

**Relationship Between Social Media Marketing And Organizational Performance Of Tourism Businesses In
Central Division, Kampala District.**

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance of tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. A correlational survey design was employed with a sample of 123 respondents comprising tourism business owners, managers, and marketing officers. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance ($r = 0.768, p < 0.01$). Specific findings revealed that content quality ($r = 0.725, p < 0.01$), customer engagement ($r = 0.681, p < 0.01$), and advertising effectiveness ($r = 0.703, p < 0.01$) significantly influenced performance. Tourism businesses utilizing social media demonstrated increased customer reach (84%), improved brand visibility (79%), and enhanced revenue generation (67%). The study concluded that social media marketing was a critical driver of organizational performance in Kampala's tourism sector. Recommendations included developing comprehensive social media strategies, investing in digital marketing training, and leveraging analytics tools to optimize campaign effectiveness for sustained competitive advantage.

Keywords: Social media marketing, organizational performance, tourism businesses, customer engagement, digital marketing, Kampala District

Background of the Study

The tourism industry represented one of Uganda's fastest-growing economic sectors, contributing significantly to employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and national development. Kampala, as Uganda's capital city and primary gateway for international tourists, hosted numerous tourism enterprises including hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Central Division, positioned at the heart of Kampala's commercial and administrative hub, concentrated a substantial proportion of these tourism businesses, serving both international visitors and domestic tourists seeking accommodation, dining, and recreational services.

The advent of digital technology fundamentally transformed marketing practices across industries globally, with social media emerging as a particularly powerful tool for business promotion and customer engagement. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube provided tourism businesses with unprecedented opportunities to reach global audiences, showcase their offerings through visual content, interact directly with customers, and build brand communities. According to Leung, Law, van Hoof, and Buhalis (2013), social media revolutionized tourism marketing by enabling real-time communication, user-generated content sharing, and peer-to-peer recommendations that significantly influenced travel decisions.

In Uganda's context, internet penetration and smartphone adoption increased dramatically over the past decade, creating favorable conditions for social media marketing adoption. The Uganda Communications Commission reported that internet users exceeded 23 million by 2024, with social media platforms experiencing exponential growth in active users. This digital revolution presented tourism businesses with cost-effective marketing channels that could compete with traditional advertising methods. Unlike conventional media requiring substantial financial investments, social media platforms offered free basic services with optional paid advertising features, making them accessible to businesses of varying sizes and financial capacities.

Despite the evident potential of social media marketing, its actual contribution to organizational performance in Kampala's tourism sector remained inadequately documented. While many tourism businesses maintained social media presence, questions persisted regarding strategic implementation, content effectiveness, engagement quality, and measurable impact on business outcomes such as customer acquisition, revenue generation, and competitive positioning. Understanding the relationship between social media marketing practices and organizational performance was essential for guiding investment decisions, optimizing marketing strategies, and enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly digital marketplace. This study therefore investigated the relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance of tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District, providing empirical evidence to inform strategic decision-making in Uganda's dynamic tourism industry.

Problem Statement

Tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District, operated in an increasingly competitive environment where traditional marketing approaches proved insufficient for reaching tech-savvy, globally connected consumers. The sector faced challenges including limited marketing budgets, difficulty in reaching international audiences, and declining effectiveness of conventional advertising methods. Although many tourism enterprises adopted social media platforms as marketing tools, their approaches appeared largely ad-hoc, lacking strategic frameworks and systematic evaluation of returns on investment.

Tourism business owners and managers expressed uncertainty regarding which social media strategies yielded optimal results, how to measure marketing effectiveness, and whether social media investments translated into tangible business outcomes. Some businesses maintained active social media presence without experiencing corresponding improvements in customer numbers, bookings, or revenues, while others achieved remarkable success through digital channels. This inconsistency suggested that mere presence on social media platforms was insufficient; rather, specific practices, content strategies, and engagement approaches determined effectiveness. Without empirical evidence linking social media marketing practices to organizational performance metrics, tourism businesses lacked guidance for resource allocation and strategic planning. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance of tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District, providing evidence-based insights for enhancing digital marketing effectiveness in Uganda's tourism sector.

