

Assessing the Digital Communication of Official Tourism Organizations in Morocco : A Multi-Dimensional Evaluation Approach

Évaluation de la communication digitale des organismes officiels de tourisme au Maroc : une approche d'évaluation multidimensionnelle

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Abstract

The rapid growth of digital technologies has made websites and social media (SM) essential tools, enabling national and regional organizations to provide information, shape brand identity, engage directly with audiences, and enhance destination competitiveness. Our study assessed the digital communication practices of the National Tourism Organization (NTO) and seven regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in Morocco, using a multidimensional assessment grid we developed, encompassing three main dimensions and twelve indicators. The results of our research revealed that Moroccan official tourism organizations are present on digital platforms as they have functional websites and detain SM accounts on which they provide information and convey the brand image and personality of Morocco and Moroccan destinations. Also, the organizations achieved high scores in both website quality and functionality as well as content and branding. However, across all organizations, social media engagement achieved the lowest score, indicating that there is a need to transform SM from a promotional tool into a space for co-creation of destination experiences.

Keywords :

Digital Communication; Branding; Official tourism organizations; Morocco; Digital platforms.

Résumé

L'essor rapide des technologies digitales a fait des sites web et des Réseaux Sociaux (RS) des outils indispensables, permettant aux organisations nationales et régionales de diffuser l'information, de façonner leur identité de marque, d'interagir directement avec les publics et d'améliorer la compétitivité des destinations. Notre étude a évalué les pratiques de communication digitale d'une Organisation Nationale de Tourisme (ONT) et de sept Organisations de Gestion de Destinations (OGD) régionales à l'aide d'une grille d'évaluation multidimensionnelle que nous avons développé comprenant trois dimensions principales et douze indicateurs. Les résultats de notre étude ont révélé que les organismes officiels de tourisme marocains sont présents sur les plateformes numériques, disposent de sites web fonctionnels et de comptes sur les Réseaux Sociaux (RS) où ils diffusent des informations et véhiculent l'image de marque et la personnalité du Maroc et de ses destinations. De plus, ces organisations ont obtenu d'excellents résultats en termes de qualité et de fonctionnalité du siteweb, ainsi qu'en contenu et image de marque. En revanche, pour toutes les organisations, l'engagement sur les RS a obtenu le score le plus faible, ce qui indique la nécessité de transformer les RS, d'un simple outil promotionnel, en un espace de co-crédation d'expériences de voyage.

Mots clés :

Communication digitale; Image de marque; Organismes officiels de tourisme; Maroc; Plateformes digitales.

Introduction

Tourism destinations today operate in a highly complex and uncertain environment, characterized by rapidly changing market conditions, evolving tourist expectations, and intensified global competition. To remain competitive, destinations must navigate a fast-paced and turbulent landscape, where achieving and sustaining an advantage poses significant challenges (Mariani, 2020). This environment requires strategic coordination and proactive management to ensure that destinations can adapt effectively to both external pressures and internal constraints.

In this context, tourism management organizations play a central role in guiding destinations through these complexities. National tourism organizations (NTOs) are primarily responsible for promoting the country as a whole, enhancing its international image, and supporting the development of sustainable tourism products (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2022). At the regional and local levels, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) focus on marketing specific destinations, coordinating the services of public and private stakeholders, and attracting tourists to particular locations. While marketing remains a core competency of these organizations, there is growing recognition that their functions extend beyond promotion, contributing to destination competitiveness, strategic development, and sustainable management (Faur & Ban, 2022).

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the ways in which tourism management organizations operate and interact with potential visitors. Websites and social media (SM) platforms have become essential tools for enhancing destination attractiveness and competitiveness. Official tourism websites provide accurate, up-to-date information, facilitate destination branding, and create a coherent brand personality that shapes tourists' perceptions and influences their decision-making (Confetto & al., 2023; Hefny, 2020).

Meanwhile, SM platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and TripAdvisor enable DMOs to engage directly with tourists, residents, and other stakeholders, fostering two-way communication, promoting brand identity, and implementing cost-effective marketing strategies (Confetto & al., 2023). By strategically integrating digital channels into their marketing efforts, both NTOs and regional DMOs can strengthen destination visibility, enhance competitiveness, and respond dynamically to the challenges posed by a complex and evolving tourism landscape.

