and strengthen the positive attitudes of local tourists towards heritage tourism through the effective promotion of these sites by various tourism institutions (tourism agencies, hotels, tourism directorates, etc.) by providing appropriate and sufficient information that answers the various inquiries that concern the tourist.

This information can change negative attitudes (negative opinions and beliefs, etc.) into positive ones.

- Do not overlook social media as an effective and very important tool in promoting cultural heritage sites, by posting videos, photos, and news to introduce these sites, and attracting celebrities (such as artists, athletes, etc.) to these sites to promote them through word of mouth.
- The need to review pricing policies and not to overlook the variable of the cost of the tourist trip while designing various marketing programmes, by offering seasonal offers at low prices to attract more domestic tourists, especially with the decline in purchasing power and income of a significant group of tourists due to Covid-19.
- The need to improve the quality of tourism services associated with cultural heritage sites, especially with regard to accommodation, food, transport and accompanying services, by listening to customers to understand their needs and desires and seeking to satisfy them by offering a package of tourism services designed to match the expectations of this type of tourists.
- Promote the availability of safety and security to make tourists feel reassured and comfortable, especially when thinking about attracting and targeting Arab and foreign tourists; by exploiting various media (TV channels, radio, etc.) to spread the feeling of security among tourists, such as recording short videos depicting some tourists (from different social and cultural backgrounds) talking about their feeling of security during their stay at various cultural heritage sites in Algeria.

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