MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES, SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND INWARD INTERNATIONALIZATION OF UGANDAN TOURISM FIRMS.

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL (FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH) IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL OF BUSINESS MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

PLAN A

MARCH, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Kabahita Charity, declare that this work has been produced entirely by myself, and under no circumstance has it been copied from any other sources without prior reference being made to the work.

Signature..... Date 26/03/2024

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been prepared under our supervision and submitted under our approval.

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Supervisor

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this academic journey. Your belief in me has been a constant source of motivation.

May God bless you abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With profound gratitude, I offer my heartfelt thanks to God, whose unwavering presence and divine guidance illuminated my path as I pursued this degree.

I am also deeply indebted to my loving parents, brothers, and friends, whose unwavering support, sacrifices, and encouragement have been instrumental in my academic journey.

To my supervisors and dedicated academic colleagues, your collaboration, inspiration, and camaraderie have enriched this endeavor beyond measure.

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This work is a testament to the blessings of faith, family, teamwork, and the caffeinated elixir that sustained me.

To God be the glory for this achievement!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	-	Artificial Intelligence
AR	-	Augmented Reality
BoU	-	Bank of Uganda
DT	-	Digital Technologies
EDI	-	Electronic Data Interchange
ERP	-	Enterprise Resource Planning
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
IoT	-	Internet of Things
RBVT	-	Research Based View Theory
SoLoMo	-	Social, Local and Mobile
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
VR	-	Virtual Reality
WTO	-	World Tourism Organization

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how digital technologies and social networks facilitate the efforts of Ugandan tourism firms to attract international customers and contribute to their competitiveness in the global tourism industry.

The study used a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. During the quantitative phase, a survey questionnaire was distributed to a sample of Ugandan tourism firms to collect data on their use of digital technologies and social networks in their inward internationalization efforts. Statistical analyses were performed to assess the impact of digital technologies, such as investing in a website, using social media and online sales platforms, and the role their social networks play in their inward internationalization efforts.

The findings of this study add to the existing literature by shedding light on the role of digital technologies and social networks in Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization. The research aims to provide policymakers, tourism industry stakeholders, and individual firms with practical recommendations on how to harness the potential of digital technologies and social networks for effective inward internationalization. This study aims to support the growth and competitiveness of Uganda's tourism sector in the global market by improving understanding of the factors that influence the success of inward internationalization.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in explaining why and how firms, particularly those in the service sector, engage in international trade (Satta, Parola, & Persico, 2014). According to authors like Bianchi (2011) and Bjorkman and Kock (1997), internal internationalization is one strategy for getting a foothold in the global market. They contend that a few service industries take a different approach to internationalization by changing the direction of internationalization and bringing the foreign customer to the firm's home nation for structural or strategic reasons. The consumer service industries of education (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008), entertainment (Duarte and Cavusgil, 1996), and healthcare (Orava, 2002) all exhibit this domestically located, inward-internationalization configuration.

In the tourism industry, inward internationalization refers to the "importing" of customers from other countries to consume local tour services in the home country of the company (Bjorkman & Kock, 1997; Otengei et al., 2017, Adjei, 2016). Tourism is one industry that has seen significant inward internationalization (Aporu et al., 2014; Otengei et al., 2016; Bianchi, 2011; Lam-González et al., 2019; Otengei et al., 2017), as attracting consumers from different countries can help them gain global brand recognition, prestige, and survival (Lam-González et al., 2019).

According to evidence, before COVID-19, the travel and tourism sector had become one of the most important sectors in the global economy, accounting for 10% of global GDP and more than 320 million jobs globally. The tourism sector in Uganda generated over US$ 1.6 billion in forex in 2018, accounting for approximately 4% of GDP or 20% of total goods and services exports. This is more than twice as much as the country's traditional export cash crop, coffee.

While other sectors are showing signs of recovery, tourism firms have continued to show negative growth, which could indicate a permanent loss of formal and informal jobs in the sector. These impediments continue to stymie their operations, endangering their survival (Guloba et al., 2021; MTWA, 2020). This is despite the Ugandan government's efforts to revitalize the industry, such as the Bank of Uganda's (BoU) provision of credit relief measures and the restart of tourism to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (BoU, 2020; Mwesigye, 2021; Muoki, 2021).

Social networks may play a significant role in assisting firms' inward internationalization efforts. According to empirical data, building and maintaining business ties enable tourism firms to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of their partners or affiliates. This information exchange can assist firms in better understanding foreign customer preferences and cultural nuances, as well as in tailoring their products and services to meet the specific needs and expectations of international tourists. Strong business ties can also help tourism firms market and promote themselves in foreign markets. Firms can reach a larger audience by collaborating with local partners and leveraging their partners' marketing channels and customer base. Co-marketing, co-branding, and cross-promotions can help tourism firms gain visibility and credibility (Lew et al., 2016; Islam & Timila, 2021; Lam-González et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the use of digital technologies also has a significant impact on the inward internationalization efforts of tourism firms. Digital technologies have transformed the way businesses operate by allowing them to reach a larger audience, personalize experiences, and optimize marketing efforts, and the tourism industry is no exception. Using digital technologies such as websites, social media, and online marketing platforms (such as Airbnb and Uber), tourism firms can reach a global audience more effectively and efficiently, as well as attract international

tourists, without having a physical presence in foreign markets. (Bianchi & Mathews 2016; Cassetta et al., 2020). These digital tools enable seamless interactions between international tourists and tourism firms in the host nation by providing real-time information, making personalized recommendations, and providing seamless information (Cassetta et al., 2020; Li et al., 2018).

Based on the submissions above, it is clear that developing social networks and utilizing digital technologies could play a significant role in enhancing the inward internationalization of tourism-related businesses. The extent to which this is true in the Ugandan context, however, is the subject of this study.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite government efforts to invest in digital innovation and infrastructure to provide tourism industry stakeholders with the knowledge and acceleration they need to rebuild their businesses or find innovative solutions to pandemic-related problems, the tourism industry has not fully recovered and continues to face challenges in attracting foreign tourists (MTWA, 2020). This is evidenced by a 69.3% decrease in international tourist arrivals in Uganda. In addition, visitors to national parks and reserves decreased by 68.7% in 2020, the largest decrease in East Africa (Muoki, 2021). Empirical evidence reveals that inward internationalization can be accelerated by building social networks (Lam-González et al., 2019) and leveraging digital technologies (Cassetta et al., 2020).. While this could be true, this evidence is glaringly lacking in Uganda's context. Thus, this study intends to investigate the influence of digital technologies and social networks on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

Internationalization improves a company's competitiveness (Zhou & Wu 2014). To mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and enable tourism firms to attract foreign tourists, the Ugandan government has implemented initiatives such as credit relief, opening borders, lifting travel bans, and restarting tourism (MTWA, 2020; BoU, 2020; Mwesigye, 2021; Muoki, 2021).

