



TRADITIONAL MARKET DAYS AND BRANDING STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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*Branding, Traditional,
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Eke-Onwa market*

Branding as a concept is something that Nigerians are known for. Each producer or marketer would always want to distinguish his product and services from that of others. The concept of branding as a subject matter became very relevant in the 19th century but it is still believed that during the early days, even before Nigeria as a country was formed, Branding had already existed. This study examines the extent to which traditional market days significantly relates with branding strategies in Nigeria. quasi-experimental research design was used for this study and four rural markets were studied and they are; Ori-Umunna Nsulu market and AhiaNkwo in Abia state, Oye-Olisa market in Anambra State and Eke-Onwa market in Imo State. Kandells tab was used in testing our hypothesis because our data was collected in ordinal form (Likert 5 point scale). Our findings show a significant relationship existing between traditional market days and branding strategies. The study further recommends government conscious action on ensuring that made in Nigeria products and services are encouraged and patronized such as the made in Aba shoes and clothing, Innoson Vehicles, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Brands can be defined as the interface that exists between an organization and its consumer (Zehir, Sahin, Kitapci&Ozsahin, 2011). It is a unique identification for products and services. Brands are usually what stimulate the relationship between consumers and organizational products. According to Soviden, Kassim& Hong (2006), businesses are beginning to have more awareness on the importance of their brand names and are thus trying to establish strong link between their corporate brands and their individual product brands. Branding strategies are focused on processes which deals with reciprocal and simultaneous attempt to influence the consumer understanding of corporate brands as well as generate shared brand meaning (Balogun& Johnson, 2004).

Authors like Ogunlade (2018) have emphasized that branding strategies had already existed in Nigeria before the colonians introduced brands such as UAC, PZ, Lever brothers, etc. In the traditional market days, farmers used hot irons to mark who owns what. Then it was easy for farmers to identify what products were owned by their colleagues (Stratagem, 2004). Parents also used tribal marks to identify their children as well as family members. In igbo land, children are named after market days. Such names as Nweke/Okeke (which represents Eke market day), Nworie/Orienma (which

represents Ori market day), Nafor/Okafor (which represents Afor market day) as well as Nwankwo/Nkwonta(Which represents Nkwo market day). According to Nnoli (1978), over 450 linguistic groups existed before colonialism and each of these groups had its own form of unique identification in form of tribal marks, culture, dress code, festivals, rituals, etc. Just like it is easy to identify those who are from Ibadan, and as well differentiate them from those of other tribes. It was also easy to identify those from the north with their unique dress code, religious practices, likes and dislikes (Eze, 2014). According to Egharevba (1949), those who come from Benin were always identified with their beads which was their traditional dress kit and the use of Corel or stone beads often constitute royal dresses to kings, prominent chiefs and those who belong to royal families.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Fan (2000), one of the greatest challenges of effective packaging and branding in Nigeria is the lack of adequate knowledge about branding. Nigeria has a lot of products which can be branded such as ogbono (bush mango), melon (egusi),dadawa (locus bean), garri, fashion, arts, vehicles, etc. These products are only being sold in market platform. The Chinese for example have branded their culture to even compete with the western world. Today, China competes as

one of the top global luxury goods market. Brands like shangxia and shanghai are example of Chinese brands in the luxury industry. (Yu, 2014).

Wendland & Denis (2013), Wong & Ahuvia (1998) and a host of other researchers have also documented Chinese achievements in their food brand which is competing favourably in developed countries. The problem in Nigeria is the fact that there is a very poor knowledge on branding. The various unique products we have need urgent face light. Ogunlade (2018) is of the opinion that most of the producers as well as marketers who promote local products lack the knowledge and secret of effective market and marketing technique. Because of their poor enlightenment, education and lack of branding knowledge, the locally made drugs which are very effective cannot find their way to the international market. These products only take interest in local market with great phobia for internationalization. This greatly affects their choice of package design, logos, verbal identity and brand names. They do not realize that these factors have great influence on the customer's perception. Nigeria has a place like Aba where making of shoes and clothing is a major occupation. We also have Innoson who should be encouraged, yet even the government are yet to see the need of making his car a Nigerian brand. Indeed, we lack "branding knowledge".

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Ho: Traditional market days and branding strategies have no significant relationship.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is anchored on the theory of reasoned action. This theory was proposed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) as well as Fishbein (1980). It states that behavioural intention of individual is predicted by such individual's attitude and subjective norm. individual attitude deals with an evaluation of the behaviour in question. Authors like Wise (1985) and Auzmedi (1991), had earlier measured attitude from two perspectives which are the affective and the cognitive components.

However, Gil (1999) and Gomez-Chacon (2000), introduced the three pedagogical components which were a modification of what was proposed by Wise and Auzmedi. The three components are the cognitive components (which can be explained as the mental processes, belief and perception about the attitudinal object), the affective component (which deals with the emotions and feelings towards the attitudinal object) and finally, the behavioural component which is an expression of the behavioural action or intention. Another perspective of theory of reasoned action is subjective norm which can be described as an individual's evaluation of what others think about such action and how motivated one is in complying with the opinion of others. In other words, "to what extent does the opinion of others determine the behavior of an individual?".

This theory fits into this study because the act of branding is a behavioural tendency which must be pre-determined by factors such as the attitude of individuals/institutions/government and subjective norm. Previous governments have not developed the attitude of branding most of the made in Nigeria products. Some who have developed the attitude feel their behavior are not dependent on what people think is good/bad, right/wrong profitable non-profitable, etc. Nigeria is endowed with numerous agricultural and other natural resources yet its brands cannot compete in the global market.

