

Exploring the Determinants of the Demand for Pottery Products in Nigeria for National Economic Advancement

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ABSTRACT: *The obvious decline in the demand for pottery wares in Nigeria is worrisome as the trend is pushing many potters out of business. Meanwhile the nation needs to harness all its resources for economic growth, but the pottery, through which the resources could be exploited seem not to enjoy patronage. In this work, literatures were reviewed to fathom the determinant for the demand for pottery. It was discovered that the attributes of the pottery wares, price of alternative imported pottery wares, and that of vessels made of materials other than clay, effect of poor advertisement, taste, interest and orientation, and the income of the consumers are the major determinants for the demand for pottery wares. Homemade tiles, personalized pottery, and ceremonial wares are pots with unique selling points identified for the potters to engage in. The Nigerian potters needs to improve on the qualities of their products in order to compete favourably with imported wares and wares made of plastics and metals at the market.*

KEYWORDS: pottery, homemade tiles, attributes, unique selling point, consumers, demand

INTRODUCTION

The pottery technology is an aspect of ceramics that deals in the manufacture of clay ware. Objects made are commonly useful ones, such as vessels for holding liquids, plates or bowls for serving food, and pots for planting flowers. Also, decorative wares which include, flower vases, decorative figures, wall hangings etc. are part of objects made by the potters. There used to be heavy demands for these items on daily bases by consumers as household, utility wares and souvenirs during occasions such as wedding, burial ceremonies among others (Okonkwo, 2014).

Clay is the major material used for the manufacture of pottery and its deposits can be found in large quantities at many states in Nigeria. These states include; Abuja (FCT) Akwa Ibom, Anambra State, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun,

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Ondo, Oyo, and Sokoto (Chembasy International Limited, 2019). Clay is a type of soil or natural rock with fine grain particles. When appropriately moistened, clays becomes plastic, and could be manipulated into different shapes of interest. Shaped plastic clay are dried and subjected to firing and it becomes brittle, hard and non-plastic, giving it a permanent physical and chemical change. These properties are the reason why it is invaluable for making pottery.



In the 90s, production of pottery wares was a source of survival for many families in Nigeria. Unfortunately in the 20s many pottery centres have become the shadows of their previous selves. Potters have reduced drastically and younger generations are not prepared to take up the job. In a study on students' perception of Ceramics Education in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions, Okonkwo (2014) identifies poor economic reward as a major factor responsible for the reluctance of most Nigerian youths to enter into ceramics profession. The students were of the opinion that the course is not lucrative and therefore will not guarantee decent livelihood after graduation. Consequently, only a negligible percentage of the few who managed to study the course practice it after graduation. Results of research efforts points to low patronage of pottery products in Nigeria as the major setback for the growth of the trade (Sullyman; 2003; Bakinde, 2008 & Gukas, 2008). As a result of this decline in the demand for the products, the economic and social status of potters were badly affected. The low economic and social status of potters may of course account for the youths' ambivalent negative perception towards pottery practice. Indeed many potters quitted the trade because their wares are no longer selling, which further increases the number of unemployed persons in Nigeria.

In a study by Nortey and Asismoaso (2019), it was discovered that the effect of declining demand for pottery in Ghana has significant effect on potters becoming unemployed. This is a similar situation in Nigeria and unemployment of the potters definitely has adverse effect on the economy of the nation. In the first place the human resources in the form of the skill of the unemployed lot are rendered unproductive. In the same vein the natural resources in the form of clay deposits become redundant.

Due to the decline in the demand for pottery products, Okonkwo (2014) recommended an urgent need for a study on the determinants of the demand for pottery in Nigeria in order to create a place for it at the national market and keep the potters in business. Thus, this study is a review focusing on what determines the demand for pottery products in Nigeria. A general overview of products demand from the economic perspectives was considered. Attempts were made at factoring the attributes of pottery products into the consumers' readiness to demand for them. The products were then categorized in accordance with income-demand relationship analysis. A set of clay products that could stimulate the consumers' interests were identified for the potters to repackage and market.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research in which literatures were reviewed on the determinant of demand for products with particular reference to pottery. Data were collected from books, journals and print media. The review was complemented with the voice of the consumers and observable behaviours. Interviews with contemporary potters were also held. Demand for a good depends upon a potentially infinite number of factors, which impact each consumer's decision to buy. Some commonly identified determinants were considered, as each affect the demand for pottery products in Nigeria. These determinants can be stated in function form as

$$D_x = f(P_x, P_y, P_z \text{ etc.}, I_c, I_d, A, C_t, C_e, G_p; C_c)$$

Where D_x = demand for good x; P_x = price of good x; $P_y, P_z, \text{ etc}$ = prices of related goods; I = individual income; I_d = distribution of income in the society; A = advertisement; C_i = Consumer's taste; C_e = Consumers expectation; G_p = Government policy; and C_c = climatic condition.