As a result, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between social networks, digital technologies, and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between digital technologies, social networks, and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the influence of digital technologies on inward internationalization.

ii. To examine the influence of social networks on inward internationalization.

iii. To examine the combined effect of social networks and digital technologies on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

1.5 Research Questions

i. What is the influence of digital technologies on inward internationalization?

ii. What is the relationship between social networks and inward internationalization?

iii. What is the combined effect of digital technologies and social networks on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study focused on social networks and digital technologies (as independent variables) and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms as the dependent variable.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was carried out on Ugandan tourism firms from Kampala, Pakwach, Kabale, and Kabarole (Fort Portal). This is because several tourism firms in Uganda have shown interest in attracting foreign tourists for local tourism experiences and services (MTWA, 2020).

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study was carried out over a period of three months between December 2022 to February 2023. The literature review covered a period of 12 years up to date.

1.7 Significance of the Study

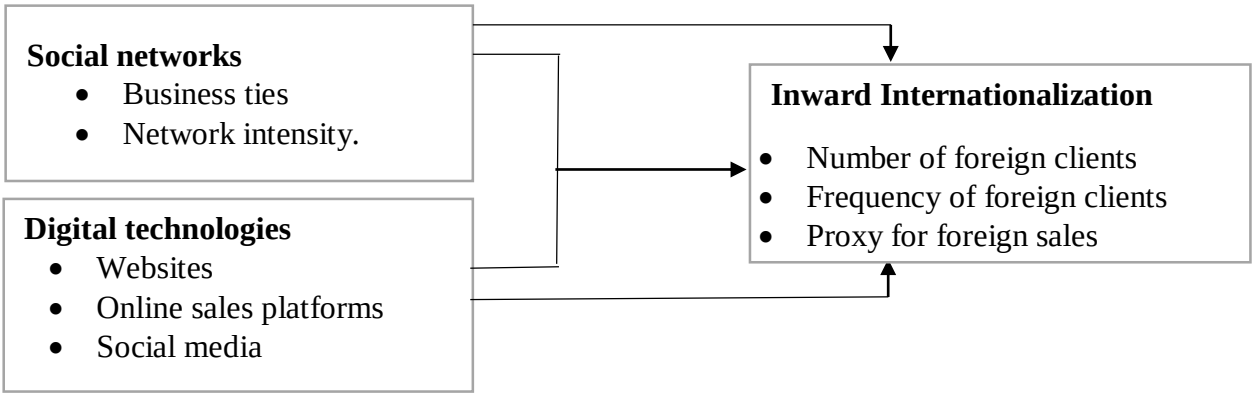
I. The research findings will be a useful guide to the management of tourism firms in Uganda to expand their opportunities to foreign tourists and attract them for their services.

II. This research is expected to add to the existing knowledge on social networks, digital technologies, and the inward internationalization of tourism firms.

III. The study will help future researchers conceptualize the study variables and use them to identify the areas for further research.

IV. The study may act as a basis of literature for other scholars to further their studies on factors that affect the inward internationalization of tourism firms.

1.8 Conceptual framework



Source: *Adopted and modified based on the literature of (Folmer & Schutjens, 2018; Cassetta et al., 2020; Otengei et al., 2016;)*

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view contends that valuable firm resources, which include both tangible and intangible components, are commonly scarce, imperfectly replicable, and lacking in direct substitutes (Brouthers & Hennart, 2007). It involves maximizing one's capabilities and resources by combining them with the advantages of others while also ensuring complementarity (Johanson, 1990). RBV is particularly well-liked in analyzing the causes and processes of inward internationalization. This study thus makes use of essential RBVT components and resources that give it a competitive edge, such as social networks and the adoption of digital technologies, which are crucial elements in the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

The RBV states that digital technologies must be incorporated into organizational processes (like the creation of market intelligence) for Ugandan tourism businesses to take advantage of technological opportunities (Pergelova et al., 2019). This is supported by Otengei, Bakunda, Ngoma, Ntayi, and Munene (2017), who found that increasing the degree of inward internationalization required the adoption of new technology.

2.2 Inward Internationalization

Inward internationalization is defined as attracting customers from other countries to consume a specific product or service in the provider's home country (Bjorkman & Kock, 1997). This is a common practice in the tourism industry, where tourists travel from their home countries in search of new experiences. To provide said service, location-based consumer services such as travel, education, transportation, health care, and entertainment (Adjei, 2016) must attract foreign

customers to their domestic market. Although some of these businesses may decide to establish a foreign office or offer the service in a foreign market in the future, their initial internationalization stages are primarily concentrated on providing services to foreign customers in the domestic market (Roberts, 1999). As a result of inward internationalization, businesses will perform better through the acquisition of foreign technology and advanced management expertise (Buckley et al., 2002), in addition to developing their capabilities and bolstering their competitive advantage by assimilating the information and experience they gain from working with foreign clients (Cao et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2007).

Additionally, inward internationalization assists in overcoming the risks and obligations of foreignness associated with doing business abroad, which may jeopardize a firm's survival. It also lowers the unemployment rate, lessens foreign risks, and opens up a market for domestic goods and services, all of which are advantageous for the socioeconomic development of the home country.

2.3 Social networks

A social network is defined as "a structure composed of a group of actors, some of whose members are connected by a group of one or more relations" (Knoke & Yang, 2008). In addition to financial resources, social networks provide users with access to a variety of social capital, such as information, social support, values, and aspirations (Schulz et al., 2017).

Businesses can use social networks to gather information, set prices or policies together, select the functional mode, and stifle competition. Businesses must build, nurture, and maintain social networks using a relational approach to better understand them as a source of competitive advantage in various contexts (Pablos, 2005; Ruzzier et al., 2006).

