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**Marketing Promotion as Key to Tourism Products Patronage: A study of Bida (Tsotamuku) Arts Works**

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**Abstract**

Marketing promotion comprises the tools used by businesses to create awareness, inform and persuade the target market to buy products and services. This study examined marketing promotion as a tool for the patronage of tourism products in Bida Arts Works, one of the ancient Nupe Arts Works in the Nupe Kingdom, Niger State, Nigeria using Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) method. The results show that all the respondents were male, 18-50 years old with 45% in the 34-41 age brackets; and mostly married (67%). The majority (56%) has a family size of 6-8 individuals and 45% were Muslim with the majority (78%) having no formal education (78%) while 45% had between 26-30 years of experience on the vocation and 45% of the respondents generate between N 301,000-400,000 annually. None of the respondent employed modern technology, 100% used of family members, 78% had market stalls for promoting the trade while 67% market the product themselves. All the respondents had patronage from individuals (100%), government officials (67%), researchers (45%), tourists (33%) and foreigners (22%). The raw materials for artwork production were sourced from the immediate environment through the re-use of unused aluminum. The challenges facing the trade: illiteracy (100%), recycle-technology (78%), transportation cost (45%) and access to bank loans (11%) were responsible for low production and poor profit. Therefore, the producers of Bida Arts Work should adopt marketing promotion techniques to enhance tourists and other visitors’ patronage. The school-aged among them should be encouraged to combine the Arts work with education to strengthen the businesses.

**Keywords:** Marketing promotion, tourism, product, patronage, technology, education

**Introduction**

Tourism has become the largest and fastest-growing industry that should play a vital role in stimulating the economic growth of many developed and developing countries(Chaiboonsri and Chaitip, 2008). Therefore, the tourists have developed an awareness of their right to be involved in the process of creating meaningful experiences during their vacation and their inputs are normally based on the prior knowledge and experiences of a tourists’ destination and products. This makes it essential for the service provider to identify and understand the clients’ needs (Matilla, 2011).Taneva (2009) argued that tourism products must adhere to the specifications and requirements earlier set by clients in order to provide meaningful experiences that meet their expectations. The consideration of this aspect is of paramount importance because tourism sells nature-based products as well as experiences and satisfaction.

Yacob, *et al.,*(2013) stated that tourism product development usually begins with some minor improvements to the existing products, which implies that entrepreneurs must be creative and innovative in developing new tourism products in their efforts to provide meaningful experiences to tourists. Thus, scholars have argued that tourism comprises of ‘products’ rather than services, despite the fact that tourism is actually classified as a service industry **(**Osmund and Sunday, 2010). However, Matilla (2011) noted that it is rather difficult to distinguish between tourism products and tourism services; hence, there are no definitions best describe tourism products. Eraqi (2006) noted that a tourism product consists of natural and cultural resources, facilities, infrastructure, accommodation, and restaurants while Ajake (2015) described it as a service or process that facilitates tourism and promotes activities carried out by individuals beyond their familiar environment.

From a marketing perspective, tourism products cover physical objects, services, places, organizations or ideas that are open to the market and are influential in satisfying the clients’ demands **(**Smith, 2001; Chaiboonsri and Chaitip, 2008**).** One of the essential features of a tourism product is its quality which must be measured in order to determine the price. Thus, quality is an important consideration because it provides the appropriate product equivalent to the amount of fixed price and also related to the clients’ satisfaction with the product. The quality of the tourism products can only be determined by gauging the clients’ experiences as to whether or not the products have fulfilled their expectations. The clients’ satisfaction is equally important because tourists encounter a wide range of tourism products offered at different tourism destinations which contribute to several memorable experiences for different clients **(**Xu, 2010**).** The implication is that different clients have several expectations that are normally based on their prior experiences and knowledge of the prices of services offered (Matilla, 2011). It is in line with clients’ different expectations and product awareness philosophy that promotion plays an important role in the marketing of tourism products especially in this modern digital world where clients generate products content opinions across the globe with the aid of social media.

