

An Analysis of Tourist's Behavioural Intention in the Digital Era: Using a Modified Model of the Reasoned Action Theory

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ABSTRACT

Destination management organisations currently operate in an environment where online media greatly influences travellers' decision-making. In this digital environment, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is considered an important source of information affecting tourist's behaviour and destination image formation. Destination image is also recognised as major element influencing holiday destination choice, intention to revisit a destination and the willingness to recommend it to others. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) in turn, offers a relevant conceptual framework to analyse tourists' behaviour. This paper aims to (1) incorporate eWOM and destination image as exogenous variables into the TRA model, then evaluate the ability of this extension to predict tourists' behavioural intention (2) examine both eWOM and destination image impact on intention to visit an emerging destination (3) inspect eWOM role in destination image formation (4) evaluate the ability of the TRA's core constructs (i.e., attitude and subjective norms) to predict intention. A quantitative approach based on structural equation modelling conducted this study in order to test the extended model, by analysing data collected from 234 potential foreign tourists, selected using a convenience sampling method. Results revealed that the extended model had a good predictive ability for tourists' intentions to visit an emerging destination. Besides, attitude, subjective norms and destination image were significant predictors of visit intention, and eWOM significantly influenced the image. The study outcomes may help to develop a more efficient and successful tourism marketing strategy.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, theory of reasoned actions, eWOM, Destination image, Visit intention.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In past years, the digitalisation phenomenon has overturned all economic sectors, without exception including the tourism industry, while creating a new ecosystem bringing together: tourists, accommodation providers, tour operators, tourist agencies and institutional organisations, operating on digital media platforms such as Google, Booking, Trivago, Tripadvisor and Hotels.com. This holistic phenomenon has also influenced tourists' decision making process by making it more digital, for example, when seeking a destination's information, online reservations, and purchasing tickets (Wang, 2016, p. 27). Therefore, the study's interest is to analyse this tourist's behaviour, more precisely his intention to choose and visit a destination during the current digital age. Visit intention is interpreted as the potential tourists' willingness and predisposition to visit a destination (Chen et al., 2014, p. 793). More profoundly, the intention to choose a particular destination can be considered a rational decision based on assessing both costs and benefits, relying on information from several sources, including those available on the Internet (Kim et al., 2017, p. 30). The intention is considered an essential factor in behavioural studies (Ajzen, 1985; Sparks & Pan, 2009). According to the reasoned action theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) behavioural intentions, are the antecedents of behaviour; in other words, intention predicts and helps to understand the behaviour of individuals. In this sense, the intentions are supposed to capture the motivating factors of consumers and tourists. Hence, intention's analysis is crucial in marketing studies, aiming to identify consumer behaviour to create value (Dodds et al., 1991 as cited in Liang et al., 2013). On the other hand, it was argued that tourists' behavioural intention is influenced by electronic word of mouth (Gosal et al., 2020; Cam et al., 2019 ; Ghidouche et al., 2018; Jalilvand, 2017; Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Filieri & McLeay, 2014); this variable falls under direct digital marketing. Online travel reviews or electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is acknowledged to play an essential role in the influence

of tourists' decision-making process (MacKinnon, 2012). EWOM communication can be defined as all positive or negative statements, reactions and evaluations posted via the internet by consumers regarding products, services or organisations (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 461). This interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in acquiring and maintaining tourists in the e-commerce era (Litvin et al., 2008; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Further, eWOM was also proven to play an essential role in destination image formation (Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017, p. 725). Destination image is widely recognised as a critical aspect of the tourist's decision-making process (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008); a critical factor in choosing a holiday destination and travel choice (Baloglu & McCleary 1999); influencing the intention to revisit the same destination and the willingness to recommend it to others (Zhang et al., 2018). Phelps (1986) defines the destination image as the set of impressions an individual perceives about a specific place, and it is considered crucial for tourism development (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

Numerous scholars have investigated in several ways both electronic word of mouth and destination image influence on visit intention (Kusumawati et al., 2019; Kanwel et al., 2019; Setiawan & Wibawa, 2018; Ramdan et al., 2017; Prayogo et al., 2017; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Reza Jalilvand et al., 2012c). In this regard, Jalilvand and Heidari (2017) have explored both traditional and electronic word of mouth effects on destination image formation, attitude, and intention to visit a particular destination. They proved that eWOM is significantly and positively associated with affective image, cognitive image, unique image, attitude and travel intention. Similarly, they confirmed that overall image positively and significantly affects tourist attitude and travel intention. Setiawan and Wibawa (2018) have investigated eWOM effect on the intention to visit Buleleng in Bali Indonesia and the mediating role of destination image; this study revealed that eWOM has a direct positive and significant influence on the intention to visit this tourist destination; similarly, the image of Buleleng is also proven to mediate the impact of eWOM on behavioural intention significantly. On the other hand, Kanwel et al. (2019) have inspected the relationship significance among destination image, tourist loyalty and intention to visit Pakistan. They found a positive linkage among these variables; likewise, it was confirmed that eWOM and tourist satisfaction fully mediate the link between destination image and visit intention. By apprehending these studies, a consensus is manifested that both eWOM and destination image significantly impact travel intention. However, these studies did not take into consideration a critical factor which is “subjective norms”. This variable refers to the social

