

**THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER AWARENESS
IN TOURISM INDUSTRY IN WAKISO DISTRICT**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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APPROVAL

This is to certify that Jenissi Mukisa has done her research report, titled "the effect of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district," under my supervision and is now ready for submission with my approval.

Signature.......... Date.....15/09/2023.....

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DECLARATION

I **JENISSI MUKISA**, do declare that, this research report is my original piece of work and has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Signature.....*Mukisa*..... Date.....*15/09/2023*.....

JENISSI MUKISA

S19B63/225

DEDICATION

This work is whole heartedly dedicated to my parents and my entire family for the moral, and spiritual support rendered to me as well as the words of encouragement and inspiration poured unto me. May God continue to bless the works of your hands!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the Almighty God, I do humbly appreciate the protection, guidance, provision and good health granted unto me and my benefactors that rendered the research study a great success.

I do appreciate my research supervisor for the timely, adequate and positively influential style of supervision that I was subjected to from the starting point up to this level.

My appreciations also go to the lecturers at the department of hotel and institutional catering for their tirelessly efforts in imparting knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to me during my course.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourist industry in Wakiso district. Emphasis was put on establishing how social media marketing is done in tourist industry, tourist awareness in tourist industry, and the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourist industry in Wakiso district. The study used cross-sectional survey research design where quantitative approach of data collection and analysis was adopted. Data was collected from customers of the selected tourist industry in Wakiso district who were selected using systematic sampling technique and data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using statistical analysis. The study found out that tourist industry in Wakiso have practiced social media marketing through using Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Youtube as the main social media platforms to market their products & services. Tourist industry have adopted social media marketing as a tool to communicate with customers for their services. It was concluded that social media marketing has improved customer awareness in tourist industry through providing information on products, location, payment, and delivery. The study recommends that restaurant management should engage itself more in improving social media marketing using different platforms available to capture customers from different areas.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1. Background to the study

Customer awareness refers to the extent to which potential consumers are knowledgeable about the existence, attributes, and offerings of a product, service, or industry (Saw, 2019). In tourism industry, customer awareness encompasses the understanding tourists have about available travel destinations, accommodations, activities, and cultural experiences (Li, 2022). It's about how well people understand the options they have for their trips, including its cultural heritage, recreational opportunities, accommodations, and logistical information (Ivanic, 2020). This awareness is crucial as it empowers tourists to make well-informed decisions, ensuring that their travel choices align with their preferences and expectations (Juhl, 2017).

Low customer awareness creates a significant obstacle for the tourism industry to thrive and achieve its full potential (AlHersh, Aburoub & Saaty, 2022). Without a clear understanding of the diverse attractions, accommodations, and experiences that a destination offers, potential travelers might miss out on the enriching and memorable aspects of their trips. This lack of awareness can result in suboptimal travel decisions, where tourists might choose popular but overcrowded places or overlook hidden gems that better match their preferences (Eastlick, and Lotz, 2020). Poor customer awareness can lead to dissatisfied tourists and missed economic opportunities for local businesses and communities (Veller, 2020). The level of customer awareness in the tourism industry is influenced by a multitude of factors, including advertising methods, recommendations from friends and family, information from travel agencies and brochures, and social media marketing (Wride, 2017; Bashar, 2018; Vij, 2019; and Khanna, 2017). This study will focus on social media marketing.

Social media marketing refers to the strategic use of social media platforms to promote products, services, or destinations and engage with a target audience (Khanna, 2017). In tourism, social media marketing involves leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to create and share content that showcases the attractions, experiences, accommodations, and cultural richness of a destination badly (Kavita, 2017). This content can

take the form of visually appealing images, videos, interactive posts, and engaging narratives that captivate and inform potential travelers. The social media helps the tourism to reach to large volume of customer with just one click. If used in the correct manner, the social media can benefit the tourism in many ways like marketing, promotion, sales, brand awareness, and so (Preetika, 2017).

1.2. Problem statement

Low customer awareness in tourism industry makes potential travelers lack comprehensive information about available destinations, experiences, and services (AlHersh, Aburoub & Saaty, 2022). Customer awareness is affected by various factors including limited traditional advertising reach, inadequate engagement with travel agencies, and a failure to effectively harness digital platforms. These factors hinder tourists from making informed decisions and lead to missed opportunities for destinations (Veller, 2020). This study focused on social media marketing because travelers often share their own experiences on social media platforms, effectively transforming into advocates who contribute to the promotion of the destination, generating user-generated content that serves as authentic and persuasive testimonials for prospective tourists (Yadav, 2019). Therefore, this study investigated the impact of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry.

1.3. Research objectives

1.3.1. General objective

To investigate the impact of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- i) To examine tourist awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district.
- ii) To examine social media marketing in tourism industry in Wakiso district.
- iii) To establish the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district.