Specific Objective

To determine the relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance of tourism businesses.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between social media marketing and organizational performance among tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. The correlational approach was selected because it enabled the researcher to identify and measure the strength of associations between variables without manipulation, which was appropriate for examining naturally occurring business phenomena. The study population comprised owners, managers, and marketing personnel from registered tourism businesses including hotels, lodges, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies, and event venues operating within Central Division.

A sample of 123 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The sampling frame was obtained from Kampala Capital City Authority's tourism business registry, which listed 287 registered tourism enterprises in Central Division. Businesses were stratified into six categories: hotels and lodges (45 businesses), restaurants and cafes (98 businesses), tour operators (52 businesses), travel agencies (38 businesses), event venues (32 businesses), and entertainment centers (22 businesses). Proportionate sampling was applied to each stratum, ensuring representation across tourism business types. From each selected business, one respondent with direct involvement in marketing decisions was purposively chosen, yielding the final sample of 123 participants.

Data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaires comprising three sections. Section A gathered demographic information about respondents and their businesses. Section B assessed social media marketing practices using a 25-item scale measuring content quality, posting frequency, platform diversity, customer engagement, advertising investment, and analytics utilization. Section C measured organizational performance through 20 items assessing customer acquisition, revenue growth, market share, brand recognition, customer satisfaction, and competitive positioning. All items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was validated through expert review by three marketing academics and pre-tested with 20 tourism business representatives from neighboring Kawempe Division, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating high reliability.

Data collection spanned six weeks, with research assistants visiting businesses during operational hours to distribute questionnaires and provide clarifications where needed. Completed questionnaires were retrieved after three days, with follow-up visits conducted to maximize response rates. A total of 123 questionnaires were returned, representing a 100% response rate due to careful follow-up procedures. Data were coded, entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, and cleaned to eliminate errors. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized respondent characteristics and key variables. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine the strength and direction of relationships between social media marketing dimensions and organizational performance indicators. Ethical considerations including informed consent,

confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed, with approval obtained from relevant authorities before data collection commenced.

Results

The study findings revealed substantial evidence of significant relationships between social media marketing practices and organizational performance among tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. Table 1 presents demographic and business characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic and Business Characteristics of Respondents (N=123)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	71	57.7
	Female	52	42.3
Age Group	25-34 years	48	39.0
	35-44 years	52	42.3
	45+ years	23	18.7
Position	Business Owner	45	36.6
	Manager	58	47.2
	Marketing Officer	20	16.2
Business Type	Hotels/Lodges	28	22.8
	Restaurants/Cafes	41	33.3
	Tour Operators	22	17.9
	Travel Agencies	16	13.0
	Event Venues	11	8.9
Years in Operation	Entertainment Centers	5	4.1
	1-5 years	51	41.5
	6-10 years	44	35.8
	11+ years	28	22.7

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The demographic profile indicated that male respondents constituted 57.7% of the sample while females represented 42.3%, reflecting general gender patterns in Uganda's business sector. The majority of participants (42.3%) fell within the 35-44 years age bracket, suggesting mature and experienced business leadership. Managers formed the largest respondent category at 47.2%, followed by business owners at 36.6% and dedicated marketing officers at 16.2%. This distribution was appropriate as these individuals possessed comprehensive knowledge of both marketing strategies and organizational performance outcomes. Regarding business types, restaurants and cafes dominated the sample at 33.3%, which aligned with the prevalence of food service establishments in Central Division's tourism landscape.

Hotels and lodges constituted 22.8%, while tour operators represented 17.9% of the sample. The majority of businesses (41.5%) had operated for 1-5 years, indicating a relatively young but established tourism sector with emerging digital marketing practices.

