

VISITOR'S AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF MARKETING IN SELECTED HOTELS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

***OLUWAGBEMI, E.O. AND ADEYEMO, A.I.**

Department of Ecotourism and Wildlife Management, The Federal University of
Technology, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: oluwagbemio@futa.edu.ng

Abstract

One of the industries with the fastest growth rate is the hospitality and tourism sector. However, in the less developed economies, the hospitality industry has low awareness in the importance of advertising their products and services. Hence, this study was carried out to investigate the visitors' awareness and perception of advertising the products and services of hotels in the hospitality industry in Akure south, Owo and Ikare Local Government Areas in Ondo State, Nigeria using 600 copies of well-structured questionnaire. Data obtained reveals that 54.7% of the visitors in the hotels were male, 46.7% of them were within the age bracket of 26-33 years, all the respondents were Nigerians and 60.8% had tertiary education. 94% of the visitors were aware of marketing in the hotels and majority were aware of promotion, word of mouth publicity, TV/radio publicity, Online/Social media publicity, billboard and handbills. The statements were measured according to their means. The mean score ranged from 4.54 to 4.01, "marketing allows customers to be aware of new services offered" had the highest mean (4.54) while "marketing costs the hotel a lot of money and time" had the lowest mean (4.01). There is a significant relationship between visitors' awareness of marketing and their perception about marketing ($p = 0.00$) and there is a significant relationship between the age, place of residence, education and visitors awareness ($p > 0.05$).

Key Words: Hospitality industry, Tourism, Hotel industry, Marketing Awareness

Introduction

The hotel and tourism sector is one of the sectors with the quickest growth rate, accounting for more than a third of all worldwide services trade. (International Labour Organization, 2010). The industry's consumption habits have changed because of the increased significance placed on leisure activities (Sonia and Neetu, 2012). This is

demonstrated by the fact that over the past 25 years, actual global gross domestic product (GDP) growth has lagged behind that of foreign visitor arrivals by around 1% (International Labour Organization, 2010). According to UNWTO (2011) estimates, tourism provides around 5% of the world's GDP. Its employment contribution is estimated to be in the range of 6-7% of all occupations globally (both

direct and indirect). This indicates that tourism activities continue to create positive impacts on communities, countries and world at large (Arowosafe *et al.*, 2017). Due to the global financial crisis and incidents particular to the hospitality business, such as terrorist attacks on hotels in certain important tourist destinations, such as India, the hospitality and tourism sector saw recessionary trends in 2008-2009. Despite this, global tourism rebounded from the shock more than anticipated in 2010, with 940 million international visitors arriving globally- an increase of over 6.6% from the previous year (UNWTO, 2011). Although there are many different types of companies that fall under the umbrella of the hospitality business, only a small portion of the people can accurately and honestly identify what the company is and is not. This indicates the essence and style of the organizational changes, the kinds of foods and festivities, the degrees of knowledge and experience applied at all levels of the business, as well as the sorts of food and celebrations (Shafait and Monjurul, 2020).

Hospitality marketing is distinctive because it addresses both the intangible elements of the hospitality and tourism industries as well as the concrete or tangible items, such as a bed in a hotel or meals in a restaurant. It is about the social prestige and travel experience that come with dining at a fine-dining establishment. An effective marketing campaign promotes a good or service that satisfies consumer requirements and wants while also making money for the company or nation that offers it (Alex-Onyeocha and Iwuagwu, 2015).

There has been various research work on the hospitality industry such as: the

effects of social media marketing in the hotel industry: conceptual model for development of an effective online community (Samaan and Abdullah, 2016), the effects of social media networks in the hospitality industry (Lim, 2010), Integrated Marketing Communication for Tourism and Hospitality: A Case of Selected Star and Non-star Category Rwandan Hotels (Vedaste, 2018), Comparative Study of Visitors' Satisfaction with Hospitality Services in Nigeria (Adeleye *et al.*, 2020). The Impact of Market Orientation on Performance of Selected Hotels in Ondo State, Nigeria (Oluwatoyin *et al.*, 2018), Visitors' Satisfaction with Physical Attributes of the Guest House at Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort, Ekiti State, Nigeria (Arowosafe *et al.*, 2018), The Role of Marketing in Hotel Industry: Case (six successful hotel units in Abuja and Jakobsad) (Talabi, 2015) and others but there is dearth of information on effect of publicity and marketing on hotels in, Ondo State. Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate the visitors' awareness and perception of marketing the products and services of hotels in the hospitality industry in Akure, Owo and Ikare Local Government Areas in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Study Area