TRADITIONAL MARKET DAYS

In looking at traditional market days, we consider the days when there were no malls, no internet which could facilitate e-commerce and no technological equipments to also facilitate the branding of goods and services. Those days were filled with the middle class who basically were traders who relied so much on the existing traditional markets to meet all their shopping needs and wants (Nwobodo, 2014). In those days, farmers practiced their own kind of branding whereby every product had a unique identification. Hot irons were used to mark products owned by individual farmers, even slaves were marked using locally made tattoos made from cashew nuts. Those living in Ibadan were identified using tribal marks on their faces which made it very easy for them to be identified by other tribes. According to Enyia & Kalu (2018), the origin of market days in Igbo land, can be traced to the reign of EzeNriji for I who reigned between 1300 – 1390AD.

Several authors such as Okigbo (2015), Nwokoye (2008) and a host of others have emphasized that the Igbo market days were instituted by EzeNriji for I after he was visited by four strangers who later identified themselves as Eke, Oye, Afo and Nkwo. These strangers informed EzeNriji for I that the message of instituting market days was a message from Chukwu (God) and in his wisdom, EzeNriji for I ensured that market days became established, Enyia & Kalu (2018).

Branding Strategies

According to Ogunlade (2018), brands are symbolic embodiment of all features connected with goods and services. The origin of the term brands can be traced to the 19th century as logos and trademarks. It was during the industrialization movement in the 19th century that the concept of brand developed more weight and meaning. Technology facilitated the concept of brands to a broader sense and the role of advertisement also played a very significant role in creating more awareness in the minds of customers. There were also the existence of machinery which became very widely used for the mass production of goods and services. Production lines were automated and there were standardization of goods produced. Some of the branding strategies include color, label, design, logos, etc (William 2000). Today, a lot of products that are made in Aba have different branding labels. Some producers go extra mile to put labels of firms in industrialized countries so they can sell their products. The government of Nigeria have not also encouraged the branding of Innoson vehicles as over 95% of vehicles used in ministries and parastatals are either Toyota, Ford, Mercedes, etc. Even the tricycles produced by Innoson are not purchased by government in large quantities the way Indian brands such as Bajaj, TVs etc. are being patronized.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a cross sectional research design which is also an aspect of quasi-experimental design. Four markets within the south-east were studied and they are: Ori-UmunnaNsulu market and AhiaNkwo in Abia State as well as Oye-Olisa in Anambra State and Eke-Onwa market in Imo State. Thirty copies of research instruments were distributed to each of these markets which made it a total of 120. Hypothesis was tested using Kandels Tab which is a statistical for non-parametric tests.

DATA ANALYSES

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for Traditional Market Days

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
TMD_1	120	1	5	3.95	.858	.737	-1.119	.221
TMD_2	120	2	5	3.92	.904	.817	-.668	.221
TMD_3	120	1	5	3.86	1.063	1.131	-.692	.221
TMD_4	120	1	5	3.56	1.143	1.307	-.300	.221
TMD_5	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244	-.441	.221
Valid N (listwise)	120							

Table 1 shows that descriptive statistics for statement items for traditional market days. It shows that there was a minimum entry of 1 and a Maximum entry of 5 for all the items except our second item which had a minimum of 2. It

also shows that each item had a mean greater than 3.0 and negative skewness. This agrees with the use of non-parametric test such as Kandells tab.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for Branding Strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
BS_1	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244	-.441	.221
BS_2	120	1	5	3.57	1.043	1.088	-.316	.221
BS_3	120	1	5	3.85	.904	.818	-.807	.221
BS_4	120	1	5	3.83	.892	.796	-.893	.221
BS_5	120	1	5	3.94	.853	.728	-1.127	.221
Valid N (listwise)	120							

Table 2 also shows the descriptive statistics for branding strategies and it shows a minimum entry of 1 for all the items and a maximum entry of 5. It also shows that all the items had

a mean above 3.0 and all the items were also negatively skewed which permits a non-parametric test.

Table 3 Correlation matrix

			Traditional_Market_Days	Branding_Strategies
Kendall's tau_b	Traditional_Market_Days	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.541**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	120	120
	Branding_Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	.541**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	120	120

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

Our test of hypothesis shows that traditional market days significantly relates with branding strategies with a correlation coefficient of 0.541 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. we would therefore reject the earlier stated null hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

This study shows the fact that branding strategies had existed in Nigeria before its integration into marketing. Today branding ideas are modifications of what was done in the past and the rise in technology has expanded the activities of branding in Nigeria and beyond. We also see that the Igbo still name their children after the traditional market days which also validates the fact that branding strategies as it was practiced in time past still exist. The major challenge faced in Nigeria has always been lack of brand knowledge on the part of producers and marketers and it has affected the locally made products that should have gone global. Nigeria has

plethora of products and services such as herbal drugs, food items, fashion, luxury and a whole lot which should be launched in the international market but the problem has been the effective use of brand techniques and strategies.

Recommendations

- i. Government should ensure that made in Nigeria products are encouraged and patronized through policies and legislation. Import should be discouraged to the barest minimum and export should be encouraged.
- ii. Government should show example by purchasing made in Nigerian products especially Innoson vehicles in large quantity. These products could even be exported as a Nigerian brand.
- iii. Some of the importations in Nigeria should be restricted so that those who locally produce them can be encouraged and empowered to increase production.

- iv. Producers and marketers of herbal products should modify their selling strategy and reduce noise pollution. They should engage the services of professional advertising agents so that their products can be more appealing to consumers.
- v. Food items such as melon(egwusi), palm wine, bush mango (Ogbono), etc can be branded in a more appealing manner so that the world can enjoy our food and culture.
- vi. There should be self-education effort by producers and marketers in Nigeria on branding techniques.

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