

Measuring the Impact of Tourism Experience on Future Visit Intentions in Algeria: A Paired Analysis Using the McNemar Test

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Received: 25 Oct 2025 Accepted & Reviewed: 28 Oct 2025, Published: 31 Oct 2025

Abstract

Tourism is critical to Algeria's economic diversification and long-term growth strategies. Despite the country's abundant cultural and natural resources, domestic tourism is underutilized. This study investigates the link between individuals' previous tourist experiences and their intention to travel in the future. The McNemar test was used on a sample of 168 respondents to see whether prior tourism participation has a significant effect on future tourist intention. The results show no statistically significant difference ($p = 0.143$), indicating that earlier experience has little influence on future willingness to travel. However, overall enthusiasm for domestic tourism remains strong. The study adds to our understanding of behavioural dynamics in Algerian tourism and makes relevant policy recommendations. The limitations and perspectives for future study are also explored.

Keywords: *Algeria, domestic tourism, behavioural intention, tourism experience, McNemar test, sustainability.*

Introduction

Tourism is widely recognized as a critical engine of economic diversification and social progress. Tourism represents a great opportunity for Algeria to diversify its economy beyond hydrocarbons, as the country is blessed with enormous natural landscapes, archaeological riches, and a unique Saharan history. The sector's contribution to national GDP, however, is minimal when compared to neighbouring nations like Morocco and Tunisia. This underperformance has been attributed to structural, infrastructural, and institutional constraints, such as ineffective marketing strategies, low accommodation capacity, and fragmented governance systems.

Despite these limitations, Algerians are increasingly interested in local tourism, notably in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited foreign movement and refocused emphasis on national locations. Understanding the psychological and behavioural reasons that motivate people to participate in tourism is critical to transforming this increased interest into sustainable tourism behaviour. Prior research has shown that past experiences frequently predict future behavioural intention, satisfaction, and loyalty (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012; Oliver, 1999). However, this association has not been statistically tested in Algeria. The current study aims to address this gap by using the McNemar test to determine whether previous tourism experience in Algeria influences one's propensity to do so again.

1.2. Research Gap

While theoretical models and regional data highlight the relationship between experience and intention, few Algerian studies have statistically investigated it using inferential methods. The majority of research is descriptive. This study fills that vacuum by using the McNemar test to determine if differences in past and future tourism intentions are statistically significant, so contributing a fresh behavioural perspective to Algerian tourism research.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to examine whether past tourism experience significantly affects future tourism intention among Algerians. Specifically, it seeks to:

- Examine the relationship between previous experience and future intention using the McNemar test;
- Provide empirical insights that inform strategies for strengthening domestic tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Tourism Experience as a Behavioural Construct

Tourism experience refers to the psychological and emotional responses that people have when they interact with a destination. It encompasses not just the physical act of visiting, but also sensory, emotive, and cognitive qualities that form lasting impressions (Kim et al. 2012). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the "Experience Economy" emphasizes how emotional connection has become a key value proposition in modern tourism. When encounters are enjoyable and memorable, they raise visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of return visits. However, pleasure is influenced by a number of factors, including destination quality, infrastructure, accessibility, and perceived service value (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Thus, tourism experience is a subjective and multifaceted construct that influences behavioural intention.

2.2 Behavioural Intention and Theoretical Foundations

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) offers a solid theoretical framework for analysing how attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioural control influence intention. In tourism research, the model has been widely used to explain how travellers make decisions. Similarly, the Expectation Confirmation Model (Bhattacharjee, 2001) proposes that satisfaction derived from the confirmation of expectations during previous experiences drives future behavioural commitment. Applying these models to domestic tourism suggests that when Algerians' previous tourism experiences meet or exceed their expectations, they will be more likely to travel again.

2.3 Domestic Tourism in Algeria

Algeria possesses extraordinary tourism assets spanning the Mediterranean coast, the Saharan desert, and mountainous regions such as the Aures and Kabylie. Yet, the contribution of tourism to national GDP remains below 2% (World Bank, 2023). Policy frameworks such as the Tourism Development Strategy 2030 and Plan Horizon 2025 aim to promote internal tourism as a driver of employment and regional development (El Azzaoui et al., 2021).

Boukhedimi (2025) investigated how marital status influences the length of stay among Algerian tourists, offering an empirical contribution to understanding tourist behaviour within the local context. The study's core aim was to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics, particularly marital status and travel patterns such as duration of stay, thereby contributing to the body of knowledge on domestic tourism behaviour.

Domestic tourism also supports social cohesion and cultural identity. However, persistent barriers including limited transport infrastructure, inadequate service standards, and low digitalization continue to limit growth. Understanding behavioural intention is thus critical for revitalizing the sector.