pressure influence exerted on an individual to perform or not perform a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). In the tourism marketing context, subjective norms are found to be significant determinants of the intention to visit a particular destination (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b, p. 604); in this light, Ngah et al. (2018) indicated that subjective norm has a positive relationship with the intention to visit the World Monument Funded Site (p.1280). Moreover, subjective norms predict the intention to travel abroad (Kim & Noh, 2004) and to attend a sporting event (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012). The current paper tried to address the subjective norms' limitation by proposing a more extensive conceptual framework based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) since it has been considered one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for the study of human behaviour due to its effectiveness in predicting behavioural intentions as well as behaviours (Park, 2000). This theory aims to understand individuals' behaviour and behavioural intention through beliefs, attitudes, and subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

In this extended model, the core constructs of the theory of reasoned action, namely, behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, attitude and subjective norms, have been associated with destination image and eWOM; this extension is elaborated to understand better tourists' behavioural intention considering social aspect of human behaviour represented by subjective norms. Besides, scholars who have examined both perceived destination image and eWOM impact on tourist's visit intention were mainly interested in Asian destinations (Kusumawati et al., 2019; Kanwel et al., 2019; Setiawan & Wibawa, 2018; Ramdan et al., 2017; Prayogo et al., 2017; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Reza Jalilvand et al., 2012c). Hence, we wanted to study this combination in another geographic zone; and we chose an African country, particularly Algeria, which constitutes a tourist destination with enormous natural, historical, and cultural potential.

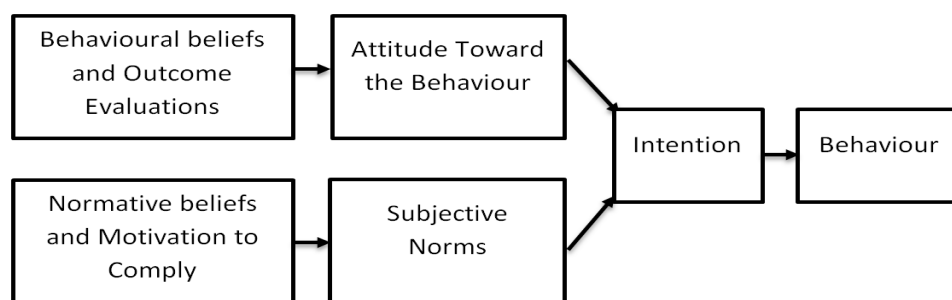
This paper aims to (1) incorporate eWOM and destination image as exogenous variables into the reasoned action theory model (TRA), then evaluate the ability of this extension to predict behavioural intention (2) examine both eWOM and destination image impact on intention to visit Algeria as an emerging destination (3) inspect eWOM role in destination image formation (4) evaluate the ability of the TRA's core constructs (i.e., attitude and subjective norms) to predict intention. The proposed theoretical model will be tested and bring empirical evidence on its causal relationships. To achieve study goals, literature, including related studies and theoretical support for hypotheses, are reviewed. Then, methodology, results and implications are discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Reasoned action theory in a tourism context

The theory of reasoned action or TRA has become one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for human behaviour studies; it is effective in predicting behavioural intentions as well as behaviour in a variety of experimental and naturalistic settings (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Park, 2000). The TRA postulates that individuals follow a rational process when gathering information; in this logic, they are considered rational beings (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This theory assumes that intentions, which are the immediate predecessors to behaviour, are a function of beliefs about the likelihood that performing a particular behaviour will lead to a specific outcome (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Figure 1 - The basic theory of reasoned action



Source: (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980)

In the same context, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) stressed that beliefs should be classified into two distinct groups: behavioural and normative; behavioural beliefs which have an intrinsic nature are supposed to influence a personal variable which is the attitude towards behaviour; on the other hand, normative beliefs are supposed to impact a social variable which is subjective norm regarding the performance of the behaviour in question. Figure1 shows the theory's variables and their internal relationships.

Behavioural beliefs (BB) are the perceived consequences of performing a particular behaviour in a specific situation. While outcome evaluations (OE) refer to assessing those consequences (Ryu & Han, 2010, p. 493).

Attitude toward the behaviour (ATD) is determined as a function of the salient behavioural beliefs (BB) and outcome evaluation (E) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This personal variable can be defined as "the degree to which a person has a favourable or

unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188); in our case, the target behaviour is the intention to visit a destination, and the attitude is that toward a destination. Besides, attitude constitutes an essential psychological construct in behavioural studies since it has impacted and predicted several behaviours (Kraus, 1995).