Overall, the globalization of tourism and advances in digital technologies have shifted the competitive landscape, requiring both NTOs and regional DMOs to strategically integrate websites and SM into their marketing and engagement efforts (Confetto & al., 2023; Mariani, 2020). By combining content-rich platforms with interactive SM channels, tourism organizations can effectively communicate their brand, engage audiences, and maintain a competitive presence in the global tourism market.

Despite the recognized importance of digital technologies for destination competitiveness, there is limited understanding of how national and regional tourism organizations in Morocco leverage websites and social media to achieve strategic objectives. While global research highlights best practices in digital engagement, little is known about the extent to which Moroccan NTOs and DMOs integrate these tools effectively to enhance destination branding, tourist engagement, and overall competitiveness. This gap raises a question about the alignment between the organizations' strategic roles and their actual digital performance, as well as the potential challenges and opportunities for improving Morocco's digital tourism ecosystem.

Accordingly, the central research question guiding this study is: How do national tourism organizations (NTOs) and their affiliated destination management organizations (DMOs) perform in terms of digital presence and communication across websites and SM platforms in Morocco?

Based on this question, the study pursues the following objectives:

1. To identify the main official tourism organizations responsible for promoting tourism in Morocco, beginning with the NTO and extending to regional DMOs.
2. To assess the digital presence of the official tourism organizations (NTO and regional DMOs) in Morocco.
3. To assess the websites and SM accounts of the selected official tourism organizations based on: Website quality and functionality; Content and branding; and SM engagement.

1. Literature review and conceptual framework

1.1. Digital presence of tourism organizations

Destination management organizations (DMOs) represent key institutional actors that hold strategic responsibility in the development, the management and promotion of tourism destinations. Their functions vary according to administrative structures and territorial levels, from national to regional and local contexts, depending on the degree of decentralization and specific governance needs (Faur & Ban, 2022). Gretzel (2006) (as cited in (Bonjisse & Paulo

Morais, 2017) defines DMOs as non-profit institutions— either public or private—tasked with attracting tourists and facilitating the commercialization of hospitality and travel services within a defined geographic area, whether a city, a region, or an entire nation.

Traditionally, DMOs have been primarily viewed as marketing-oriented organizations responsible for promoting tourism destinations. Presenza & al. (2005) (as cited in (Faur & Ban, 2022) note that these organizations play an increasingly significant role in destination development. But, despite the evolution of their functions toward broader management activities, several scholars continue to argue that the main competence of DMOs remains destination marketing (Faur & Ban, 2022).

At the national level, NTOs recognize the importance of maintaining a strong digital presence. According to Han & Mills (2006), NTOs must create, maintain, and regularly update official destination websites (ODWs) to effectively engage with both current and potential visitors.

The digital transformation of tourism marketing has also expanded the role of DMOs into SM environments. As Confetto & al. (2023) highlight, DMOs responsible for marketing a destination within clear geopolitical boundaries increasingly utilize SM platforms; such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and TripAdvisor; as primary communication channels. These platforms are essential for brand positioning and visitor engagement strategies (Lim & al., 2021 as cited in (Confetto & al., 2023)).

Finally, maintaining an effective digital presence has become a precondition for competitiveness in modern destination marketing. This presence is based on a well-structured website and well-managed social networks business accounts (Confetto & al., 2023).

Together, these digital communication tools form the foundation of contemporary destination marketing and brand positioning strategies.

1.2. Websites, Social media (SM) and Destination Branding

Destination branding is about strategically selecting and combining coherent brand elements, such as names, logos, symbols, as well as the heritage, language, myths and legends associated with a place to create a positive and unique image (Confetto et al., 2023). Also, destination branding is the basis of marketing strategies and the most important marketing tool in the tourism sector for shaping the images of the places in the minds of potential tourists and other stakeholders (Tran & Rudolf, 2022).

Websites and SM are important digital channels that help destination management organizations build, promote and maintain branding. Molinillo (2017) argue that DMOs

encourage visits based on the information distributed through official websites and SM, in addition to traditional media.

Regarding websites, official destination websites are considered important tools for providing information to tourists on the destination (Hefny, 2020), thus providing visitors with what they need to make a destination choice and avoid uncertainty and risk (Confetto & al., 2023). Moreover, Fernández-Cavia (2013) argue that DMOs need to develop their virtual presence via successful websites. Other than providing information, official tourism websites enable to convey brand image and brand's personality (Rol & Sert, 2023).

