

EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THEATRE PERFORMANCE

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS,
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
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OCTOBER, 2025.

DECLARATION

I declare that;

This project is based on the study undertaken by me in the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin under the supervision of Dr J. N. Bardi.

All ideas and views are products of my personal research and where the view of others have been used and expressed, they were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned certify that this work was carried out by Igboamaka, Great Nwakaego with the Mat No. ART2101230, in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Benin, Benin City.

Dr J. N. Bardi (arpa)
Project Supervisor

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Date.

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his strength, guidance and support throughout my academic years in the prestigious University of Benin.

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ABSTRACT

This project addresses the critical issue of effective marketing strategies to use to maximize audience engagement and attendance for theatre in Nigeria, specifically focusing on strategies that appeal to the crucial youth demographic. The study utilised a quantitative research design, employing a structured questionnaire administered to Theatre Arts students at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). This cohort was selected for their intrinsic knowledge of performance and their role as both consumers and future practitioners of the arts. Data analysis of student responses revealed key preferences and perceptions regarding theatre marketing efficacy. Findings demonstrated a significant preference for digital channels over traditional media (print, radio, or television advertising). Furthermore, students highly value interactive content, clear pricing structures, and promotional packages linked to educational or course programmes. The conclusion is that successful marketing in the Nigerian Theatre should shift from a singular pattern towards a multifaceted, data-driven, and audience-centric approach. It is recommended that Nigerian Theatre companies by implementing these strategies can harness the full potential of this marketing tool to promote their performances.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Theatre has historically served as one of the most compelling platforms for storytelling, cultural expression, and community engagement. As a dynamic art form, it has endured centuries of evolution, from ancient ritualistic performances to medieval morality plays, Renaissance drama, and today's technologically enhanced productions. Despite its adaptability and artistic depth, theatre has often grappled with the challenge of maintaining robust audience engagement, especially in a world that has grown increasingly digitized and saturated with competing entertainment options.

The rise of cinema, television, and more recently, on-demand streaming services and social media content, has fundamentally altered how people consume narratives. Consequently, theatre now contends with a shortened attention span and a preference for instant gratification. Amid these challenges, effective marketing has become not merely a tool for publicity but an essential component for the survival and growth of theatrical productions. In a market dominated by visual and digital storytelling, theatre must now appeal to audiences with compelling marketing strategies that emphasize its unique value—its live, unfiltered, emotionally resonant experience.

The integration of digital tools, branding strategies, consumer psychology, and audience analytics has transformed how marketing functions within the creative industry.

Live performances are increasingly marketed like branded experiences, with producers focusing on engaging potential attendees before, during, and after a production. Whether through email campaigns, influencer collaborations, or immersive pre-show content, theatres are reinventing their promotional playbooks to build deeper, more sustainable audience relationships.

Furthermore, the democratization of content creation and sharing, particularly via platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, has allowed smaller, independent theatre groups to market their shows with minimal resources—provided they adopt a strategic and creative approach. In this shifting landscape, understanding what constitutes "effective" marketing becomes critical not only for box office success but for the cultural relevance and continuity of theatre itself.

This study aims to explore and evaluate the various marketing strategies utilized in theatre performance, with a view to identifying practices that have proven most successful in attracting audiences, driving engagement, and sustaining visibility in an ever-evolving entertainment environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite theatre's longstanding reputation as a medium of profound artistic expression, it continues to face a significant disconnect between production quality and audience attendance. While theatres around the world produce exceptional work, many

experience low patronage due to ineffective or outdated marketing strategies that fail to resonate with today's audience.

Modern consumers are inundated with choices and rarely engage with content unless it speaks directly to their preferences, values, or lifestyle. Unfortunately, many theatre companies lack either the resources or expertise to harness marketing tools that cater to these preferences. For example, marketing materials may fail to utilize inclusive language, relevant aesthetics, or engaging multimedia that today's audience finds appealing.

Another pressing issue is the underutilization of data-driven marketing. Many theatre managers make decisions based on intuition or tradition rather than data analytics, leading to misaligned promotional efforts. The result is a recurring cycle where theatre productions struggle to sell tickets despite critical acclaim.

Furthermore, the global COVID-19 pandemic has changed consumer behaviour, with audiences now seeking hybrid or digital alternatives to live events. Theatres that fail to adapt their marketing and service delivery models to these changes risk alienating their audience base and becoming obsolete.