The study was carried out in hotels in three zones of Ondo State, namely; Akure, Owo and Ikare, Ondo State, Nigeria. Akure, the capital of Ondo State is situated about 282km away from Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. Akure is also the Headquarters of Akure South Local Government Area. It lies on latitude 7.25°N and longitude 5.19°E. The city is located 396m above sea level. According to 2006 Nigerian Population Census,

Akure has a population of 360,268. Thus, the current estimated population is about 495,000 (Oyinloye and Kufoniyi, 2011).

Ikare Akoko is a major commercial town in Ondo State, and the seat of Akoko North East Local Government, situated about 120km from Akure, the State capital. It is located between latitude 4° and 5° north of the equator and longitude 3° and 4° east of the Greenwich Meridian. (Fagbohunka, 2018).

Owo, the headquarters of Owo Local Government area is situated 38km east of Akure, the capital city of Ondo State, 400 kilometres North East of Lagos, the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria and 480 kilometres South East of Abuja the Federal Capital Territory. Owo lies on latitude 7° 15' north of the Equator and longitude 5° 35' east of the Greenwich Meridian. (Olugbamila and Ogunyemi, 2015).

Materials and Methods

This study made use of a self-administered questionnaire for data collection. A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive literature review and the questionnaire constructs focused on gathering information such as the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their awareness of the marketing strategies used in the hotels, their perception about the importance of marketing. The target population of the study were visitors at the hotels and copies of questionnaire were distributed to them using the random sampling approach (Arowosafe *et al.*, 2022). Total number of hotels was obtained from a database from State Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2021). The database indicates that there are 109 hotels in Akure, 21 hotels in Owo

and 17 hotels in Ikare with star rating categorization ranging from 1 star to 4 stars. The database also indicates that the four categories of hotels based on star rating in Akure are in the following proportions: 1 Star hotel (53), 2 Star hotel (41), 3 Star hotel (12) and 4 Star hotel (3). In addition, the database indicates the four categories of hotels based on star rating in Owo are in the following proportions: 1 Star hotel (13), 2 Star hotel (6), 3 Star hotel (1) and 4 Star hotel (1). The database further indicates the categories of hotels based on star rating in Ikare are in the following proportions: 1 Star hotel (12), 2 Star hotel (5). In order to effectively determine a representative sample of the entire population of hotels in Akure, Owo and Ikare metropolis, 10 percent of the total number of hotels as adopted by Efiong *et al.* (2013) was selected as indicated below:

Akure: $109/100 \times 10 = 10.9$ approximately 11 hotels.

Owo: $21/100 \times 10 = 2.1$ approximately 2 hotels

Ikare: $17/100 \times 10 = 1.7$ approximately 2 hotels

The study employed stratified sampling technique to select the sample size hotels from the sample frame in the study area. The sample sizes were allocated to the sample groups using Bourley's proportional allocation formula as adopted by Oluwatoyin *et al.* (2018). It is given as:

$$nb = n(n) N$$

where;

nb = Bourley's formula;

n = Element within the sample frame, i.e. number allocated to star rating;

n = Sample or proportion of the universe used for the study (total sample size);

N = Population of the study.

Based on the results, the sample selected include:

Akure: 1 Star hotel (5), 2 Star hotel (4), 3 Star hotel (1) and 4 Star hotel (1).

Owo: 1 Star hotel (1), 2 Star hotel (1), 3 Star hotel (0) and 4 Star hotel (0).

Ikare: 1 Star hotel (1), 2 Star hotel (1).

