

EVALUATING DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGY IN TRADE FAIR TOWARDS HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM DESTINATION PROMOTION IN BAUCHI, BAUCHI STATE

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ABSTRACT

The effect of trade fair in hospitality and tourism industry is not well known; however, it is not quite certain digital marketing has influenced people in their choice to patronize the industry. The study aims at evaluating trade fair in hospitality and tourism promotion in Bauchi State. The study is significant in providing useful suggestion to stakeholders in the Industry. The study was faced with limited time. Data was collected using questionnaire, was used in the analysis with result presented in table and interpreted to draw inference. The study revealed that trade fair is a good platform for promotion of goods and services in the

Introduction

In every trade fair, there are loopholes that hinder the success of the fair. However, these can be minimized if not solved by both the sponsoring body and the participants. Problems encountered by trade participation are the availability of proper information, the suitability of the product to the fair that is being conducted, and the availability of strategic location in the fair. Adequacy of government support in terms of funding, cooperation, and market intelligence, competitiveness of mode of payment for export such as consignment and payment documents, mechanism for selecting participants, and decreasing sponsored trade fairs are some of the problems in trade fairs. Participation costs are considerably marketing problems for businesses to consider in attending trade fairs. This includes transportation costs, entrance ticket, hotel and food expenditure, stand, construction and design, organizational costs, staffing capabilities, and other costs. These costs are being considered by entrepreneurs in their decisions before they participate in trade fairs. Hospitality and tourism are a unit that also require the practice of trade fair to promote its services and increase sales. The effect of trade fair to this industry is not well known, However, it is not quite certain weather digital marketing has influenced people in their choice to patronize tourism destination in Bauchi State. Promotion technique, suitable for the industry is still vague.

The study attempts to answer the following research questions.

- i. Has the use of digital marketing influenced tourism patronage in tourism destination?
- ii. Is digital marketing a good tool in marketing hospitality and tourism in Bauchi?
- iii. What are the effects of trade fair to hospitability and tourism marketing in Bauchi state?



industry, trade fair can be promoted to increase sales in the industry, digital marketing can be a tools for sales promotion, trade fair as an annual event has little effect on the industry, digitalization is cheaper and cost effective, people use phones to search for services rather than manual search offline etc. The study concludes that digital marketing is a good option for promotion, recommendation made include awareness should be created on stakeholders to use digital marketing as it is cheaper and cost effective, also hospitality and tourism destinations should provide website to make it easier for customers to access their services.

Keywords: Digital marketing, Trade fair, Internet marketing, Marketing performance, Digital technology

The study aimed at evaluating digital marketing technology in trade fair towards hospitality and tourism promotion in Bauchi, Bauchi state, Nigeria. It can help in policy decision and in proper planning and management that can be viable source of economic benefit for government and private entrepreneurs.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Importance of Trade Fairs

Trade fairs are especially essential for SMEs that can use them as a route for new market areas (Evers and Knight 2008). Bettis-Outland *et al.* (2010) conducted a third kind of classification which separates the benefits of trade fair information into tangible and non-tangible ones. The tangible benefits include information that affects acquisition of new customers, technical updates, and training and implementation advice. The intangible benefits listed by Bettis-Outland *et al.* (2010) include trade fair information that enables improvements in sales planning, strategic planning, policy development, marketing communications, customer/supplier relationships, and new product development.

Marketing Performance

It is viewed as a marketing performance measure which shows the swiftness with which sales are acquired through trade sales promotion strategies (Nwielaghi, 2003). Sales turnover is guided by the simplification that a promotion will result in temporary price reductions that can significantly boost sales. Market share is a sign of market competitiveness showing how well a firm is doing against its competitors (Armstrong and Gerene, 2007); or the breaking up of market size in percentage terms, to aid recognize the top players, the middle and 'minnows' of the market place based on the volume of business conducted (Mahajan, and Muller, 1997); or the capability of business performance management in evaluating the degree to which consumers patronize a given product in the market environment, (Nwielaghi, 2003). Conversely, a main supposition regarding market share as a measure of marketing performance is that superior market share brands are less deal elastic. And without profitability, the business cannot survive at least in the long run (Hofstrand, 2007). This is why measuring past, present and future profitability is significant to the firm.