1.4. Research questions

- i) How is tourist awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district?
- ii) How is social media marketing done in tourism industry in Wakiso district?

- iii) What is the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district?

1.5 Research hypothesis

- i) There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district. ii) There is a significant relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district.

1.6. Scope of the study This section presented the content scope, geographical and time scope of the study.

1.6.1. Content scope

The study investigated the effect of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district. Specifically, the study examined tourist awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district, examined social media marketing in tourism industry in Wakiso district, and established the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district.

1.6.2. Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Wakiso district. This area was chosen because of easy access. This was easier for the researcher to obtain data for the completion of the study.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study was carried from June 2023 to November, 2023. This time was sufficient for the researcher to obtain information needed for the completion of the study.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study findings will be useful in providing evidence-based knowledge for decision making by policymakers to improve the tourism industry in Uganda.

The results obtained will contribute to the existing body of literature, resourceful to the academic fraternity as it will provide a reference for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presented relevant literature by different authors regarding social media marketing and tourist awareness in tourist firms. The presentation was in the order of the objectives. The related literature on study objectives was done by reviewing secondary data from journal articles, books, reports and newspapers.

2.1. Tourist awareness in tourism industry

Tourist awareness is the implied promise to one's self to buy the product again whenever one makes next trip to the market. It has a substantial importance because the companies want to increase the sale of specific product for the purpose to maximize their profit. Tourist awareness depicts the impression of tourist retention (Tariq *et al.*, 2013). Hameed (2015) explain tourist awareness as the number of patrons that has a proposal to buy the products in future and make repetition purchases and contact again to the specific product. Kang (2011) explains tourist awareness relating four behaviors of consumers including the undoubted plan to buy the product, thinking unequivocally to purchase the product, when someone contemplate to buy the product in the future, and to buy the specific product utterly.

Fandos and Flavian (2016) explain the phenomenon of tourist awareness as the projected behavior of consumers on short basis about the repetition purchase of specific product i.e. when someone decided to buy the product whenever he/she will come again to the market. Tourist awareness is the disguised undertake to one's self to buy the product again whenever one makes next trip to the market. This is a multi-step process firstly the consumer collect the information about the desired brand then evaluate its attributes by using the product if it suits with the intentions of the buyer after that they start thinking to make awareness when he/she make one purchase attempt of the specific brand, this consumer have experienced personally now they would have complete product knowledge about the product if the consumer is satisfied from the particular brand they would absolutely think again or to show interest to purchase again the particular brand this is called "tourist awareness". This meticulous behavior is called purchasing behavior.

Tourist awareness is the predisposition of tourists to patronize a brand in the future. It describes the readiness and willingness of consumers, a favourable disposition to do business with a brand. Tourist awareness is an important predictor of consumer behaviour. Firms are concerned about tourist awareness because it indicates consumers' preference for a given

product in a product category and because of its nexus with profitability (Pooladireishahri, Asgari, Hamid, & Asgarpour, 2015).

Firms can induce tourist awareness by responding proactively to tourist feedback (Nwulu & Asiegbu, 2015) and by providing value adding services to tourists' experience. Favourable purchase experience reinforces tourists' retourist awareness. The more frequent tourists get favourable experiences with a brand, the more likely they will do business with the brand (Chao-Min, Meng-Hsiang, Hsiangchu, & Chun-Ming, 2010). Tourist awareness is also driven by perceived value. Possible to buy, intended to buy and consider buying are the most notable measures of tourist awareness (Ateke & Didia, 2018).

2.2. Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a platform that facilitates online communication, social networking and collaboration (Carr and Hayes, 2015). Kaplan and Haenlein defined social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that allows users to create and exchange user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). Social media provides the ability to create profiles for social connectivity to share information with searching mechanisms and privacy features (Chang and Hsiao, 2013).

According to Trusov et al. (2009) social media marketing assists marketers in attracting consumers to brands at lower costs and in real time (faster service delivery) as the internet allows consumers to share their views, preferences and experiences. One of the benefits of social media marketing is that it allows marketers to correct comments, address queries and quickly and efficiently modify their online marketing strategies (Evans, 2010).

According to Bilal et al (2014), social media marketing is one of the most burgeoning communication means of marketing and information gathering, which is based on content, web technologies, and user communities. This has been becoming immensely popular among the worlds' population and the businesses because of offering huge space for advertisements and being aware of the surroundings for selling and buying purposes respectively (Hadija, Barnes, & Hair, 2012). According to Kavanaugh *et al.* (2012), social media concept is not new, but it existed in the era of Romans as well. For instance, a form of social media in Romans period was “the graffiti wall” inwards into the courtyard of the houses. On these walls, people were allowed to write their issues, opinion, or views for societal decisions (Shivakumar, 2013).