Thus, the core problem lies in understanding and implementing marketing strategies that align with contemporary expectations while preserving the integrity and cultural richness of theatre. This study aims to address that gap.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Marketing is no longer a peripheral function in the theatre; it is a foundational pillar. A performance, no matter how artistically brilliant, cannot thrive without an audience. The rationale for this study is rooted in the increasing need for theatre professionals to understand the dynamics of marketing in the digital age and apply them effectively to live performance.

This research is particularly relevant in light of recent shifts in audience behaviour, the proliferation of digital platforms, and the democratization of entertainment production and consumption. Consumers now act as both spectators and critics, and their word-of-mouth, expressed online, can make or break a show.

Moreover, this study recognizes the importance of equipping upcoming theatre practitioners and managers with practical tools for navigating a competitive entertainment landscape. By investigating contemporary marketing techniques—from social media promotion to experiential activations—this work provides a well-rounded perspective that merges theory and practice.

In addition, the research addresses the gap in scholarly attention to the marketing of theatre, as most marketing literature tends to focus on mainstream products, services, or film. Theatre, with its unique consumption patterns and ephemeral nature, deserves a more tailored exploration.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to comprehensively explore and evaluate the use and effectiveness of marketing strategies in theatre performance. The objectives include:

1. To identify the range of marketing strategies currently used in the promotion of theatre performances.
2. To assess the effectiveness of digital marketing tools in increasing audience reach and engagement.
3. To explore the continuing relevance of traditional marketing techniques in the
4. contemporary theatre landscape.
5. To examine how experiential marketing can enhance audience experience and loyalty.
6. To recommend practical strategies for overcoming marketing challenges in the theatre industry.

1.5 Research Questions

To systematically address the identified problems and explore the potential of strategic marketing in theatre, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the most prevalent marketing strategies used in promoting theatre performances?
2. How effective are digital marketing tools such as social media and email campaigns in driving theatre attendance?

3. What roles do traditional marketing techniques still play in promoting theatre in the 21st century?
4. In what ways can experiential marketing tactics enhance audience engagement?
5. What are the key barriers theatre organizations face in implementing modern marketing strategies?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is of significant value to a variety of stakeholders within the theatre and marketing ecosystem:

- **Theatre Practitioners:** Actors, directors, producers, publicity directors and production managers will benefit from insights into audience behaviour, enabling them to tailor their productions and marketing efforts accordingly.
- **Marketing Professionals:** The study offers a sector-specific application of broader marketing principles, providing marketers with innovative ways to promote live events.
- **Academics and Students:** It contributes to the limited academic discourse on theatre marketing, serving as a reference for future research.
- **Policy Makers and Cultural Advocates:** Insights from the study can inform funding priorities, educational programme, and cultural policies that support the performing arts.
- **Theatre Audiences:** By improving how productions are marketed, audiences will gain access to performances that resonate more closely with their preferences and values.

In sum, this study bridges the gap between creative innovation and commercial viability, helping to secure theatre's place in modern culture.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research focuses exclusively on marketing strategies for live theatre performance, encompassing both digital and traditional methods. It analyzes how various techniques impact audience engagement, ticket sales, and brand visibility.

The scope includes:

- Local and international theatre companies
- Community-based and professional productions
- Digital (social media, websites) and physical (flyers, billboards) marketing tools
- Marketing strategies pre-, during, and post-performance

However, the study does not cover marketing strategies for film, television, or web series. Also, the results may not be fully generalizable to all cultural contexts due to differing audience behaviours, internet penetration, and economic conditions.

In terms of limitations, the availability of data from smaller or less digitally active theatre companies may restrict the comprehensiveness of the findings. Additionally, rapidly evolving digital trends mean that some strategies evaluated as effective during the study may become outdated over time.

