

**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS ROLE IN PROMOTING TOURISM
DESTINATIONS IN UGANDA**

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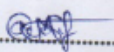


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I, Masawi Sharon hereby declare that this is my original work, is not plagiarized and has not been submitted to any other institution for any award.

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APPROVAL

APPROVAL

I hereby confirm that this research report, authored by MASAWI SHARON, Registration Number J22B63/028, was conducted under my supervision and is now ready for submission.

Signature.....*DKW*.....Date.....*20/09/2024*.....

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ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my dear parents Mr. and Mrs. Makhonje Godfrey who have been there for me throughout my academic journey supporting me financially, physically and mentally. My academic supervisor Mr. Daniel Karibwije has also played an important role by advising and mentoring me especially during the proposal stage which is very crucial during research. Above all, thanks to God Almighty for a healthy life for both my beloved and I which ensured provision thus completion of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations in Entebbe city. The study was therefore done with the help of objectives which included identifying the most convenient social media strategy, investigate the impact of social media marketing on tourism destinations, explore the ways in which social media platforms can be leveraged to promote tourism destinations, and analyze the role of social media marketing in reaching different audience segments for example Gen X.

The research was done in an explanatory design in which quantitative and qualitative approach were also used with the help of questionnaires. Samples of 4 people who are staff from 4 chosen tour companies in Entebbe tourism city were also used.

Through my findings, there is a very positive impact of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations as all the four tour companies investigated use social media as a tool to promote tourism destinations with 85% hence making it an important tool in all businesses not only in Entebbe but the country at large.

Finally, I recommend that all businesses in Uganda start using social media as a marketing tool to improve on their profits level. This can be done by using social media influencers, sharing videos and photos of experiences on different social media handles and also engaging customers by directly replying to their concerns. For small businesses, whatsapp and face book are the most suitable platforms to use since the market is still small but as it grows, other social media platforms like instagram, tiktok can also be used to reach out to large audiences at the same time.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents background to the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, justification and theoretical frame work.

1.1 Background study

Social media generally refers to online platforms and applications that enable users to create, share, and interact with various forms of content such as texts, images, videos and audio. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing among individuals, communities and organizations. Social media has become an integral part of modern life with billions of people using various social media platforms every day which include face book, twitter, instagram, you tube, tik tok, snap chat, pinterest, reddit, whatsapp among others. According to Kietzmann, J. H., et al. (2013), social media has transformed the way people connect, communicate and interact with each other. It has also had a significant impact on various industries, including tourism, marketing entertainment, and education. It has made it easier for people to stay connected with friends and family, share experiences, and discover new content and access news and information.

According to Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010), social media marketing refers to the practice of promoting products, services, or brand through various social media platforms, such as face book, twitter, instagram among others. It involves creating and

sharing content including texts, images, videos, to engage and influence target markets. The primary goal of social media is to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, generate leads and ultimately boost tourism sales. It allows tourism businesses to reach and interact with their target audience in a more personal and direct manner than traditional advertising methods. Social media marketing involves a range of strategies and tactics, such as:

- i) Content creation; this involves developing and sharing relevant, engaging, and informative content that resonates with the target audience.
- ii) Content curation; sharing curated content from other sources that is relevant to the target audience and aligns with the brand's message and values.
- iii) Influencer marketing; partnering with influential individuals or organizations on social media to promote tourism products or services to their individuals.
- iv) Sponsored content; paying for promoted posts or ads on social media platforms to increase the reach and visibility of brand content.
- v) Community building; creating and nurturing online communities where customers can interact, share experiences, and provide feedback.
- vi) Analytics and reporting; monitoring and analyzing social media metrics to track the performance of marketing campaigns and identify areas for improvement.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO Nov 15, 2021), tourism are the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment

for not more than one continuous period of time for leisure, business or other purposes. The INTERNAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION (ITA) defines tourism as the movement of people to destinations outside their usual environment, for the purposes of leisure, business or other none essential purposes. The United Nations Statistics Division defines tourism as the activities of visitors, the purpose of which, whether leisure or business, or other non essential purposes either internally within the country or to destination outside the country. Tourism is a significant global industry that contributes to the economies of many countries and has a profound impact on the world's culture, environment and societies. There are several types of tourism including:

- i) Leisure tourism; this type of tourism involves traveling for pleasure, relaxation, and enjoyment. It can include activities such as sightseeing, visiting attractions, and participating in various forms of entertainment.
- ii) Business tourism; also known as business travel which involves traveling for purposes such as attending conferences, meetings or seminars.
- iii) Health and wellness tourism; this type of tourism focuses on improving one's health and well being through activities such as spa treatment, yoga retreats, and medical tourism.
- iv) Adventure tourism; it involves traveling to experience excitement, such as through activities like hiking, rock climbing, and wildlife safaris.
- v) Cultural tourism; it focuses on culture, traditions, and histories of a destination through activities such as visiting museums, attending cultural

performances, and exploring historical sites.

Tourism has numerous benefits including economic, cultural exchange, environmental benefits like reforestation, and social benefits like creation of employment opportunities among others. However, tourism has its challenges and drawbacks such as environmental impact like destruction of the natural environment, cultural degradation, and social issues such as poverty and increased standards of living among others. In conclusion, tourism is a complex and multifaceted industry that has significant economic, cultural, environmental and social implications. It is essential to practice responsible tourism and work towards sustainable and ethical tourism practices for example community based tourism to ensure that the benefits of tourism are maximized while minimizing its negative impacts.

According to the UNWTO, a tourism destination is an area specifically identified and protected for tourism, which satisfies the needs and expectations of tourists and hosts. This definition emphasizes the importance of tourism in the destination and the need for it to be specifically identified and promoted to attract visitors. A tourism destination is also defined by the INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION (ITTA) as a place that people visit for leisure or business purposes, which offers a range of attractions, amenities, and activities that meet the needs and expectations of tourists. Examples of tourism destinations include; beaches, mountains, city centers, historical sites, national parks, cultural destinations like tombs, adventure destinations, spa and wellness destinations among others.

Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010) suggest that social media marketing has become an

increasingly important tool for promoting tourism destinations. By leveraging the power of social media platforms, tourism destinations can reach a wider audience, engage with potential visitors, and showcase their unique attractions and experiences. Social media can therefore be used in the following ways to promote tourism destinations that is to say visual storytelling, influencer marketing; user generated content, real time engagement among others.

1.2 Problem statement

According to Kim, W., & Lee, Y. (2012), despite the growing popularity of social media platforms, there is a lack of understanding about the specific ways in which social media marketing can effectively be used to promote tourism destinations. This research aims to investigate the most effective social media marketing strategies and tactics for tourism destinations, with a focus on increasing awareness, driving website traffic, and boosting bookings among potential visitors.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the most effective social media marketing strategies and tactics for tourism destinations, with a focus on increasing awareness, driving website traffic, and boosting bookings among potential visitors.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i) To identify the most effective social media strategies and tactics for tourism destinations.
- ii) To provide valuable insights for tourism industry stakeholders, including tourism

destination managers, marketing professionals among others.

lii To investigate the impact of social media marketing on tourism destinations.

iv) To explore the ways in which social media platforms can be leveraged and promote tourism destinations.

vi) To analyze the role of social media marketing in reaching different audience segments for example Gen X and millennial.