Normative beliefs (NB) are a person's perceptions regarding the opinions of others about what he or she should do in a situation; while the motivation to comply (MC) is a stimulus that makes individuals conform with these referents and reflects what others think should be done (Ryu & Han, 2010, p. 493).

Subjective norms (SN) are represented as a function of the person's normative beliefs (NB) and the individual's motivation to comply (MC) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). "The person's subjective norm, that is, his/her perception that most people who are important to him/her think he/she should or should not perform the behaviour in question" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 57). Standards and norms with a social character have a significant role in activities with a social aspect in which environmental attributes can affect intention and behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

The reasoned action theory was widely applied in the tourism context (Sultan et al., 2019; Ngah et al., 2018; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012; Kim et al., 2011; Ryu & Han, 2010; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Kim & Noh, 2004).

Kim and Noh (2004) carried out a comparative study between the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour by taking "travel abroad" as the target behaviour to be predicted and Koreans' university students as a study sample. Ryu and Jang (2006) have studied the intention to try local gastronomy of a tourist destination, among the undergraduate and graduate students from Midwestern University (United States), by applying a modified model of reasoned action with the integration of past behaviour. Moreover, Ryu and Han (2010) were able to predict the intention to experience New Orleans's local gastronomy, during a culinary event, by incorporating past behaviour and examining the tourist's gender moderating role. Always in a culinary tourism context, Kim et al. (2011) were able to examine food tourist's behaviour, and that with the use of a modified reasoned action model, which has been subject to the incorporation of perceived value as well as satisfaction, as factors influencing the intention to revisit a culinary event, in the southwestern part of the United States. In addition, Kaplanidou and Gibson (2012) have analysed the event image and the factors influencing parents' intention to travel and attend a youth sporting event by adding the event image as an independent variable to the TRA model. Ngah et al. (2018)

demonstrated the central role of eWOM in the intention to visit the world monument fund site by integrating this digital variable into the original TRA theory. Finally, Sultan et al. (2019) have studied the effect of tourism experiences shared via social media on behavioural intention to choose a destination by incorporating positive and negative experience sharing in a simplified TRA model containing the attitudinal and normative factors.

The current research and the study objectives agreed to modify the model of reasoned action theory by incorporating eWOM and destination image in the original TRA model. Hence, it was essential to review the relationships linking study variables to develop research hypotheses, crucial in the conceptual framework design.

2.2 Hypotheses development

A literature review identified the theoretical linkage among study variables, which are presented as follows:

The linkage among eWOM, destination image and visit intention; many tourism marketing studies were interested in the relation between eWOM and visit intention. In this regard, eWOM was considered a significant source of information influencing tourist's travel intention as well as destination choice (Gosal et al., 2020; Cam et al., 2019; Ghidouche et al., 2018; Jalilvand, 2017; Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Zarrad & Debabi, 2015; Miao, 2015; Jalilvand et al., 2013; Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). Indeed, Cam et al. (2019), in their study aiming to compare traditional word of mouth and electronic word of mouth effect on the intention to travel to Ho Chi Minh city, found that eWOM had a considerable impact on travel intention comparing to traditional WOM. Ghidouche et al. (2018) empirically confirmed that susceptibility to eWOM moderates the strength of the indirect link between the perceived credibility of eWOM regarding Taghit (an Algerian tourist destination) and the intention to visit this destination. On the other hand, eWOM was found to impact accommodation decision making (Filiari & McLeay, 2014; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Ye et al., 2009). In this regard, Filiari & McLeay (2014) concluded that product ranking, information accuracy, information value-added, information relevance, and information timeliness are strong predictors of travellers' adoption of information from online reviews about accommodations while planning their holidays. Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: eWOM communication has a significant influence on visit intention.

Crompton (1979) defines destination image as “the sum of beliefs and ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination”. Previous theoretical and empirical works revealed that perceived destination image influence tourists' intention to choose and visit a particular

destination (Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020; Liu et al., 2018; Pratt & Chan, 2016; Phau et al., 2010; Lee, 2009a; Lee, 2009b; Gibson et al., 2008; Phillips & Jang, 2007). On this subject, Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat (2020) found a positive link between the intentions of travellers to visit NEOM, a smart city in Saudi Arabia and the image they have of this destination; the study also determined that the image of the destination was influenced by the use of social media, leading to a rise in the likelihood of travellers choosing to visit the region. By the same token, it was proven that destination image impacts the intention to revisit the same destination (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Indeed, Chen & Tsai (2007) approved both direct and indirect effects of destination image on behavioural intention to revisit the Kengtin region, an important destination in southern Taiwan. As a result of the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Destination image has a significant influence on visit intention.