Business ties and network intensity are just a few of the dimensions that explain social networking. Business partners might collaborate and meet regularly with each other and leave the mere formal stage of a business relationship, developing a more personal relationship (Van Ruth, 2008). The informal character of social networks is expressed through informal advice from friends or family members as well as loose conversations with actors inside and outside a company (Gulati, 1998). Therefore, social networks consist of both formal as well as informal, characteristics and can be created as a sub-network of a business network (Björkman & Kock, 1995).

Zimmer (1986) discovered that social networks can provide access to valuable resources such as funding, expertise, and mentorship for businesses. According to the study, business owners who have strong social networks are more likely to receive funding as well as valuable advice and support from their network members. Access to information and new business opportunities can also be obtained through social networks (Burt, 1992). Individuals with strong social networks were more likely to be aware of new business opportunities and to have access to information about potential customers, suppliers, and partners, according to his research.

Network intensity refers to the strength and density of relationships within a social network. That is the frequency, duration, and closeness of interactions and relationships within a person's network. A high network intensity can help the process by increasing the flow of information and resources between network members. Stronger and more numerous relationships within a network can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise, allowing businesses to gain a better understanding of foreign markets and identify potential partners or customers. Furthermore, a dense network can provide access to a broader range of resources, such as financial capital or specialized skills, which can help businesses expand their operations.

According to Knight and Cavusgil (2004), strong networks can assist businesses in identifying potential partners and customers in foreign markets. Companies with a high network intensity are more likely to have access to a diverse network of contacts, which can increase the likelihood of finding suitable partners and customers.

Network intensity can also assist businesses in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers (Javalgi and White, 2002). Stronger networks can provide access to individuals who speak a foreign language and are familiar with the culture of the target market, facilitating the process of inward internationalization.

2.4 Digital technologies

The term "digital technologies" (DT) refers to the use of a group of technologies associated with the digital transition, whose reach transcends organizational boundaries and includes connected customers and an intelligent supply chain (Gilchrist 2016; Ghobakhloo 2018). DTs encompass the use of e-commerce tools like Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), and the most advanced IDT like the Internet of Things (IoT), Augmented Reality (AR), and Big-Data analytics (Gilchrist 2016; Lu 2017; Ghobakhloo 2019).

The literature on business organizations focuses on evaluating the process of digital transformation by examining the adoption, diffusion, and deployment of DTs to (a) conduct marketing and promotion activities (e-marketing); (b) conduct transactions such as business-to-business and business-to-consumer (e-commerce); and (c) improve production processes, customer engagement processes, and internal management processes (e-business) (Mazzarol 2015).

2.5 Social Networks and inward internationalization

During each stage of their internationalization processes, businesses establish and maintain an increasing number of domestic and international relationships. These relationships are formed through the penetration of pre-existing foreign networks and international integration into various countries' pre-existing networks (Johanson & Mattsson, 1988). To compete effectively in changing environments, various forms of formal and informal networks such as strategic alliances, joint ventures, business, and social networks, and so on are formed.

By integrating themselves into social networks, firms can compensate for their lack of global knowledge and experience during the internationalization process. This can help businesses find opportunities in the global market and strengthen their connections with foreign institutions through social network connections (Chetty and Holm, 2000).

The key to internationalization is developing relationships, whether they be new or existing (Johanson, 2009). By fostering brand connections and participation, social networks serve as a conduit for the dissemination of information, which improves brand reputation (Hurn, 2007). Additionally, social networks are essential when evaluating an organization's potential for global expansion (Wu, 2017).

The investigation of inward internationalization has included the use of social networks. Ahimbisibwe, Ntayi, Ngoma, Bakunda, and Kabagambe investigated the value of international networking for small- to medium-sized businesses entering new markets in a 2020 study. According to their findings, network integration and network expansion are critical components of SMEs' internationalization. Zhou et al. (2007) discovered that home-based social networks mediate the link between inward and outward internationalization and firm performance. Social

networks provide three types of information: (1) knowledge of global market opportunities, (2) advice and hands-on learning, and (3) referral trust and solidarity.

Business connections made through social networks can help connect businesses with international clients and act as a bridge (Ellis, 2000), providing crucial clients for business internationalization initiatives like learning about international market opportunities, gaining international experience, and building trust. This is a key motivator for businesses that decide to pursue inward internationalization to integrate with social networks. First, connections with other businesses provide companies with information about products, market trends and changes, and information about the dependability of their business partners—all of which are difficult to access in the formal market system (Sheng et al., 2011).

Additionally, strong social ties between a company and its other business partners can facilitate a company's capacity for learning as well as the movement of information and technology across networks (Rindfleisch & Moorman, 2001). These significant social networks can encourage business trade, improve the appeal of interactions between tour operators and customers, and provide financial advantages to companies (Cao et al., 2022).

2.6 Digital Technologies and Inward Internationalization

Market intelligence can be developed at a low-cost thanks to the Internet and other digital technologies (Bianchi & Mathews 2016; Etemad 2013). Because of technological advancements such as the Internet, even small businesses can connect with suppliers, customers, and collaborators all over the world (Wright & Etemad 2001). The effectiveness of digital technologies is especially important for small, resource-constrained businesses such as SMEs in transition and other emerging economies (Pergelova et al., 2019), because increased use of and investment in digital technologies fuels growth and internationalization (Davis & Harveston, 2000).

This is because DTs may help to mitigate the effects of foreign liabilities and resource scarcity, which may hasten internationalization and expand market opportunities (Arenius et al., 2005).

Firms that use digital tools may be able to seize global market opportunities faster and gain a significant competitive advantage (Zhou et al., 2007). For example, social media helps businesses raise brand awareness and provide product information at a low cost, which has a positive impact on the pre-purchase phase (Abed et al., 2015), whereas social media analytics, such as Facebook Analytics, Twitter Analyzer, and YouTube Analytics, have built-in analytical services that provide information on traffic and popularity. These analytical services are critical in obtaining data and information that can be used to better understand foreign consumers and markets (Ciravegna et al., 2014; Fernhaber & Li, 2013), as well as to develop superior marketing capabilities and effective customer engagement strategies, both of which are required for international success.

Otengei, Bakunda, Ngoma, Ntayi, and Munene (2017) in their study also found that innovative capabilities including the adoption of new technology was very instrumental in enhancing the level of inward internationalization of African-ethnic restaurants. Cassetta et al. (2020) in their research established that e-business technologies have a positive impact on internationalization only when they are embedded in organizational processes, and innovations and when investments in digital skills are made as these improve connectivity with business partners, suppliers, distribution networks, and customers, while also facilitating integration in emerging global value chains (Marchi, Maria & Gereffi, 2018; Jin et al., 2014).