1.8 Definition of Terms

- **Theatre Performance:** A live artistic presentation, typically of a dramatic or musical nature, performed before a live audience.
- **Marketing Strategy:** A plan or set of actions designed to promote, sell, and distribute a product or service to a target audience.
- **Digital Marketing:** The use of digital technologies, platforms, and tools such as social media, websites, and email to market products or services.
- **Traditional Marketing:** Conventional methods of promotion including print advertising, broadcast media, direct mail, and outdoor signage.
- **Experiential Marketing:** A strategy that aims to create immersive, memorable experiences that engage the consumer personally and emotionally.
- **Audience Engagement:** The degree of attention, interest, and emotional involvement an audience exhibits before, during, and after a performance.
- **Brand Visibility:** The extent to which a brand or product is seen, recognized, and recalled by potential consumers.
- **Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC):** A holistic marketing approach that ensures all forms of communications and messages are carefully linked together for coherence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance

Marketing is the process of planning, executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange that satisfy individual and organisation. Awodiya discuss that marketing is a system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote and distribute products, goods or services for the benefit of the customers (213). Awodiya's discussion recognize the four P's of marketing which price, place, product, promotion (213). According to Bardi and Diakpomrere marketing is: the art and science of identifying the need of the customers and satisfying them at the right price, time and place with minimum waste and maximum profit (45).

Theatre is a collaborative art form that uses live performance to present experience to an audience. Ayarkoroma and Bardi and Diakpomrere points out that the word, theatre is from a Greek word, theatron, which means "a seeing place" or "place of seeing (14 - 1). Ayarkoroma views that "the theatre is a place where dramatic performance takes place (13). This involves a building or an open space where the dramatic performance is acted by actors to audience.

According to the Oxford dictionary Marketing strategies can be defined "as a plan of action designed to promote and sell a product or service." Marketing strategies refer to

the coordinated and intentional efforts made by organizations to influence consumer behaviour, drive product or service adoption, and achieve market goals. Marketing strategies concern the link between the organization and its customers, and how best to leverage resources within an organization to achieve a competitive advantage. Ododo and Adedoyin states that marketing and theatre share a very close affinity in terms of their public-centredness and service provision orientation. In concrete assessment, both depend on the following business elements of physical facilities: People or participant and processes to thrive well (217).

Theatre marketing involves four major processes which are: "Marketing Concept, Marketing Research, Marketing Plan, Marketing Mix" (Adedina 100).

Marketing Concept: This is a business view that focuses on understanding and meeting the needs and wants of the customer or audience. It's a customer-centric base approach that prioritizes creating value for customers, building relationships, and driving long-term growth. Thereby developing products or services that meet those needs and continuously adapting to changing customer needs.

Marketing Research: is the process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to understand customer or audience needs, preferences, and behaviours. Having a better understanding of the market interest helps businesses make informed decisions about product development, marketing strategies, and resource allocation of a theatrical production.

Marketing research methods include:

1. Surveys
2. Focus groups
3. Interviews
4. Observation studies
5. Online analytics

Marketing Plan: Bardi and Diakpomrere states that "a marketing plan concerns the satisfaction of the audience needs, physically or psychologically" (47). A marketing plan outlines a company's overall marketing strategy and tactics to operate. Such as Executive summary, Situation analysis, Marketing objectives, Target market description, Marketing strategies, Tactics and action plans, Budget and resource allocation, Performance metrics and evaluation. A marketing plan helps the theatre company stay focused, allocate resources effectively, and measure progress toward marketing objectives.

Marketing Mix: The marketing mix, also known as the 4Ps, refers to the four key elements of a marketing strategy: They include -

1. **Product:** What the company offers to meet customer needs. The art itself, being the service rendered by actors, dancer and other performers on stage, is the product (Bardi and Diakpomrere 48).

2. **Price:** The amount customers pay for your product or service, it is also the value affixed to the production in order for it to be accessed by the audience. There are factors to consider when pricing for a theatrical production such as printing of tickets, posters, publicity, income of the supposed audience and so on.

3. **Place (Distribution):** This venue or location of the production which can take place in a building or an open space. When picking a place for the theatrical production, it is advisable to pick one that is accessible to the audience and one that is in line with the production budget. Rhine sees a place "as the way in which your product is presented to consumers" (140).

4. **Promotion:** This involves how theatrical companies communicate with customers or audience and promote their product or service through advertising, sales promotions, public relations, digital marketing. A promotion of a product or services must be catching in a way that it attracts the audience to watch the production. Bardi and Diakpomrere states that promotion is very expedient in theatre marketing (50).

The marketing mix is a framework for creating a comprehensive marketing strategy that balances these four elements to meet audience needs and achieve the aim and objectives of the theatre company. In the realm of theatre performance, these strategies take on unique characteristics because of the live, temporal, and often intimate nature of the experience. Theatre is not simply a product to be consumed; it is an event, a cultural

ritual, and a medium of human expression that appeal to audiences on emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic levels.