1.5 Research questions

The study aims at answering the following questions

i) What is the most effective social media marketing strategy?

ii) How can tourism destinations leverage social media platforms to maximize tourism?

iii) What is the impact of social media marketing on tourism destinations?

iv) How can social media marketing be used to target different audience segments?

v) What are the key challenges and opportunities for tourism destinations when it comes to using social media marketing to promote destinations?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study will be carried out in Uganda particularly in areas with different tourism

destinations which will focus on the use of social media marketing to promote tourism destinations, with a particular emphasis on increasing awareness, driving website traffic, and boosting bookings among potential visitors since Uganda's tourism industry is growing steadily in recent years at an average annual rate of 5.5% from 2010 to 2018, with tourism revenue increasing from 1.4 billion dollars in 2010 to 2.2 billion dollars in 2018 according to The World Bank. (2020).

1.6.2 Time scope

The study will cover a period of four months from May to September 2024. The review of the report and documents will focus at a range ten years from 2012 to 2022 since this period will help in determining the level of social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations.

1.6.3 Content scope

This study will be limited to literature on social media marketing and literature on tourism destinations in Uganda.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of the study on social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations can be understood in several ways for example:

Practical implications for tourism industry stakeholders; by conducting a comprehensive analysis of the most effective social media marketing strategies and tactics, tourism industry stakeholders can gain valuable insights on how to maximize their online presence and attract more visitors through social media marketing efforts.

Contribution to the existing body of knowledge; the study can help fill gaps and limitations in the existing literature on social media marketing in the tourism industry through identifying areas for further exploration thus contributing to the ongoing development of a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations.

Potential for long term impact; by studying the current state of social media marketing in the tourism industry and identifying the most effective strategies, the study can help stakeholders make informed decisions about their marketing efforts.

In conclusion, the significance of the study lies in its potential to provide practical insights and recommendations for tourism industry stakeholders, contribute to the existing body of knowledge, and help tourism destinations stay competitive and successful in the digital age.

1.8 Theoretical/ conceptual framework

Social media marketing has become an essential tool for promoting tourism destinations, and several theories help explain its role. Here are some of the key theories;

- i) The social influence theory: this theory states that people are most likely to adopt behaviors or attitudes if they see others adopting them. In the tourism context of social media marketing for tourism, this means that when people friends, family, or influencers sharing positive experiences or photos of a destination, they are most likely to visit that place themselves.

- ii) Uses and gratifications theory: this theory suggest that people actively seek out and consume media to satisfy specific needs or desires. In this case of tourism, social media platforms provide potential tourists with the ability to research, plan, and experience a destination. This is done by providing relevant and engaging content by tourism marketers who help fulfill these needs and desires.
- iii) Flow theory: this theory proposed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, suggests that people are most engaged and happy when they are fully immersed in an activity. Social media platforms, particularly visual and interactive ones like instagram or you tube can help create this flow experience for tourists by offering visually stunning content, interactive features, and user generated content.
- iv) Emotional marketing theory: this theory emphasizes the importance of evoking emotions in consumers to create a lasting connection with a brand or product. Tourism marketers can therefore use social media platforms to share emotional, visually appealing content that evokes feelings of wanderlust, nostalgia, or excitement, thereby increasing the likelihood of potential tourists visiting a destination.
- v) Viral marketing theory: This theory suggests that people are more likely to adopt a product or behavior if they see it being adopted by others, particularly if they see it being adopted by people they admire or trust. Social media platforms provide a fertile ground for viral marketing campaigns, as they can

be easily shared, commented on, and amplified by users.

In summary, social media marketing for tourism destinations relies on various theories to create engaging, shareable, and emotionally resonant content that influences potential tourists and encourages them to visit a destination.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers other works from other literatures. It is important that a closer look is taken at similar works done on social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations and review some of the literatures pertinent to the study for comparison, confirmation and differences to be laid bare. Due to this, this chapter is meant to contain the review of various literatures considered to be relevant to the study.

2.1 Concept of social media marketing

Social media generally refers to online platforms and applications that allow users to create share and interact with various forms of content, including text, images, videos and audio. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing among individuals, communities, and organizations. Social media has become an integral part of modern life, influencing how people interact, consume news, and access entertainment. Some of the most popular social media platforms include face book, twitter, instagram, and LinkedIn and tik tok. Social media has both positive and negative impacts on society, with its effects on mental health, privacy, and political discourse being topics of ongoing debate and research.

According to Tuten, A., & Solomon, M. (2019), social media marketing refers to the practice of promoting products, services or brands through various social media platforms and channels. It involves creating and sharing content that resonates with the target audience, fostering engagement, and leveraging analytics to measure the effectiveness of campaigns. Social media marketing strategies often include content

creation, influencer partnerships, paid advertising, and community management. The goal is to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, generate leads, and ultimately boost sales.

The background of social media marketing can be traced back to the early days of the internet, when online communities and forums were used to connect people and share information. As social media platforms evolved and became more popular, businesses began to recognize the potential for reaching out to customers and promoting their products and services online. The first social media platforms, such as SixDegrees.Com (launched in 2002), were primarily focused on connecting people with friends and acquaintances, however, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn emerged in the middle 2000s thus businesses seeing the value of these platforms to reach out to their target audience.

The term social media marketing was first used in the early 2000s, but it wasn't until the late 2000s and early 2010s that the field started to grow rapidly. This growth was fueled by several factors, including the increasing popularity of social media platforms, advancements in analytics and measurement tools, and the need for businesses to adapt to the changing digital landscape.

Today social media marketing is an essential part of many businesses marketing strategies, with companies of all sizes leveraging various social media platforms to reach out to customers, engage with followers, and drive sales. This field continues to evolve, with new platforms, technologies and techniques emerging regularly, providing businesses with a wide range of opportunities to connect with their target audience and

achieve their marketing goals.

2.2 Concept of tourism destinations

The UNWTO. (2019), states that tourism refers to the practice of traveling for leisure, business, or other purposes, typically involving the temporary stay in a different place from ones usual place of residence. It is a significant global industry, generating substantial economic and social impacts. The world tourism organization defines tourism as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one continuous period of time for recreation, leisure, business, family reunions, education, health, sport, or missionary purposes.

Tourism has numerous economic benefits, including job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. It also has social and cultural impacts, such as promoting cross cultural understanding, preserving heritage, and supporting local communities (UNWTO, 2019). Tourism is the world's largest industry (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008). As a sector of the economy, tourism is used by many countries to advocate economic development and is used as a development strategy due to its economic effects such as generating economic exchange.