Despite efforts to investigate the subject, the available empirical literature lacks adequate insights or research findings on this specific topic.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a plan, structure, and strategy for conducting research to find answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2005). A cross-sectional survey design was used because the data was collected over a brief period and it was analyzed from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time (Mukyala et al., 2017). A quantitative research approach supported by a qualitative approach was used to examine the relationship between social networks, digital technologies, and Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization.

3.2 Population of the Study

At the time of the study, Uganda had 821 tourism firms, according to the Uganda Tourism Board registrar (2022). The research focused on 295 tourism firms based in Uganda.

Table 3.1: Licensed Tourism Firms in Uganda.

S/N	Region	Number of tourism firms	% of tourism firms	Sampling number
1	Kampala	551	67%	198
2	Kabale	161	20%	59
3	Kabarole (Fort Portal)	66	8%	24
4	Pakwach	43	5%	14
	Total	**821**		**295**

Source: Uganda Tourism Board (2022)

3.3 Sampling Size

According to Kumar (1999), sampling is the process of selecting a few units from a larger group (the sampling population) to serve as the foundation for estimating or predicting a fact, situation, or outcome of the larger group. Any statements made about the sample should apply to the entire population (Orodho 2003). However, it is argued that the larger the sample, the lower the sampling error (Gay, 1992). Using a total population of 821 tourism firms across the country, a 95% confidence level, a 10% non-response rate, a 5% margin of error, and a simple random sampling design effect of 1.0, 295 tourism firms were sampled to represent the larger group's viewpoint.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The sample was chosen using simple random sampling. The respondents were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. At the time of the study, Uganda had 821 tourism firms, according to the Uganda Tourism Board registrar (2022); 295 tourism firms were sampled to represent a larger view of the 821 tourism firms in Uganda, with a 95% confidence level, a 10% non-response rate, a 5% margin of error, and a simple random sampling design effect of 1.0.

3.5 Study Location

The ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher and should allow for instant rapport with the informants or respondents. The study was conducted among licensed tourism firms in Pakwach, Kabale, Kabarole (Fort Portal), and Kampala districts.

3.6 Data sources

By using both structured and unstructured questions, quantitative data was gathered from the selected sample of tourism firms from the geographical areas of Kampala, Pakwach, Kabale, and Kabarole (Fort Portal).

Key informant interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data, but care was taken to make sure that the interviewees had never taken part in key informant discussions.

Desk review was used to gather secondary data; the study reviewed pertinent data for instance, previous research reports on social networks, digital technologies, and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism businesses.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Respondents' data was gathered using a self-administered questionnaire. The instrument asked closed-ended questions to answer the research objectives.

A key informant interview guide was also used. This instrument served as a guideline for the conversation in which the interviewer asked questions to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee (Kakinda, 2000). The interviews were conducted with selected employees from the selected tourism firms.

3.8 Measurement of variables

The independent variables were social networks and digital technologies, while the dependent variable was Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization.

- ***Social networks*** were measured in terms of business ties and network intensity using tools developed by (Folmer & Schutjens, 2018; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994).
- ***Digital technologies*** were measured in terms of websites, online sales platforms, and social media based on the tools developed by (Cassetta et al., 2020).
- ***Inward Internationalization*** was measured in terms of the number of foreign clients, frequency of foreign clients, and proxy for foreign sales. This is consistent with previous research tools (Otengei et al., 2017; Lu & Beamish, 2001; Knight et al., 2004; Varma, 2013; Hsieh et al., 2019; Ngoma & Ntale, 2014).

These measures were taken from the literature. The above measures were used for this study, with modifications to fit the Ugandan environment.

3.9 Reliability and validity

3.9.1 Reliability

The researcher pre-tested the data collection instruments with two respondents from tourism firms. Pilot testing was performed to ensure that the tool is answering the research questions, and necessary adjustments to the data collection instruments were made following the pilot of the data collection tool. Pilot studies, according to Yin (2009), allow one to fine-tune data collection tools and procedures. According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2004), a pre-test is the process of conducting a primary study, which includes going through the entire research procedure with a small sample. This enabled the researcher to identify potential issues in the research. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to assess the questionnaire's reliability. According to Nunnally (1978), if Cronbach's coefficient is greater than 0.70, the instrument is reliable.

Table 3.2: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Digital Technologies	0.958	19
Social Networks	0.782	8
Inward Internationalization	0.922	8

Source: Primary data

The Cronbach's reliability index for digital technologies, social networks, and inward internationalization of tourism firms in Uganda was 0.958, 0.782, and 0.922, respectively, according to the results in table 3.2. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the variables in this study were all greater than 0.70, indicating that the instrument produced consistent results.

3.9.2 Validity

Before collecting data, the content validity of the questionnaire items for this study were determined.

The Content Validity Index was used to assess the relevance and clarity of the questions. The research instrument was given to five knowledgeable individuals for review, including two academic experts, two tourism officials, and another knowledgeable individual in a pilot survey among Ugandan tourism firms. As a result, the Content Validity Index was calculated. The experts assessed and rated the relevance of each item in the instrument to the objectives using a two-point rating scale of **Relevant (1)** and **Irrelevant (0).**

Following that, a content validity index was computed for each study variable. As a result, Hair et al, 200 recommends that all study variables have a Content Validity index of 0.7 or higher. This threshold was used in this study to determine the validity of study instruments. The overall content validity index was greater than 0.7, which is considered acceptable. Table 3.3 summarizes the findings.

Table 3.3: Content Validity Index

Variable	Content Validity Index	Number of items
Export entrepreneurial orientation	0.8	19
Firm resources	0.8	8
SME export performance	1	8

Source: Primary data

3.10 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data was compiled, sorted, edited, classified, and coded into a coding sheet before being analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23 to determine the relationship between social networks, digital technologies, and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression were produced as outputs. Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables being studied. Multiple regression analysis was also used to determine the variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables.