Theatre marketing is uniquely complex because the product – a live performance – is inherently experiential and ephemeral. Unlike a tangible good, a play or musical is intangible (you cannot “see” or test it before attending) and perishable (its value exists only in the moment of performance). This means that effective theatre marketing must emphasize the unique, emotional, and social aspects of the experience. Early promoters of theatre used simple signals – for example, Elizabethan playhouses raised colored flags (black for tragedy, white for comedy) to announce the type of play. Today’s marketers build on that heritage by combining brand-building (e.g. developing a strong identity for the show), audience research (segmenting potential patrons by demographics and interests), and multi-channel promotion. Theatre has been regarded in the literature as a fusion of art marketing, non-profit marketing, and service marketing. In practice, this means cultivating the theatre’s brand (creative vision, reputation and personality), while also using targeted promotional tactics (advertising, PR, pricing) to reach and retain audiences.

Because consumer choices in entertainment are abundant, modern theatre marketers must often create integrated, omnichannel strategies. Audiences now expect a seamless narrative about the show across print ads, digital campaigns, social media, and on-site experiences. In one view, live performances are “marketed like branded

experiences,” with producers engaging attendees before, during, and after the show via email campaigns, influencer collaborations, and immersive pre-show content. This Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach ensures consistency: the visual style of posters, the tone of social media posts, the messaging in press releases – all align to reinforce the production’s core themes. Case studies of blockbuster musicals (like *The Lion King* or *Wicked*) demonstrate that success often comes from synchronizing storytelling across channels – building anticipation and then deepening fan loyalty through every touchpoint.

Finally, it is important to recognize that theatre marketing serves both artistic and economic goals. At a theoretical level, scholars note that theatre consumers derive not only entertainment but also social and symbolic value from attending (e.g. signaling personal identity or cultural capital). By understanding these intangible benefits, marketers can tailor strategies that highlight how this particular production offers a memorable, even life-enhancing, experience. In summary, theatre marketing strategies must navigate the field’s distinctive features – intangibility, co-creation of value, and ephemeral nature – while leveraging a mix of promotional tools to connect audiences with performances.

2.2 Digital Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance

With the rise of the internet and mobile technology, digital channels have become indispensable in theatre marketing. Digital tools enable precise targeting and

measurement, allowing even small companies to reach global audiences. The world has become increasingly connected, and a younger generation of youths, raised in a digital era have a preference for digital experiences, theatre practitioners must embrace these new platforms to remain relevant.

According to Iyere and Ogunwuyi the foundational principle of digital marketing for theatre in Nigeria is the need to bridge the gap between traditional theatrical experiences and modern digital engagement (55). The components of a digital strategy typically include; social media marketing, email marketing, influencer partnership, and paid advertising. Each of these contributes to a cohesive digital footprint that can amplify the theatre's brand and drive ticket sales.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a digital marketing strategy that utilizes social media platforms to promote products, services, or content (Olakunle et al. 659). Social media marketing is a crucial tool for Theatre Company to promote their productions, engage with audiences, and build a community. According to Akoh and Ugwu social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube allow theatre artists to move from being mere content producers to engaging with a participatory audience (4).

Social media platforms allow theatre groups to reach a wider audience, beyond geographical limitations (Imiti 182). Thereby engaging in content, such as behind-the-

scenes photos and videos, interactive engagement to attract and retain a clearly defined audience (Iyere and Ogunwuyi 55).

Elements of Social Media Marketing in Theatre include:

Content Marketing: This strategy is about creating valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract audience for a production. For Nigerian theatre, this means moving beyond simple promotional posters. It involves sharing behind-the-scenes photos and videos of rehearsals, set design, and costume creation. These "sneak peeks" build excitement and give the audience a sense of ownership in the creative process. Also writing blog posts that provide insights into the theatre group's productions, share news and updates, and showcase the talent and creativity of the cast and crew (Ekwok 7).

Interactive Engagement: This is a key aspect of social media marketing as it involves using social media features to directly interact with the audience. Examples include live Question and Answer sessions with the cast and crew on platforms like Instagram Live or Facebook Live, polls on Instagram stories to gather feedback on production elements, and creating branded hashtags to encourage audience-generated content (Iyere and Ogunwuyi 56).