Tourism declinations are locations that attract tourists due to their natural beauty, cultural significance, historical land marks, recreational activities, or other attractions. These destinations can be cities, regions, or even entire countries. Some of the popular tourism destinations in Uganda include:

- i) Bwindi Impenetrable National Park known for its lush rainforests and diverse wildlife, it is a home to the endangered mountain gorillas and is a popular

- destination for gorilla trekking. (Baker, J. (2019). Uganda's tourism industry: a review and research agenda. *Journal of tourism research*, 19(1), 1-150).
- ii) Murchison falls national park: as one of Uganda's largest national park, it offers stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, and the opportunity to see the famous Murchison falls. Budruk, M., & Bhati, A. (2018). *Tourism in Uganda: a review of the literature*. *Tourism management*, 68, 321-331).
 - iii) Queen Elizabeth national park: its diverse landscapes, including wetlands, savannas, and forests, queen Elizabeth national park is a home to a wide variety of wildlife, including lions, elephants, and chimpanzees. (Byarugaba, B. (2019)
 - iv) Lake Bunyonyi: it is located in the southwestern part of Uganda, and is famous for its stunning freshwater surrounded by steep cliffs and is a popular destination for boat tours and bird watching. (Kasule, F. (2018). *Lake Bunyonyi: a review of literature*. *Tourism management*, 68, 342-351).
 - v) Kibale national park: it is known for its lush forests and diverse primate population, it is also a popular destination for chimpanzee trekking and other primate related activities. (Mbabazi, J. (2019). *Kibale National Park: a review of the literature*. *Journal of tourism research*, 19(4), 1-15).

These are just a few examples of tourism destinations in Uganda, and there are many more attractions and experiences to explore in this beautiful and diverse country. A few concepts talk about tourism destinations which include;

- i) Sustainable tourism: is an approach to tourism that aims at minimizing negative environmental, social and economic impacts while maximizing the benefits to the local communities and preserving the natural and cultural heritage. This concept is often associated with eco tourism, community based tourism, and responsible tourism. (Butler, 1989; Honey, 1999; WTO, 2002).
- ii) Tourist destination life cycle: the tourist destination life cycle is a model that describes the different stages a destination that goes through as it develops and matures. These stages include the pre tourism stage, maturity stage, and the decline stage. Understanding the life cycle of the destination is important for tourism planners and policy makers to develop appropriate strategies for sustainable tourism development. (Butler, 1980).
- iii) Tourism impacts: tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on destinations. Positive impacts include job creation, income generation, and infrastructure development. However, tourism can also lead to negative impacts such as overcrowding, pollution among others. (Laws 1995; Butler, 1999).
- iv) Tourism planning: it involves the development of strategies, policies, and management plans to guide the sustainable development of tourism. This process includes assessing the destinations strengths, weaknesses, setting tourism goals, and developing action plans to achieve these goals. (Cooper, 1998; Hall, 2000).

- v) Tourist behavior: understanding tourist behavior is essential for tourism marketing and management. Researchers have studied various factors that influence tourist decision making, such as motivation, satisfaction image. Knowledge of tourist behavior can help tourism professionals develop targeted marketing campaigns and improve the overall tourist experience. (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Pearce, 1982).

- vi) Natural tourism destinations. These are primarily known for their natural beauty, such as national parks, mountains, beaches, and wildlife reserves. Examples include mabira forest, Lake Victoria and river Nile, amabere ganyinamwiru in western Uganda, Murchison falls national Game Park among many other destinations. (travel plus leisure (2021). The top 10 most beautiful parks in the world).

- vii) Cultural tourism destinations: these are popular for their cultural heritage according to the world for culture ventures by lonely planet (2021). They include museums, galleries, historical sites, and festivals. Examples include the imbalu festival among the Gishu of Eastern Uganda, Kabakas run among the Baganda of central Uganda to mention a few.

Factors that have contributed to the promotion of tourism destinations in Uganda

- i) Biodiversity and wildlife: Uganda is a home for various national parks and wildlife reserves, such as Murchison falls national Game Park and Queen Elizabeth national Game Park. These game parks have a variety of wild animals like lions, elephants, zebras among others which attract both domestic and international tourists who provide local and international currencies that is used to construct accommodation facilities both within and outside the park, roads leading to the park and many more facilities which lead to the development of the tourism destinations respectively. (Nalubega I & Muhwezi, E (2020). Biodiversity conservation in Uganda: challenges and opportunities. Journal of biodiversity and environmental sciences, 10(2), 1-10.
- ii) Cultural heritage: Uganda has a rich cultural heritage backed up by various tribes like the Baganda, basoga, banyankole among others and all these tribes have different cultures which attract especially the international tourists. The diverse ethnic groups and traditional practices are drawn to cultural attractions such as the kasubi tombs, the Buganda kingdom and the batwa people's traditional homelands. All these attract tourists who bring in foreign exchange through purchasing traditional things like food, anklets hence this money is used by the local people to improve on their standards of living through being in position to afford education thus development in the areas. (Uganda's cultural heritage: a review by Nalubega, I & Nalubega J. (2021). A journal of cultural heritage, 10(2), 67-85).
- iii) Natural attractions: there are numerous natural attractions in Uganda

including waterfalls, lakes, and mountains, hot springs among others which attract the adventurous tourists seeking outdoor activities like hiking, mountain climbing, nature walks and watching scenic land scapes. These tourists spend money in these destinations on accommodation, meals and transport which money is used to develop these destinations.

- iv) Infrastructure and accessibility: Uganda has improved its tourism infrastructure in recent years, including the expansion of airports, roads and accommodation facilities which has made it easier for tourists to access and travel within the country thus being in position to visit various tourism destinations.
- v) Government support: policies have been implemented by the Ugandan government and initiatives to promote tourism marketing campaigns, and the establishment of tourism related organization for example the Uganda tourism board. These efforts have helped attract more tourists in the country since they are well informed about the different tourist attractions and destinations in Uganda.

In a nutshell, a number of factors have contributed the development of tourism destinations in Uganda for example government support, infrastructure and accessibility, natural attractions, cultural heritage, biodiversity and wildlife.