Promotion is one component of the marketing mix whose aim is to inform, educate, and persuade target consumers to buy a company’s products and services. Promotion (also referred to as Integrated Marketing Communication, IMC) mainly consists of messages and related media that are used to communicate with the market. The basics of promotional strategy involve delivering the communicational message from the producer to the consumer with the aim of persuading the audience to purchase the product or service. Simamora (2004) stated that promotion is a kind of communication that provides a convincing explanation to potential customers about goods and services. It is a flow of information or one-way persuasion made to direct a person or organization to actions that create exchanges in marketing (Swasta, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of promotion is to inform, persuade and remind the existence of a product to consumers and the tools are an advertisement, publications, word of mouth and e-commerce.

Sales promotion is a vital element of the promotional mix and modern marketing in an era of digital communications should make customers more informed such that interaction with regards to a company’s services promotion becomes paramount. Thus, companies must communicate with their present and potential customers who need to be receptive to the message and be able to interpret it in such a way that should spur a purchase. Khuong *et al*. (2016) reported that promotions generally play a significant role in influencing a target audience for a purchase decision and customers’ loyalty was significantly and directly affected by trust, interest, brand recall, and brand recognition. This is because consumers’ buying behaviour and sales promotion can be motivated through various kinds of elements including promotion techniques such as free samples, price discounts, social surroundings and physical surrounding (Ghafran, 2014).

The tourism managers and producers of tourism products must pay attention to promotional factors that attract tourists to destinations. The tourism product producers will be able to attract the attention of prospective tourists through promotion since the purpose is to reach the targeted consumers and persuade them to buy. Therefore, marketing promotion whether television (TV) or Radio is essential for promoting advertiser-customer base, especially for tourists’ products (Aka *et al*., 2015). This study focuses on television promotion and social media.

Television promotion is a media tool used for marketing communication in which the advertiser pays for space and time for the products being advertised with the aim of informing and persuading tourists to purchase services or products. The use of television for marketing promotions influences the behavioural pattern of consumers which in turn helps in building continuous patronage for products or services that would ensure brand loyalty of product purchased (Kehinde *et al*., 2016). Awunyo-Vitor *et al*. (2013) opined that sales promotion and patronage influence buying decisions, especially among tourists. Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content**”** (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The applications take a variety of forms including weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. These social media platforms play a big part in the daily lives of their users (Okazaki, 2009**)**, allow users to connect with peers by adding them to the networks of friends which facilitate communication, particularly among peer groups (Zhang and Daugherty, 2009). Globally, over 50% of users follow brands on social media (van Belleghem et al., 2011), 29 % follows trends and find product reviews and information, and 20% comments on what is hot or new or to review products (Gallup, 2014). Social media, therefore, give consumers a voice and allow them to interact and share experiences with any person anywhere in the world (Kozinets *et al*., 2010).

Consumers generally have different orientations when making purchase decisions. Some are brand conscious viewing brands as symbols of status and prestige while others are value conscious and use the social media to check and compare the prices of different brands so as to get the best value for their money (Ismail, 2017). With this in mind, Gupta and Verma (2018)noted that increasing internet penetration can have a huge impact on a country’s gross domestic product (GDP) as users are able to compare prices, search for hard-to-find items or information, communicate and learn about new and improved ways of consumer products in the market. Chong *et al*., (2017)revealed that the variables from both online reviews and promotional marketing strategies are important predictors of product demands. Hence, variables in online reviews were better predictors compared to online marketing promotional variables. This, therefore, provides important implications for practitioners as they can better understand how online reviews and online promotional marketing can influence product demands. The relationship of how marketing promotion influences customers patronage on business products in the market is shown in Fig. 1.

Television

Social Media

Figure 1: Marketing Promotions and Customers Patronage

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed by George Homans (1961) is the framework considered for the study. It is based on the principles of costs and rewards. People generally weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships. It suggests that the value of benefits and costs of each relationship would determine whether or not to continue any form of social association especially using social media platforms

The Bida (also known as Tsotamuku) Arts Works(Fig. 2)started in 1860 by the Makun family whose members were traders claimed to have migrated from Sudan to Nigeria. They first settled in Labar, one of the villages in the western part of Mokwa Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State, and first produced war tools- knives, cutlasses, axes, spears, etc. The Late Emir of Bida, His Royal Highness Usman Zakin heard about them and their art crafts and engaged them to produce war tools needed for defending the Bida Kingdom. He later relocated them to Bida where they worked for successive Emirs of the Bida Kingdom but allowed to pursue personal businesses used to meet their daily needs. The Bida Arts Works is well known in Northern Nigeria, even by foreigners who come in contact with them as souvenirs. However, there is little or no promotion of the Bida Arts Works products which has limited the exposure and marketing opportunities for the producers. There has been no single research conducted to explore the marketing promotion as a key for tourism product patronage on Bida (Tsotamuku) Arts Works in Niger State Nigeria. Based on this knowledge gap, this study examined the influence of marketing promotion (with particular emphasis on Television and Social media) as tools for enhancing tourists’ patronage and attempt to elucidate the influence of marketing promotion on tourist patronage.