In many cases, the most extremely visible promotional mix often used in marketing mix relates to sales promotion (Ricky *et al.*, 2005). Trade fairs are events that perform a marketing task. They bring customers to a fair centre where they can see, touch, listen, smell and sometimes taste the goods on the exhibition.



Trade Exhibition and Marketing Performance

Trade fairs, also known as trade shows, exhibitions or expositions, are thus a way for industrial companies to promote themselves (Evers & Knight 2008). Shi and Smith (2012) believe that international trade shows are cost-efficient and quick way to increase exports and gather priceless market information to enter international markets. When planning for a trade show, the most important decision a firm must make concerns the objectives of attending a show.

According to TOBB (2007), a trade show is an action which has a detailed name, type, scope, organizer, date, duration, location to support benefits of a society and a certain industry. It leads companies to show their products and services, exhibit and transfer technological improvements, knowledge and innovation; widen and improve network and trade associations with visitors to form strategic alliances, expand market share, and exchange information (Ayci, 2011). Benefits of trade fairs as a marketing tool are due in large part to the continuation of a target audience, large and elevated quality with a high positive bias towards the products exhibited, and which can provide an imperative communication, as are the customers who come to the diverse positions of the speakers (stands) for information.

Thus, we hypothesized that:

Ha: There is significant relationship between trade exhibition and marketing performance.

Stand Personnel and Marketing Performance

In order to do well in their exhibiting, the firms should appoint one person who is primarily responsible for coordinating all fairs and there should be adequate and appropriate stand personnel (Tanner and Chonko 1995). The exhibiting firms should staff the stand with personnel that can best achieve the objectives set. This means that if the objectives are to increase sales there should be sales personnel at the stand (Tanner and Chonko 2002). Stand personnel training has found to have positive impact on image-building, information-gathering and relationship improvement performances (Lee and Kim 2008).

Thus, we hypothesized that:

Ha: There is significant relationship between stand personnel and marketing performance.

Adaptive Selling and Marketing Performance

Today the world becomes more complex and the risk in purchasing is high. Point-of-purchase in decisions play a major role in influencing customer's in the final stages of decision making, as then customers will make final decisions or change brands (Varley and Rafiq, 2004). As a general rule, goods that are new and different technically complex or expensive requires more personal selling effort. It is where salesperson enthusiastically presents products to customers, showing its positive attributes that will sway their attitudinal and subjective norms thus resulting to consumer buying intention. When it comes to building relationships with customers, sales people are vital front-line players honestly connected to the revenue-generation capabilities of almost all commercial enterprises (Verbeke et al., 2004).

Ha: There is significant relationship between adaptive selling and marketing performance.

Fair Communication Strategy and Marketing Performance

Smith et al. (2004) argued also that the integration of pre-show messages via direct mail or advertising would increase the number of trade fair visitors at the stand. Firms should remember that an on-going series of messages after the trade fair could prolong the value of the trade show investment. If some



promises are made to customers at the fair, the firm should keep in mind that a broken promise is worse than no contact at all (Stevens, 2005).

With consumers barraged by more ads than ever before and concentration disjointed across channels and screens, there's a growing challenge for brands to successfully engage their key audiences in order to drive business outcomes. Simply getting brand messaging in front of consumers does driveresponsiveness, but how can brands truly get closer to their target audience to stay top of mind, engender brand equity, and build associations at scale? The rise of social media adoption has offered brands the opportunity to engage with consumers at an unprecedented level. The aim of organization's promotional strategy was to bring existing or impending customers from a state of comparative unawareness of organization's products to a state of enthusiastically adopting them. To generate sales and profits, the benefits of products had to be communed to customers. Equally, due to continued business competition, firms had to go for productdifferentiation besides diversification; all those had to be communed to the customer in one way or another. This was achieved through an effective promotion in any business. There is significant relationship between fair communication strategy and marketing performance.