The Price of Goods

Like many other goods, there is an inverse relationship between the price of a pot and the willingness of the consumer to buy it, all things being equal. Assuming a person wants to buy pot for any reason, the chances of buying it is greater at affordable price than when the price is higher. However, in the case of many pottery ware even when the price is low customers still don't buy them. In the ordeal of Lami Samuel, a potter in Bwari area of Abuja, it was found that pottery were selling a few years back but later, patronage continues to dwindle (Adeniyi & Ngbokai, 2016). This was not because of price but due to changing time and some other factors. One of such factor may be the prices of related goods.

Prices of related goods

Related goods to pottery may be substitute goods or complimentary goods. In the case of pottery in Nigeria, the substitute goods include glazed wares from foreign lands and bigger factory, and vessels made in metals and plastics. The pottery craft, which has been a source of livelihood for many craft potters and contemporary ceramicists, is now challenged by modern conveniences. Pots are being replaced by modern vessels of aluminium, enamelware and plastics (William & Kwesiga, 2016). The products of Nigerian potters cannot compete favourably with the imported potteries, and the mass-produced wares. If wares of exact

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qualities with the imported ones are to be produced in Nigeria, it will be more expensive due to the cost of production. The price of the substitute goods in this regard is indirectly a factor determining the demand for pottery produced in Nigeria.

Complimentary goods to pottery may also be a determinant for pottery made in Nigeria. Example of such goods are ornamental plants, tea, isi-ewu, beer, coffee, and garri. Many hotels use native pottery cups to serve local beverages like pito, burukutu, gin and beer etc (Okhiria, 2015). As the demand for these complementary goods increases, that of the pottery used with them increases. For instance the increase in the demand for ornamental plants would bring about increase in the demand for pot planters so long as clay pots are used as the planter.



Individual income

The income of a consumer may affect the purchasing power. However some people still do not buy pottery wares despite increase in income. Considering income demand relationship, goods are group into four categories, namely: inferior goods, normal goods and luxury goods. Demand for inferior goods increase with the income of the consumer but to a fixed unit. This may be true of pottery granting that consumer wishes to demand for it. There is a limit to the number of pottery article which a consumer can own irrespective of the income. As for normal good, demand increases linearly with increase in the consumer's income. Demand for pottery ware is hardly dependent on the increase in the consumer's income. For instance people living at Abuja of today are of higher income than those living there in the time past. Despite that, the potter, Lami Samuel of Bwari, finds it difficult to sell her wares as before. In the case of luxury goods, demand decreases with increase in the income of the consumer and their perception about the use of the good. Many pottery fall into this category. For instance with increase in income, those using clay pots to contain water abandon it for plastic containers or modern water dispenser.

Distribution of income in the society

Only a section with high income can demand for certain goods because of the uneven distribution of income in the society. For instance only consumers of high income, who lives in a building with large space to accommodate the type of giant pot (about1.6m) as shown in the plate can demand for it. According to the potter at ATAMORA Pottery, people of high income who live at urban cities and tourists usually demand for giant pots.



Effect Advertisement

Advertisement may have enormous effect on the demand for a product. Advertising involves catching the attention of the consumers, making information available, demonstrating the features to potential consumers, persuasion, and endorsement by celebrities. This determinant is a factor in demand for pottery. Northey and Asismoaso (2019) found that location was highly influential factor in determining the demand for pottery. This is in agreement with the observation of William and Kwesiga (2016) that studio potters who run small-scale crafts business, display their pottery products from their workshops and sell them to visitors and customers because their studios are usually, strategically positioned near towns and by the roadside. In addition, they sell their products at craft centres. The display of pottery at strategic points only brings the products to the attention of prospective consumers. However, it does not sometimes make information available or demonstrate the features, hence only those who are interested or know the use would buy.

Consumer's taste and preferences

The taste and preferences of consumers depends upon factors like life styles, customs, common habits and change in fashions, standards of living, religions values, age, and sex, provided differences in prices are proportionate to their income. This was corroborated in the study on ceramic as a way of economic empowerment by Adah (2007), where development, perception, and religious beliefs of prospective consumers were identified as the bane of low demand for articles of local pottery. As well, in a study of low patronage of Nigerian made pottery, Bakinde (2008) observed that the reason for poor demand for contemporary pottery was that the vessels are produced without recourse to ideological or cultural values of the consumers.

Consumer's expectation

The anticipation in the fall or rise in price, or increase or decrease in income, or anticipation of scarcity of a good can dictate the demand for it. People do not buy clay pot unless they have need for it, or stumble on one that meets their interest. They buy at their convenience and not based on any anticipation of rise or fall in price or its scarcity. From the work of William and Kwesiga (2016), there are indications that pottery are used for occasional and special purposes as vases used by the newly wedded brides for keeping hot water and perfume pots. In addition, smoking pipes are used by elderly people while some items are used for cultural purpose. Demand for such items are not determined by expectation or any anticipation of any sort.

Population Growth

The demand for a product may increase with increase population of prospective consumer. More people are becoming sophisticated and more are becoming religious. The growth in the population of these sets of people has negative correlation to demand for pottery. Conversely, the growth in the population of pot collectors and users of pottery affects the demand. Population growth can have both negative and positive impact on the demand for pottery, depending on the type of consumers.