Community Building: It involves creating and nurturing a community of loyal audience members who are passionate about the theatre and its productions. According to Iyere and Ogunwuyi community building is essential for theatre groups to establish a loyal fan

base and increase audience engagement (55). As they participate in the creative process, provide feedback, and share their experiences with others fostering sense of belonging and shared passion for the theatre.

Email Marketing

According to Ayarkoroma emails are "effective and less expensive means of publicity. It is an invention of computer age. The computer could be used to send letters to different email addresses at the same time" (89).

Email marketing is a digital marketing strategy that involves sending messages to targeted and personalized customers or subscribers via email (Iyere and Ogunwuyi 56). In this approach of theatre performance, email marketing can be used to promote productions, share news and updates, and build a loyal fan base (Ekwok 7). It helps to increase engagement with the audience, encourage audience participation and improving conversion rates by promoting productions and encouraging subscribers to purchase tickets. Email marketing is a cost-effective way to reach a large audience and promote productions.

Influencer Partnership

Influencer partnership is a marketing strategy where theatre performances collaborate with social media influencers to promote their shows, events, or brand to the influencer's followers (Iyere and Ogunwuyi 58). This partnership can take various forms, such as sponsored content, product reviews, and endorsements, allowing theatre

performances to reach a wider and more targeted audiences (Ekwok 8). By partnering with influencers it helps theatre performances tap into their existing audience, expanding their reach and visibility. Influencers can also create engaging content with the theatre company to showcase the theatre company's productions in order to increase engagement and encourage audience participation towards a theatrical production.

Paid Advertising

Paid advertising in digital marketing refers to the technique of paying for online ad space or sponsored content to reach a target audience. In theatre it involves using online platforms to pay for a theatre performance's promotion. This includes:

Search Engine Advertising (SEA): Search Engine Advertising, also known as Search Engine Marketing (SEM) this involves paying for ads to appear on Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) when users search for specific keywords or phrases. Theatre company can bid on specific keywords or phrases relevant to their production. Ads can increase brand awareness of the production and drive traffic to a website. Examples are Google Ads (formerly Google AdWords) and Bing Ads.

Social Media Advertising: Social media advertising involves paying for ads to appear on social media platforms, such as:

Facebook Ads

Instagram Ads

LinkedIn Ads

Twitter Ads (Now X Ads)

TikTok Ads

This Ads can be targeted to specific demographics, interests, behaviors, and more which reach a large audience, including users who may not be following your brand or production. It can also drive likes, comments, shares, and other engagement metrics, it boost website traffic and tickets sales.

Types of social media ads:

Image ads: Ads featuring images or graphics.

Video ads: Ads featuring video content.

Carousel ads: Ads featuring multiple images or cards.

Story ads: Ads that appear in the stories section of a platform.

Collection ads: Ads that allow audience to purchase products or tickets directly from the platform.

3. **Display Advertising:** This involves paying for ads to appear on:

Websites: Ads appear on websites, often in the form of banners or sidebar ads.

Blogs: Ads appear on blogs, often in the form of sponsored content or banner ads.

Mobile apps: Ads appear within mobile apps, often in the form of banner ads, interstitials, or rewarded videos.

Choosing the right websites, blogs, or apps to display your ads can increase visibility and recognition for your brand of production.

4. **Video Advertising:** Video advertising also involves paying for ads to appear before, during, or after video content on platforms like YouTube, social media, or websites. Such as:

Pre-roll ads: Ads that play before the main video content.

Mid-roll ads: Ads that play during the main video content.

Post-roll ads: Ads that play after the main video content.

Bumper ads: Short ads (usually 6 seconds or less) that play before, during, or after video content.

Video ads can increase audience engagement and interaction by focusing on targeted audiences, their interests, or behaviors. It can be tracked and measured for effectiveness.

To reach a wider and more targeted audience, Nigerian theatre companies must invest in digital advertising. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer sophisticated targeting tools that allow advertisers to reach potential patrons based on their demographics, interests, and online behavior. For instance, an ad for a new production can be specifically targeted at users in Benin who have shown an interest in "theatre," "arts and culture," or "live events." This is a significant improvement over traditional marketing methods, such as print ads, which lack this level of precision.