Internet and Tourism Marketing

Internet as a network which links multiple networks and users around the globe and a network that no one owns outright. The terms, the Web and the Internet, have often been used inter- changeably; however, the Web is part of the Internet as a communication tool on the Internet.

Today the Internet is one of the most effective communication, information and promotion tools. This promotional channel is designed to inform potential visitors about the tourism products offered, sharing with them the most attractive and innovative attributes. As such it is usually integrated with distribution and implies communication activities, including advertising. Along with the loyalty of customers, the “unstructured” means are the most affordable, offering higher yields for small businesses at a lower cost. Therefore “invest in quality and save on advertising” is definitely the motto (International Labor Office, 2012). This e-word-of-mouth strategy can be done through the internet using various social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, websites, blog-posts and soon. On the other hand, it is important to remember that a greater percentage of new tourists plan and organize their own trips, thanks to the wide availability of information via the internet. Through internet marketing, the State can create awareness for its tourism products, increase its market base, gain traffic from niche conversations held through social networking websites, online discussions, groups and blog comments, and consequently, enhance its tourism brand. Additionally, internet marketing serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for the State to implement its tourism marketing campaigns as it is accessible to anyone with internet access (Kuojel, 2013).

Hence, the internet is a veritable tool for tourism product awareness and patronage. Constraints on the use of Tourism as a Key to Sustainable National Economic Development in Nigeria While tourism offers tremendous potentials as a tool for sustainable national economic development, the sector has been continually constrained by a number of challenges. According to Aremu and Lawal (2018), a major challenge that has plagued the tourism sector is the over- reliance on oil as the major source of government revenue and the means of earning foreign exchange which has caused a systemic neglect of other non-oil sectors and leading to under- development in these sectors, tourism included. Enemuo and Oduntan (2012) expressed that the challenges constraining the growth of the tourism sector are inadequate finance, corruption and system-wide non-implementation of tourism policies. Yusuff and



Akinde (2015) asserted that the major challenges faced by the sector are the lack of adequate infrastructure, insecurity and low level of capital investment in the tourism sector of Nigeria, due to lack of interest by financial institutions to lend capital, to tourism investors. It is important to note that while these factors are important as constraints faced by the system, insecurity as expressed in the recent waves of kidnapping and insurgencies have proved detrimental to the country's tourism sector with the government of some countries warning their citizens to avoid certain cities. While having a detrimental effect on current performance, this key challenge also has deleterious future consequences as it erodes international tourists' confidence in the country.