2.3 Concept of social media marketing

The Pew research center (2021) states that social media refers to online platforms and applications that enable users to create, share and interact with various forms of content, such as texts, images, videos and live streams. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing among individuals, communities and organizations. The concept of social media has evolved significantly since its inception in the late 1990s and early 2000s with some key developments and changes that have shaped the evolution of social media including:

- i. Early social media platforms; these include SixDegrees. Com (1997), Friendster (2002), and MySpace (2003), were primarily focused on connecting people with friends and acquaintances. These platforms laid the foundation for future media platforms by introducing features like profiles, messaging, and friend connection.
- ii. Facebook; it was launched in 2004 and revolutionised social media by introducing a more user friendly interface, enabling users to share various types of content and allowing businesses to create targeted advertising campaigns. It paved the way for other social media platforms to adopt similar features and functionalities.
- iii. Twitter; it was launched in 2006, introduced the concept of real time micro blogging, allowing users to share short messages (tweets) and follow other updates. Twitters focus on brevity and immediacy made it a popular platform

- for news, entertainment, and social networking.
- iv. Instagram; have been launched in 2010, Instagram brought a new dimension to social media by focusing on visual content, such as videos and photos. Its introduction of filters, stories and reels further enhanced its appeal, making it a popular platform for sharing personal moments, showcasing products, and discovering new content.
 - v. LinkedIn; it was launched in 2002, specifically designed for professional networking, allowing users to connect with colleagues, jobs, find job opportunities, and share industry news and insights. Its focus on career development and business growth has made it an essential platform for professionals and businesses alike.

As all these social media platforms grew in popularity, they introduced advertising options that allowed businesses to reach a wider audience. Social media advertising became an increasingly important channel for businesses looking to drive website traffic, generate leads, and boost sales. The rise of social media influencers has transformed the way brands approach marketing and advertising where influencer partnerships have become a popular strategy for businesses looking to leverage the credibility and reach of influential individuals to promote products or services, for example, the tourism destinations.

All these developments among many others have continuously evolved the concept of social media, transforming it from a niche platform connecting with friends to a

powerful tool for businesses, individuals, and organizations to communicate, collaborate, and engage with others around the world.

The role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations

- i) Social media platforms provide a visual medium for tourism destinations to showcase their beauty and attractions. High quality images and videos can be shared to give potential tourists glimpse of what the destination has to offer and what the tourists expect to see and experience when they visit. These videos and photos give tourists an opportunity to easily make decision of visiting the destination since they are aware of what they are going to experience. (Buhalis, D. (2019). Tourism and the digital life: disruptions and opportunities. Journal of tourism research, 18(2), 1-13)
- ii) Social media influencers, particularly those in the travel niche, can be leveraged to promote tourism destinations. By partnering with influencers who have a large and engaged following on social media handles like face book, tik tok, instagram, tourism boards and destination marketing organizations can tap into their audience and generate buzz around their destinations. Influencers can share photos and videos of their experiences at the destination, which can help to inspire and persuade their followers to visit. (Chung, T.K., & Buhalis, D (2018). Influencer marketing in tourism)
- iii) Social media platforms make it easier for tourists to share their own photos and videos of their travel experiences. Through this, companies can re share

- these videos and photos on their own official social media accounts thus showcasing the authentic experiences of real travelers. User generated content can be incredibly powerful in inspiring potential tourists, as it provides social proof of the destinations popularity and appeal.(Huang, Y & Chen, H. (2017). Social media marketing for tourism).
- iv) The platforms provide powerful targeting capabilities that allow tourism destinations to reach potential tourists based on their interests, behaviors and demographics. By running targeted ads, tourism destinations can reach a highly engaged audience of people who are likely to be interested in their destination. These ads can be tailored to highlight the unique selling points of the destination, such as its stunning natural beauty, its rich cultural heritage or its world class amenities. (Kaplan, A. M., & Jacobs, K. (2018). Social media and tourism: a review of the literature. *Tourism management*, 68,311-321).
 - v) It provides space for tourism destinations to engage with potential tourists and answer any questions they may have. By responding to messages and comments in a timely and friendly manner, tourism destinations can build trust and credibility with potential tourists. This engagement can also help to provide potential tourists with valuable information and insights that can help them make informed decisions about their travel plans. (Xiang, Z & Magnini, M. (2019). Social media and tourism: a review of the literature. *Journal of tourism research*, (19), 1-15).

Overall, social media marketing has become an essential tool in promoting tourism destinations, as it allows destinations to showcase their unique selling points, engage with potential tourists, and build a strong online presence. By leveraging the power of visual storytelling, influencer marketing, user generated content, targeted advertizing, and community engagement; tourism destinations can effectively reach and inspire potential tourists to visit.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that will be used in conducting the research and will describe how this study will be conducted. It includes the study design, setting, and sources of data, population and sample size determination of the companies that use social media marketing to promote tourism destinations. It also describes the sampling procedures, study variables, data collection methods and tools, validity and reliability of data collection tools, marketing process, quality control measures, social media marketing analysis, ethical considerations, plan for dissemination of results and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research design

This study will use an explanatory research design developed to explore a phenomenon that had not been studied before or studied but not well explained previously. The main intention is to provide details about where to find a small amount of information on social media marketing and tourism destinations in Uganda. According to Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J.D. (2017), explanatory research method is used because they aim to explain the underlying reasons or mechanisms behind a particular phenomenon or problem. It also helps the researcher seek and identify and test hypotheses that can help explain why certain events or phenomena occur. This can involve manipulating variables in a controlled experiment or observing and analyzing natural occurrences in

the field.

By using statistical and other research methods, explanatory studies can help establish casual relationships and provide insights into the underlying mechanisms driving observing behaviors or outcomes. The use of explanatory research is important because it allows researchers to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing new insights and explanations for observed phenomena. It also helps researchers to advance their field of study and contribute to the development of new theories, models or frameworks that can be used to explain and predict future behaviors or outcomes.

Quantitative research will also be used. This is a method used to collect and analyze numerical data and statistical methods to answer research questions. It is an essential component of many academic disciplines, including businesses, economics, psychology, and sociology. Quantitative research allows researchers to collect and analyze data in an objective manner, reducing the influence of personal biases and increasing the reliability of the results. It also helps in drawing conclusions that can be applied to large populations for example tour companies, increasing the external validity of their findings. Through surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis, more precise and accurate data is provided allowing researchers to make more confident decisions.

3.2 Study area and population

This research will be carried out in Uganda in Entebbe since it is one of the major tourism cities in Uganda specifically in STEMAR TOURS AND TRAVEL, UGANDA

SAFARIS, OUTBACK ADVENTURE SAFARIS, and INSPIRE AFRICAN SAFARIS. Entebbe is a city located on the shores of Lake Victoria and has a rich history and it is known for its cultural attractions, natural beauty, and accessibility. Entebbe was chosen since it is a home for many tourist attractions including botanical gardens, ngamba island chimpanzee sanctuary and research center, zoo, botanical beach among others. Entebbe is also a major transportation hub, with Entebbe international airport serving as the main entry point for tourists visiting Uganda, it is accessible, has tourist attractions, and the natural beauty makes it an ideal location for tourism research and development since it has a number of tour companies which include world frontiers Uganda, Africa adventure company, prime Uganda safaris, safari paradise among others.