A total of 15 hotels were sampled. The number of rooms in the hotels were not disclosed by the management of the hotels and the numbers are also not available online. A total number of 700 copies of a well-structured closed ended questionnaire was administered to customers and visitors of the hotels. 600 questionnaires were useful for the research. The questionnaires were

self-administered. The data for this research was collected in the space of 3 months i.e. July, August and September, 2022. The target population for this study were the customers and visitors of the selected hotels in Akure, Owo and Ikare zone, Ondo State.

Data obtained in this study was analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23). The result was presented descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics involved the use of charts, tables, percentages, means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics involved the use of Chi-Square (Arowosafe *et al.*, 2020).

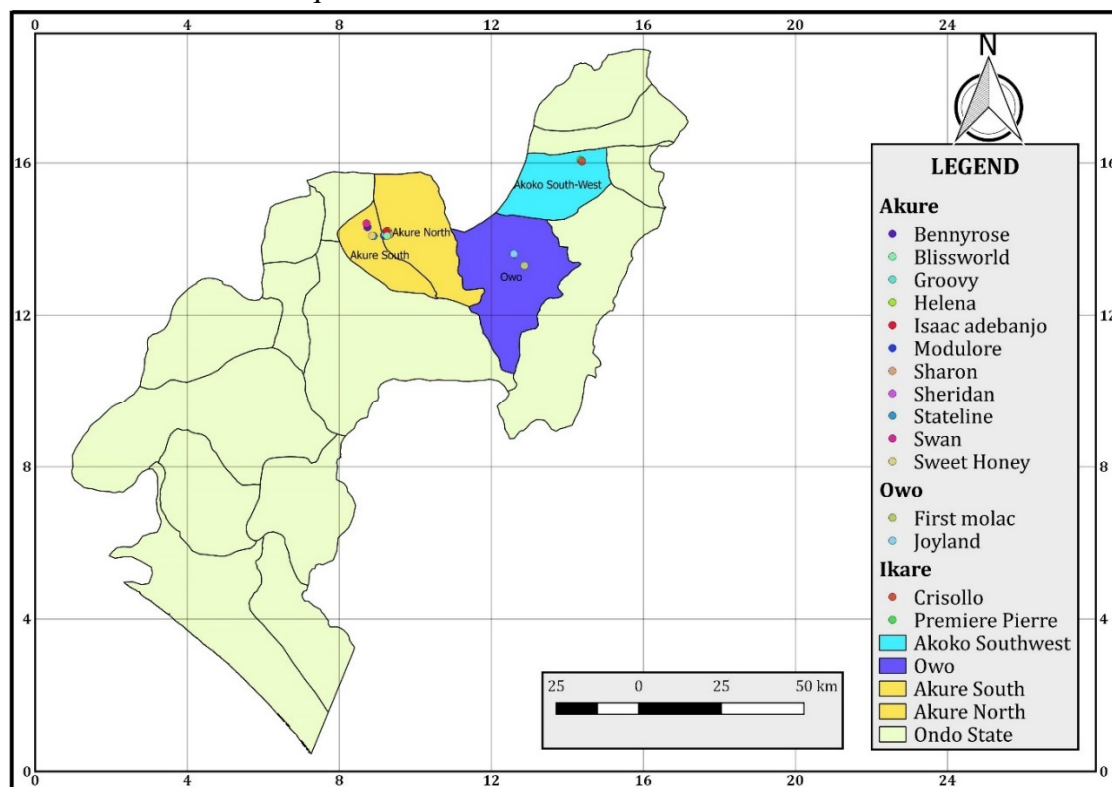


Fig. 1: Map of Ondo state showing the study areas

Results

Socio-demography Characteristics of Visitors

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the visitors to the selected hotels.

Majority of the respondents were males (54.7%) between 26-33 years of age (46.7%). Also, highest percentage of the respondents were single (62.8%) and had religion of Christianity (63.81%). In

addition, highest percentage of the respondents (60.8%) had tertiary education and all the respondents were Nigerians, with 70% of them residing in

Akure. Furthermore, highest percentage of the respondents had low income of below 50,000 (53.2%).