Several social media applications and social networking sites are almost always available for social connectivity (Cao et al., 2016; Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012). The most known social media platforms are Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, blogs, and skype, among others (Chen and Lin, 2014; Kim, 2012).

2.2.1. Facebook Social Media Marketing for Tourist firms

Facebook is the perfect general-use social network for tourist firms and resorts. That's because the platform allows businesses to add all sorts of extra tabs, cross referencing all other social networks and websites (Natalie, 2017). Plus, it's a great place to add all your contact and amenity details. One other thing to keep in mind, is that Facebook will often assign pages to businesses (Guillet, 2011). It's best to claim your page so that you have control over the content and conversation. The use of Facebook provides the ease to use mechanisms for users to contact and access information from other users on the same platform. So, individuals use Facebook for different purposes such as obtaining information about products and developing contacts (Pan and Crotts, 2012). For example, consumers prefer to obtain information from acquaintances about products and services. Ultimately, consumers play an important role in transforming and sharing information about products and services of any organization on Facebook (Pudliner et al., 2015).

2.2.2. Twitter Social Media Marketing for Tourist firms

Most tourist firms will want to use Twitter to conduct tourist service and to send guests time-sensitive updates about events happening at the tourist firm or in the area (Severt, 2017).

Twitter is best used to update guests about things that are happening right now. It's the social media platform that you use to engage guest during their stay. At the same time, your guests need to be on Twitter in the first place (Kamon, 2018). According to a study by Twitter on UK users, 33% use Twitter for travel-related tourist service issues. Responding to tourist service queries on Twitter can result in an increase in guest spending, recommendations, and repeat guests. Twitter found that 96% of users who have a friendly experience buy from the brand again, while 83% recommend the brand to others (Hyatt, 2017).

2.2.3. Instagram Social Media Marketing for Tourist firms

Instagram is one of the most important social networks for tourist firms. Owners want travelers to get excited when visualizing staying in the tourist firm and spending time at their destination. Instagram is the perfect platform for posting beautiful images of tourist firm and desirable destinations in the area (Servet, 2017).

2.2.4 WhatsApp social media marketing for tourist firms

Some tourist firms use WhatsApp for their official benefits such as to attract and to engage their tourists (Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012). For example salesmen adopt WhatsApp to increase their sale volume and expand their networks (Agnihotri et al., 2012). On the other hand, tourists also look for such social media tools such as WhatsApp to make purchasing decisions making and maintaining relationships with organizations (Guillet, 2011).

Golder et.al (2007) identify three basic types of social networking websites used by individuals at work and these include free-for-all social websites (Facebook, MySpace, Ning, and Friendster; professional websites (LinkedIn, FastPitch, and Plaxo) and industry-specific websites (like I-Meet). The list of social web sites and tools that are available to users is very extensive, and each of these sites and tools are slightly different from one another and each provides a forum for people to communicate with one another no matter where they live.

According to Mohan (2020), brands including tourist firms have known for a while that they need to be where their tourists are and those tourists are increasingly on social media. Because social media is free to use aside from financial investments in advertising it has become a lucrative form of communication for businesses across the board. Large percentages of online users are utilizing social channels to keep in touch with the news, find entertainment to distract them, or to educate themselves. But it isn't enough to have a social channel, businesses also need to be active on as many platforms as possible. Now is the time to revive dead accounts or create profiles on new channels like Snapchat and TikTok, which are popular among younger audiences. And the kind of content companies create needs to be planned out, it is best to share updates about what is happening within its walls.

Facebook and Whatsapp, in particular, have become the most popular social network site with over 500 million active users in the world (Barnes, and Mattson, 2009). To put this into perspective, if Facebook and Whatsapp were a country, it would be the third largest in the world, after China and India and it is estimated that people spend over 700 billion minutes per month on this social networking site (Crescenzo, 2009). However, the current study seeks to determine the types of social media platforms used by tourist firms in Wakiso District.

2.3. Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing and Tourist Awareness in tourist firms

According to Durmaz (2014), as a result of social media, potential tourists can demand what their heart's desire and access tourist firm services anytime and anywhere. Social media's general impact on consumers awarenesss in the tourist firm industry is that tourists are able to

find answers to their questions regarding services after connecting through this medium and thus they are satisfied with brands and designers. Schneier (2014) noted that social media attracts tourists through eye-catching images.

Fauser, Weidenhofer and Lorenz (2011) conducted a research study regarding the impact of social media during the consumer's awareness journey. In their analysis and conceptual model, Fauser et al. (2011) wrote that whilst communication was the core of any social media platform, information sharing, collaboration and relationship building was necessary to support ongoing communication. The study (Fauser et al., 2011) concluded that social media marketing is an essential tool for marketing brands and products due to the rapid development in social media and changes in consumer behaviour. The results proved that social media can be effective in influencing consumers during all stages of the consumer's awareness journey.