As a final point, the literature has generally accepted that eWOM has a significant effect on destination image formation (Setiawan & Wibawa, 2018; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Ramdan et al., 2017; Reza Jalilvand et al., 2012c). According to Jalilvand & Heidari (2017), eWOM plays an essential role in the destination image formation process and significantly influences Iran's cognitive, affective, and unique image. Ramdan et al. (2017) approved that eWOM positively influences the perceived image of Batu City in Indonesia. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: eWOM has a significant influence on destination image.

The relationships among eWOM, attitude toward a destination, and subjective norms, in tourism marketing, "attitudes are predispositions or feelings toward a vacation destination or service, based on multiple perceived products attributes" (Moutinho, 1987, p. 19). Scholars have suggested that eWOM is a determinant predictor of attitude toward a destination (Cam et al., 2019; Ngah et al., 2018; Zarrad & Debabi, 2015; Jalilvand et al., 2013; Di Pietro et al., 2012). Indeed, Zarrad & Debabi (2015), in their study aiming to analyse eWOM effect on attitude toward Tunisia and intention to revisit it among 219 foreign tourists, found that eWOM communication has a credible influence on both attitude and behavioural intention. Ngah et al. (2018) were also able to prove that eWOM has a positive relationship with attitude toward the World Monument Fund Site as a tourist destination. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: eWOM has a significant influence on attitude toward the destination.

Regarding electronic word of mouth impact on subjective norms, we noticed that all

previous research concluded that online WOM communication is significantly related to subjective norms (Ngah et al., 2018; Miao, 2015; Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). In this subject, Ngah et al. (2018) argued that eWOM contribute significantly to the social pressure represented by subjective norms when intending to visit a tourist destination. By the same token, Miao (2015) found a significant and positive linkage between electronic word of mouth and subjective norms toward visiting Thailand. Finally, Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012b) concluded that eWOM significantly impacts subjective norms in their study to examine tourists' behavioural intention to visit Isfahan in Iran. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: eWOM has a significant influence on subjective norms.

Destination image effect on attitude toward the destination, previous studies suggested that destination image influences tourists' attitude toward choosing a vacation place (Liu et al., 2018; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Reza Jalilvand et al., 2012c). On the other hand, Phillips and Jang (2008), in their study of 749 inbound American tourists, found that New York City's affective image directly impacts attitude toward this destination, while the cognitive image component does not have any influence. However, Liu et al. (2018) stated that the overall image of Taiwan positively affects Muslim tourist attitude toward this destination. In the same direction, Reza Jalilvand et al. (2012c) noted that destination image positively affects tourist attitude toward Isfahan. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Destination image has a significant influence on attitude toward the destination.

The linkage among behavioural belief, normative belief and attitude, according to Ryu and Jang (2006), behavioural belief is a significant predictor of attitude toward experiencing local cuisine in a travel destination and has a positive influence on attitude toward the same behaviour (Ryu & Han, 2010). On the other hand, Ryu and Jang (2006) concluded that the normative belief component is not a significant predictor of attitude and has no direct influence; however, normative belief indirectly influences attitudes through subjective norms (Ryu & Jang, 2006). The same study revealed that normative belief significantly predicts subjective norms (Ryu & Jang, 2006) and has a positive influence on them (Ryu & Han, 2010); thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H7: Behavioural belief has a significant influence on attitude toward the destination.

H8: Normative belief has a significant influence on subjective norms.

The interrelationships among attitude toward a destination, subjective norms, and visit

intention, tourism literature has demonstrated that attitude is strongly related to visiting intention (Cam et al., 2019; Amalia et al., 2019; Ngah et al., 2018; Zarrad & Debabi, 2015; Jalilvand et al., 2013; Albarq, 2013; Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b). However, Lam and Hsu (2006) found that the influence of attitude on behavioural intention was not significant. As for the theoretical linkage between subjective norms and behavioural intention, previous studies showed a contradiction, so that a group of researchers confirmed that there is no effect or at least direct influence of subjective norms on behavioural intention (Chang, 2013; Ryu & Han, 2010; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Lam & Hsu, 2006). While, another group of studies concluded that subjective norms are significantly and positively related to behavioural intention (Ngah et al., 2018; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012; Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012b; Kim & Noh, 2004). As a final point, it was revealed that subjective norm is a significant predictor of attitude toward the behaviour and positively influences it (Ryu & Jang, 2006; Ryu & Han, 2010). As a result of the above discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