Moreover, SM are considered as powerful tools for contacting potential visitors, conveying information and communicating destination brands alongside with mobile applications, photographs and video sharing platforms and recommendation sites (Fernández-Cavia & Castro, 2015). Several authors underline the importance to activate SM accounts such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Adona & al., 2023; Confetto & al., 2023). The utilization of SM not only facilitates the promotion of the unique personality of each destination but also enables the co-creation of value between tourists and the managers of official accounts. Moreover, it enables tourist destinations to reach a broad and diverse audience, reinforcing its role as a powerful tool for tourism marketing (Bonilla-Quijada & al., 2025).

Despite the extensive literature highlighting the role of websites and social media in destination branding, several gaps and limitations remain. Research often treats websites and social media as separate channels, without critically examining their interactions or combined impact on brand perception and tourist engagement. Finally, while destination branding elements are widely recognized, there is a lack of unified frameworks for evaluating how these elements are integrated across digital platforms. These gaps highlight the need for empirical, context-specific analysis, which the present study addresses by examining the digital presence and communication strategies of Morocco's official tourism organizations.

1.3. Development of an assessment grid for digital communication of official tourism organizations

In the field of communication, monitoring and evaluating implemented strategies is increasingly recognized as essential. However, in the context of digital tourist communication, there are currently no widely accepted models or standardized parameters for evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies carried out through official destination websites (Bonjisse & Paulo Morais, 2017) and no single, universally accepted methodology has been established to analyze website quality (Fernández-Cavia & Castro, 2015). Let alone, models

that encompass both websites and SM platforms. Hefny (2020) also notes that destination website features remain largely unstandardized. Research addressing the use of digital channels and tools for destination promotion is scarce, with only a few studies proposing models from different perspectives (Confetto & al., 2023). Taken together, these gaps indicate a clear need for a comprehensive, standardized assessment framework for digital communication by official tourism organizations. Developing such an evaluation grid would support consistent measurement of website quality, effectiveness, and impact in promoting tourist destinations.

To address this gap, an original assessment grid was developed, integrating and adapting elements from three established models: Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013), Han & Mills (2006) and Confetto & al. (2023). These models were selected because they approach the evaluation of digital communication from complementary perspectives : strategic communication and branding, website quality and usability, and SM engagement. But while they provide a solid theoretical foundation for evaluating the digital communication of DMOs, they have significant limitations in their practical application. For example, the model of Han & Mills (2006) uses binary assessments (presence /absence), and doesn't fully considere the strategic dimension of branding or multichannel coordination. Confetto & al.'s (2023) model focused on analyzing destination branding more on SM than on websites. As for the model of Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013), it shows some limits regarding branding as it includes basic indicators related to brand presence and it primarily assesses technical and informational aspects of websites rather than the strategic, emotional, and narrative dimensions of branding.

In response to these shortcomings, the framework developed in this study combines these perspectives and refines the measurement scales, and offers a more comprehensive, strategic, and relevant assessment of the digital communication of tourism organisations.

That being said, the grid we developed provides a standardized yet adaptable tool for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of digital communication practices across different levels of tourism organizations. The dimensions used in the assessment grid, the models they were adopted from and the specific description for each indicator are listed in Table N°1.

As displayed in Table N°1, the assessment grid is based on three key dimensions: Website Quality and functionality; Content and branding; and Social media engagement. Each dimension has four indicators.

Table N°1: Assessment grid developed for digital communication of official tourism organizations

Dimension	Indicator	Models used	Description / How to Evaluate
Website quality and functionality	Navigation clarity	Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013), Han & Mills (2006)	Are menus, links, and pages easy to find and follow?
	Mobile responsiveness		Does the site display correctly on smartphones/tablets?
	Search function		Is there a functional site search feature?
	Accessibility / Languages		Are multiple languages offered? Is basic accessibility considered (font size, contrast)?
Content and branding	Brand identity visibility	Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013), Han & Mills (2006); Confetto & al. (2023)	Is the destination's brand clearly communicated (logo, slogan, visuals)?
	Storytelling / Narrative		Does the website convey destination story, experience, or lifestyle?
	Multimedia richness		Use of images, video, interactive maps, virtual tours
	Visual and messaging consistency		Do colors, fonts, images, tone match destination brand?
Social media engagement	Platform coverage	Confetto & al. (2023); Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013)	Presence on major platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube)
	Posting frequency and regularity		Are posts made consistently?
	Audience interaction		Average engagement (likes, comments, shares) per post
	Content alignment with website		Is messaging and branding consistent with website content?

