

Traditional Market Days and Modern Marketing Communication in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper examines the extent to which modern marketing communication relates with traditional marketing days in south-east Nigeria. 250 copies of questionnaire were distributed to 5 markets within south east Nigeria and they are Afo Umuosu Nsulu market and Ahia Nkwo in Abia sate, Oye Olisa market and Afo Igwe market in Anambra state as well as Eke Onwa market in Imo state. Paired sample t-test was used in testing the hypothesis and the result shows that traditional market days significantly relates with modern marketing communication in south-east Nigeria.

Key words: Traditional Market days, Communication, modern marketing, Umuosu Nsulu market, Ahia Nkwo, Oye Olisa market, Afo Igwe market, Eke Onwa market, Abia sate, Anambra state & Imo state

INTRODUCTION

Communication according to Anidi (2007) can be referred to as the process whereby there is an exchange of words, symbols or expression between two or more people. Communication is a necessary requirement between humans and animals and it is a means through which one individual or group of individuals would be able to understand the intention or projection of

others. Modern marketing communication is referred to as a process whereby modern channels of communication are employed by marketers in passing information concerning products and services to customers and prospective customers. Such channel of communication includes Email, Youtube, Google+, Twitter, etc. In a world of increasing technology, most business organizations can barely remember what life would have been without communication facilities such as social/professional media platforms.

Despite the fact that the world is rapidly changing due to the increase in technology, it is actually on record that over 70% of the population of those living in rural areas within Nigeria rely mostly on traditional communication (ILO, 2011).

According to Nwoye (2008), traditional market days in Igbo land originated from the reign of Eze Nriji for I who was the 5th Eze Nri through succession line and he lived from 1300-1390AD. Okigbo (2015) further revealed that historical facts has it that four strangers came to visit Eze Nriji for I, they refused to communicate with anyone (pretending to be dumb) neither did they want to reveal their names. Each of them had nkata (basket) with them. They were later taken to the visitor's room by one of Eze Nriji for's servant (Adamma). In trying to find out what the names of their strange visitors was, Eze Nriji for's soothsayer sent a rat to disturb them while asleep. First it went to the nkata which belonged to Eke and made some sound and this made Oye to call Eke's name to observe what was happening to his nkata. The rat repeated the same process on all the Nkata which belonged to all the visitors until they all revealed their names. After that, the rat ran away. The next day, Eze Nriji for I went to the chambers the visitors dwelt to greet them as well as perform the morning kolanut rituals also known as 'oji ututu'. As Adama the king's servant broke the kolanut and Eze Njiriofor I called each of the strangers by name, they were shocked and astonished because they had pretended to be dumb. Their names were Eke, Oye,

Afo and Nkwo. These strangers later asked for water to wash their faces and hands and this time, they collected the oji ututu that was presented to them. After that, they revealed themselves as messengers from Chukwu (God Almighty) and presented him with for earthen pots also known as “ite ano” and told Eze Nriji for I that each of the ‘ite ano’ belongs to them (Eke, Oye, Afo and Nkwo) and that his people should observe those names as market days, through which they would buy and sell (Okigbo, 2015). Since then, these market days are observed in Igbo land and are today known as traditional market days.

Statement of Problem

Despite the fact that modern communications have changed the means of information dissemination, it is very true that the old methods cannot be forgotten in a hurry (Akakuru, Nwokedi and Edi, 2015). According to Achebe (1958), while describing the incident which occurred during the wrestling match between Okonkwo and Amalinze in things fall apart, he drew attention of his readers towards the drum beats and the flutes that sang while spectators held their breath. The drum and sound of flutes were means of communication and the people could understand what every sound meant (Alimi, 2012). The use of town criers have also provided useful information to villages living within the south east especially those within the rural areas and such information are extended to those who are far away. Villagers often depend on traditional means of communication but the problems associated with it has always been the fact that there has always been inconsistency concerning the use of standard technical vocabulary while prescribing, analyzing as well as challenging the traditional communication system. Akakuru et al (2015) has further opined that despite the existence of modern means of marketing communication, people still have love for traditional

communication but are faced with the problem of where to get such instruments.