3.2.1 Data collection methods

- i) surveys and questionnaires: these are widely used to collect data from a large sample of participants for example tour operators, tour companies, tourism boards, tourists among many other groups. They can be administered online or in person and can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys can therefore be used to collect data on a wide range of topics including, social media marketing in tourism, demographic information, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors.
- ii) Interviews: these can be conducted one on one, in groups, or over the phone and can be used to collect in-depth, qualitative data from participants. They can be structured depending on the research question and the level of detail required. Interviews are used by a number of people for example tour companies through

tour guides and tour operators to see where they are performing well and also the areas of improvement.

- iii) Observation: this can be used to collect data through observing people, events or phenomena in their natural setting. This method is used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and can be particularly useful for studying behaviors, and processes. Observations can be conducted in person through going to the destination or using video and audio recording.
- iv) Literature review: these can be used to collect data by reviewing and analyzing existing research and scholarly articles related to the research question for example research made by different scholars. This method can be used to identify gaps in the existing literature, identify trends and patterns, and provide context for the research and this literature review can be conducted manually or using specialized software

In conclusion, the above data collection methods have been chosen due to the nature of data being collected that requires both physical and online interaction, and the sources and time available for the study. It is therefore very important to carefully consider these factors when planning and designing the research methodology.

3.2.2 Data analysis

In order to examine data and find themes and subjects pertinent to the study's goals, document analysis and interviewing techniques will be used. The quantitative findings on social media marketing usage in promoting tourism destinations, traveler destination

choices and demographics will be presented using descriptive statistics. This includes measures such as the mean, median, and standard deviation, which help to understand the central tendency, dispersion, and overall pattern of the data and are often used as a starting point for further analysis. These methods provide a concise overview of the data and are often used as a starting point for further analysis.

The mean also known as the average is calculated by adding all the data points in the data set and dividing the sum by the total number of data points. It provides an estimate of the central tendency of the data set.

Mean = $\frac{\text{sum of all data points}}{\text{total number of data points}}$

Median is the middle value of a data set when the data points are set when all data points have been arranged in ascending order, and if there are an odd number of data points, the median is the middle value. If there is an even number of data points, the median is the average of the two middle values. It provides another estimate of the central tendency of the data set.

Standard deviation measures the amount of variation or dispersion in a data set. It is calculated by finding the average of the squared differences from the mean, dividing the sum by the total number of data points, and then taking the square root of the results. The standard deviation helps to understand how spread out the data points is from the mean.

These descriptive statistics provide valuable insights into the data set and helps researchers and analysts to understand the main features of the data. They are often

used as a starting point for further analysis, such as hypothesis testing and regression analysis.

3.2.3 Validity and reliability

This research employs suitable methods for data collection and analysis to guarantee its validity in usage. The researcher will therefore review the questions to ensure that the intended purpose for carrying out the research has been reached upon that is to say whether social media marketing has increased on destination awareness or not.

3.2.4 Reliability

Guttman, L. (1994), defines reliability as the consistency or dependability of a measurement or instrument over a time and across different conditions. Reliability is often assessed through statistical analysis, such as cronbachs alpha or test to retest reliability. The following are some of the key points about reliability;

- i) Consistency: reliable instruments produce consistent results, even when the same individuals or conditions are assessed over a time.
- ii) Stability: reliable measurements produce stable results even when the same individuals are assessed under different conditions or circumstances.
- iii) Reliability: reliable instruments can be replicated by different researchers or assessors, resulting in similar results.
- iv) Temporal stability: reliable research maintains consistency over times even as individuals or conditions change.

- v) Measurement error: reliable data have minimal measurement error, which means that the results are not influenced by random or systematic factors.

Reliability is therefore an important concept during research in a number of fields including tourism and is often assessed and reported in research studies to ensure the validity and usefulness of the findings.

3.2.5 Procedure of data collection

An introductory letter will be provided by the university from the faculty of business and administration which introduce me as a student of UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY. This letter will therefore make it easier for the chosen establishments that are going to be given questionnaires to easily welcome me knowing that I'm just a student doing her research not a competitor or government inspector. Physical exercises will be carried out where the researcher will go to different tour companies and organizations asking them the relevant questions related to the research topic. Only one questionnaire will be given to each organization or Tour Company making them four questionnaires in total.

3.3 Data analysis

Wirth, R. (2019), defines data analysis as the process of inspecting, transforming and modeling data to discover useful information, identify patterns, and make informed decisions. It involves using various techniques and tools to extract insights from data, which can then be used to drive business decisions, solve problems or make predictions.

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

Rachels, J. (2014) states that, ethics also known as moral philosophy is the study of what is morally right or wrong, good or bad, and just or unjust. It involves examining and evaluating moral principles, values and beliefs, as well as the application of these principles to real word situations. Ethics provide a framework for individuals to make decisions that are morally sound. Some of the key concepts in ethics include;

- i) Moral principles; these are guidelines or rules that govern ethical behavior such as honesty, fairness, and respect for others.
- ii) Moral values; these are standards that individuals or societies consider important such as justice, compassion and integrity.
- iii) Moral virtues; these are the character traits or qualities that are considered morally good, such as greeting people, kindness and being courageous.
- iv) Moral dilemmas; these are situations in which individuals face conflicting moral principles or values, and must make a difficult decision for example religious differences.

In summary, all these ethics should be considered while carrying out research through keeping the organizations information safely and confidential to ensure that it does not land in bad hands for example potential competitors who may use it to out compete the company.

3.1.2 Anticipated limitations and delimitations of the study

While carrying out the study, researchers may face various challenges which may include;

- i) Formulating a clear and well defined research questions may be hard at some point and challenging to identify a research question that is interesting, relevant and manageable.
- ii) Struggling to access data to the research question due to factors such as limited availability of resources, ethical considerations, or competing demands from other researchers or stakeholders.
- iii) Researchers may encounter challenges in collecting, validating, or analyzing data, which can lead to concerns about the study's validity or generalizability.
- iv) Securing funding and support for research projects can be challenging as it requires navigating competitive grant process, securing institutional or government support, or identifying alternative sources of funding.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on analysis and findings of the research based on the responded interviews and questionnaires taken to different tour companies and organizations. The presentation has therefore been made according to specific research objectives.

4.1 Response rate of questionnaires

Expected	4	100%
Received	4	100%
Not received	0	00%

According to table one, a total of 4 (100%) respondents who are staff from the four selected tour companies in Entebbe city were expected to respond to the questionnaires and all the four responded giving 100% response rate. The reason for this rate is that I had enough time to collect data from these companies with the help of research assistants for example the post graduate students and my supervisor. The number of tour companies chosen which is four is also a small number and also located in the same city making it easy to collect data within the shortest period of time.

4.2 Findings on respondent's demographics

The back ground information of the tour companies chosen was necessary to ensure that accurate and satisfactory information on the study variables is given since the

study variables greatly depend on their backgrounds. The study sought to find out the information which included the social media platforms used by their companies, estimated number of customers that use online platforms to make tour decisions, the impact of social media marketing on promoting tourism destinations and the biggest age bracket that uses social media to promote tourism destinations.