Source : Elaborated by author

The first dimension captures the technical foundation of the destination's online presence and focuses on intuitive site structure and ease of information retrieval; the mobile responsiveness; the inclusion of search functionality and the both inclusivity and internationalization through the use of several languages on the website. As for the second dimension, Content and branding, it is mainly about how the destination's image and personality are communicated through multimedia, storytelling and the brand elements such as the logo, the slogan and the visuals. The last dimension developed in the assessment grid is about SM engagement and focuses mainly on audience reach, participation, and consistency with the overall brand.

2. Methodology

2.1. Case selection

The destination of Morocco was selected as the empirical context for this study for several reasons. First, tourism is one of the most significant sectors of the country's economy as it generated 112 billion dirhams in 2024 (Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy, s. d.), and this makes the effectiveness of official tourism communication particularly important. Second, Morocco is considered the most visited destination in Africa (UN Tourism, 2025). Third, it is worth noting that Morocco is preparing to co-host the FIFA World Cup in 2030 and that it will host the thirty-fifth edition of the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN 2025) starting December 2025 (UN Tourism, 2025). These factors together make Morocco a relevant case for testing the proposed assessment grid. While the findings are context-specific, the analytical framework can be replicated or compared across other destinations with similar tourism and communication dynamics.

2.2. Research design

This study opts for a qualitative exploratory case analysis of the online communication strategies of official tourism organizations in Morocco. The analysis focused on the websites and SM accounts of the country's official tourism organizations including one NTO and several regional DMOs.

An evaluation grid was used to quantitatively score predefined dimensions and indicators, which were identified through qualitative observation. Although each dimension was assigned a numeric score, these values are used primarily as an interpretive aid to identify patterns and relative emphasis across websites and SM platforms. The scoring does not constitute statistical testing but serves to structure qualitative observations for comparative discussion.

2.3. Data collection

A top-down approach guided the selection of organizations. The National Moroccan tourism Office (Office National Marocain du Tourisme, ONMT), responsible for promoting Morocco as a tourist destination, was included first. Its official website (*visitmorocco.com*) and associated SM accounts were cataloged. Links from the ONMT website to regional DMOs were subsequently followed. Contact details for regional and provincial DMOs are provided on the pages dedicated to destinations according to four categories: (1) nature and rural heritage, (2) beaches and leisure, (3) medinas and beaches, and (4) medinas with cultural heritage immersion. In some cases, the links provided on the website were outdated or inactive, requiring supplementary searches through official directories or platform searches to accurately locate

the organizations' accounts. Seven regional DMOs were included, while provincial DMOs were excluded from the study. For each selected regional DMO, we visited the official website to identify and document associated SM accounts. In addition, we examined the SM accounts themselves to check for links to other platforms that might not be listed on the websites. This two-step procedure ensured that all active SM accounts were accurately identified and included in the analysis.

This selection procedure ensured institutional legitimacy and reflected the hierarchical structure of tourism promotion in Morocco, in which the ONMT provides overarching coordination and DMOs manage regional communication.

2.4. Data analysis

The assessment of the online communication was conducted from the 1st to 31st of October 2025 and evaluated three dimensions: website quality and functionality, content and branding, and SM engagement, each dimension comprising four indicators as mentioned above. Each indicator in the assessment grid was evaluated using a four-point scale ranging from 0 to 3. Details regarding the scoring scale are presented in Table N°2.

This scoring system allowed for a nuanced appraisal of the extent to which each criterion was fulfilled. A score of 0 indicated the absence of the feature or criterion, while higher scores reflected increasing levels of presence, quality, or sophistication.

At the compilation of the assessment, the scores were assigned for each dimension and aggregated to produce an overall evaluation for each organization.