Cuming (2008) conducted a research study in the United States of America (USA) to explore consumer's relationships on social media platforms. The analysis revealed that overall online information played an influential role in the consumer's final awareness. The study concluded that consumers who frequented social media platforms were more likely to be influenced in their final awareness (Cuming, 2008).

Cuming (2008) conducted a research study in America to explore consumer's relationship with social media websites. This study included the consumer's perception of online brand information. Cuming's (2008) study resulted in: 60% of consumers indicating that they would use social media platforms as a medium to recommend or comment on products through testimonies and WOM; 70% of consumers visited social media sites to conduct research and collect general information on products or brands; 49% of these consumers made a final awareness based on the information they gathered from social media sites.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection methods, data collection instruments, quality control (validity and reliability), data collection procedure, data management and analysis and measurement of the variables.

3.1 Research design

A cross-sectional study design was used. A cross-sectional study design involves the analysis of data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at one specific point in time using a quantitative technique. The study design was adopted for this research because it enables an in-depth study, as Sekaran (2003) suggests. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to solicit information expressed in numerical format (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

3.2 Study population

The study population included tourist firms in Wakiso District and the information was obtained from guests of these tourist firms. Three (3) tour and travel firms were selected purposively in Wakiso district where there information was sought from firm employees.

3.3 Sample size and sampling techniques

3.3.1 Sample Size

The sample size was determined Krejcie and Morgan table. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Therefore, a sample size of 60 employees was selected from 3 tourist firms in Wakiso.

3.3.2 Sampling techniques

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select managers. The researcher chose the sample based on who she thought was appropriate for the study. Purposive sampling was used because it saved time, money, and effort, and it was flexible and met multiple needs and interests. Also, simple random sampling was used when selecting lower staff members due to their large number. In this case, they had an equal chance of being selected in the study. This method helped obtain a manageable size of the population and also contributed to the generation of the findings.

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Questionnaire method

Primary data was gathered from respondents using the questioning method. This method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, it was less expensive than some other data collection methods. The selection of the method was guided by the nature of the data to be collected, the time available, as well as the objectives of the study.

3.6 Data collection instruments The instruments used in data collection are close-ended questionnaires.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. In this case, close-ended questionnaires were designed for the study because they could facilitate quick responses from a large number of respondents (Kothari, 2004; Amin, 2005; Creswell, 2003). Additionally, questionnaires were used because they increased the degree of reliability due to the many items in them and enhanced the chances of obtaining valid data (Amin, 2005). The questionnaires were arranged on a 5-point scale, consisting mainly of closed items to facilitate rapid data collection and analysis. The questionnaires were self-administered.

3.7 Data collection procedure

After the proposal, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from Uganda Christian University, allowing the researcher to proceed with data collection and report preparation. This necessitated the researcher to present this letter to the management in tourist firms in Wakiso District, where the study was conducted, to seek permission. The researcher hand-delivered reliable and validated questionnaires to the respondents, and the completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher after an agreed-upon period of time.

3.8 Data analysis tools

Data obtained from closed-ended questions were analyzed using the descriptive option of the computer package, which simplified data analysis. This data analysis was performed by categorizing responses into frequency counts, and percentages were presented using graphs, pie charts, and tables (Amin, 2005). Pearson correlation was used to establish whether there was a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In this case, SPSS was used to analyze the coded data.

3.9 Ethical considerations to the study

A letter of introduction was obtained and hand-delivered to the management of tourist firms in Wakiso district to secure permission to conduct the research. After receiving clearance to proceed with the study, the nature and purpose of the study were explained clearly to the respondents. On this basis, informed consent of the respondents was sought prior to the application of the questionnaire. During the introduction process, respondents were informed of their voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw from the study at any point in time as they saw fit. The names of the respondents were withheld to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in terms of any future prospects.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS 4.0

Introduction

The study looked at social media marketing and customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district. The findings from the study were presented and analyzed in an orderly based on the formulated study objectives. This was made possible with help of computer packages MS word and SPSS whereby tables, graphs, and pie-charts were generated.

4.1 Response rate

The researcher distributed (60) questionnaires and was able to collect information from 52 which were fully answered and returned giving a response rate of 86.7%. This was because they were self-administered questionnaires and some respondents claimed to have forgotten where they placed them.