Government Policy

Government policy on tax, importation and credit facilities for producer affects the demand for a good.

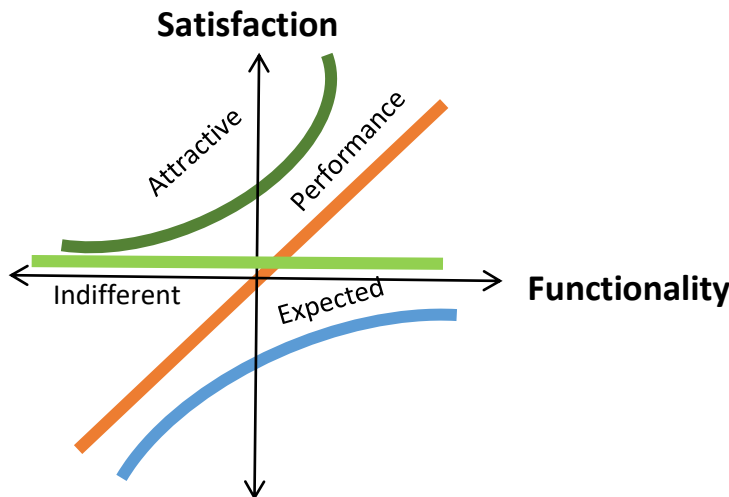
Climatic Condition

Attributes of the pottery wares

The consumer needs in a product are the attributes of the product which gives them satisfaction and delight. That is, the consumers will always demand for what gives them pleasure. In which a case, what gives the consumer that emotional, hedonic and practical benefits associated with products must be the attribute of focus. From the designers perspective, the attribute of a product could be classified into soft and hard attributes, Hard-Attributes define the product's "infrastructure" – abilities, performances, and reliability. While the Soft-Attributes define the product's front – user-experience, character, look and feel. Just as the consumer will be dissatisfied with unattractive product, a non performing attractive one will be unsatisfying. The balance between the two differs from product to product. However any good product must include them both in totally separate and different manners (Yariv, 2014). A product is not measured solely by its performance. Indeed, a product's soft-attributes act (in many cases) as the product's Unique Selling Point (USP). Nonetheless, the best soft-attributes cannot cover poor hard-attributes performances. As there are varieties of pottery ware, it is important to identify which attribute needs to be improved in one type of product or the order to guarantee In prioritizing customer satisfaction and delight, Daniel (2017) alluded to Kano model by categorizing products attributes into four, based on how their functionality brings about satisfaction to the consumer. These attributes come under one of the following categories:

- i. Performance
- ii. Must-be (expected)
- iii. Attractive
- iv. Indifferent

As shown in figure, attractive attribute quickly brings excitement and further efforts on increasing the attribute may bring no further satisfaction. As for performance attribute, functionality is proportional to satisfaction. The more the functionality of the performance the greater the satisfaction. It thus mean that attractive pottery of high functionality will be most sought for by the consumers where such functions are desired.



One way to improve a product and to retain the demand for it is to pay attention to its quality (Ria & Sam'un, 2019). In this work the quality of the product was emphasised as the major attribute that will make the consumer part with his money. In the work of Chang & Wu (2007) it was discovered that products of Aesthetic and Bios forms were the ones most likely to elicit consumer pleasure. (Chang & Wu, 2007), and consumer will only demand for products that gives him pleasure and satisfaction

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Clay is the major material used for the manufacture of pottery and its deposits can be found in large quantities across many states in Nigeria. If well tapped, this this natural endowment has the potential of making the economy of Nigeria one of the biggest in the world. Local pottery producers have continued to make their impacts in pottery wares production but regrettably; their contribution to the sector is infinitesimal due to the decline in the demand for local pottery products in the country. This study through literature mining identified major determinants of demand for products with particular reference to pottery to include: costs which bother on price of related goods and income of consumers. Others include distribution, product advertisement as well as tastes and preferences of consumers (quality). In order to make pottery production more attractive to producers and Nigerians, the under listed recommendations are made.

1. There is need to apply modern technology in the production of local pottery in order to enhance it quality and meet the expectations of consumers. The products should be properly coated, impermeable and be made more attractive. To achieve this, there is need to organize

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2. In addition to the above, literatures revealed that local pottery products are mostly produced with single clays. Therefore, using a more composed body of materials would further strengthen the products and make it more durable. The use of other additives such as feldspar to reduce firing temperature and cost and the addition of manganese to give alternate effects are means of improving the quality and even the aesthetics of the products.

3. More so, the unit cost of producing pottery wares in Nigeria is higher when compared to the cost of imported wares due to the high cost of firing. Therefore, there is need for Technocrats to assist in building fuel efficient kilns using waste products such as saw dust. If this is achieved, it will tremendously cut the cost of production.

4. With respect to distribution of pottery wares, there is need for good and accessible road networks to be constructed to give pottery dealers and retailers' easy access to pottery production centres. Owing to the fragile nature of pottery wares, bad roads can lead to damages of the product during transportation and thereby discouraging customers to settling for other available competing brands within their reach in the cities or towns.

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