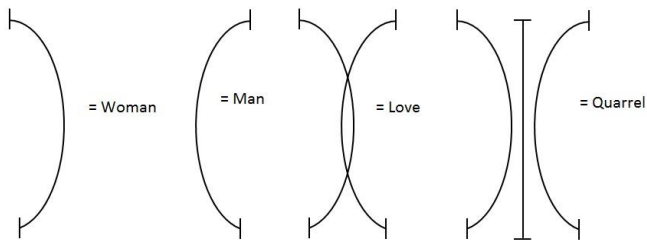
It is quite unfortunate that the quest for modernization has increased to the extent that the Igbos have forgotten their cultural heritage, with the volume of economic activities going on in the south-east, there is a high influence on communication activities yet there is this challenge which is associated with the limited reach as well as ineffectiveness which often discredit the traditional sources and communication channels in Igboland (Mowlana, 1983). Therefore, this study would investigate how the traditional market days have influenced modern marketing communication in south east Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on the theory of planned behaviour which was proposed by (Ajzen, 1991). This theory believes that the determination of individual behaviour is based on individual's behavioural intention as well as his behavioural control. The theory of planned behaviour is a modification of the theory of reasoned action which was also proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) which states that individual behavioural intents are often a function of behavioural interaction which is also a product of subjective norms. By implication, the reason behind the establishment of market days was preceded by the visit of the four strangers from Chukwu who visited Eze Nrijofofor I. This plan was instituted by Chukwu (God) himself who wanted his people to observe their names as market days. It is also believed that Eze Nrijofofor who received this news also ensured that such behaviour is carried out throughout the kingdom and today, all over south east, these market days are observed because plans were made by Eze Nrijofofor to ensure that these market days are observed according to the words of the strangers.

Traditional Vs. Modern Marketing Communication

It is true that the development of modern marketing communication emerged from the traditional systems whereby individuals in the grassroots are made to be conscious towards cultural, health and political programs (Des, 1987). The Igbo culture also made room for public entertainment through cultural festivals, arts, musical and dramatic performances, etc which are aimed towards communication purposes. This is because there was a need for group, societal as well as natural cohesion. These traditional methods of communication has further proved that it is the best way to get to the grassroot as not every individual especially those with the rural areas can afford the means for modern communication such as computer, smart phones, Ipods, etc. Wilson (1987) further gave eleven classes to which traditional forms of communication can be divided and they include idiophones, membranophones, aerophones, signs, signal, colour schemes, objectifics, music, symbolic displays as well as extra-mundane communication. Idiophones can be described as self sounding instruments or objects which can produce sound without any additional influence. Such sounds are produced when the instruments are struck, shaken, pulled etc. They include objects such as wooden drum, bell and rattle gong, etc. Membranophones are those class of instrument whose sound is produced through the vibration of its membranes. They produce their sound when beaten with specially carried stick and they include instruments like leather drums of all variations (Akakuru et al, 2015). Aerophone refers to those instruments which produce sound as a result of the air that passes through it and they include trumpets, flutes, whistle as well as other wood wind and brass instruments. Symbolography has to do with encoding messages symbolically, or graphically which is generally understood by a specific group of people for example, the Igbo writings also known as 'uli' which were often inscribed on walls during painting and on clothes used symbols such as;



Source: Wilson (1987)

Secondly, the presence of palm frond (usually greenish yellow in color) which is tied and shaped in different forms typifies several meaning to the Igbo people. Signals refer to those physical embodiment of a message which could be in form of fire, canon shots, gun shots, etc. Signs can be referred to marks which have meaning. Sign languages are often used to communicate and today it has been extended to individuals who are deaf. While signs are more associated with meanings that are denotive in nature (Ross, 1992). While symbols would most likely require someone who can interpret based on his knowledge of the system related to the symbol, signs often require an interpreter who is vast in general law and theories. Objectives are media which are shown in a concrete form and their significance extended to a specific society only or could also be universal. Examples include white pigeon, white flag, cowries, flowers, pictures, etc.

Colour schemes refer to the concept and use of color combination in specific designs. To convey meaning, red always signify danger while white signifies purity in Igbo land. Music refers to the combination of sounds in a manner which is pleasing to the ear. The Igbo culture has music for mourning as well as music for joy, they have music for war as well as other social events. Symbolic displays refer to culture-specifics or universally accepted characteristics which are often shared with primates e.g. happiness, smiling, expression of anger, disgust and fear, the way individuals walk, talk, sit or give facial expression. Extra-mundane communication refers to the

communication between the living and the dead, with the supernatural or Supreme Being and it is often through some rituals, prayers, innovation, liberation, spiritual chants, etc.

Today, some of these medium of communication are still in practice, we still have several musical instruments which are still in use just like in Nigeria for instance, every broadcasting station still utilize the drum sound to attract viewers or listeners to the fact that they are about to start transmission for the day, announce time, close down, etc. (Des, 1987). Today marketing has evolved and the presence of information and communication technology has given rise to more efficient and effective means of communication. Marketers now use sweet songs to communicate the features of their products to consumers, marketers still use signs in their advertisement to communicate with consumers as well as pictures. This is because there is a conceptual misapprehension in the minds of people who believe that traditional market days do not have any influence on the outcome of today's marketing activities especially in the south east. These signs can guide them in functioning; the use of bell is still relevant because it is at the sound of the bell that auctions end likewise in nursery, primary and secondary schools. Traditional and modern cultures are often conflicting because of their communication systems. However, traditional means of communication in Igbo land such as gong is being used by town criers and other extra-mundane activities are still in use today. Because of technological developments, marketing communication has been made very easy as the speed at which information moves from the sender to the receiver as well as feedback time is very short.