2.3 Traditional Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance

Traditional marketing for theatre involves strategies that focus on physical and mass media channels to reach a target audience. These methods are deeply rooted in

community engagement and local media presence, and are often employed in conjunction with modern approaches. This involves using creative, attention-grabbing tactics in public spaces. As seen in the marketing of the play *'Odidigboigbo'* written by Austin Ovigie Asagba, The 400 level of the Department of Theatre Arts, Ekehuan Road Campus, University of Benin used banners, posters, and handbills in high-traffic areas and within the school campus to generate buzz. Some effective traditional marketing strategies are:

Print Media

Print Media are the traditional of media that publish information in physical format such as; Newspapers, Magazines, Books, Flyers, Posters and Brochures. Iyav argue that "print media" serves as a vital bridge between the theatre company and the general public, providing a tangible way to communicate key information (11). The print media provided a physical experience for readers to touch and engage in material such as newspapers and magazines, both national and local, have a wide circulation and are often read in public spaces like barber shops, motor parks, and newsstands. This allows theatre productions to reach an audience beyond the typical urban, theatre-going demographic. This makes it a sustainable marketing option for small or independent theatre groups (Iyav 11).

In essence, print media provides a reliable and accessible platform for passing critical information about a play's theme, cast, dates, and venue. It leverages the existing

cultural habits of the Nigerian populace to ensure a production gets the exposure it needs to attract an audience.

Radio

Radio is an efficient means of Mass Communication, it is convenient to use (Bardi and Diakpomrere 34). It remains a vital traditional marketing strategy for theatre performances in Nigeria, particularly due to its wide reach and ability to penetrate local communities where other media may be less accessible. A key advantage is its ability to reach a large number of people who are commuting, at home, or working in places with no internet access or consistent electricity (Iyav 11). Radio marketing for theatre performance could take the form of jingles, spot announcements, news, talk or interview (Ayarkoroma 85). A live interview on a popular radio station can convey the production's themes, share behind-the-scenes stories, and personally connect with listeners, thereby generating interest and encouraging ticket sales (Nwosu 102). Also, Some theatre companies have partnered with radio stations to allow the theatre get multiple mentions over a period, ensuring their message is heard repeatedly by a loyal audience (Nwosu 102).

Television

Television is regarded as the most powerful medium of Mass Communication because of its ability to combine the audio and visual elements in communication (Bardi and Diakpomrere 35). Unlike radio or print, television allows theatre companies to

showcase snippets of the performance, including scenes, behind the scenes, costumes, actors interview and acting. This visual representation can create a powerful emotional connection with the audience, giving them a glimpse of what to expect and building excitement (Amodu).

Television spots – perhaps on local cable or even a segment on a regional morning show – allow for a short visual preview. These media often target older or more general audiences who may not be active on social media. Television, in particular, can create a prestigious aura around a production and may be used to market family-oriented or blockbuster shows (where the budget justifies it).

Posters

Posters are visual displays that can be used to communicate information, promote products or events, or convey messages to a target audience. Posters are used for specific purpose: to inform, to persuade, to sell and to stimulate (Clifford 146). A posters must be concise and clear to communicate the intended message, it also has to be designed to grab attention and make a visual impact. Clifford also state that for a poster to be effective it has to be: Simple, Informative, Economical, Attractive and Appropriate for the play.

A good poster must have; The name of the producing organization, the title, the author, the director of the play, the venue, date, time and ticket information (Clifford 146). A poster should be very attractive and informative. It should be compositionally effective, well-illustrated with attractive colours (Bardi and Diakpomrere 36).

Handbills

Handbills are known as leaflets, throwaways (Reid 93). They are a popular and cost-effective traditional marketing strategy for theatre performances in Nigeria. They are small, printed flyers that can be physically distributed to potential audience members in public places such as markets, libraries, schools, offices, buses, etc. Iyav emphasize that handbills are a highly strategic tool for theatre marketing due to their direct and localized nature (11). For many small theatre companies or student productions, the cost of television or radio advertising is too expensive. Handbills, on the other hand, are relatively inexpensive to produce and can be printed in large quantities. This makes them a feasible and practical option for marketing on a limited budget (Bardi). All the information in the poster are also contained in the handbills; it is a smaller version of the poster (Bardi and Diakpomrere 36).