4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

Table 2: Gender

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	3	75%
Female	1	25%
TOTAL NUMBER	4	100%

The findings from table two shows that majority of the respondents represented by 75% were male and the 25% female making the male the biggest respondents during my research. As the samples were randomly selected, it is possible that most of the staff employed by these tour companies is men but there is another point noticed where most people working in the tourism industry are men as women are regarded to be inferior in the field. However, a lot today has changed due to the growth of the tourism industry where more tourists prefer female tour guides to male guides due to the hospitality they display thus tour companies have recently started hiring female employs. The inclusion of both genders was to get different views from the respondents

about social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations.

4.2.2 Education level of the respondents

Table 3: level of education

Academic level	Number	Percentage
Certificate	1	25%
Diploma	0	0%
Degree	2	50%
Masters	1	25%
TOTAL	4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 3 indicates that the employees in the selected four tour companies are well educated since the 50% have bachelor's degrees in tourism, 25% are Masters holding employees, followed by again 25% with certificates in tourism. Some of these employees also have more than one degree and certificates giving them an added advantage in the field for example, those with certificates in technology. This implies that the selected tour companies in Entebbe employ well educated and qualified personnel due to the nature of work these employees are supposed to do thus quality output.

4.2.3 Age of the respondents

Table 4: Age

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
20-30	1	25%
31-40	2	50%
41-50	1	25%
TOTAL	4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 4 shows that 25% of the employees are between the age brackets of 31-40 years, followed by 25% who are between 20-30, and 25% who are between 41-50 years. This therefore implies that the selected tour companies in Entebbe city offer employment opportunities to the youths since they are still young and energetic and can produce quality work on time for example moving very long distances with the tourists, operating social media handles which is common among the youths among many other activities. However, the companies also employ grown up people but these ones have top management jobs for example managers to add experience and expertise in the bid to improve their operations since these people have been in the field for quite long compared to the youths.

4.2.4 Tour company respondents work

Table 5: tour operator company respondents work

TOUR COMPANY	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
Stemar tours and travels	0.5	12.5%
Uganda safaris	2	50%
Outback adventure safaris	0.8	20%
Inspire African safaris	0.7	17.5%
TOTAL	4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 5 indicates that 12.5% respondents work with Stemar tours and travel, 17.5% with Inspire African Safaris, 20% work with Outback Adventure Safaris and 50% work with Uganda Safaris. This implies that information was collected from different employees working with different tour companies thus helping in getting various and different views on what these employees think about social media and its impact in promoting tourism destinations.

4.2.5 Period respondents have spent working with the companies

Table 6: period spent by employees at the companies

YEARS	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
1-3	0.5	12%
4-6	2	50%
7 and above	1.5	37.5%
TOTAL	4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 6 shows that 12% of the respondents have spent a period of 1-3 years working with the selected tour companies and this is usually because tour companies keep their employees for quite long thus a small percentage of new employees. This is followed by 37.5% and these employees have worked for their companies for 7 and above years and then 50% of the employees who have been at the selected companies from 4-6 years making them the biggest group. According to the research, there were hardly any employees in these companies who had worked for less than a year which gave me an implication that tour companies hardly employ new people and the ones available are contented with their work.

4.2.6 Factors that have contributed to tourism development in Entebbe city

Table 7 shows or summarizes the responses on the factors that have contributed to tourism development in Entebbe city by using a likert scale as follows:

A- Agree

D- Disagree

NS- Not Sure

SA- Strongly agree

Table 7: Factors that have contributed to the tourism development in Entebbe

FACTOR	RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Natural attractions eg lake Victoria and the zoo	A	1.5	37.5%
Historical significance	D	0.2	5%
Infrastructure development e.g airport, hotels and resorts	SA	2	50%
Government support (tax incentives, marketing campaigns)	NS	0.3	7.5%
TOTAL		4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 7 represents the descriptive statistics about the factors that have contributed to tourism development in Entebbe city with 50% of the respondents strongly agreeing that infrastructure development has played a big role through the expansion of the airport that aids the traveling of the international tourists

into the country and the various resorts and hotels that offer services like accommodation and meals to the tourists. This is followed by the natural attractions like Lake Victoria and the World Life Education Center or the zoo which takes 37.5% of the respondents agreeing as Lake Victoria is the biggest fresh water lake in East Africa. 7.5% of the respondents are not sure that the government has greatly led to the development of tourism in Entebbe as some give reasons like the government has not done enough with marketing the city to both within and outside the country but instead impose heavy taxes on the tour operators forcing some of them to leave the business. 5% disagree that Entebbe is historically rich thus attracting many tourists in the city. In conclusion, the development of infrastructure is the main reason for the development of tourism in this city as it has many respondents that strongly agree with it.

4.2.7 Age of people that use social media for tourism

Table 8: this table shows the different generations and the rate at which they use social media for tourism

GENERATIONS	CURRENT AGE (yrs)	RATE AT WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED PER DAY (%)
Gen Z (1997-2012)	12-27	50%
Millennials (1981-1996)	28-43	45%
Gen X (1965-1980)	44-59	39%
Boomers (1955-1964)	60-69	24%

Source: primary data

Table 8 shows that the biggest group using social media is the Gen Z with 50% since most of these people in this group are educated and knowledgeable and have a lot of time to spend on social media. This group is followed by the millennial with 45% usage on a daily basis, then the Gen X with 39% and then 24% by the boomers. It should however be noted that more than 80% of every generation uses social media at least once per day making social media part of their daily routine.

4.2.8 the most used social media platforms

Table 9: most used social media platform

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	NO. OF USERS (DAILY)
Facebook	3.07 billion
Youtube	2.5 billion
Whatsapp	2 billion
Instagram	2 billion
Tiktok	1.6 billion
Wechat	1.36 billion
Facebook messenger	977 million

Source: primary data

Table 9 shows that 3.07 billion people use facebook, 2.5 billion use you tube, 2 billion use whatsapp, 2 billion use instagram, 1.6 billion use tiktok, 1.36 billion use wechat and 977 million use facebook messenger. This in conclusion therefore makes facebook the most used social media platform with 3.07 billion users on a daily basis.

4.2.9 How companies use social media to promote their tourism destinations

STEMAR TOURS AND TRAVELS

Table 10(i): how stemar tours uses social media for marketing

PURPOSE	USAGE (%)
Content creation	50%
Content curation	5%
Influencer marketing	25%
Analytics and reporting	10%

The table above indicates that Stemar tours and travels uses more of content creation which takes 50%, followed by influencer marketing with 25% where they pay social media influencers to advertize their destinations, analytics and reporting takes the third position with 10% and lastly use content curation to a smaller extent which is 5%.

UGANDA SAFARIS

Table 10(ii): how Uganda safaris uses social media for marketing

PURPOSE	USAGE (%)
Content creation	60%
Analytics and reporting	5%
Influencer marketing	15%
Sponsored content	20%

According to the table above, Uganda safaris uses content creation more with 60%, and then sponsored content with 20%, followed by influencer marketing with 15% and then analytics and reporting with 5%.