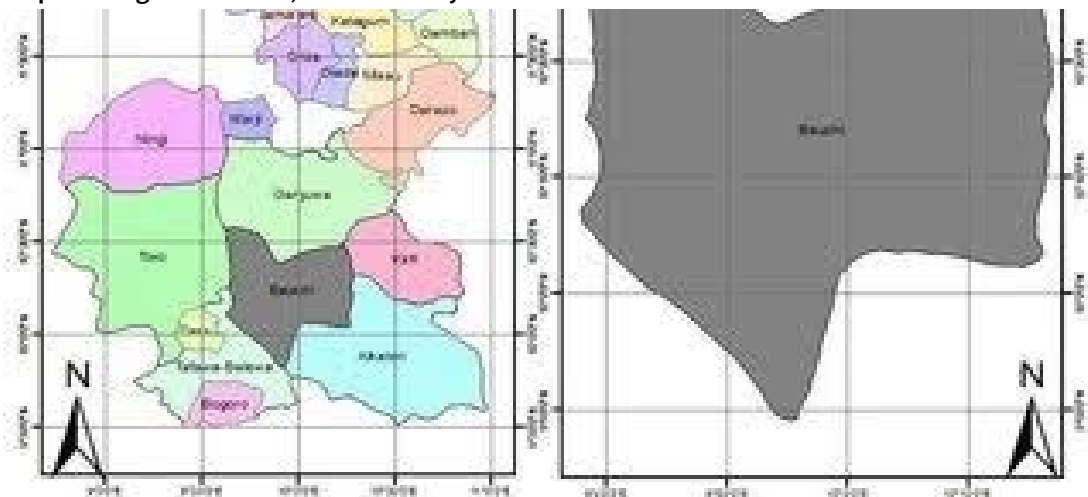
Study Area

Bauchi state north eastern Nigeria is bounded by Jigawa and Kano in North West, Taraba and Gombe in the south and Yobe in the East. Yankari Game Reserve with a hot spring at Wikki is a major attraction. The population of the study area consists of about 621,000 (United Nations population projections 2020), people.

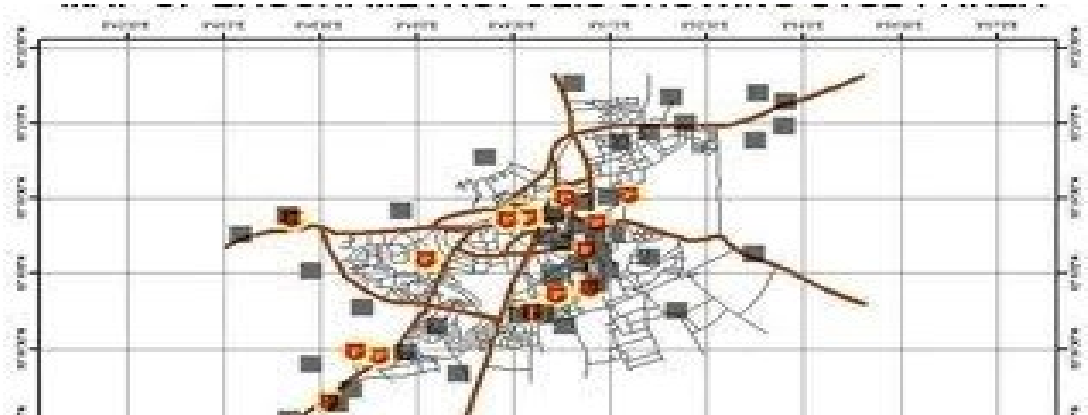
Research Method

To achieve the objectives, various information were collected from the field including information on digital marketing as a good tool in marketing hospitality and tourism in Bauchi and information on the use of digital marketing influencing tourism patronage in tourism destination. The data collection methods were questionnaires and observations. The sampling frame include selected location of Bauchi metropolis including IBB square and environs, Yelwa and GRA with a sample frame of about six hundred (600) people. A simple convenient sampling was used to get the sample size of 391 respondents. Descriptive statistic Likert scale was used to describe the result from the field as shown on tables, it was interpreted and inferences drawn.

Map showing Bauchi State, LGA and Study Area



MAP OF BAUCHI METROPOLIS SHOWING STUDY AREA



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The use of digital marketing can be a tool for sales promotion of hospitality and tourism industries.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agreed	78	19.9	19.9	19.9
Agreed	177	45.3	45.3	65.2
Undecided	71	18.2	18.2	83.4
Disagreed	61	15.6	15.6	99.0
Strongly Disagreed	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The use of digital marketing can be a tool for sales promotion of hospitality and tourism industries, 71 respondents of the study where undecided where 65 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, a good percentage of the study agreed to it, by 177 respondents who agreed and 78 respondents strongly agreed to the statement that the use of digital marketing can be a tool for sales promotion of hospitality and tourism industries. The use of digital marketing is a vital tool for sales promotion in the industry as it makes it easier for the marketing process and more people are getting the awareness of digital marketing.