4.2 Background information of the respondents

The study identified the gender, age, level of education, and period with the tourist firm. The responses obtained are presented.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents

Table 4.1. Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	23	44.2	44.2	44.2
Female	29	55.8	55.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

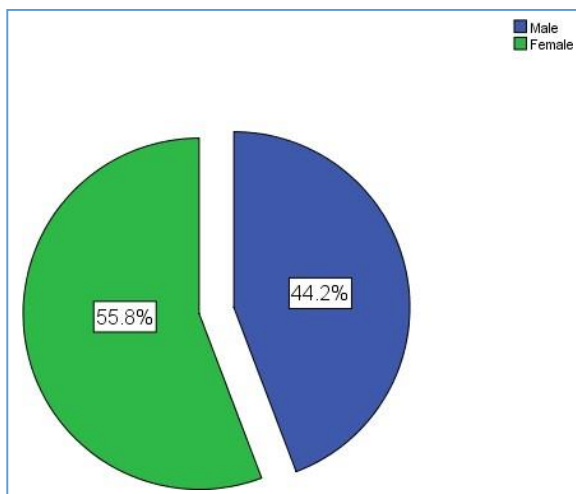


Figure 4.1. Gender of respondents

The results in Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 above indicated that 29(55.8%) of the respondents were female and the 23(44.2%) of them were male. More so it is indicated that women were more than men.

4.2.2 Age of respondents and level of education

Table 4.2: age and level of education of respondents

<i>Age Group</i>	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30yrs	15	28.8	28.8
31-40yrs	18	34.6	34.6
41-50yrs	12	23.1	23.1
51yrs and above	7	13.5	13.5
Total	52	100	

<i>Level of education</i>	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certificate	14	26.9	28.8
Diploma	21	40.4	63.5
Bachelor's degree	10	19.2	86.5
Master's degree	7	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100	

From the results in Table 4.2 above, 15(28.8%) were in the age bracket of 20-30years, 18(34.6%) were in 31-40years, 12(23.1%) were between 41-50years, and 7(13.5%) were above

51years of age. From the study majority of the respondents were in the age group between 31-40years.

Regarding level of education, majority of the respondents 21(40.4%) had attained Diploma, 14(26.9%) of them had Certificate, 10(19.2%) had reached bachelor level, and the least 7(13.5%) had master's degree.

4.2.3. Period spent with the tourist firm

Table 4.3: Period spent with the tourist firm

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-5yrs	20	38.5	38.5	38.5
6-10yrs	15	28.8	28.8	67.3
11-15yrs	15	28.8	28.8	96.2
Above 16yrs	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

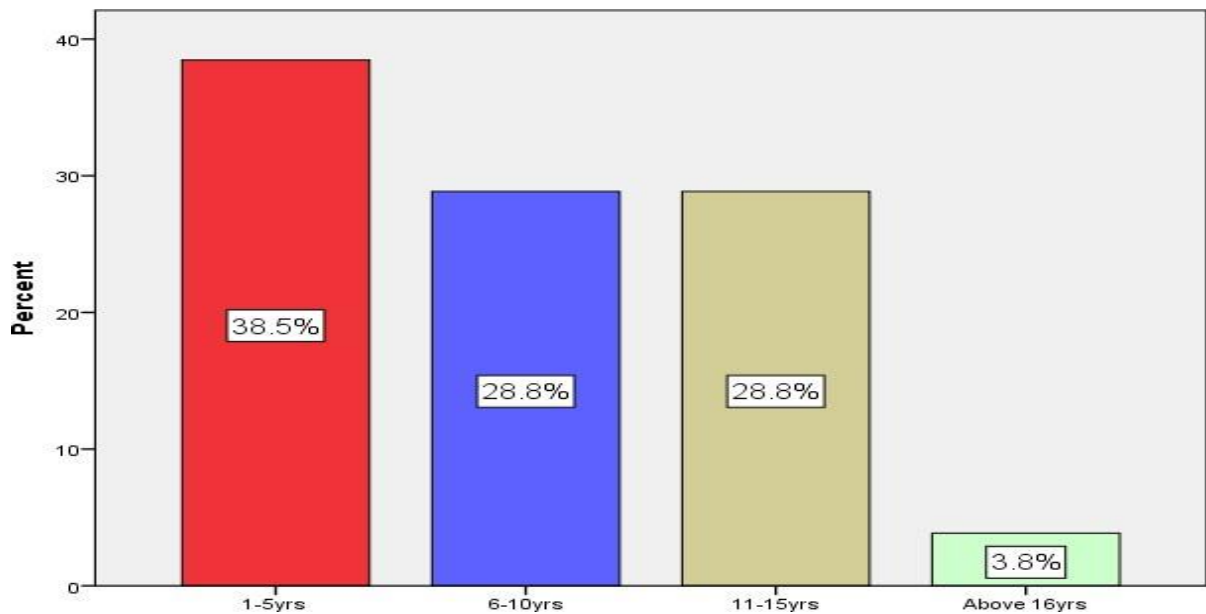


Figure 4.2: Period spent with the tourist firm

From the figure 4.2 above, 20(38.46%) of the respondents had spent 1-5years with the tourist firm, 15(28.85%) had spent 6-10years, a similar number 15(28.85%) had spent 11-15years with tourist firm, and only 2(3%) had been customers for the period above 16years.