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of visitors at the hotels

Variables	Frequency (N=600)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	328	54.7
Female	272	45.3
Age		
18-25years	161	26.8
26-33 years	280	46.7
34-41 years	112	18.7
42-49 years	38	6.3
50 years and above	9	1.5
Marital Status		
Single	377	62.8
Married	204	34.0
Divorced	10	1.7
Widow	9	1.5
Educational Background		
Non-formal Education	19	3.2
Primary Education	46	7.7
Secondary Education	170	28.3
Tertiary Education	365	60.8
Others	19	3.2
Nationality		
Nigerian	600	100
Foreigner	0	0
Place of Residence		
Akure	420	70.0
Owo	90	15.0
Ikare	90	15.0
Religion		
Christianity	383	63.8
Muslim	207	34.5
Traditional Worshipper	10	1.7
Others	0	0
Monthly Income		
< ₦50,000	319	53.2
₦51,000-₦100,000	209	34.8
₦101,000-₦150,000	45	7.5
₦151,000-₦200,000	18	3.0
Above ₦200,000	9	1.5

Figure 2 shows the visitor's level of awareness of marketing in the hotels. Majority of the visitors (94%) were aware of marketing in the hotels. Figure 3 shows the marketing strategies in which the visitors were aware of in the hotels. Some of the visitors are aware of word-of-mouth

publicity, online/social media publicity, billboard publicity, and handbill, while most are not aware of sales promotion, TV/Radio advertisement, Newspaper/magazine publicity, community meeting, church/mosque and any other form of publicity.