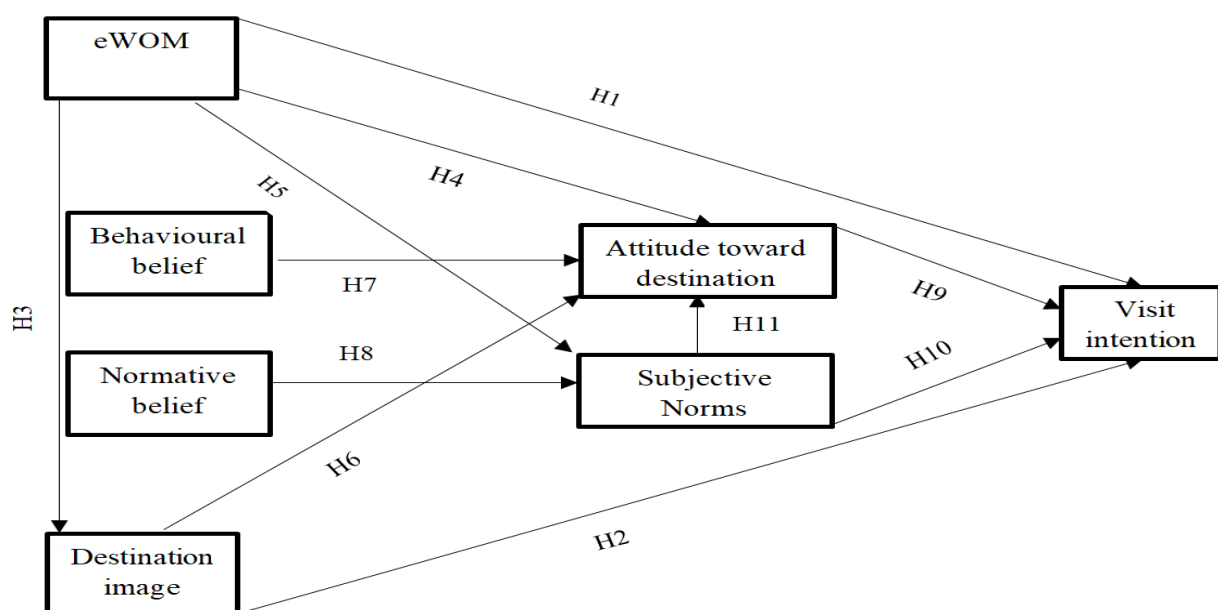
H9: Attitude has a significant influence on visit intention.

H10: Subjective norms have a significant influence on visit intention.

H11: Subjective norms have a significant influence on attitude.

Based on previous research findings and our hypotheses, we present in Figure 2 below the proposed model of the modified TRA:

Figure 2. Proposed model for the modified TRA

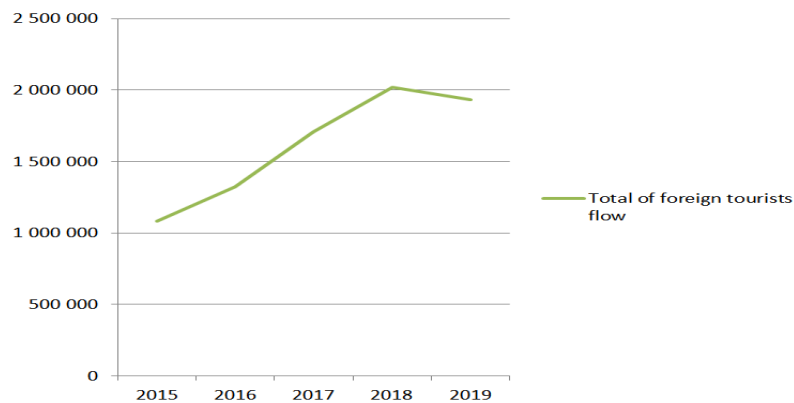


3. METHODS

3.1 Sample design and data collection

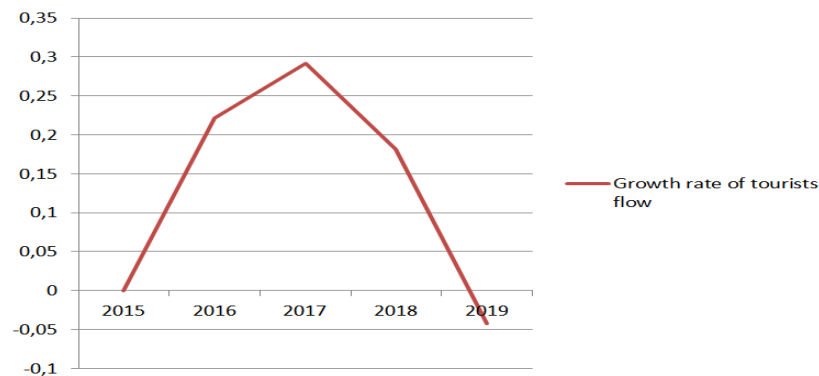
In this paper, we were interested in tourists who have previously experienced a tourist trip to an emerging country like Algeria. This North African nation constitutes a tourist destination with enormous natural, historical and cultural potential.