4.3 Tourist awareness in tourism industry

The study sought to establish the level of tourist awareness in tourism industry. Results were obtained and are presented below;

Table 4.4: Tourist awareness in tourism industry

Statements	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
I rarely think of getting options because I am satisfied here	9 (17.3%)	4 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	11 (21.2%)	28 (53.8%)	52 (100%)
I intend to be getting services from this tourist firm in future	3 (5.8%)	4 (7.7%)	1 (1.9%)	12 (23.1%)	31 (59.6%)	52 (100%)
I always recommend this tourist firm to my colleagues	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.8%)	5 (9.6%)	41 (78.8%)	52 (100%)
I proud to be identified with this tourist firm	4 (7.7%)	14 (26.9%)	04 (7.7%)	11 (21.2%)	19 (36.5%)	52 (100%)
I complaint when I am not satisfied because I would like to come back here	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (5.8%)	49 (94.2%)	52 (100%)

Source: Primary Data

From Table above, findings show that most respondents (53.8%) strongly agreed that they rarely think of getting options because I am satisfied here, (21.2%) of them agreed compared to (17.3%) who strongly disagreed and (7.7%) disagree while only no respondents were not sure. The majority (75%) agreed. Also, (59.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed with they intended to be getting services from this tourist firm in future, (23.1%) of them agreed while (7.7%) of the respondents disagreed, 3(5.8%) of them strongly disagreed and only (1.9%) were not sure. Since majority (82.7%) agreed.

From results, (78.8%) strongly agreed that they always recommend the tourist firm to their colleagues and (9.6%) agreed as compared to (3.8%) of the respondents who disagreed and (1.9%) of them strongly disagreed and only (5.8%) of the respondents were not sure. Fewer respondents (7.7%) strongly disagreed with they are proud to be identified with this tourist firm and (26.9%) of them disagreed compared to those who concurred (36.5%), strongly agreed and (21.2%) of them agreed while only (7.7%) were not sure.

Finally, from table 4.4 above, the majority of (94.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that customers complaint when they are not satisfied because they would like to come back here and only (5.8%) of the study respondents agreed.

In conclusion, customer purchase intentions in tourist firms have been good in terms of satisfaction and loyalty. This shows that the organization has a guaranteed continuity for many years ahead so long as the external social-economic factors such as inflation, taxes, political stability remain constant or affectless.

4.4 The social media marketing used in tourist firm

The study sought to establish the social media marketing used in tourist firm in Wakiso district.

Results were obtained and are presented below;

Table 4.5: Social media marketing used in tourist firm

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
This firm markets its products and services on Facebook	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	32 (61.5%)	17 (32.7%)	52 (100%)
This firm markets its products and services on Twitter	5 (9.6%)	8 (15.4%)	1 (1.9%)	14 (26.9%)	24 (46.2%)	52 (100%)

This firm markets its products and services on WhatsApp	7 (13.5%)	11 (21.2%)	03 (5.8%)	12 (23.1%)	19 (36.5%)	52 (100%)
This firm markets its products and services on You Tube	11 (21.2%)	8 (15.4%)	9 (17.3%)	11 (21.2%)	13 (25%)	52 (100%)
This firm markets its products and services on SnapChat	6 (11.5%)	5 (9.6%)	0 (0%)	27 (51.9%)	14 (26.9%)	52 (100%)
This firm markets its products and services on TikTok	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (21.2%)	30 (57.6%)	11 (21.2%)	52 (100%)
This firm markets its products and services on Instagram	5 (9.6%)	8 (15.4%)	1 (1.9%)	14 (26.9%)	24 (46.2%)	52 (100%)

Source: Primary Data

According to the table above, the majority of the study respondents (61.5%) agreed that the tourist firm uses Facebook to market its products & services while (32.7%) of them strongly agreed, (3.8%) of the respondents were not sure, (1.9%) of the study respondents disagreed and no respondent strongly disagreed. Since the majority of the respondents (94.2%) were positive implies that tourist firms in Wakiso district use Facebook as a marketing tool to reach out to their customers.

The majority of respondents (46.2%) strongly agreed that the tourist firm has a Twitter Account where its services are advertised, (26.9%) of them agreed, (15.4%) of the study respondents disagree, (9.6%) strongly disagree while (1.9%) of the respondents were not sure. However, most of the responses (73.1%) agreed to imply that tourist firms in Wakiso district have Twitter accounts to engage with their customers. However, there are those tourist firms that do not have Twitter accounts meaning they use other ventures to reach out to their customers.