Considering the current situation of the digital world, digital marketing will be a better promotion tool to trade fair, hospitality and tourism.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agreed	176	45.0	45.0	45.0
Agreed	176	45.0	45.0	90.0
Undecided	14	3.6	3.6	93.6
Disagreed	8	2.0	2.0	95.7
strongly disagreed	17	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.



ICT has ever since its emergence play major role in various sector, helping to simplify processes and improving performance. In hospitality and tourism industry it's also agreed to as a key player in the promotional services. From table above 45 percent strongly agreed another 45 percent agreed to ICT playing significant role, though 14 percent were undecided, a fraction of 8 percent did disagree and 4.3 percent strongly disagreed to the statement. Hence the importance of incorporation of the digital world cannot be over emphasized. Digital marketing is a good promotion tool to trade fairs and would be better in enhancing the hospitality and Tourism industry in the state.

Only very few respondent disagree to these assertions which makes their opinion not very relevant.

The world of digitalization is cheaper with cost effectiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agreed	151	38.6	38.6	38.6
	Agreed	167	42.7	42.7	81.3
	Undecided	34	8.7	8.7	90.0
	Disagreed	35	9.0	9.0	99.0
	strongly disagreed	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Though digitalization start with a few, it's gradually becoming an interest of every person, The world of digitalization is cheaper with cost effectiveness, as seen in table above, 151 respondent strongly agreed to the statement whereas 167 agreed that The world of digitalization is cheaper with cost effectiveness, 34 respondents where totally undecided and 35 disagreed to the statement, 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed to digitalization as being cost effective. It can be concluded that the world of digitalization is cheaper with cost effectiveness as shown by the number of respondents.

That agree and strongly agree to these opinions. Hospitality and tourism will benefit tremendously in the digitalization world if well implemented due to the cost effectiveness.

In the case of pre-order and ordering for goods and services from the hospitality and tourism industries digital marketing is a top option for promotion.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agreed	87	22.3	22.3	22.3
	Agreed	209	53.5	53.5	75.7
	Undecided	42	10.7	10.7	86.4
	Disagreed	45	11.5	11.5	98.0
	Strongly Disagreed	8	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

There are often different methods of approach to things, considering the digital age in pre-order and ordering for goods and services from the hospitality and tourism industries it has been so effective and is a top option for promotion. 209 respondents agreed and 87 strongly agreed giving a total of 296 of 391 respondents who agreed as against 45 who disagreed and 8 who strongly disagreed and 42 were undecided. Therefore, digital marketing is a good option for promotion and can take up a top option due to its effectiveness in the development of the industry.



People use internet to search for available hotels, rather than search offline manually

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agreed	142	36.3	36.3	36.3
Agreed	115	29.4	29.4	65.7
Undecided	58	14.8	14.8	80.6
Disagreed	68	17.4	17.4	98.0
Strongly Disagreed	8	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Due to an increase in digitalization and use of android enabled or smart phones, most time people get to use their phones to search for available hotels rather than going in search for them offline. From the tabular result, it is strongly agreed by 142 respondents of the study also with 115 respondents who agreed to the use of smart phone, 58 respondents were undecided, where 68 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed with the statement. This affirmation to the statement is due to its convenience and ease of access and communication. These is reflected in the degree of respondent that agreed and strongly agreed to these opinions.

Use of smart phones and online system for hospitality and tourism has great impact on patronage in the industry.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agreed	155	39.6	39.6	39.6
Agreed	202	51.7	51.7	91.3
Undecided	22	5.6	5.6	96.9
Disagreed	12	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The table above shows an overwhelming support to the statement. The emergence of smart phones and online registry system for hospitality and tourism have great impact on the patronage of goods and service via the internet as strongly agreed by 155 respondents of the study and 202 agreed to its performance. Though 22 where undecided and 12 disagreed to the statement. This result strongly shows a proving support to digitalization and its benefits. Therefore, use of smart phones has been of great significance to customers in helping them in decision making for patronage, they have all information concerning what they need at their fingertips at their convenience.