Figure 3. Foreign tourists' flow in Algeria



Source: Algerian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts (2020)

Figure 4. The growth rate of tourists' flow



Source: Algerian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts (2020)

Figures 3 and 4 above summarise foreign tourists' arrivals in Algeria and the growth rate of this tourist flow from 2015 to 2019, respectively. We notice an increase in both indicators until 2018 exceeding the two million tourists' threshold, before a sharp decline in 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Table 1 in turn, represents Algeria's accommodation capacity by tourism type from 2015 to 2020. Similarly, we notice an increase in this indicator for all types of tourism except sustainable tourism, stagnating with a capacity of 1883 hosting companies since 2015.

Table 1. Accommodation capacity by tourism type

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Urban tourism	62 479	66 155	69 861	74 712	80 470	81 863
Coastal tourism	30 380	30 500	31 326	32 581	32926	32 971
Saharian Tourism	3 636	4 780	4 928	5 477	5895	6 299
Thermal tourism	3 866	4 102	4 266	4 502	4502	4 598
Sustainable tourism	1 883	1 883	1 883	1 883	1 883	1 883
Total	102 244	107 420	112 264	119 155	125 676	127 614

Source: Algerian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts (2020)

Table 1 also shows that Algeria's accommodation capacity in 2020 was 127 614 hosting companies for all tourism types.

The research target population was potential foreign tourists who are members of online communities or travel groups and have previously experienced a tourist trip to an emerging destination. Since accurate data about this population's size were not available, probabilistic sampling techniques could not be used. Thus, a non-probabilistic convenience method was conducted to select study participants. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and French and then published in online travel reviews communities such as (Travellers around the World, International Association of Tourists and Travelers, Traveller Reviews, Voyageurs nomades Autour du monde); we chose these platforms since they contain a large number of subscribing members and quality shared content.

Table 2. Sample profile (n=234)

Variable		Frequency	Ratio %
Nationality	French	70	29.9
	British	30	12.8
	American	13	5.6
	German	11	4.7
	Malay	9	3.8
	Chinese	6	2.6
	Others	95	40.6
Gender	Male	63	26.9
	Female	171	73.1
Education	Primary & Middle	7	3
	High School	13	5.6
	University	214	91.5
Age	24 or under	130	55.6
	25-34	70	29.9
	35-44	22	9.4
	45-54	7	3
	55 or above	5	2.1

Data collection was done from October 5th 2020, to January 16th 2021. As to size, although initially 239 questionnaires were collected, five questionnaires had to be rejected because they were not correctly filled in, finally resulting in a sample of 234 valid respondents. The majority of respondents were female (73.1%). The sample profile is displayed in Table 2 above. In terms of educational level, the majority of respondents had a university-level (91.5%). The research project covered various nationalities, with the most dominant nationalities being: French, British, American, German, Malay, and Chinese, respectively 29.9%, 12.8%, 5.6%, 4.7%, and 3.8%. Finally, the majority of respondents were aged 24 years or under (55.6%).

3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed as the survey instrument, including all proposed model constructs for the modified TRA. A section was assigned to each variable in this questionnaire, which gave ten sections, including the socio-demographic part. All items were previously validated from prior studies, and the original version of the questionnaire was slightly modified. This refined version of the survey questionnaire was reviewed again and perfected by an academic expert who is a faculty member. The items formats of all variables were 7 points Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Except, attitude items were measured by a 7 points semantic differential scale; the 7 points Likert scale was used since it offers more options, which increases the likelihood of responding to the objective reality (Joshi et al., 2015, p. 398). EWOM variable was measured through six items developed by Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012b) from (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold (2011). Behavioural belief and outcome evaluation were measured via six items each (Lam & Hsu, 2006, p. 593). However, a 7 points semantic differential scale was used to measure attitude through 5 items (Lam & Hsu, 2006, p. 593). In terms of destination image variable, five items modified by Reza Jalilvand et al. (2012c) from Lee and Lockshin (2011) were used. Following Lam and Hsu (2006), we evaluated normative belief and motivation to comply by employing three items each. Subjective norms were assessed using three items established by Lam and Hsu (2006) from Ajzen and Driver (1992). Finally, to measure intention to visit Algeria, we used three items developed by Jalilvand et al. (2013) from Kassem et al. (2003).

3.3 Measurement

A structural equation model (SEM) based on a two-step approach recommended by (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was conducted. In this regard, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first executed to empirically validate the measurement model with proposed

constructs and measurement items. A Cronbach alpha test and average variance extracted (AVE) were elaborated to verify internal consistency and construct validity in this level. The second step developed a structural model with latent variables using Amos software to identify the modified version of TRA's validity and investigate all hypotheses. In these analyses, several goodnesses of fit indices were assessed, such as chi-square statistic (χ^2), normed chi-square statistic (χ^2/df), the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA), Incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI). Finally, perceived likelihood (BBs) and outcome evaluation (OE) were multiplicatively combined (BBs x OE) to compute the behavioural belief variable (BB). Similarly, perceptions of specific referents' opinions (NBs) and motivation to comply (MC) were also multiplied to calculate the normative belief variable (NB).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