The table above also indicates that most respondents (36.5%) strongly agreed that the tourist firm communicates with its customers on WhatsApp, (23.1%) of the respondents agreed, (21.2%) of the respondents disagreed while (13.5%) strongly disagreed and only (5.8%) of the study respondents were not sure. Also, the majority of respondents (25%) strongly agreed that the uses 'ads' on YouTube as a way of communicating to its clients, and (21.2%) agreed as compared to (21.2%) of them who strongly disagreed and (15.4%) of the respondents who disagreed while only (17.3%) of the respondents were not sure. The majority (46.2) agreed while (36.5%) opposed implying that tourist firms have adopted social media marketing as a tool to get customers for their services.

According to the table above, the majority of the study respondents (51.9%) agreed that this tourist firm markets its products and services on SnapChat and (26.9%) strongly agreed as compared to (11.5%) of the respondents who strongly disagreed and (9.6%) disagreed. The majority of respondents 24(46.2%) strongly agreed that this tourist firm markets its products and services on TikTok, (26.9%) of them agreed, (15.4%) of the study respondents disagree, (9.6%) strongly disagree while 1(1.9%) of the respondents were not sure. However, most of the responses (73.1%).

The table above also indicates that most respondents (36.5%) strongly agreed that this tourist firm markets its products and services on Instagram, (23.1%) of the respondents agreed, (21.2%) of the respondents disagreed while (13.5%) strongly disagreed and only (5.8%) of the study respondents were not sure.

4.5 Effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness

To examine the relationship between the independent variable (social media marketing) and dependent variable (customer awareness). The study hypothesis was there is no significant relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district. Pearson's correlation coefficient was run to test the hypothesis and the results are showed in the table 4.5.

Table 4.6: Social media marketing and customer awareness

Correlations		
	Social media marketing	Customer awareness
Social media marketing	1	.764**
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	52	52
Customer awareness	.764**	1
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	52	52

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 4.6 above showed that there is a significant *positive* relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in tourist firm in Wakiso ($r = 0.764$, $p < 0.01$). The results imply that when tourist firm management makes it a point to adopt social media marketing through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, You Tube, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram, they are in turn, more likely to realize a high customer awareness with increase in market share, overall profitability and others.

Hypothesis testing

The findings from Table 4.6 indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in the tourism industry in Wakiso district, refuting the null hypothesis. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.764 and a p-value of .000 (significantly below the typical alpha level of 0.05), the study provides strong evidence that social media marketing efforts have a meaningful impact on increasing customer awareness in this context. These results demonstrate that active engagement in social media marketing strategies is associated with heightened levels of customer awareness within the tourism industry in Wakiso district.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the discussion, conclusion, and recommendation of the findings presented in the previous chapter. The discussion is followed by the conclusion which is also based on the findings of the study and finally the recommendation.

5.1 Discussion of major findings

5.1.1 Tourist awareness in tourism industry

Study findings in chapter four revealed that customers always appreciate tourist firm services, customers always come back for more services, and tourist firm get customers who have been recommended to the tourist firm by their colleagues. Also, some customers take business cards implying that most customers that go to their tourist firm always want to go back. In some tourist firm, customers recommend areas for improvement in their services implying that in tourism industry, many customers are concerned with their service performance. The study found out that customer awareness in tourism industry have been good in terms of satisfaction and loyalty. This shows that the organization has a guaranteed continuity for many years ahead so long as the external social-economic factors such as inflation, taxes, political stability remain constant or affectless. The findings agree with Pooladireishahri, Asgari, Hamid, & Asgarpour (2015) firms are concerned about purchase intention because it indicates consumers' preference for a given product in a product category and because of its nexus with profitability.

5.1.2 Social media marketing in tourism industry

Study findings in chapter four revealed that tourism industry use Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Youtube as the main social media platforms to market their products & services. This implies that tourism industry have adopted social media marketing as a tool to

communicate with customers for their services. Some tourist firm use WhatsApp for their official benefits such as to attract and engage their customers. For example, salesmen adopt WhatsApp to increase their sales volume and expand their networks. On the other hand, customers also look for social media tools such as WhatsApp to make purchasing decisions making and maintaining relationships with organizations.

The findings are in line with Carr and Hayes (2015) who established that social media is a platform that facilitates online communication, social networking, and collaboration. Social media provides the ability to create profiles for social connectivity to share information with searching mechanisms and privacy features (Chang and Hsiao, 2013). Several social media applications and social networking sites are almost always available for social connectivity (Cao et al., 2016; Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012). The most known social media platforms are Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, blogs, and skype, among others (Chen and Lin, 2014; Kim, 2012).

The use of Facebook provides the ease to use mechanisms for users to contact and access information from other users on the same platform. So, individuals use Facebook for different purposes such as obtaining information about products and developing contacts (Pan and Crotts, 2012). For example, consumers prefer to obtain information from acquaintances about products and services. Ultimately, consumers play an important role in transforming and sharing information about products and services of any organization on Facebook (Pudliner et al., 2015).