 Fig. 2: Products of Bida Arts Works on display for sale

 Source: Bida Arts Works, Bida Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

**Materials and Method**

**Study site**

**Bida** town and the traditional emirate is the headquarter of Bida Local Government Area in [Niger](https://www.britannica.com/place/Niger-state-Nigeria) State, west-central [Nigeria](https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria) and located on 9.0797°N and 6.0097°E. It has about 92,620 individuals (NPC, 2006). The town is on the Bako River, a minor tributary of the Niger and lies at the intersection of the roads from Minna, Jebba, Zungeru, and [Agaie](https://www.britannica.com/place/Agaie) (Fig. 3). Bida is well known for its crafts, notably brass and copper goblets, other metal products, glass beads and bangles, raffia hats and mats, and locally-dyed cotton and silk cloth. The craftsmen work by hand in their own [premises](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/premises) in distinctive wards and are organized into close-knit guilds. Most of the town’s predominantly Nupe population live in mud houses that are grouped into customary [compounds](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compounds). The town is the chief collecting point for the swamp rice [cultivated](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cultivated) in the fadamas (“floodplains”) of the Niger and Kaduna rivers. Bida also produces and trades in yams, sorghum, millet, shea nuts, tobacco, cotton, peanuts (groundnuts), palm oil and kernels, onions, indigo, sugarcane, fruits, goats, sheep, and poultry.



 **Fig. 3: Google map of the study area**

**Data collection**

The study was investigative and adopted qualitative research of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) to collect data (Beebe, 1995) from the team leaders of the Bida Arts Work (Tsotamuku) and all their apprentices in Bida Niger State. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages.

**Results and Discussion**

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. All the respondents were male aged between of 18 and 50 years old. The age distribution is consistent with that obtained for Nigeria in 2008 which indicated the dominant age group at 15 – 64 years (NMEC, 2008). Majority (67%) married, while 22% and 11% were divorced and single respectively. Odetola and Osanyinleye (2016) had observed a higher percentage (59%) of the respondents as married suggesting that majority of the residents were emotionally stable Majority (56%) of the respondents were 6-8 individuals within the family, 22% each had 3-5 family size and above 8 individuals within the family. Most of the respondents (45%) were Muslim, 33% were Christians while 22% were traditional worshippers. This observation contradicts Adetola and Osanyinleye (2017) that 44.0 and 43.5% practiced Christianity and Islam respectively.

The majority (45%) of the respondents had between 26 and 30 years of experience on the vocation, 22% with between 21 and 25 years while 11% each had between 15 and 20 years, 31 and 35 years and above 35 years experiences respectively. Also, the majority (78%) had no formal education while 22% had only primary education. This is contrary to the 69.0% literacy level of people at Osogbo (Odetola and Osanyinleye 2016) and below the national literach rate 61.3% (CIA, 2014) which indicate that the respondents are still at the developmental stage of education. Large percentage (45%) of the respondents generated between N 301,000-400,000 from the trade, 22% generated between N 100,000-200,000 while 11% generated income between N201,000-300,000, N 401,000-500,000 and above N 500,000 annually which could mean that the little income generation could be as a result of little or no access to loan to boost the trade.

Table 2 shows the marketing strategies of Bida Art works. Modern technologies (You tube, Facebook, radio, and television) are not used for marketing promotion of the products as all respondents did not respond to the questions regarding them. However, marketing promotions through television can influenced the behavioural pattern of consumers which in turn would help in building continuous patronage of products or services, and thereafter, ensuring brand loyalty of product purchased (Kehinde *et al.*, 2016).Hence, modern small-scale businesses should not only be promoted but also be designed along the needs of the target market to enhance patronage. All (100%) the respondents employed the use of family members in the promotion of the art work, 78% promotes their trade using market stalls where products are displayed while the majority (67%) of the respondents promote their products personally. This could be the reason for poor patronage of the product. However, marketing promotion whether through TV or social media has been established as essential for promoting advertiser-customer base, especially for tourists’ products (Aka *et al*, 2015). Social media, on the other hand, can be used as a vehicle to expose the producers of Bida Arts work to gain wider patronage. Social media users follow brands trends, product reviews ad information on new or hot products (Gallup, 2014), give consumers a voice and allow interaction and sharing experiences with persons anywhere in the world (Kozinet *et al*. 2010).