The measurement model was evaluated through CFA using maximum likelihood estimation to test the measures' factor structure. The chi-square value (χ^2) of the measurement model was 703.3 (df = 391, $p < .001$). The normed chi-square χ^2/df value of 1.79 was less than three, indicating good fits (Bearden et al., 1982). In addition, the root mean square error of approximation, incremental fit index, Tucker-Lewis coefficient, and comparative fit index were respectively (RMSEA = .05; IFI = .93; TLI = .9; CFI = .93), providing a satisfactory fits as suggested by (Bentler, 1990). On the other hand, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of electronic word of mouth, attitude toward the destination, destination image, behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, subjective norms, travel intention, as shown in Table 3 were .899, .924, .709, .857, .863, .791 and .842, respectively. All scores exceeded the benchmark of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), signifying that the survey's items were valid.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha (α), and AVE values

Factors	α	AVE
Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)	.899	.640
Attitude toward destination (ATD)	.924	.608
Destination image (DI)	.709	.558
Behavioural beliefs (BB)	.857	.508
Normative beliefs (NB)	.863	.698
Subjective norms (SN)	.791	.546
Visit intention (VI)	.842	.574

AVE values of electronic word of mouth, attitude toward the destination, behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, travel intention, destination image, and subjective norms were .640, .608, .508, .698, .574, .558 and .546, respectively. And greater than the criterion of .50 (Hair et al., 2006). Based on these findings, we concluded that the indicators were significant, confirming that our research survey instrument had good reliability.

4.2 Structural equation model

As a second step, SEM was performed to validate the modified TRA in predicting tourist's visit intention. The causal model was evaluated using two criteria, namely, fit indices and path significance. Table 4 below shows the structural parameter estimates.

Table 4. Structural Parameter Estimates

Hypothesised path	Standardised Estimate	T value	Conclusion
H1: eWOM → VI	.05	1.051	Rejected
H2: DI → VI	.22	3.417***	Supported
H3: eWOM → DI	.27	3.504***	Supported
H4: eWOM → ATD	-.001	-.014	Rejected
H5: eWOM → SN	.01	.253	Rejected
H6: DI → ATD	.28	4.023***	Supported
H7: BB → ATD	.45	5.292***	Supported
H8: NB → SN	.67	6.070***	Supported
H9: ATD → VI	.16	2.497*	Supported
H10: SN → VI	.60	5.712***	Supported
H11: SN → ATD	.32	4.298***	Supported

(*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001)

The output of maximum likelihood estimation suggested that the model fit to data well ($\chi^2 = 839.387$; $df = 400$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.09$; RMSEA = .06; IFI = .90; TLI = .88; CFI = .90). These indicators confirmed that this model had the ability to predict visit intention. On the other hand, the relationship between eWOM and VI was not significant ($\beta = .05$, $t = 1.051$, $p < .05$) hence, H1 was rejected. Findings showed that DI was significantly linked to VI ($\beta = .22$, $t = 3.417$, $p < .001$), and eWOM was also significantly related to DI ($\beta = .27$, $t = 3.504$, $p < .001$), supporting H2 and H3. In addition, H4 with H5 was both not supported, accordingly to a non-significant relation between eWOM and ATD ($\beta = -.001$, $t = -.014$, $p < .05$), and a non-significant linkage between eWOM and SN ($\beta = .01$, $t = .253$, $p < .05$). While, Both DI and BB effect on ATD were significant ($\beta = .28$, $t = 4.023$, $p < .001$) and ($\beta = .45$, $t = 5.292$, $p < .001$) respectively, supporting H6 with H7. By the same token, NB was significantly related to SN ($\beta = .67$, $t = 6.070$, $p < .001$) supporting H8. Results indicated a significant linkage between ATD and VI ($\beta = .16$, $t = 2.497$, $p < .05$) hence, H9 was supported. SN was also significantly linked to VI ($\beta = .60$, $t = 5.712$, $p < .001$) supporting H10. Finally, H11 was accepted, accordingly to a significant effect of SN to ATD ($\beta = .32$, $t = 4.298$, $p < .001$).

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion and implications

The main research objective was to build a conceptual model that explicates tourist's behavioural intention in the digital era. Measurement instruments were found to have a satisfactory level of reliability and validity, and the proposed TRA model was found to have a good predictive ability for tourists' behavioural intentions. Findings also provided some interesting insights. Firstly, destination image, attitude and subjective norms were significant predictors of intention to visit an emerging destination; however, the eWOM effect on tourist's intention was not significant, contradicting prior research (Gosal et al., 2020; Cam et al., 2019; Ghidouche et al., 2018; Jalilvand, 2017). Secondly, eWOM was a dominant antecedent of the perceived destination image consistent with previous studies (Setiawan & Wibawa, 2018; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Ramdan et al., 2017), while its impact on both attitudes toward the destination and subjective norms was not significant which contradict the findings of Cam et al. (2019) and Ngah et al. (2018), respectively. On the other hand, the hypothesised dependence between attitudinal and normative structures was confirmed since