3.11 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, I ensured the respondents' confidentiality by notifying them up front that the information they provided was to only be used for academic purposes and that any information I obtained about their personal affairs was to be treated with the utmost confidence. To help the respondents recognize the researcher, an introduction letter from the Makerere University Business School was used.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the results are presented and interpreted. Specifically, this chapter displays the demographic characteristics, descriptive statistics of the study variables and correlation analysis results of the study objectives as well as the regression analysis results.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the relationship between digital technologies, social networks, and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms, and the combined effect of digital technologies and social networks on their inward internationalization efforts as per the study's objectives. The data on which the study is based is quantitative.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of 295 questionnaires distributed, 282 were returned, yielding a response rate of 95.6%, which is sufficient to draw valid and reliable conclusions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% is good, and more than 70% is rated very well. This also supports Kothari's (2004) assertion that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate of more than 70% is excellent. This implies that the 95.6% response rate in this case was excellent.

Table 4.1: Showing Response Rate

Targeted respondents	Attained respondents	Response rate
295	282	95.6%

Source: Primary data

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents and Firms

Information on the demographic traits of the respondents and participating tourism firms is provided in this section. Table 4.2, Table 4.3, and Table 4.4 below provide a summary of the demographic characteristics that were analyzed, including the respondents' gender, age, education level, and position within the tourism firm.

Table 4.2: Gender, Age, and Education Level Characteristics of Respondents (N=282)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	211	74.8%
	Female	71	25.2%
The age group of Respondents (years)	Below 30	23	8.2%
	30 to 39	121	42.9%
	40 to 49	119	42.2%
	50 to 59	18	6.4%
	60 and above	1	0.4%
Education Level of the respondent	Certificate	17	6.0%
	Diploma	75	26.6%
	Bachelors	181	64.2%
	Masters	9	3.2%

Source: Primary data

Table 4.2 above reveals that 211 respondents (74.8%) were overwhelmingly male. This could mean that, in contrast to their female counterparts, more men than women are involved in founding and managing tourism firms.

Additional research reveals that the majority of these respondents, 121 (42.9%) and 119 (42.2%), were, respectively, between the ages of 30 and 39 and 40 and 49. This suggests that the respondents were capable of responding to the survey and were of legal age.

Additionally, further investigation showed that the majority of respondents (181, 64.2%) had degrees, followed by diploma holders (75, 26.6%). Only a small percentage of respondents (6%) had a certificate, and only a few (3.2%) had a master's degree. This suggests that educated

people own and manage the firms. The average age of the respondents, which was between 30 and 49, can also be partially attributed to their level of education.

Table 4.3: Position of the Respondents (N=282)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Position of the respondent	Director	76	27.0%
	Employee	44	15.6%
	Manager	162	57.4%

Source: Primary data

According to the data in Table 4.3 above, managers (162, 57.4%) and directors (76, 27.0%) made up the majority of the respondents. This indicates that the study is based on reliable respondents who were knowledgeable about the firm's operations.

Table 4.4: Tourism Firm's Business Age and Number of Employees (N=282)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Business age	Less than a year	16	5.7
	1 – 2 years	37	13.1
	3-5 years	116	41.1
	6-10 years	46	16.3
	Over 10 years	67	23.8
Number of employees	Less than 5 people	107	37.9
	6 – 10 people	61	21.6
	Over 10 People	114	40.4

Source: Primary data

Most (41.1%) of the firms sampled have been in operation for 3-5 years, according to information from the firms. 16.3% of the tourism firms surveyed have been in operation for more than ten years, while 5.7% have been in operation for less than a year. Despite the fact that Uganda is an entrepreneurial nation, most businesses fail before they reach their first birthday, according to a number of studies (Robert, K., et al 2022; Kiranda, Y., et al 2017). Since the majority of the companies that took part in the study (94.3%) have been around for at least a year and beyond, they can provide reliable data from which sound conclusions can be made.

The majority of these firms (40.1%) employ more than 10 people and the number of employees increases as the firm's years in business increase. According to the findings, firms that have been around for at least three to five years employ more people than their counterparts. The increased clientele base amassed by the company over time may be responsible for the rising employee count over time.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.5 below summarizes the observed data using descriptive statistics of the variables, which include mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values for the variables used in the analyses. The dependent variable in the study is inward internationalization, and its predictors (the independent variables) are social networks and digital technologies. Descriptive statistics are used to determine whether the calculated means accurately reflect observed data, or whether they are a good representation of reality (Field, 2009; Saunders et al., 2007).

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics Results

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Websites	282	1	5	4.24	0.877
Online Sales Platforms	282	1	5	3.93	0.851
Social Media	282	1	5	4.20	0.736
Digital Technologies	**282**	**1**	**5**	**4.14**	**0.722**
Business Ties	282	1	5	4.38	0.447
Network Intensity	282	1	5	3.74	0.790
Social Networks	**282**	**1**	**5**	**4.14**	**0.514**
Inward Internationalization	**282**	**1**	**5**	**4.00**	**0.615**
Valid N (listwise)	282				

Source: Primary data

According to the results in table 4.5, the mean values for digital technologies, social networks, and inward internationalization are 4.14, 4.14, and 4.00, respectively. Digital technologies, social networks, and inward internationalization have standard deviations of 0.722,

0.514, and 0.615, respectively. Because the standard deviations from the mean values are small, the estimated means closely match the actual data (Nkundabanyanga, S. K., et al, 2015).

The SD, or standard deviation, calculates how far the respondents' responses vary from the mean scores. When the SD is close to 0 or less than 1, it indicates that the study's respondent views were uniform. When the SD is greater than 1, it suggests that respondents' opinions on the given response varied widely. A mean value greater than 3 indicates that the respondents accepted the premise of the question. All respondents in this study agree that digital technologies and social networks play a significant role in fostering inward internationalization, with their averages being over 3.00 and their standard deviations being all under 1.00.

4.4 Correlation Results

The correlation results are shown in Table 4.6, and Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was done to determine the relationships between the criterion variable (inward internationalization) and the predictor variables (digital technologies and social networks). The goal was to determine whether the predictor variables and the criterion variable have a linear relationship. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used in bivariate-correlation analyses to gauge the strength and direction of the relationship between the study variables. This is primarily due to the parametric nature of the Pearson correlation coefficient, which necessitates interval data for both variables (Garson, 2012; Field, 2009).

Table 4.6: Correlation Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Websites (1)	1							
Online Sales Platforms (2)	.658**	1						
Social Media (3)	.634**	.605**	1					
Digital Technologies (4)	.920**	.842**	.834**	1				
Business Ties (5)	.291*	.276**	.495**	.349**	1			
Network Intensity (6)	.423**	.531**	.575**	.566**	.591**	1		
Social Networks (7)	.402**	.457**	.601**	**.541****	.885**	.898**	1	
Inward Internationalization (8)	.320**	.349**	**.**541**	**.446****	.618**	.682**	**.730****	1

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

Source: Primary data

4.4.1 The relationship between digital technologies and inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms

Table 4.6 shows a moderately positive relationship between digital technologies and Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization (r=.446** and p<.01). This means that a 44.6% increase in the use of digital technologies will result in a 44.6% increase in inward internationalization. As a result, the first objective of determining the relationship between digital technologies and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms has been met.