Study objective

To empirically examine the extent to which there is a significant relationship between traditional market days and modern marketing communication in South-east Nigeria

Research Question

Does traditional market days relate with modern marketing communication in South-east Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship existing between traditional market days and modern marketing in south-east Nigeria

Methodology

This study was conducted in five markets within Abia and Anambra states respectively and they are; Afo Umuosu Nsulu market and Ahia Nkwo in Abia sate, Oye Olisa market and Afo Igwe market in Anambra state as well as Eke Onwa market in Imo state. 250 copies of questionnaire were distributed to these markets (50 copies each). Our hypothesis was tested using paired sample t-test because our observations are independent of each other and we are looking for the mean difference between observations (Traditional market days and modern marketing communication). This was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Table 1

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	TRADITIONAL MKT DAYS	18.87	250	3.645	.231
	MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATION	22.74	250	3.484	.220

Table 1 shows that traditional marketing days have a mean of 18.87 while modern marketing communication has a mean of 22.74. Traditional marketing also has a standard deviation of 3.645 while modern marketing communication has a standard deviation of 3.484. these figures are closely related.

Table 2

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 TRADITIONAL MKT DAYS & MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATION	250	.626	.000

Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.626 which is strong and a p-value of 0.000 which is also less than alpha of 0.05. This shows that there is a significant relationship existing between traditional marketing days and modern marketing communication in south-east Nigeria.

Table 3

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 TRADITIONAL MKT DAYS - MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATION	-3.872	3.085	.195	-4.256	-3.488	-19.844	249	.000

Furthermore, our paired sample test shows a p-value of 0.000 which is also less than alpha of 0.05. This means that our stated null hypothesis would be rejected and the alternate accepted.

CONCLUSION

The result of our hypothesis shows that within the south east, it is still believed that traditional market days has a significant relationship with what we see today as modern marketing communication. Some of the strategies adopted in carrying out modern marketing communication are drawn from the ideologies borrowed from events carried out during traditional market days. Today, modern marketing make use of music, signs, symbols, etc and these concepts are borrowed from traditional marketing. This was further revealed in the mean differences which are close as well as their standard deviation. Our p-value from the result of our paired sample statistic and

correlation also revealed a significant relationship between variables. Therefore, this study has empirically ascertained that a relationship exists between traditional market days and modern marketing in Nigeria.

Recommendations

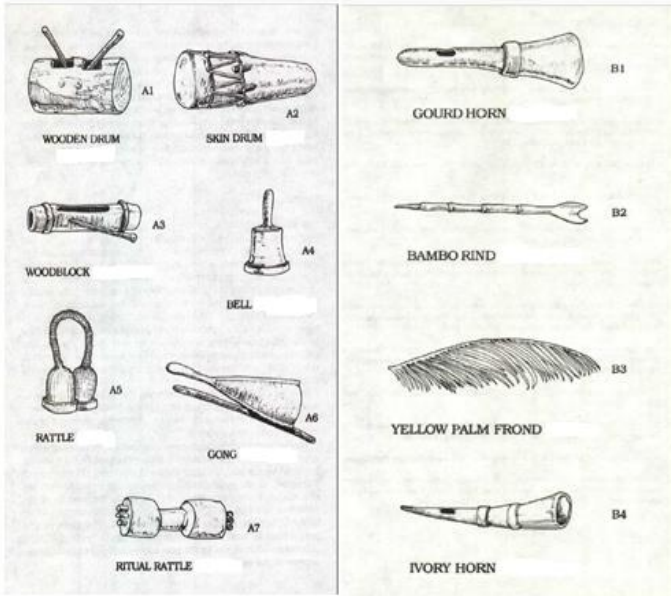
1. Despite the high acceptance of modern marketing techniques in the south-east, previous marketing ideologies should be taught to upcoming business practitioners because no matter how much they have been introduced to modern means of marketing, they would always fall back on tradition.
2. Government within the south-east must ensure that there is integration between traditional and modern marketing in their jurisdiction. If possible, Eke, Oye, Afo and Nkwo market days should be reinstated, re-established and encouraged
3. There is need for unity among the Igbos so that there would be unity of purpose in all their commercial activities.
4. There is need for parents to teach their children Igbo language. This is the only way there would be sustainability in their way of life for and easy communication.
5. History as a subject must be reintroduced and implemented so that people could trace their origin and know where they are coming from.

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APPENDIX I

Traditional means of communication



Source: Wilson (1987)

APPENDIX II

Modern Means of Communication



Researcher's conception (2018)