the path linking subjective norms to attitude was significant, supporting the results of Ryu and Jang (2006) and Ryu and Han (2010). Besides, both behavioural beliefs and normative beliefs components were dominants antecedents of attitude and subjective norms, respectively, confirming the theory of reasoned action postulate regarding these factors. Finally, the destination image was a significant predictor of attitude toward an emerging tourist destination, in line with related studies (Liu et al., 2018; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017). By synthesising, we concluded that online travel reviews evaluated by a potential traveller when preparing a tourist trip contribute to forming the destination perceived image. This image, in turn, influences his feelings toward the destination in question and similarly affects his potential willingness to visit it. Academically, our research has contributed to the applicability of the theory of reasoned action in the context of tourism marketing at an emerging African destination. Further, the current paper provided an extended TRA model to understand tourist's behavioural intention, which combines, on the one hand, the core constructs of the theory of reasoned action (i.e., behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, attitude, and subjective norms) and, on the other hand, electronic word of mouth communication with destination image. In addition, empirical findings supported the theoretical significance of the factors influencing the intention to visit an emerging tourist destination (i.e., destination image, attitude toward the destination, and subjective norms). The results also cast doubt on the role of online travel reviews in the prediction of tourist's behavioural intention, attitude formation and social pressure (i.e., subjective norms) since eWOM was proven to have any effect on these variables contradicting prior studies (e.g., Gosal et al., 2020; Cam et al., 2019; Ghidouche et al., 2018; Ngah et al., 2018; Jalilvand, 2017). For practical implications, the current paper provides guidelines for developing an effective digital marketing strategy. Indeed, the results obtained through our empirical investigation confirmed the managerial significance of both electronic word of mouth and destination image in the destination management process, since eWOM was proven to contribute to destination image formation and the image was also established to play a crucial role in attitude formation and intention to visit a tourist destination. Accordingly, both tourism marketers and tourism companies in Algeria have to focus on these two variables in their marketing plans in order to create demand and guide tourists in their decision making. Moreover, previous studies supported the eWOM influence on e-reputation (Castellano & Dutot, 2017); similarly, destination image was also recognised to contribute to the destination's online reputation (Darwish, 2021). E-reputation refers to "a perceptual

identity formed through the collective perceptions of others, and it represents an organisation's past actions and prospects, which are all visible on the internet" (Heever, 2018, p. 49). Reputation has become a central mechanism in the tourism industry since it conducts to a competitive advantage (Freire, 2011). Indeed, it was argued that an excellent online reputation positively affects the sustainability of competitive advantage (Levy et al., 2013). Thus, online reputation monitoring is helpful for strategic planning and tourism destination governance (Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2019).

Consequently, DMOs in Algeria have to implement digital marketing instruments (i.e., Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimisation, Social Media Marketing and Search Engine Advertising) to disseminate positive destination images then generate word of mouth. This online output about Algeria has to be managed with a marketing plan dedicated exclusively to monitor destination image and electronic word of mouth in order to enhance Algeria's e-reputation as a tourist destination. This "e-reputation marketing plan" requires further implementing specific instruments (e.g., destination' e-reputation monitoring tool, online reviews certification and online communities' management).

5.2 Limitations and future directions

A limitation of this study is that respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method since randomisation was complex to execute due to data lack. The main limitation of the conventional method is that more readily available individuals have a better chance to be selected, so the opportunity to participate in the survey is not the same for everyone in the target population (Etikan, 2016, p. 4). On the other hand, it was interesting to integrate more digital variables into the conceptual model since the research subject was tourist behaviour in the digital era. Further, the destination image in the current paper has been treated as if it consists of a single fragment, whereas it is widely recognised that the image is generally conceptualised in three fragments (i.e., cognitive, affective and conative image) (Gartner, 1993). Finally, the reasoned action theory used in our research as a conceptual framework has been subject to major criticism. In this regard, Ajzen, one of the founders of this theory, stated that the TRA model was explicitly developed to deal only with behaviours over which the individual has voluntary control (Ajzen, 1988). In this sense, Ajzen (1991) adds that TRA is a model that cannot consider the situation of non-voluntary control of human behaviour. In order to address this limitation, the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) was introduced, containing an additional belief variable which is perceived behavioural control, integrated to interpret non-voluntary control of behaviour, as this new variable

represents the belief in possession of the resources and opportunities required to perform a particular behaviour (Madden et al., 1992). For the research's future directions, it will be more relevant to treat the same issue using a more representative sampling technique by carrying out a study based on the theory of planned behaviour to consider the non-voluntary control aspect of human behaviour, also taking into consideration the three-dimensional conceptualisation of destination image and other digital factors such as social media influencers or augmented reality use.

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