The use of websites, online sales platforms, and social media as dimensions of digital technologies are also positively related to the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms, with the parameters (r =.320**, p<.01), (r =.349**, p<.01), and (r =.541**, p<.01) respectively. As a result of the findings, Ugandan tourism firms will see an increase in foreign clients if they use all aspects of digital technologies, particularly social media.

4.4.2 The relationship between social networks and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

Table 4.6 also shows a strong and significant positive relationship between social networks and Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization efforts (r=.730** and p<.01). This means that a 73% increase in social network constructing and maintaining will result in a 73% increase in inward internationalization. As a result, the second objective of determining the relationship between social networks and Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization has been met.

The inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms is also positively correlated with the development of new business relationships and the intensification of existing ones (network intensity) as dimensions of social networks, with the parameters (r =.618**, p.01) and (r =.682**, p.01), respectively. The results show that if Ugandan tourism firms expand and strengthen their social networks, they will attract more foreign tourists.

4.5 Regression Results

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which digital technologies and social networks influence the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms. Multiple regression analysis is a statistical technique that can be used to investigate the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables (predictors) (Hair et al, 2010). The goal of multiple regression is to use the independent variables to predict the dependent variable. The regression analysis results are shown in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Regression Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.326	.208		4.486	.007
	Digital Technologies	.061	.041	.107	2.159	.032
	Social Networks	.826	.058	.691	14.237	.000
	R=.732, R^2=.536, Adjusted R^2=.533, F=161.071, Sig=.000, e=.42025					

a. Dependent Variable: Inward Internationalization.

Source: Primary Data

According to Table 4.7's findings, social networks and digital technologies account for 53.6% of the variation in the inward internationalization of tourism firms in Uganda (Adjusted R Square =.533). As a result, the remaining 46.4% can be explained by various other factors, such as the regulatory environment, market and political stability, safety and health concerns, and so forth.

It was also discovered that social networks (Beta =.826, sig<.000) are a better predictor of the inward internationalization of tourism firms in Uganda than digital technologies (Beta =.061, sig<.001). This implies that tourism firms in Uganda should prioritize and invest in developing strong relationships with both foreign and domestic stakeholders in order to achieve long-term growth and success in the tourism industry.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings guided by the objectives of the study, conclusions and recommendations for areas for further research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This study aimed at examining the relationship between digital technologies and inward internationalization, the relationship between social networks and inward internationalization, and the combined effect of social networks and digital technologies on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms as discusses below.

5.1.1 Relationship between digital technologies and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms

The relationship between digital technologies and inward internationalization was found to be strong, positive, and statistically significant and only reinforces the impact of digital technologies on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms. It is therefore evident that Ugandan tourism firms need to invest in digital technologies such as having an information-rich and easily accessible website and social media to attract international clients. Digital technologies have greatly facilitated the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms by overcoming geographical barriers and enabling seamless communication, marketing, and transactions across borders. In this study, it is evident that digital technologies have enabled Ugandan tourism firms to establish a strong online presence through websites, social media platforms, and online travel agencies. These channels have allowed these firms to promote their

products and services globally, reach a wider audience, and engage directly with potential international customers. In addition, Ugandan tourism firms have generated vast amounts of data that they've analyzed to gain insights into international market trends, customer preferences, and their firm' performance. They have also leveraged the digital technologies' data analytics tools to understand the behavior of international tourists, optimize their marketing strategies, and make data-driven decisions to enhance their inward internationalization efforts.

The observations in this study are consistent with Aramendia-Muneta and Ollo-Lopez (2013)'s scholarly work, which established that technology revolutionized travel and created a slew of new opportunities for the tourism industry. Furthermore, Xiang et al. (2017) investigated the role of digital analytics in the hospitality and tourism industries and discovered that social media analytics have a positive impact on tourism firms' reputation and contribute to their inward internationalization efforts.

The findings of this study are further supported by Gvaramadze's (2022) study, which found that travelers actively use digital technologies for ideas and inspiration while also purchasing tourism products. It revealed that social media, for example, can influence tourists' expectations and decisions in addition to disseminating information. Gvaramadze's study also supported the importance of tourism firms having an online tourism domain (website) in the context of travelers planning their trips using a search engine. As a result, tourism stakeholders should pay attention to the impact of digital technologies in order to improve the reliability of their information and services, and in turn attract international clients.

5.1.2 Relationship between social networks and the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms

The relationship between social networks and inward internationalization was found to be strong, positive, and statistically significant and only reinforces the impact of social networks on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms.

The findings of this study are in line with those of a study by Hitt et al. (2002) that demonstrated the significance of social capital for firms. They added that firms operating in international markets frequently lack the resources necessary to compete successfully there and must instead rely on formal and informal relationships with other firms to obtain those resources. Their research revealed that Asian cultures place a lot more emphasis on social networks than Western firms, which gave Asian businesses a competitive edge in international markets. Furthermore, the findings are supported by Ellis's (2000) study, which demonstrated that business connections made through social networks can help connect businesses with international clients and act as a bridge, as well as provide them with critical clients for their inward internationalization initiatives such as learning about international market opportunities, gaining international experience, and building trust.

According to these findings, it is essential that Ugandan tourism firms understand the value of cooperating with other tourism-related firms and stakeholders in order to access more resources required to attract more international customers. That said, Ugandan tourism firms should invest their resources in cultivating and maintaining relationships with stakeholders who have the capacity to assist their firm’s success in their inward internationalization efforts.

5.1.3 The combined effect of digital technologies and social networks on the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms

The study revealed that the combination of digital technologies and strategic social networks has significantly aided the inward internationalization of tourism firms in Uganda. This integration has been crucial in improving the country's tourism sector, attracting foreign visitors, and expanding business opportunities.