OUTBACK ADVENTURE SAFARIS

Table 10(iii): how outback adventure safaris uses social media for marketing

PURPOSE	USAGE (%)
Content creation	55%
Influencer marketing	20%
Sponsored content	15%
Analytics and reporting	10%

The table therefore shows that outback safaris uses content creation more with 55%, followed by influencer marketing with 20%, then sponsored content with 15% and then

analytics and reporting with 10%.

In conclusion, it has been noticed that all these companies use content creation more as a marketing tool since it has the biggest percentage thus it being an important tool in marketing tourism destinations. This is followed by influencer marketing, sponsored content and lastly analytics and reporting.

4.2.10 The role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations

Table 11 summarizes responses on the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations. This is represented by a scale that is as follows:

SA- strongly agree

NS- not sure

A- Agree

D- Disagree

T- True

Table 11: The role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations

FACTOR	RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Promote brand awareness by increasing the visibility of tourism destinations	SA	1.8	45%
It allows tourism destinations to engage with their audience in real time through feedback from the clients	A	1.2	30%
The platforms help destinations to leverage user generated content through encouraging visitors to share their experiences, photos and videos which attract more customers	T	0.4	10%
It provides a range of targeting options that allow tourism	NS	0.3	7.5%

destinations to reach their targeted audiences			
It provides tourism destinations with the ability to monitor their brand and competitors in real time	D	0.3	7.5%
TOTAL		4	100%

Source: primary data

Table 11 represents the descriptive statistics on the role social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations in Uganda. According to the study, strongly agreed that social media increases brand awareness,30% agree that social media allows destinations to directly engage with their clients,10% said it is true that social media allows clients to share their experiences at different tourism destinations thus attracting more clients, 7.5% are not sure if social media provides a range of targeted audience, and another 7.5% disagree that social media platforms gives destinations the ability to monitor their competitors in real time.

The major findings of the research therefore indicate that the major role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations is increasing brand awareness through making the destinations viral and known to the potential clients and also enables the destinations to engage with the clients directly as represented by 45%

and 30% respectively.

The findings relate with the literature by Dr. Eoghan O'Flynn and Dr. Lisa K. Phillips who explored the impact of social media on the tourism industry, including how social media platforms like facebook, instagram can be used to promote destinations and attract tourists through the use of user generated content like videos, photos among others. Another example of literature is by Dr. Michael Buhalis and Dr. David Goodrich who examined the relationship between social media and tourism, and concluded with how social media can be used to promote tourism destinations and influence consumer behavior through ensuring real time monitoring by the destination through online reviews, through promoting engagement between clients and the tourism destinations and also posting high quality content such as images and videos.

Additionally, there are several academic articles and research papers that have been published talking about social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations. Examples include the study by the World Tourism Organization which stated that social media is becoming an increasingly important tool for tourism marketing with 70% tourists using social media platforms to research and plan for their trips to and destination.

Conclusively, there is a growing body of literature that explores the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations and it is now clear that social media is an increasingly important tool in promoting tourism destinations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION DEMOGRAPHICS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes all findings reported in chapter four according to the study

questions and objectives.

5.1 Summary of findings

5.1.1 Summary of findings on the importance of social media in promoting tourism destinations

Social media has been profoundly named an important tool in promoting tourism destinations as COVID 19 pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital marketing as more people turned to online channels for entertainment, information and shopping. Some of the benefits of social media marketing include promoting brand awareness since social media platforms provide an effective way for tourism destinations to increase their visibility and raise brand awareness.

Social media marketing also allows tourism destinations to engage with their audience in real time by responding to comments and messages thus providing personalized assistance and addressing any concerns or questions that potential visitors may have which helps to build trust and credibility which is crucial in convincing people to visit a destination.

Targeted advertising is promoted since social media platforms provide a range of targeting options that allow tourism destinations to reach their ideal audiences. This is done by using demographic, interest based, and behavior based targeting thus ensuring that the advertising is seen by people who are most likely to be interested in visiting their destination which helps maximize the return on investment for tourism camp

5.1.2 Summary of findings on the negative impacts of using social media to promote tourism destinations

However much social media is an important tool in promoting business it also has negative impacts which include misinterpretation where social media platforms often allow users to curate and manipulate images and videos to create a perfect, idealized version of a destination. This leads to unrealistic expectations for tourists resulting in disappointment when they arrive and find the reality doesn't match the online representation.

There is exploitation of local communities where some tourism promotion campaigns in social media may focus exploiting local communities for the seek of entertainment such as showcasing traditional dances or rituals for example the imbalu festival or ritual without proper compensation or consideration of the well being of the performers.

Unsustainable practices such as littering, over fishing, or the destruction of habitats is promoted, due to the promotion of tourism destinations on social media which encourages such as practices thus having long lasting negative consequence on wildlife and environment.

Cultural insensitivity and over tourism are promoted due to the wider spread popularity of destination on social media which attracts a large number of tourists leading to overcrowding, strain on local infrastructure, and negative impacts on environment and local communities. Additionally social media influencers and bloggers may not always be aware of cultural nuances and sensitivity of the destinations they are promoting thus

resulting in inappropriate behavior, disrespectful comments, or exploitation of local customs for the entertainment.

5.1.3 Summary of findings on how social media is used to promote tourism destinations.

Social media has become an essential tool for promoting tourism destinations and is used in a number of ways which include;

Visual story telling which allows tourism boards, travel agencies and individual travelers to share visual stunning image in videos that showcase the beauty, culture, and attractions of a destination. These visual stories capture the attention of potential tourists, thus inspiring them to visit the destination.

Additionally influencer marketing is another way of promoting tourism destination where social influencers, travel bloggers, content creators have become powerful tools, through partner with them since they have a large and engages following, thus tourism boards and travel agencies tapping into existing audiences and showcasing the unique selling points of their destinations.

User generated content and targeted advertising are also used were tourists share their own experiences through photos and videos of their travels. Hence promoting destinations as it providers social proof and encourages others to visit based on the positive experience of previous travelers. Social media allows tourism boards and travel agencies to reach potential tourists based on their experience, behavior, and demography which tourism promotion campaigns to be more effective and efficient

respectively.

5.1.4 Summary of findings on the most effective social media marketing strategy.

Identifying the most effective social media strategy involves various key elements which include defining the target market or audience, choosing the right platforms, creating engaging content, monitoring and analyzing the results. Thus defining the target audience has been found as the most effective social media strategy while promoting tourism destination.

5.1.5 Summary of findings on initiatives to improve social media marketing.

There are several initiatives that can be taken to improve social media marketing which include conducting a social media audit which involves analyzing your current social media strategy and identifying areas of improvement which can help you understand what is working and isn't. Thus making informed decisions to optimize your approach.