Table N°2: Scoring scale

Dimension	Indicator	0	1	2	3
Website quality and functionality	Navigation clarity	Confusing or no menu	Basic menu, confusing labels	Clear menu, minor issues	Intuitive, multi-level menu, easy to navigate
	Mobile responsiveness	Not responsive	Partially responsive	Mostly responsive, minor issues	Fully responsive, all elements adapt
	Search function	Absent	Present but limited	Functional, minor limitations	Fully functional, fast, accurate
	Accessibility / Languages	No languages, not accessible	One language, minimal accessibility	Two languages, some accessibility features	3+ languages, good accessibility features

Content and branding	Brand identity visibility	Not visible	Minimal branding	Clear but inconsistent branding	Strong, consistent branding
	Storytelling / Narrative	None	Very limited	Some narrative content	Rich, engaging storytelling
	Multimedia richness	None	Minimal (few images)	Moderate (images + some video/maps)	Extensive, high-quality multimedia
	Visual & messaging consistency	No consistency	Minimal consistency	Mostly consistent	Fully consistent
Social media engagement	Platform coverage	0–1 platforms	2 platforms	3 platforms	4+ platforms
	Posting frequency & regularity	No posts	Irregular, rare	Somewhat regular	Regular, frequent
	Audience interaction	Very low / none	Low	Moderate	High / very active
	Content alignment with website	Not aligned	Minimal alignment	Some alignment	Fully aligned

Source : Elaborated by author

3. Findings

In this section, the findings of the study on the digital communication of the official tourism organizations (NTO and DMOs) of Morocco are presented. The first sub-section identifies the official tourism organizations in Morocco included in the analysis. The second sub-section, examines their digital presence through both their websites and SM accounts. Finally, the last sub-section is dedicated to the results of the evaluation conducted on the websites and SM accounts of the selected DMOs based on the assessment grid we developed.

3.1. Identification of the official tourism organizations in Morocco

The first step of the analysis consisted in identifying the main official bodies responsible for the promotion and management of tourism in Morocco. At the national level, the ONMT represents the central authority in charge of the country's overall tourism promotion and destination branding. In Morocco, ONMT operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy and is responsible for international marketing campaigns, participation in trade fairs, and the coordination of promotional strategies across regions. Its online communication activities are therefore the most visible and centralized within the national tourism system.

Building on the identification of the NTO, the research then focused on detecting the regional DMOs involved in promoting specific areas within Morocco. The identification of these DMOs

was based on references found on the NTO's official website. This step made it possible to outline a multilevel governance structure in which the ONMT plays a coordinating role, while DMOs act as operational units managing regional marketing initiatives.

In total, 8 official tourism organizations were identified: 1 NTO and 7 regional DMOs. These organizations together constitute the institutional network responsible for the promotion of Morocco as a tourism destination. Table N°3 presents an overview of these entities, indicating their type, their name and the destinations they promote.

Based on our research, we noticed that the Moroccan tourism governance structure is hierarchical, with the National Moroccan Council of Tourism (ONMT) providing overarching coordination and seven regional DMOs managing destination-specific promotion. All these regional DMOs are Regional Councils of Tourism (called "Centres Régionaux du Tourisme" in French). The NTO's classification of destinations on its website is generally logical and balanced. While most destinations are promoted through regional DMOs, certain destinations (for example Safi and Essaouira), are also represented by provincial organizations. Overall, the classification provides a coherent structure for the promotion of Moroccan destinations.

Table N°3 : Moroccan official tourism organizations and destinations they promote

Type of tourism organization	Name	Destinations promoted
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office	Morocco
	Regional Tourism Council Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima	Tanger; Tétoutan; Alhoceima; Tamuda Bay; Chefchaouen; Assilah; Larache; Ouazzane
DMOs	Regional Tourism Council Fès Meknès	Fès; Ifrane; Taza; Elhajeb; Taounate; Meknès Sefrou; Moulay Yaâkoub; Boulemane
	Regional Tourism Council Dakhla Oued Eddahab	Dakhla
	Regional Tourism Council d'Agadir	Agadir; Inzegane; Chtouka Ait Baha; Taroudannt; Tiznit; Tata
	Regional Tourism Council Grand Casablanca	Casablanca; Settati; Sidi Bennour; El Jadida; Azemmour; Benslimane; Oualidia; Mohammadia; Bouznika; Médiouna; Berrachid
	Regional Tourism Council of Rabat Salé Kénitra	Rabat; Salé; Kénitra
	Regional Tourism Council Marrakech	Marrakesh; Essaouira; El haouz; Agafay; Rehamana; Yousseoufia; Chichaoua; El Kelaa des Sraghna; Safi

Source: Elaborated by author

3.2. Assessment of digital presence of Moroccan NTO and DMOs

In terms of digital presence, all organizations maintain official websites, while SM presence varies across platforms. The URL to the websites of the NTO and DMOs are summarized in Table N°4.