Hospitality and tourism industries now have website to help customers in patronage and promotion in the industry.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agreed	120	30.7	30.7	30.7
Agreed	201	51.4	51.4	82.1
Undecided	29	7.4	7.4	89.5
Disagreed	37	9.5	9.5	99.0
strongly disagreed	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.



A major percentage of the entire study agreed to this assertion of 51.4 percent whereas 30.7 percent strongly agreed to the statement of hospitality and tourism industries now have website and social media handles to manage and promote their offers. 9.5 percent disagreed and 1 percent strongly disagreed to the statement, though 7.4 were undecided. The total percentage that disagreed were of no significance to the statement as they constitute only 10.5 percent, perhaps due to their ignorance of the digital world.

Best promotion techniques adopted in the digital age is the digital marketing.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agreed	94	24.0	24.0	24.0
Agreed	113	28.9	28.9	52.9
Undecided	61	15.6	15.6	68.5
Disagreed	99	25.3	25.3	93.9
strongly disagreed	24	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

First on the investigation of the hospital and tourism promotion techniques in Bauchi using an investigative tool of the best promotion techniques as adopted in the digital age is digital marketing. It is obvious that the above statement is true, as shown by 113 who agreed and 94 who strongly agreed where 99 disagreed and 24 strongly disagreed to the statement, though 61 respondents were undecided digital marketing is indeed a very important promotion technique in this age as it plays significant roles in the industry. The few that disagreed perhaps had other options but surely it cannot be better.

Summary

Hospitality and tourism require the practice of trade fair to promote its services and increase sales. The effect of trade fair to this industry is not well known, however, it is not quite certain whether digital marketing has influenced people in their decision to patronize tourism destinations in Bauchi State. The study attempt to answer research questions as the use of digital marketing influencing tourism patronage in tourism destination. Simple convenient sampling was used to get a sample size of 391 respondents from a sample frame of about 600 people. Descriptive statistics was used to describe results on tables, interpreted and inferences drawn. Results show the use of digital marketing is a vital tool for sales promotion, the world of digitization is cheaper, digital marketing is a top option due to its effectiveness in the development of the industry. Moreover, smart phones have been of great significance in helping people make decision for patronage. Hospitality and tourism establishment now have websites to help in promoting the industry. Digital marketing is a very important techniques and plays a significant role in technological promotion of the industry. It is recommended that stakeholders in the industry should use the combination of trade fair and digital marketing as tools for sales promotion. Finally, awareness should be created to stakeholders that lack understanding to be able to adopt digital marketing as it is cheaper with cost effectiveness.

Conclusion

The use of digital marketing has influenced tourists to patronize tourism and hospitality in Bauchi. Digital marketing has always been a tool for promotion services and increase in sales. The use of digital marketing has influenced tourists and has shown that digital marketing is a better tool or platform to promote sales as it is cheaper and cost effective, considering the present digital age where people use their smart phone to search for hospitality and tourism destination of their choice and make orders as information are readily available for customers to go through and find out what they want.



Recommendations

1. It is recommendation that more studies be carried out by individual and co-operate researchers to provide adequate literature on the subject matter for more information.
2. Government and private organization of trade fair should consider the hospitality. Tourism industry in their plans as trade fair is seen as a good platform for its promotion, it increases sales in the industry.
3. Stakeholders in the hospitality and Tourism industry should use the combination of trade fair and digital marketing as tools for sales promotion in the industry.
4. To be able to have more effect on the hospitality and tourism industry the annual trade fair event should be increased to be held twice or thrice annually.
5. Awareness should be created to the stakeholders to be able to adopt the digital marketing as it is cheaper and has cost effectiveness.
6. Hospitality and tourism destination should able to have their website and make it available to the general public for easy access to their services.

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