5.1.3 Effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry The study found a strong positive relationship between social media marketing and customer awareness in tourist firm in Wakiso. The results implied that when tourist firm management makes it a point to adopt social media marketing through platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, SnapChat, Tiktok, Instagram, and others, they are in turn, more likely to realize high customer awareness with increase in market share, overall profitability and others. The findings are in line with the study Fauser et al. (2011) which concluded that social media marketing is an essential tool for marketing brands and products due to the rapid development in social media and changes in consumer behaviour. The results proved that social media can be effective in influencing consumers during all stages of the consumer's purchase decision journey.

5.2. Conclusion

Basing on the above discussion, it can be concluded that;

Tourism industry in Wakiso have practiced social media marketing through using Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Youtube as the main social media platforms to market their products & services. Tourism industry have adopted social media marketing as a tool to communicate with customers for their services. Social media marketing has improved customer awareness in tourism industry through providing information on products, location, payment, and delivery.

5.3. Recommendations

- The tourist firm management should engage itself more in improving social media marketing using different platforms available to capture customers from different areas.
- The tourist firm management should also adopt using sponsored ad's on social media platforms so that a wide market is targeted.
- The hospitality industry should encourage tourism industry to use attractive content while advertising so that customers can be attracted to their pages.
- The management of the hotels should regularly run research activities in order to keep a regular track of customer satisfaction level. Regular research should also be conducted to find out customer expectations about various service aspects. As customer expectations and satisfaction are not static figures, regular research at sufficient intervals should be conducted.
- Since the hotels are service oriented organizations, hence providing continuous training to the employees on issues like courtesy and communication skills while dealing with customers is of immense importance.

5.4. Areas for further studies

The present study focused on social media marketing from the perspective of the tourism industry. Future researchers could use this as a method of comparative analysis whereby different sections within the hospitality industry could be focused. This would assist in comprehending the role of social media marketing separately.

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APPENDICES APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS

Dear respondent,

My name is **JENISSI MUKISA**, a student at Uganda Christian University, pursuing a Bachelor of tourism and hospitality management. I am doing research on a topic, “the effect of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourism industry in Wakiso district”. I kindly request you to respond to my questionnaire given to you. The information will only be used for academic purposes and therefore it will be kept confidential. Thank you.

Instructions: Please tick against your most appropriate answer and fill in the spaces provided in each section.

Section A: Background information

1) Gender

a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

2) Age bracket of respondents

a) 20-30 ☐ b) 31-40 ☐ c) 41 -50 ☐ d) 51 and above ☐

3) Level of education

a) Certificate ☐ b) Diploma ☐ c) Bachelor's degree ☐ d) Master's degree ☐

4) Years you have been a customer of this firm

a) 1-5years ☐ b) 6-10years ☐ c) 11-15years ☐ d) Above 16 years ☐

SECTION C: TOURISM AWARENESS IN TOURIST FIRMS

Please indicate your opinion on the customer awareness in firm in Wakiso District. Tick your appropriate response using **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NS = Not sure, SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree**

	Statements	SA	A	NS	SD	D
1	I intend to be getting services from this firm in future					
2	I always recommend this firm to my colleagues					
3	I proud to be identified with this firm					

4	I complaint when I am not satisfied because I would like to come back here					
5	I rarely think of getting options because I am satisfied here					

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN TOURIST FIRMS

Please indicate your opinion on how social media marketing in tourist firms is done in Wakiso District. Tick your appropriate response using **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NS = Not sure, SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree**

	Statement	SA	A	NS	SD	D
1	This firm markets its products and services on Facebook					
2	This firm markets its products and services on Twitter					
3	This firm markets its products and services on WhatsApp					
4	This firm markets its products and services on You Tube					
5	This firm markets its products and services on SnapChat					
6	This firm markets its products and services on TikTok					
7	This firm markets its products and services on Instagram					

SECTION D: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CUSTOMER AWARENESS IN TOURIST FIRMS

Please indicate your opinion on the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer awareness in tourist firms. Tick your appropriate response using **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NS = Not sure, SD = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree**

	Statements	SA	A	NS	SD	D
1	I interact with staff members of this firm a lot in terms of seeking information regarding the services and products					
2	I have a good relationship with the firm management					
3	The firm always updates me on their quality changes on products and services					
4	I get proper information using the social media platforms used by this firm					
6	I got to know this firm from social media					

Thank you for your time, may God bless you



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

1st Aug 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name: JE'NISSI MUKISA

Reg. No. 519863/225

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

"THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER AWARENESS IN TOURISM
INDUSTRY IN WAKISO DISTRICT"

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

The Uganda Christian University School of Business thanks you in advance

Mukisa Simon Peter
Research coordinator