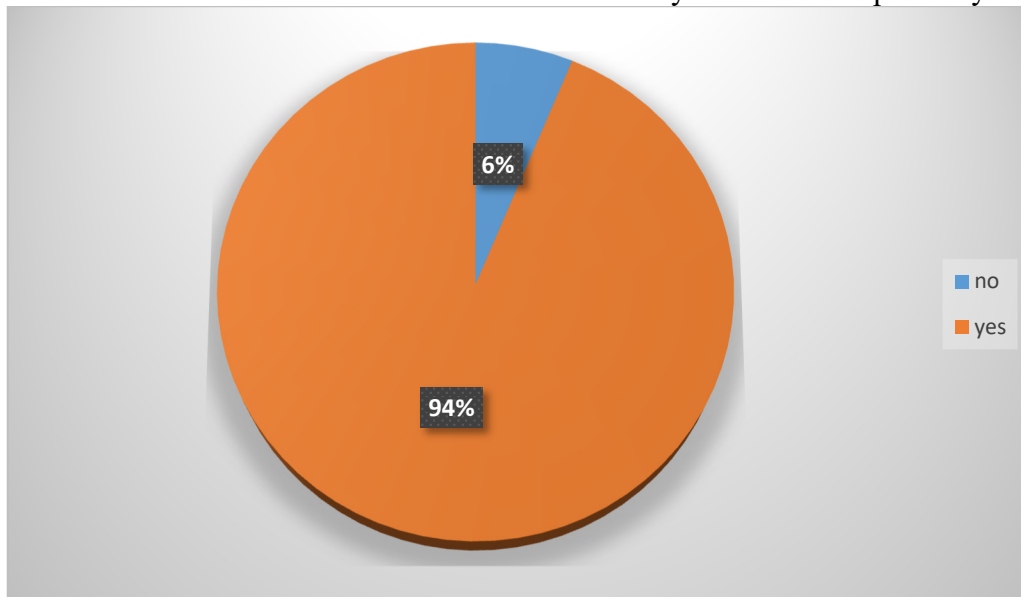


Fig. 2: customer's awareness of marketing in the hotels

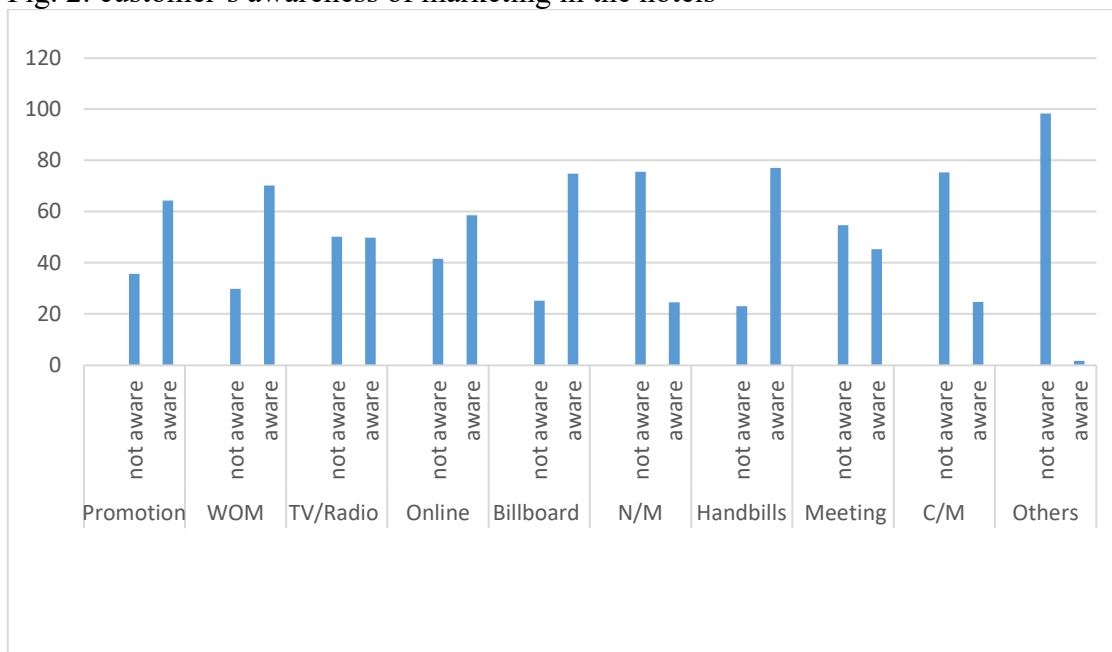


Fig. 3: Customer's awareness of marketing strategies in the hotels

Key: WOM: word of mouth; N/M: Newspaper/magazine publicity; C/M: church or mosque

Perception About the Importance of Marketing

Table 2 shows the perception about the importance of marketing. Majority of the respondents (48.7%) strongly agreed that marketing tools need to be updated depending on market conditions, majority (51%) of them agreed that a proper website is necessary for the marketing efforts of hotels. Most of the respondents (44.7%) also agreed that effective marketing provides a competitive advantage, majority of them (54.8%) strongly agreed that marketing helps and supports the increase in sales and hotel profitability. 44.5% of the respondents agreed that marketing costs the hotel a lot of money and time. 52.2% of the

respondents strongly agreed that marketing efforts increase the hotel recognition in the market. 61.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that marketing allows customers to be aware of new services offered.

Relationship between Socio-demographic Characteristic of Visitors and Visitor's Awareness of Marketing in the Hotels

Table 3 show that there is a significant relationship between the age, place of residence, education and visitors awareness. In addition, the table also shows that there is no significant relationship between visitor's gender, marital status, religion, monthly income and visitor's awareness of marketing in the hotels.

Table 2: Perception about the importance of marketing

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
Marketing tools need to be updated depending on market conditions	292(48.7%)	280(46.7%)	28(4.7%)	0	0	4.44	0.58
A proper web site is necessary for the marketing efforts of hotels	267(44.5%)	306(51%)	27(4.5)	0	0	4.40	0.57
Effective marketing provides a competitive advantage	244(40.7%)	268(44.7%)	58(9.7%)	20(3.3%)	10(1.7%)	4.19	0.87
Marketing helps and supports the increase in sales and hotel profitability	329(54.8%)	213(35.5%)	38(6.3)	20(3.3%)	0	4.42	0.76
Marketing costs the hotel a lot of money and time	212(35.3%)	267(44.5%)	36(6.0%)	85(14.2%)	0	4.01	0.99
Marketing efforts increase the hotel recognition in the market	313(52.2%)	241(40.2%)	36(6.0%)	10(1.7%)	0	4.41	0.75
Marketing allows customers to be aware of new services offered	369(61.5%)	195(32.5%)	27(4.5%)	9(1.5%)	0	4.54	0.66

SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

Relationship between Socio-demographic Characteristic of Visitors and Visitor's Awareness of Marketing in the Hotels

Table 3 show that there is a significant relationship between the age, place of residence, education and visitors

awareness. In addition, the table also shows that there is no significant relationship between visitor's gender, marital status, religion, monthly income and visitor's awareness of marketing in the hotels.

