



**ROLE OF SELECTED SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING TOURISM AT LAKE
BUNYONYI IN KABALE**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the role of selected social media platforms in the travel of tourists to Lake Bunyonyi. The primary interests and activities of most of the tourists who visit Lake Bunyonyi are to relax, canoe, bird watching, and forest hikes. Tourists are becoming increasingly knowledgeable and particular. Although the role of internet is a source of travel information, it was not clear if social media can also sustain tourism marketing. Tourism service providers have limited knowledge of the tourism market and the opportunity for tourism growth. The study investigated how tourists use social media in trip planning and how selected tourism players both private and public use social media in marketing Lake Bunyonyi.

The study adopted an exploratory research design to investigate the use of social media platforms in the trip planning .In addition this qualitative study identified how selected tourism service providers use social media in marketing Lake Bunyonyi as a tourist site . Participants in this study included tourists visiting Lake Bunyonyi, tour operators' accommodation sites and the Uganda tourism Board (UTB) that manages marketing Uganda. Purposive sampling was used to determine the sample. Primary data was obtained using observation and semi-structured interviews that were face to face with twenty nine respondents. Data was processed and presented according to the objectives and research questions.

Findings showed that the majority of tourists use social media for information during trip planning. It also showed that tourism service providers have embraced the use of social media. Social media is highly influential among tourists travelling to Lake Bunyonyi and will increasingly be used in the future. Therefore tourism service providers should intensify their marketing efforts using social media and should pay more attention to tourist's reviews of their services posted on social media platforms as well as encourage clients to share their experiences on social media for improved service provision.