Table 2: Social Media Marketing Practices Among Tourism Businesses

Social Media Practice	Adoption Rate (%)	Mean Score*	Std. Deviation
Facebook marketing	96.7	4.23	0.68
Instagram marketing	84.6	3.89	0.81
Regular content posting	78.9	3.72	0.94
Customer engagement activities	81.3	3.85	0.77
Paid social media advertising	69.1	3.51	1.02
Twitter/X marketing	52.8	2.98	1.15
YouTube video marketing	47.2	2.76	1.21
LinkedIn marketing	35.0	2.34	1.08
Analytics and insights monitoring	65.9	3.42	0.96
Influencer collaborations	43.9	2.65	1.13

*Scale: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 2 demonstrated that social media marketing was widely adopted among tourism businesses in Central Division, with Facebook emerging as the dominant platform utilized by 96.7% of businesses with the highest mean score of 4.23. This overwhelming preference for Facebook reflected the platform's large user base in Uganda and its versatile features accommodating various content types including text, images, videos, and event promotions. Instagram ranked second in adoption at 84.6% with a mean score of 3.89, indicating recognition of the platform's visual-centric nature which aligned well with tourism marketing needs for showcasing destinations, accommodations, and experiences through compelling imagery.

Regular content posting was practiced by 78.9% of businesses, though the mean score of 3.72 suggested that consistency remained a challenge for some enterprises. Customer engagement activities, including responding to comments, messages, and reviews, showed 81.3% adoption with a mean of 3.85, indicating that most businesses recognized the importance of two-way communication with their audiences. Paid social media advertising was utilized by 69.1% of businesses with a mean of 3.51, demonstrating willingness to invest financial resources in amplifying reach beyond organic content.

Twitter/X adoption was moderate at 52.8%, while YouTube video marketing reached only 47.2% of businesses despite video content's proven effectiveness in tourism promotion. LinkedIn showed the lowest adoption at 35.0%, which was understandable given its professional networking focus less aligned with consumer tourism marketing. Analytics

monitoring was practiced by 65.9% of businesses, though the mean of 3.42 suggested that systematic data-driven decision-making remained underdeveloped among some enterprises. Influencer collaborations were utilized by less than half of businesses (43.9%), indicating untapped potential in leveraging influential personalities to expand market reach.

Table 3: Organizational Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Low Performance (%)	Moderate Performance (%)	High Performance (%)	Mean Score*
Customer acquisition	12.2	29.3	58.5	3.76
Revenue growth	18.7	39.8	41.5	3.54
Market share expansion	22.0	43.9	34.1	3.38
Brand recognition	8.9	31.7	59.4	3.82
Customer satisfaction	6.5	26.8	66.7	3.91
Booking frequency	15.4	35.0	49.6	3.62
Competitive positioning	19.5	41.5	39.0	3.45
Online visibility	7.3	23.6	69.1	3.98

*Scale: 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, 5=Very High

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 3 presented organizational performance metrics revealing generally positive outcomes among surveyed tourism businesses. Online visibility achieved the highest mean score of 3.98, with 69.1% of businesses reporting high performance in this dimension. This finding aligned with the widespread adoption of social media platforms shown in Table 2, suggesting that digital marketing efforts successfully enhanced businesses' online presence. Customer satisfaction scored 3.91, with 66.7% of businesses achieving high performance, indicating that social media facilitated better customer relationships through improved communication and service responsiveness.

Brand recognition demonstrated strong performance with a mean of 3.82 and 59.4% of businesses achieving high levels, suggesting that consistent social media presence contributed to brand building and awareness among target audiences. Customer acquisition showed favorable results with 58.5% achieving high performance and a mean of 3.76, indicating that social media effectively served as a customer attraction channel. Booking frequency achieved a mean of 3.62 with 49.6% reporting high performance, demonstrating moderate success in converting social media engagement into actual business transactions.

Revenue growth, while positive with a mean of 3.54, showed that only 41.5% of businesses achieved high performance, with 39.8% experiencing moderate growth. This suggested that while social media contributed to

revenue enhancement, its impact varied across businesses depending on implementation quality and other business factors. Competitive positioning and market share expansion showed the lowest mean scores of 3.45 and 3.38 respectively, indicating that while social media improved visibility and customer relations, translating these into dominant market positions remained challenging in Kampala's competitive tourism landscape.