Table 3: relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and visitor's awareness

Variables	Chi square (χ^2) value	P-value	Remark
Gender	7.67	0.06	NS
Age	15.44	0.04	*
Marital status	3.73	0.29	NS
Place of residence	36.17	0.00	*
Religion	2.08	0.35	NS
Education	90.49	0.00	*
Monthly income	7.62	0.11	NS

p<0.05, * - Significant, Ns - Not significant

Relationship between Visitors Awareness and Perception about marketing

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between visitors awareness of marketing and their perception about marketing (sig = 0.000, p < 0.05)

Table 4: relationship between visitor's awareness and perception

Variables	Chi square (χ^2) value	P-value	Remark
Relationship between visitors awareness and perception about marketing	92.58	0.00	*

p<0.05, * - Significant

Discussion

Table 1 revealed that there were more male visitors than female visitors in the hotels which is line with study by Arowosafe *et al.* (2018) who reported majority as male participants. Most of them were single, all were Nigerians, and majority had a tertiary education as supported by Adeleye *et al.* (2020) who revealed tertiary education as highest education in their research. Majority of the respondents in this study earn less than ₦50,000 per month. Majority of the visitors were Christians and it was also found out that most of the visitors were in their active ages. This is consistent with

Adediran and Sule (2019), which also found out in a research which they carried out in some hotels in Ilorin, that majority of the respondents were male, most of them were single, majority were Nigerians, most of them had tertiary education and they earn less than ₦50,000 monthly and most of the visitors were Christians.

Figure 2 revealed that majority of the visitors in these hotels were aware of marketing in the hotels. Anil (2017) found out in a research which was carried out as regards awareness of marketing in hospitality industry, that majority of visitors were aware of the marketing in

those places. Majority were aware of sales promotion, word of mouth publicity, online/social media publicity, billboard publicity and handbills, this shows that most of the hotels employ the use of sales promotion, social media publicity, billboards and handbills publicity more than other forms of marketing. This result is consistent with the findings of Vedaste (2018), which found out that many visitors knew about the existence of a hotel via word-of-mouth publicity. Anil (2017) reported that many respondents were familiar with sales promotion in the industry.

It was established that the advertising campaign in the hotels in persuading consumers to buy the hotel products is very effective. This is consistent with Nalugo (2018) which reported that advertising is effective in drawing visitors' attention to know more about the hotel and it helps in customer's purchasing decision, this implies that it helps create awareness and leads to purchase of hotel products.

The findings from this research shows that, marketing allows customers to be aware of new services offered, it increases hotel recognition, it provides a competitive advantage and it helps and supports the increase in sales and hotel profitability. These findings are in sync with the findings of Talabi (2015), which also discovered from his research that marketing helps in building the hotels brand name and placing the hotels product or service in the heart of prospective customers which means the hotel, this implies that it helps to build visibility which also in turn increase the hotel recognition in the market. He also affirmed that marketing gives a hotel competitive advantage over others and it

also boost the hotel's profitability, efficiency and higher income generation.

Conclusion

This study concluded that customers are aware of marketing in hotels which makes the advertising campaigns in the hotels effective and most of them are aware of promotion, words of mouth, billboards and handbills marketing strategies which is being used by the various hotels and this makes customers aware of new service and also prompt customers to patronize the hotels. It is therefore recommended that advertising campaigns should be encouraged in hotels and management of the hotels should be more creative in their marketing strategy because this will distinguish them from others who may serve as competitors.

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