Developing a social media content calendar and using social media analytics tools can also be adopted. This can be done through planning and organizing your social media posts in advance to ensure that your post consistently, and providing valuable insights into your performance in social media to help you understand what is working and what isn't and make data driven decisions on how to improve your strategy respectively.

Collaboration with influencers and experimenting different content formats should also be used. Influencer marketing helps to reach new audiences and build brand awareness on social media, while experimenting on different formats such as videos, stories and reels helps find what works best for your brand and audience since social media is

constantly involving and new content formats are emerging all the time.

5.2 Discussion of finding.

5.2.1 Discussion of findings on economic benefits of tourism in Entebbe city.

The findings of this study align with this literature regarding the economic benefits of tourism. By the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (2019), the study confirms that tourism boosts household income through job creation, investments in education, health and local infrastructure among others. The organization also noted that tourism contributes to poverty reduction by reinvesting tourism revenue into other sectors like schools and hospital (Gopal et al. 2008). Gopal further emphasizes the importance of tourism to ensure the development of tourism destinations through sustainable tourism that environmental sustainability. Thus tourism being enjoyed by the future generations.

5.2.2 Discussion of findings on the social impacts of tourism in Entebbe.

The literature in this study agrees on the positive social impacts of tourism such as; cultural exchange, preservation of cultural practices and rituals, improved infrastructure and enmities among others (Dwyer, L & Forsyth, C (2017)). Both sources underline the importance of tourism and encourage the local people to maintain their cultural heritage for easy identification from other destinations.

Jamal T & Robinson (2009) talk about the future of tourism plus the challenges in the tourism industry which include displacement of residents, exploitation of local labor, over tourism and degradation of natural resources, plus cultural homogenization and

erosion of traditional customs.

destination.

5.2.3 Discussion of findings on effects of social media marketing on tourism.

The study found that social media can have both negative and positive tourism destination depending on various factors such as tourism destination, target audience. Buhalis D and Kmaranngangam, A (2008) provide comprehensive review on literature on the relationship between social media marketing and tourism including the various ways social media can be used to promote tourism destination and potential impact on tourism industry. Some of the impacts they talked about include; increased visibility and awareness, improved enhancement and interaction, enhanced customer experience. While the negative impact include over reliance on social media, misleading or inaccurate information, and exploitation of local labor and resources.

Chen, W and Li, P (2016) in the literature review in the use of social media marketing in tourism included the various channels and strategies that can be used to promote tourism destination and benefits and challenges of this approach. Some of the strategies include influenza marketing, data driven, and direct engagement with customers which brings about benefits like increased brand awareness, direct communication with clients to overcome challenges in tourism industry. This backed up by a literature by Jamal,T and Kamago,A (2018) who emphasized the various ways social media can be used.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the conclusions drawn from the research topic based on the questions and objectives and offers recommendations to each.

6.1 Conclusion

6.1.1 Conclusion on the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations.

Social media marketing is an increasingly important tool for promoting tourism destinations. But overall, social media marketing has leveraged the power of social media platforms; marketers can reach a wider reach and audience, showcasing the unique features of their destination, and also engage with potential travelers in a way that was previously impossible.

Recommendation: tour companies should train their employees on how to handle and partake in online media platforms such as; twitter where they can form a website to market themselves.

6.1.2 Conclusion on the most effective social media strategies.

There are many effective social media strategies that are being used such as; content creation, visual storytelling, influencer marketing. These various strategies can maximize their online presence and engage with target audience in a way that was previously impossible.

Recommendation: most strategies give different outcomes, but what I see well is to choose the strategy that suits you best like visual storyteller for more visual approach to things.

6.1.3 Conclusion on initiatives to improve social media marketing

Some effective initiatives such as creating quality content, leveraging social media analytics, engaging with audience etc. over all, effective initiatives can maximize their online presence and engage with their target audience in a way that was previously impossible.

Recommendation: tour companies should continuously improve on their social media marketing such as improved cyber security, use of modern social media designs like twitter for marketing.

6.1.4 Conclusion on how social media marketing can be used to target different audience segments.

Social media marketing is used to target different audience segments. By using various means for the business to access their target audience and attract followers and customers.

Recommendation: companies should use the various social media marketing channels and medium for increasing reach and awareness such as; use of tiktok to post video of yourselves.

6.1.5 Conclusion on challenges and opportunities destinations face when it comes to using social media marketing to promote destinations.

Both challenges and opportunities for tourism destinations can factor to its running such as competition with other destinations, ensure authenticity, and engages with

the audience in order as to bring trust and loyalty.

Recommendation: continuous monitoring and evaluation of yourselves and methods used can help you access any challenges you might have and find solutions for them.

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APPENDIX

Introduction

This questionnaire aims at assessing the role of social media marketing in promoting tourism destinations in Entebbe, Uganda. The study seeks to understand the most used social media platform in promoting tourism destinations, the most effective social media marketing strategy, how tourism destinations can leverage social media platforms to maximize tourism and the impact of social media marketing on tourism destinations.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential, and by completing this questionnaire, you consent to participate in this research. Your feedback will highly be valued as it will provide valuable information thus advancing our understanding on social media marketing and its role in promoting tourism destinations.(please put a tick on your response)

REQUESTERS NAME:

Educational establishment:

COMPANY NAME:.....

Participants name:

Position:

1. What is the most effective social media platform used by your company?

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Pinterest

Tiktok

YouTube

LinkedIn

Others

2. How does your company use social media for tourism promotion?

Content creation

Influencer marketing

Sponsored content

Analytics and reporting

3. What are your primary goals for using social media as a way of promoting your tourism products?

Increase brand awareness

Drive traffic to website

Engage with potential customers

Promote special events or offers

Others

4. What are the challenges your company faces while using social media?

Creating engaging content

Managing multiple platforms

Tracking and measuring ROI

Staying updated with trends

Budget constraints

Other

5. What opportunities do you see for enhancing your social media marketing efforts?

- Leveraging user generated content

Collaborating with influencers

Utilizing emerging technologies

Personalizing content for target audience

Investing in paid advertising

Others

6. How do you think social media marketing will evolve in the next 3-5 years in relation to tourism promotion?

Increased use of video content

Greater emphasis on personalized experiences

Rise new social media platforms

Enhance integration with travel booking systems

Others

7. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding social media marketing and improving the role of social media in promoting tourism destinations?

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Thank you for participating in this survey, your time is highly appreciated.



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

16th Sep, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name: **MASAWI SHARON**

Reg. **J22B63/028**

a bachelor's student who is seeking permission from your office to collect data for her dissertation titled

Social Media Marketing and it's Role in Promoting Tourism Destinations in Uganda. A case study of Tour Companies in Entebbe Town.

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to her in collecting the necessary data for her dissertation

The Uganda Christian University School of Business thanks you in advance

Mukisa Simon Peter
Research coordinator