Table N°4 : URLs of the official websites

Type of tourism organization	Name	Website URL
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office	https://www.visitmorocco.com
	RTC of Tanger-Tétouan-Alhoceima	https://www.visittanger.com
DMOs	RTC of Fès Meknès	https://visitfesmeknes.ma
	RTC of Dakhla Oued Eddahab	https://visitdakhla.ma
	RTC of Agadir	https://visitagadir.com
	RTC of Grand Casablanca	https://visitcasablanca.ma
	RTC of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra	https://www.visitrabat.com
	RTC of Marrakech	https://visitmarrakech.com

Source : Elaborated by author

Following the assessment of selected official websites, the analysis turned to SM presence. To provide a clear overview, Table N°5 summarizes the presence of each organization on major platforms, including Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG), Youtube (YT), X, Tiktok (TT), Pinterest, Threads (TH) and LinkedIn (LI). A checkmark (✓) indicates an active account, whereas the absence of the checkmark indicates that the organization does not maintain an account on that platform.

Table N°5: Social media presence of Moroccan official tourism organizations

Types of organization	Name	FB	IG	YT	X	TT	Pinter est	TH	LI
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima	✓	✓	✓					
DMO	RTC of Fès Meknès	✓	✓	✓		✓			
	RTC of Dakhla Oued Eddahab	✓	✓	✓					
	RTC of Agadir	✓	✓						
	RTC of Grand Casablanca	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
	RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	RTC of Marrakech	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Source : Elaborated by author

As shown in Table N°5, the NTO maintains active SM accounts on all platforms except LinkedIn. As for the DMOs, we noticed that all organizations maintain at least two SM accounts, with Facebook and Instagram being the most widely adopted platforms. The platform Youtube comes in third position. As for the other platforms, they are less used as it is the case for X and Ticktock in comparison with Facebook and Instagram. As for Threads, Pinterest and LinkedIn they are the least used SM platforms by DMOs.

3.3. Assessment of the websites and social media accounts of Moroccan official tourism organizations

The assessment of digital communication of the Moroccan NTO and the 7 regional DMOs was structured around 3 main dimensions and 12 indicators as outlined above. The following sections present the detailed results for each dimension and its corresponding indicators.

3.3.1. Website quality and functionality:

Website quality and functionality constitute the core of an organization's digital presence, shaping first impressions and influencing tourists' perceptions of destination credibility. By examining the indicators related to website quality and functionality, the study aims to identify how effectively the national and regional tourism organizations provide user-centered, reliable, and engaging online experiences. The results presented in Table N°6 summarize the overall performance and variability observed across destinations.

Table N°6: Assessment score for website quality and functionality

Type	Name	Indicators				Dimension score
		Navigation clarity	Mobile responsiveness	Search function	Accessibility / Languages	
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT)	2	3	3	3	2,75
	RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima	2	2	1	3	2
	RTC of Fès Meknès	3	3	3	3	3
DMOs	RTC of Dakhla Oued Eddahab	3	2	1	3	2,25
	RTC of Agadir	1	3	2	1	1,75
	RTC of Grand Casablanca	2	2	3	2	2,25
	RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra	3	3	3	3	3
	RTC of Marrakech	3	3	0	3	2,25

Source : Elaborated by author

Overall, according to our assessment, the RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra achieved the highest average score (3/3), followed by the MNTTO (2,75/3). The RTC of Fès Meknès, and the RTC of Marrakesh have respectively a score of 2.25/3, while the RTC of Agadir obtained the lowest score (1.75/3). The indicators with the best performance across all organizations were: mobile responsiveness and accessibility/languages, with a respectively average score of 2.625/3, whereas the search function showed a lower score as some DMOs websites had no search function or had one that is present but limited. Regarding mobile responsiveness all official tourism organizations had a fully responsive mobile version of their website or mostly responsive versions with minor issues. As for the accessibility and availability of several languages on the websites, it is worth mentioning that website of the MNTTO is available in 11 languages and that the website of the RTC of Marrakesh is available in 12 languages. As for the other websites, at least two languages are available (French and English). On the website of the RTC of Agadir, there was noticed a slight problem with languages, as the same content is displayed in several languages but no language choice is available, so the navigation on the website is rather confusing. On navigation clarity, the majority of the websites' menus were intuitive, multilevel, clear and easy to navigate. The issue of languages was reported in the menu of the website of the RTC of Agadir, as several pages had the same name but needed to be checked to know in which languages they are written.