2.4 Empirical Research and Behavioral Studies

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the factors that influence tourist behavior in Algeria. Ghadjati and Bennafla (2024) found that social media marketing significantly increases domestic tourism engagement. Fari and Mouloudj (2024) discovered that emotional attachment to heritage sites predicts the intention to return, whereas Boudiaf (2023) contended that tourism investment promotes both natural preservation and urban development. In the digital sphere. Findings from regional studies (Zeraib, Kouba, &

Berghout, 2022) confirm that memorable experiences and perceived trustworthiness influence future tourism intentions in North Africa.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study used a quantitative research methodology to investigate the impact of tourism experience on future tourism intentions in Algerian participants. An online poll was conducted between June 24, 2023 and January 27, 2024, with 168 respondents selected at random. The survey contained Yes/No questions about prior tourism experience and future intentions to return or recommend Algeria.

3.2 Analytical Method: The McNemar Test

The McNemar test is appropriate for analysing paired nominal data where two dichotomous responses are provided by the same individuals (McNemar, 1947). It examines whether the proportion of discordant pairs those who change their responses between questions is statistically significant. The McNemar test with continuity correction is calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(|b - c| - 1)^2}{b + c}$$

where:

- **b** = number of respondents who previously participated in tourism but do not wish to continue
- **c** = number of respondents who had not participated but expressed future interest

This formula is used when the sample size is relatively small, as it reduces bias from the standard McNemar test.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Results

Descriptive statistics show that 91.7% of participants had previously engaged in domestic tourism, and 95.8% planned to do so again. Only 4.2% expressed no interest in future trips. These data point to a very positive impression of national tourist potential. The cross-tabulation shows that 149 of 154 respondents with past tourist experience exhibited sustained interest, whereas 5 did not. In contrast, 12 of 14 respondents with no prior tourist experience expressed a desire to travel in the future, while two remained uninterested.

The McNemar test yielded a p-value of 0.143, which exceeded the 0.05 criterion. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, implying that there is no meaningful difference between previous experience and future desire. This statistical outcome implies that whether or not an individual has practiced tourism in Algeria does not substantially alter their willingness to do so again. Interest in domestic tourism is consistently high across both experienced and inexperienced groups.

4.2. Discussion

The findings call into question the widely held belief that previous vacation experiences significantly influence future behavioural intentions. Instead, Algerians' propensity to participate in tourism appears to be driven by broader socio-cultural incentives and rising national consciousness, rather than experiential reinforcement. The findings also reflect the changing perception of tourism as a social necessity associated with relaxation, cultural exploration, and national pride, rather than a luxury hobby.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the findings deviate from the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which holds that previous acts support future intentions. Instead, they are more consistent with research that focus on emotional and cognitive characteristics including trust, contentment, and perceived risk reduction. These factors may be better predictors of intention in poor countries where infrastructure and service quality are variable.

Matter of first importance, the findings suggest that policymakers should prioritize satisfaction, trust, and accessibility over reliance on repeat visits. Investment in infrastructure, digital marketing, and human resource quality will be critical for translating enthusiasm into tangible tourism flows. Promoting domestic destinations like the Aures Mountains, Ghardaïa, and Saharan circuits can support local economies and reduce regional inequalities (Zeraib et al., 2022; Boudiaf, 2023).

4. Conclusion

This study looked into whether prior tourism experience influences future tourism intentions among Algerians. Using the McNemar test, there was no statistically significant difference ($p = 0.143$) between previous participation and future willingness. Nonetheless, the data show a strong overall desire to engage in tourism, highlighting Algeria's untapped domestic tourism potential. The lack of significance does not diminish the value of experience, but rather suggests that other psychological and environmental factors may play a larger role in shaping future behavior. As a result, Algerian tourism policies should prioritize service quality, trust, and accessibility rather than relying solely on repeat visitors.

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. An online survey may have excluded people who do not have internet access, particularly older or rural populations, limiting representativeness. The sample size, while adequate for the McNemar test, is still insufficient for national generalization. Furthermore, the study looked at only two binary variables, excluding mediators like satisfaction, perceived risk, and economic constraints. The cross-sectional design also captures intentions at a single point in time, making it ineffective for measuring behavioral evolution or seasonal changes. Finally, self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability bias, which occurs when respondents overestimate their willingness to participate in tourism activities.

Future studies should adopt a more comprehensive analytical framework that includes psychological and contextual variables. Multivariate or structural equation modeling could help identify how satisfaction, perceived trust, and income influence tourism intention. Comparative studies of Algeria and its neighboring Maghreb countries could shed light on regional patterns and common challenges. Longitudinal research would reveal how intentions shift as infrastructure and marketing improve. Qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews, may also capture the emotional and cultural meanings that motivate Algerians to travel within their country. Finally, future research could look into how digitalization, social media engagement, and environmental sustainability affect domestic tourism decisions in the post-pandemic era.

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