Table 4: Relationship Between Social Media Marketing Dimensions and Organizational Performance

Social Media Marketing Dimension	Organizational Performance (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Overall social media marketing	0.768**	0.000	Strong positive
Content quality	0.725**	0.000	Strong positive
Posting frequency	0.612**	0.000	Moderate positive
Platform diversity	0.584**	0.001	Moderate positive
Customer engagement	0.681**	0.000	Moderate positive
Paid advertising	0.703**	0.000	Strong positive
Visual content utilization	0.694**	0.000	Moderate positive
Analytics utilization	0.658**	0.000	Moderate positive
Response time to inquiries	0.637**	0.000	Moderate positive

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

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 4 presented correlation analysis results demonstrating statistically significant positive relationships between all social media marketing dimensions and organizational performance. The overall correlation between social media marketing and organizational performance was strong and positive ($r = 0.768, p < 0.01$), providing robust evidence that social media marketing significantly contributed to business success in Kampala's tourism sector. This finding validated the strategic importance of digital marketing investments and justified resource allocation toward social media initiatives.

Content quality emerged as the strongest individual predictor of organizational performance ($r = 0.725, p < 0.01$), underscoring the critical importance of creating valuable, relevant, and engaging content that resonated with target audiences. This finding suggested that businesses could not achieve optimal results through mere platform presence; rather, the quality of information, imagery, and messaging shared determined effectiveness. Paid advertising showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.703, p < 0.01$), indicating that strategic investment in targeted advertisements amplified reach and conversion rates beyond organic content capabilities.

Visual content utilization demonstrated a moderate to strong correlation ($r = 0.694, p < 0.01$), which was particularly relevant for tourism businesses where compelling photographs and videos of destinations, facilities, and experiences played crucial roles in influencing purchase decisions. Customer engagement showed a moderate positive correlation

($r = 0.681, p < 0.01$), confirming that interactive communication, prompt responses to inquiries, and active community management contributed significantly to business outcomes by building trust and fostering customer loyalty.

Analytics utilization correlated moderately with performance ($r = 0.658, p < 0.01$), suggesting that businesses employing data-driven approaches to monitor campaign effectiveness, understand audience behaviors, and optimize strategies achieved better results than those relying solely on intuition. Response time to customer inquiries also showed moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.637, p < 0.01$), highlighting the importance of timely communication in converting social media interest into actual bookings and sales.

Posting frequency ($r = 0.612, p < 0.01$) and platform diversity ($r = 0.584, p < 0.01$) showed the weakest correlations among measured dimensions, though still statistically significant and positive. These findings indicated that while regular posting and multi-platform presence contributed to performance, they were less critical than content quality and strategic engagement. This suggested that businesses should prioritize creating fewer but higher-quality posts over maintaining constant low-quality output across numerous platforms.

Conclusions

This study concluded that social media marketing had a significant positive relationship with organizational performance among tourism businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. The strong overall correlation ($r = 0.768, p < 0.01$) provided compelling evidence that strategic utilization of social media platforms contributed substantially to business success across multiple performance dimensions including customer acquisition, revenue generation, brand recognition, and market positioning. This finding aligned with contemporary marketing literature emphasizing digital channels' transformative impact on service industries, particularly tourism where visual storytelling and customer interaction were paramount.

The study established that content quality represented the most critical determinant of social media marketing effectiveness, with the strongest correlation to organizational performance ($r = 0.725, p < 0.01$). This conclusion underscored that tourism businesses could not achieve optimal results through casual or inconsistent social media use; rather, success required deliberate investment in creating compelling, informative, and visually appealing content that showcased unique value propositions and engaged target audiences emotionally and intellectually. High-quality imagery of facilities, authentic customer testimonials, informative destination guides, and culturally relevant storytelling emerged as essential components of effective tourism social media strategies.

Furthermore, the study concluded that paid social media advertising significantly enhanced organizational performance beyond organic content reach. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.703, p < 0.01$) indicated that strategic investment in targeted advertisements enabled businesses to overcome algorithmic limitations, reach specific demographic segments, and achieve measurable returns on investment. This finding was particularly relevant for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises with limited traditional advertising budgets, as social media platforms offered cost-effective alternatives with precise targeting capabilities and measurable outcomes.