Fig. 2 shows the rate of patronage of Bida Art Work. All the respondents receive a large turnout of patronage from individuals followed by patronage from government officials, researchers, tourists and foreigners at 67%, 45%, 33%, and 22% respectively. The low patronage could be attributed to poor marketing promotion of the products and producers consumer buting behaviour could be motivated through promotion techniques such as free samples, price discounts, social surroundings, and physical surrounding (Ghafran and Ashraf 2014)

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Frequency N=9 | Percentage (%) |
| Gender |
| Male | 9 | 100 |
| Marital status |
| Single | 1 | 11 |
| Married | 6 | 67 |
| Divorced | 2 | 22 |
| Age |
| 18-25 | 1 | 11 |
| 26-33 | 1 | 11 |
| 34-41 | 4 | 45 |
| 42-49 | 2 | 22 |
| 50 and above | 1 | 11 |
| Family size |
| 3-5 | 2 | 22 |
| 6-8 | 5 | 56 |
| Above 8 | 2 | 22 |
| Religion |
| Christianity | 3 | 33 |
| Islamic | 4 | 45 |
| Traditional | 2 | 22 |
| Years of experience |
| 15-20 | 1 | 11 |
| 21-25 | 2 | 22 |
| 26-30 | 4 | 45 |
| 31-35 | 1 | 11 |
| Above 35 | 1 | 11 |
| Level of education |
| No formal education | 7 | 78 |
| Primary  | 2 | 22 |
| Annual income generation |
| 100,000-200,000 | 2 | 22 |
| 201,000-300,000 | 1 | 11 |
| 301,000-400,000 | 4 | 45 |
| 401,000-500,000 | 1 | 11 |
| Above 500,000 | 1 | 11 |

Source: Field 2018

Table 2: Marketing strategies.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Frequencies = 9 | Percentages (%)  |
| Marketing promotion strategy |
| The use of YouTube, Facebook, etc. | 0 | 0 |
| The use of radio | 0 | 0 |
| The use of television | 0 | 0 |
| Personal vending  | 6 | 67 |
| Vending through market stalls | 7 | 78 |
| Vending through family members | 9 | 100 |

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Figure 4: Patronage of Bida Art work

Table 3 shows the sources of raw materials acquisition and the challenges facing the trade. The raw materials for the production of art work were sourced from their immediate environment through the reuse of unused aluminum. All the respondents agreed that illiteracy was the major challenge facing the vocation. Most of the respondents (78%) affirmed that the recycle technology took over all unused and rejected aluminium from domestic waste which is the source of the raw materials needed for the trade. Also, 45% of the respondents complained that high transportation cost was taking over the profit of the trade while only 11% of the respondents have access to loans from banks.

**Table 3: Sources of Raw materials and Challenges of the trade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Frequencies = 9 | Percentages (%) |
| Mode of getting raw materials |
| Through importation | 0 | 0 |
| Through Industries | 0 | 0 |
| Through local source (Re-use) | 9 | 100 |
| Challenges of the trade |
| The recycle technology | 7 | 78 |
| Assess to Bank loan | 1 | 11 |
| Transportation cost | 4 | 45 |
| Illiteracy | 9 | 100 |

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Marketing promotion is the heart of generating awareness to target customers for services in the market. Marketing promotion has become easier for advertisers through the availability of social media in the market on the needs of the target customers. This study, therefore, has established that the low patronage of Bida Art work was due to lack of marketing promotion which was as a result of the low literacy level of the respondents. Also, the high cost of Bida Art work was due to scarcity of raw materials which increases the production cost while only few people had access to bank loan facilities. Therefore, the producers of Bida Arts Work should seek marketing promotion techniques to enhance tourists and other visitors’ patronage their products. The school aged among them should combine the Arts work with education to strengthen their businesses. They workers should form cooperative society to facilitate financial support in the form of credit facilities.

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