It was discovered in this study that advances in the joint use of digital technologies and one's social networks increased connectivity, facilitated personalized and targeted marketing, gave tourism firms the ability to manage their online reputations, gave them access to market data, and allowed for partnerships and collaboration that benefited their efforts to draw in foreign customers. Therefore, in order to reach global markets and maintain competitiveness in the international tourism industry, Ugandan tourism firms must adjust to the rapidly evolving nature of technology and maximize both digital platforms and social networks.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Ribeiro et al.'s study from 2023, which examined the literature on value co-creation in the tourism and hospitality industries. They discovered that interactions and engagements in a firm's social networks, and service innovation through the use of current digital technologies were key antecedents of value co-creation, and that tourism and hospitality firms perceived both business value and loyalty as the main consequences. It is this value co-creation that enables tourism firms to revolutionize their offerings and dynamically co-create products and services with their consumers and partners.

This observation is also consistent with the findings of Buhalis and Foerste (2015), who investigated Social, Local, and Mobile (SoLoMo) marketing concepts in the tourism industry. SoLoMo combines social, location, as well as mobile marketing, to provide unprecedented

opportunities for co-creation through the interrelationships of personal information, content, and dynamic interaction with the potential client's context in mind. Having said that, SoLoMo represents a fantastic opportunity for Ugandan tourism firms to attract more international customers, increase foreign sales, and improve customer satisfaction.

5.2 Conclusion

It is clear that digital technologies and social networks play a critical role in facilitating Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization efforts. These firms have been able to overcome geographical barriers and reach a global audience by adopting and effectively utilizing digital platforms such as websites and social media. The widespread availability and accessibility of opportunities to form and strengthen social ties has created opportunities for networking, marketing, and connecting with international tourists as well as fellow industry players and stakeholders, thereby expanding the reach and visibility of Ugandan tourism firms' offerings.

Furthermore, this study discovered that co-creation of value by combining digital technologies and social networks positively contributes to Ugandan tourism firms' inward internationalization efforts by allowing them to effectively market their tourism offerings and attract international clients.

As a result, digital technologies and social networks have emerged as significant contributors to Ugandan tourism firms' growth and success, enabling them to enter the international market and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

5.3 Recommendations

Given the role of digital technologies and social networks in promoting the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms. Recommendations will focus on encouraging Ugandan tourism firms to use digital technologies that are critical for efficient communication of their service offerings, improving marketing efforts, and facilitating access to global markets. In addition to developing strong relationships and networks that will allow them to gain valuable market insights, form partnerships, and access new business opportunities. In addition to urging Ugandan tourism companies that have not yet embraced this to do so.

As a result, the researcher suggests:

1. Create a user-friendly website: Tourism firms must create a visually appealing and informative website that provides comprehensive information about their offerings or tourism business. To improve the user experience, they should ensure that it is optimized for mobile devices.

2. Utilize social media platforms: Tourism firms in Uganda must establish a presence on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. They should regularly share engaging content, such as high-quality images, videos, and updates about their destination, attractions, or services. Encourage user-generated content by holding contests or incentivizing visitors to share their experiences on social media.

3. Implement online booking systems: Tourism firms should invest in online booking and reservation software on their websites or through third-party platforms. This allows potential visitors to plan their trips, check availability, and make reservations more easily.

4. Stay current on emerging technologies: Tourism firms should be aware of and make use of the most recent digital technologies and trends in the tourism industry, such as virtual reality (VR).

They can provide virtual tours and experiences of potential international clients' destinations, experiences, or attractions using virtual reality (VR) or 360-degree video technologies. This will allow potential customers from all over the world to remotely explore and interact with their offerings.

5. Implement data analytics tools to gain insight into international customers' behavior, preferences, and market trends. Tourism firms should analyze data (either from their website, social media, or third parties) to make better business decisions, identify new market opportunities, and improve their marketing strategies. In today's fast-paced and highly competitive world, making data-driven decisions is critical. Instead of relying solely on intuition or subjective judgment, tourism companies can use data and analytics to better understand their target international customers and provide personalized experiences.

6. Attend industry events: Tourism firms should attend domestic and international tourism industry conferences, trade shows, and networking events. These events are excellent places to meet industry professionals, make connections, and learn about market trends.

7. Seek strategic partnerships: Tourism firms should identify potential strategic partners in their international target markets, such as tour operators, travel agencies, lodging providers, and transportation companies. Form mutually beneficial alliances that will allow them to expand their network and reach new customer segments. For example, some tourism firms in Rwanda invite travel agents from the United States to experience their services.

8. Furthermore, tourism firms can host familiarization trips in which they invite key industry stakeholders, travel agents, and media representatives from target international markets to experience their tourism offerings firsthand. Organizing familiarization trips can help to highlight

Uganda's unique features and build relationships with potential partners. For example, foreign travel agents, international travel vloggers, or even celebrities.

9. Continue to support industry research and initiatives: Tourism firms should consider partnering with universities, research institutions, and industry associations to support tourism research and initiatives. Participate in industry surveys, contribute to research studies such as this one, and share their expertise to improve their credibility and network in the industry.

5.4 Study limitations

This study, like every other study, has a number of limitations:

There were only three variables included in the study. This limited the researcher to using only the variables being studied.

The results may not accurately reflect the opinions of all other firms since they will only apply to Ugandan tourism-related businesses. It is therefore necessary to conduct additional research studies that consider other firms in the nation and other national settings.

Due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, changes in people's perceptions over time might not be recorded. Therefore, longitudinal research is required.

5.5 Further Areas for Research

In recent years, the role of digital technologies and social networks in the inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms has grown in importance. Tourism firms are utilizing various digital technologies and building social networks to attract and engage international tourists as the world becomes more interconnected and digitalized. However, there are still several areas in this field that require additional research and investigation. This section aims to identify and investigate these areas, shedding light on potential future research directions.

Firstly, the impact of social media marketing on the inward internationalization of tourism firms warrants further investigation. Tourism businesses now have access to a global audience thanks to the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. It is critical to investigate the strategies, content types, and engagement techniques that have proven to be the most effective in leveraging social media to promote tourism services and destinations.

Secondly, further research is needed into the potential applications of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies in attracting international tourists. These immersive technologies have the potential to transform the tourism industry by providing virtual tours, improving visitor experiences, and sparking interest in various destinations. Exploring how tourism businesses can use VR and AR to effectively cater to the needs and preferences of international tourists is an area ripe for investigation.

Furthermore, online travel communities and peer-to-peer networks have a significant impact on the decisions of international tourists. TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, and travel blogs have all become essential sources of information for travelers. Analyzing how travel firms can engage with these communities and promote their services through peer-to-peer networks will provide valuable insights into effective marketing strategies.