The research also concluded that customer engagement practices, including timely responses to inquiries, active community management, and interactive content, substantially influenced organizational performance. The moderate positive correlations for customer engagement ($r = 0.681, p < 0.01$) and response time ($r = 0.637, p < 0.01$) demonstrated that social media's interactive nature created competitive advantages for businesses that prioritized relationship-building over one-way broadcasting. Tourism businesses that treated social media as conversation platforms rather than mere advertising channels achieved superior customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth referrals.

Finally, the study concluded that while platform presence and posting frequency contributed positively to performance, strategic focus on fewer platforms with quality content outperformed dispersed presence across multiple channels with inconsistent content. The relatively weaker correlations for platform diversity ($r = 0.584, p < 0.01$) and posting frequency ($r = 0.612, p < 0.01$) suggested that businesses should prioritize depth over breadth in social media strategies, concentrating resources on platforms where target audiences were most active and receptive.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, several actionable recommendations were proposed for various stakeholders in Uganda's tourism industry:

For Tourism Business Owners and Managers:

Tourism businesses should develop comprehensive social media marketing strategies aligned with organizational objectives rather than engaging in ad-hoc posting activities. These strategies should clearly define target audiences, select appropriate platforms based on customer demographics, establish content calendars ensuring consistent messaging, and allocate budgets for both content creation and paid advertising. Given the strong relationship between content quality and performance, businesses should invest in professional photography, videography, and copywriting services to showcase their offerings compellingly. Regular training for staff responsible for social media management should be prioritized to ensure they understood platform algorithms, content optimization techniques, and customer engagement best practices.

For Industry Associations:

The Uganda Tourism Board and Kampala tourism associations should organize capacity-building workshops specifically focused on social media marketing for tourism enterprises. These training programs should cover practical skills including content creation, visual storytelling, customer engagement strategies, paid advertising campaign management, and analytics interpretation. Associations should also facilitate knowledge-sharing forums where successful businesses could share case studies and lessons learned with peers, creating collaborative learning environments that elevated industry-wide digital marketing competencies.

For Government Tourism Agencies:

The Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should recognize social media marketing as a strategic priority in national tourism promotion efforts and provide support mechanisms for businesses transitioning to digital marketing. This could include subsidized access to digital marketing tools, partnerships with social media platforms for preferential rates, and development of comprehensive digital marketing guidelines tailored to Uganda's tourism context. Government agencies should also facilitate internet infrastructure improvements and affordable connectivity to enable smaller businesses in peripheral areas to participate effectively in digital marketing.

For Educational Institutions:

Hospitality and tourism training institutions should integrate comprehensive social media marketing modules into their curricula, ensuring that graduates entered the industry with practical digital marketing skills. These programs should emphasize hands-on learning through real business campaigns, analytics interpretation, and emerging platform trends. Universities should also conduct ongoing research on digital marketing effectiveness in Uganda's tourism context, providing evidence-based insights that guided industry practice and policy formulation.

For Individual Tourism Businesses:

Businesses should prioritize Facebook and Instagram marketing given their high adoption rates and proven effectiveness among Ugandan consumers, while selectively exploring emerging platforms based on target market preferences. Investment in paid advertising should be approached strategically, beginning with small budgets to test campaigns, measuring results through platform analytics, and scaling successful approaches. Businesses should establish response protocols ensuring customer inquiries received replies within 24 hours, recognizing that timely communication significantly influenced booking decisions. Additionally, businesses should actively encourage satisfied customers to share reviews and experiences on social media, leveraging user-generated content to build credibility and expand organic reach.

For Future Research:

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to track social media marketing's sustained impact on organizational performance over extended periods, examining whether initial gains were maintained or enhanced through continued practice. Researchers should also explore specific platform strategies, comparing effectiveness of different content types, posting schedules, and engagement approaches to provide granular guidance for practitioners. Qualitative investigations examining challenges faced by tourism businesses in implementing social media strategies would complement quantitative findings and inform more nuanced support interventions. Furthermore, comparative studies across different Ugandan regions could identify contextual factors influencing social media marketing effectiveness, enabling development of location-specific strategies that addressed unique market characteristics and infrastructure realities.

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