3.3.2. Content and Branding:

The dimension related to content and branding is an important dimension as it is related to the official tourism organizations branding efforts. We assessed the indicators related to content and branding to know how effectively destinations in Morocco communicate their identity and image online. The scores of the indicators related to content and branding are presented in Table N°7.

Table N°7: Assessment scores for content and branding

Type	Name	Indicators				Dimension score
		Brand identity visibility	Storytelling / Narrative	Multimedia richness	Visual & messaging consistency	
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT)	3	3	3	3	3
	RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima	1	1	2	1	1,25
	RTC of Fès Meknès	2	2	3	3	2,5
	RTC of Dakhla Oued Eddahab	2	2	3	3	2,5
DMOs	RTC of Agadir	2	2	2	2	2
	RTC of Grand Casablanca	3	3	3	3	3
	RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra	2	2	2	2	2
	RTC of Marrakech	3	3	3	3	3

Source : Elaborated by author

Based on our assessment of content and branding, the MNTTO, the RTC of Grand Casablanca, and the RTC of Marrakech have the highest scores (respectively 3/3). On the contrary, the RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima has the lowest score (1,25/3) as we noticed some inconsistencies regarding the branding and a lack of storytelling across the website. The indicators with the highest scores are multimedia richness (2,625/3) and visual and messaging consistency (2,5/3). On the websites of the MNTTO, the RTC of Fès Meknès, of Dakhla, of Grand Casablanca, and of Marrakech, extensive and high-quality multimedia was used including pictures, videos, interactive maps and e-brochures. As for visual and messaging consistency, the website of the MNTTO is fully aligned to the branding of the destination Morocco. As for the DMOs there is some alignment in terms of colors, fonts, images, tone. Regarding storytelling and narratives and brand identity visibility, the digital platforms of the MNTTO, the RTC of Marrakech and of Grand Casablanca have rich and engaging storytelling and a strong, consistent branding. On the contrary, the digital platforms of the RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima have limited storytelling and a rather inconsistent branding.

3.3.3. Social Media engagement:

The SM engagement dimension evaluates the interactive and promotional dimension of digital presence, capturing audience reach, participation, and consistency with the overall brand. The scores of the indicators related to this dimension are summarized in Table N°8.

Table N°8: Assessment scores for Social media engagement

Type	Name	Indicators				Dimension score
		Platform coverage	Posting frequency & regularity	Audience interaction	Content alignment with website	
NTO	Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT)	3	3	2	3	2,75
	RTC of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima	2	1	0	1	1
	RTC of Fès Meknès	2	2	1	2	1,75
	RTC of Dakhla Oued Eddahab	2	1	0	2	1,25
DMOs	RTC of Agadir	1	2	1	2	1,5
	RTC of Grand Casablanca	3	2	1	2	2
	RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra	1	0	1	1	0,75
	RTC of Marrakech	3	2	1	2	2

Source : Elaborated by author

Overall, according to our assessment, the SM engagement dimension is the one that has the lowest score in comparison with the other dimensions assessed with an average score of 1,625/3. The platform coverage is the indicator with the highest average score (2,125/3) and the audience interaction has the lowest score (0,875/3).

When it comes to platform coverage, the MNTTO, the RTC of Grand Casablanca and of Marrakech have the highest score (respectively 3/3) as they have SM account on more than 4 platforms (see Table N°5). Furthermore, we noticed that the MNTTO posted regularly and frequently on their SM accounts. As for the RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra, they had 3 accounts on SM platforms but post irregularly and rarely. For the other DMOs, the frequency and regularity of posting is somewhat regular. It is also worth mentioning, that the platform on which DMOs post the least is Youtube.

Regarding the alignment of the content posted on the SM accounts, it was noticed that branding on the SM accounts are fully aligned as they showcase the same visual identity and image. But we reported a minimal alignment in the SM accounts with the branding on the websites on the RTC of Rabat Salé Kénitra and of Tanger Tétouan Alhoceima.