Other important areas of research include the use of social media analytics and big data to better understand the preferences, behaviors, and trends of international tourists. Furthermore, investigating how tourism firms build and manage their online brand and digital identity, addressing privacy and security concerns, and investigating cross-cultural communication and localization strategies are all critical to expanding our understanding of the role of digital technologies in tourism firms' inward internationalization.

Researchers can contribute valuable insights to the field by delving deeper into these areas of study, allowing Ugandan tourism firms to effectively leverage digital technologies and social networks for inward internationalization efforts.

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Appendix 1: Self-administered questionnaire

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

Digital Technologies, Social Networks and Inward Internationalization of Ugandan Tourism Firms.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am Kabahita Charity, a Makerere University Business School student pursuing a Master of International Business degree. I am conducting a research study on "**Digital Technologies, Social Networks, and Inward Internationalization of Ugandan Tourism Firms**" as part of my academic work. You were chosen to participate in this study because you possess the necessary information and knowledge. The information sought is only needed for academic purposes. Participation is entirely voluntary and essential to the success of this project. For the sake of the study's success, I ask that you respond truthfully and honestly. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

SECTION A-1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (Please tick where applicable)

1. **Gender**
   Male ☐ Female ☐
2. **Age:**
   Below 30 years ☐ 30-39 years ☐ 40-49 years ☐ 50-59 years ☐
   60 and above years ☐
3. **Level of education**
   Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ Other ☐
4. **Position**
   Director ☐ Manager ☐ Supervisor ☐ Employee Others ☐
5. **No. of years in the enterprise**
   Less than 5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 11-15 years ☐ Above 15 years ☐

SECTION A-2: Firm Demographic Characteristics

6. **Ownership of the Enterprise:**
   Individual ☐ Group ☐
7. **Business age**
   Less than a year ☐ 1 – 2 years ☐ 3 – 5 years ☐ 6 – 10 years ☐
   Over 10 years ☐
8. **Number of employees**
   Less than 5 people ☐ 6 – 10 people ☐ Over 10 people ☐

SECTION B

The table below shows the alternative responses and the number assigned to each response. For sections associated with ***1 – 5 values***, please evaluate the statement by ticking the box with the number that best suits your response. The options are:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

SECTION B: ***Digital Technologies***

W	***Websites***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Our firm has attracted a number of international clients owing to our website.					
2	It is critical to our firm's success that the content on our website is up-to-date and updated on a regular basis.					
3	It is critical that we frequently update our website with information on our tour and travel services.					
4	Having service offerings on our website, such as images and itineraries, has encouraged more international tourists to book.					
5	Linking our social media pages to our website has made it easier for potential foreign customers to learn more about our services.					
6	Analyzing our international market through our website assists us in identifying new opportunities.					
7	We use website analytics and other tools to assist us in developing international-level service concepts for our company.					
8	Website analytics and tools are useful for discovering which tour and travel services are well-liked and appealing to international customers.					
SP	***Online sales platforms***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Working with affiliate online platforms attracts more international customers.					
2	Our business is appealing because international customers can purchase our services online.					
3	Our business is appealing due to our ability to provide sales support to international clients online.					
4	Our international clients prefer booking online through our website or our affiliates over traditional channels.					
5	The effectiveness of our global campaigns and advertisements has been maximized through the use of search engine optimization (SEO), such as Google ads.					
SM	***Social media***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Our firm invests in keeping our social media pages up to date.					
2	We maximize the use of social media advertisements, such as Facebook ads, to attract international customers.					
3	Advertising our service offerings on our social media platforms strengthens our efforts to attract clients from other countries.					
4	Consistently publishing on various social media platforms strengthens our efforts to attract international clients.					
5	Social media is a great place to engage with potential international customers.					

6	Social media has improved our firm's accessibility to international customers.					

SECTION C: ***Social Networks***

BT	***Business ties***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Collaboration with other tourism firms strengthens our efforts to attract international clients.					
2	Other firms will gladly refer international customers to us if our services are better suited to them, and vice versa.					
3	To build trust with our business partners, we place a high value on providing and receiving accurate and truthful information about services.					
4	Collaboration with other tourism-related businesses provides us with all of the resources we need to attract international customers.					
5	Former international clients serve as our ambassadors, referring us to new potential clients.					
NI	***Network intensity***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Our firm's participation in social and professional networks significantly contributes to our ability to attract international partners and clients.					
2	Our social and professional networks provide us with useful information about international opportunities and resources.					
3	Our firm actively seeks out foreign opportunities through collaborating within social and professional networks.					

SECTION D: Inward Internationalization

NF	***Number of foreign clients***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Our firm's increased international exposure is attracting an increasing number of foreign clients.					
2	Our firm's increased international exposure has generated increased interest from foreign clients.					
3	Our firm's adoption of digital technologies has resulted in an increase in foreign clients seeking travel experiences.					
4	Our firm's involvement in social networks has resulted in a rise in foreign clients looking for travel experiences.					
FF	***Frequency of foreign clients***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Our firm’s use of digital technologies has led to an increase in the number of times foreign clients use our services.					
2	Our firm’s involvement in social networks has led to an increase in the number of times foreign clients use our services.					
PF	***Proxy for foreign sales***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
1	Digital technologies have made it possible for us to tailor sales and marketing strategies to the wants and preferences of global customers, which has increased foreign sales.					
2	Social networks have facilitated the expansion of our international networks and partnerships, leading to increased foreign sales.					

Thank You for Your Corporation

Appendix 2: Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size.

Population Size	Sample size	Population Size	Sample size	Population Size	Sample size	Population Size	Sample size	Population Size	Sample size
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	301	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Krejcie, Robert V., Morgan, Daryle W., (1970) "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities", Educational and Psychological Measurement

Appendix 3: Data Collection Letter

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Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research

January 6, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Kabahita Charity MIB 2019/HD10/21728

The above named is a student of Makerere University Business School pursuing studies leading to the award of Master of International Business of Makerere University.

She has completed the course work component and is currently carrying out research on the topic **"Digital technologies, social networks and inward internationalization of Ugandan tourism firms".**

Any assistance rendered to her will highly be appreciated.

Thank you,

Byonanebye Komugisha
Seniour Administrator

Makerere University Business School
06 JAN 2023
Faculty Of Graduate Studies And Research

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