The audience interactions on SM of the official Tourism organizations included in our analysis are rather low as the rate of the numbers of comments, likes and shares to the numbers of followers on the SM platforms are low.

4. Discussion

The main objective of our research is to assess the digital communication on the websites and SM accounts of official tourism organizations in Morocco in 2025. As the assessment and evaluation of communication strategies is essential, and since no universal model for the evaluation of websites and SM has been established, we developed a grid with three dimensions that were adopted from three models proposed by Fernández-Cavia & Castro (2013), Han & Mills (2006); Confetto & al. (2023).

The results of our assessment showed that Moroccan official tourism organizations are present on digital platforms as they have functional websites and detain SM accounts on which they provide information and convey the brand image and personality of Morocco and Moroccan destinations. But it is worth noting that there were disparities in terms of performances among the NTO (ONMT) and the other DMOs evaluated in our analysis.

Overall, the NTO achieved the highest overall average score of the three dimensions (2,84/3), outperforming regional DMOs. This result suggests that the NTO benefits from greater resources, professional expertise, and a more coherent digital strategy, which translates into higher-quality content, consistent branding, and more sophisticated user experiences. In contrast, several regional DMOs demonstrated solid performance in terms of website quality and functionality and in terms of content and branding. These findings point to the potential for regional organizations to develop stronger, more participatory communication practices.

Another noteworthy result is related to SM engagement which received the lowest score among the three evaluated dimensions (1,625/3). This suggests that, while most organizations maintain an active presence on various SM platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram and Youtube), their content strategies may still rely predominantly on one-way information dissemination rather than fostering engagement and interaction with users. This highlights the challenge in transforming SM from a promotional tool into a space for co-creation of destination experiences.

Our research offers several theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital destination marketing, online communication and destination branding as it demonstrates that effective digital presence is not solely a matter of technological adoption, but of strategic management of communication and

branding. Also, by developing an assessment grid, the study extends existing models of online destination marketing and offers a conceptual and methodological tool that can be adapted or replicated in different contexts to evaluate the digital performance of official tourism organizations. From a managerial perspective, the findings underscore the need for official tourism organizations to adopt a more strategic and integrated approach to digital communication. The consistently low scores in SM engagement indicate that many organizations should prioritize Community Management to foster users' engagement and interactions.

Conclusion

The results of our research offer an overview of the digital communication on the websites and SM accounts of official tourism organizations in Morocco in 2025. As these organizations play an important role in the promotion of Morocco as a tourism destination, it is important to assess their digital presence. To achieve that, we used an assessment grid that we developed to provide a structured understanding of how these institutions use websites and SM to promote destinations and engage with audiences. The results revealed clear differences in performance. The NTO achieved the highest overall score, reflecting a more professionalized and consistent digital strategy, while regional DMOs showed strengths in website quality and functionality and in content and branding but weaknesses in SM engagement. Across all organizations, the latter scored the lowest, suggesting that interactive and participatory communication remains underdeveloped despite active online presence.

While our study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations. Firstly, its scope was limited to a specific national context and time frame. Secondly, the assessment was conducted by a single researcher, which may introduce subjectivity in the evaluation of the digital communication dimensions and indicators. Another limitation of this study is that the assessment primarily relied on quantitative scoring of qualitative dimensions, which may not fully capture the nuances of digital communication, particularly in terms of destination branding. Finally, the study did not employ triangulation of data sources or methods, which could have provided a more comprehensive and validated understanding of the digital strategies of DMOs.

Building on these limitations, several avenues for future research emerge. First, to enhance the generalizability of findings, similar assessments could be conducted across different contexts and over extended time periods, allowing for cross-country comparisons and longitudinal analyses of digital communication strategies. Second, involving multiple researchers and

practitioners in the assessment process could improve the objectivity of the evaluations and reducing potential bias. Additionally, complementing the quantitative scoring with qualitative approaches, such as content or thematic analysis, could provide deeper insights into how tourism organizations construct and communicate their brand identities and images, engage audiences, and differentiate destinations in the digital space. Finally, future research could combine multiple data sources and methods, such as interviews with DMO managers, analysis of internal documents, and observational data from social media interactions. Such triangulation would provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of how digital communication strategies contribute to destination branding and stakeholder engagement.

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