Direct Mail

Direct mail is a traditional marketing strategy for theatre performances that involves sending physical promotional materials directly to individuals. It involves the use of postal services to keep the theatre patrons abreast of what is happening. Brochures tickets, and season's information are mailed to the audience in advance (Ayarkoroma 88). Unlike mass media, which broadcasts to a general audience, direct mail is personalized,

allowing theatre companies to communicate directly with people who have previously shown an interest in their productions (Iyav 12). For an instance a theatre company could send information about a new classical production to a list of patrons who have previously attended similar shows thereby communicating with patrons and fostering a loyal audience base.

Word-of-Mouth

Word of mouth (WOM) this is a crucial traditional marketing strategy for theatre performances in Nigeria, relying on person-to-person communication to generate interest and attendance. It is highly interpersonal and intimate. Adedoyin suggest that the success of Word-of-Mouth lies in its ability to influence purchase decisions in a way that formal advertising cannot. For example people are more likely to attend a play if it's recommended by a trusted friend or family member. In the Nigerian context, where communal values and personal relationships are highly regarded, a positive recommendation from someone in your social network is often more persuasive than a paid advertisement. It is effective because you have instant feedback and you can also sell your tickets in the process or collect research data from the prospective audience (Bardi and Diakpomrere 38).

Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing for theatre performances in Nigeria involves using creative, non-traditional, and often low-cost tactics to create a buzz and capture audience attention

in public spaces. It a form of marketing which publicity crew go around town or campus dancing, singing and attracting the would be audience and at the same time telling them about the production and sharing flyers or handbills to them (Bardi and Diakpomrere 38). For example, characters from a historical Benin play might walk around streets or campus in costume, handing out flyers and engaging people in conversation about the play. The iconic comedian and theatre practitioner Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala) and his troupe would often parade through town in full costume before a performance. This personalizes the promotion and creates a memorable experience.

2.4 Experiential Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance

Experiential marketing for Nigerian theatre entails creating immersive and memorable experiences for the audience, transcending beyond traditional publicity to build lasting connections. Nigerian scholars emphasize that in a competitive entertainment landscape, theatrical productions must evolve to draw in and keep audiences, who now have numerous entertainment options. Experiential marketing strategies for theatre performance concentrate on engaging potential and current audience members by appealing to their senses, emotions, and participation. Nigerian theatre pioneers, such as Moses Olaiya, used a form of experiential marketing by "parading most of the main street in the town with his costume before performance" to create a buzz (Ogunbiyi 41).

These strategies can be divided into several key areas:

Immersive and Interactive Theatre

This refers to a creative methods that break the traditional fourth wall, merging the line between the audience and the performers. Instead of being passive spectators, audience members become active participants, either by physically moving through the performance space or by shaping the narrative itself. This technique transforms a theatre visit from a viewing experience into a sensory and emotional journey as powerful tool for audience engagement and loyalty.

In a Nigeria society still emerging in the trend of commercial theatre, elements of immersive and interactive theatre are rooted in our cultural traditions and are being adapted for modern audiences. This is particularly effective where community engagement and social connection are highly valued.

Forum Theatre and Applied Drama: This leveraged as an effective marketing strategies for theatre as Nigerian theatre has a rich legacy of harnessing performance as a tool for social change. In "Forum Theatre," a play is presented and then re-enacted with audience members stepping in to change the outcome. This form is naturally engaging and Interactive. For instance, Empowerment through Arts, a Nigerian humanitarian organization, utilizes this approach to tackle pressing issues like human rights, where audience members participants collectively to find a resolution thereby generating buzz and word-of-mouth. This turns theatre into a collaborative and empowering experience rather than a mere observation. This practice aligns with the scholarly view that

interactive theatre possesses a unique potency for conflict transformation and resolution (Onwuemezie 3).

Location-Based Performances: Rather than conventional theatre setting, performances can take place in a location relevant to the story. This allows for target marketing, reaching specific demographics and interests. This immerses the audience by making them feel like they've stepped into the world of the play, offering the audience a unique experiences that attract their attention and curiosity. Examples could include a play about a family dispute performed in a real home or a historical drama staged in a historical building or museum.

These strategies shows that by making audiences active co-creators, theatre can not only entertain but also address real-world issues, building a loyal and deeply connected community.

Community Engagement and Workshops

This strategy entails providing a "behind-the-scenes" experience to prospective audience members. By hosting free, interactive or low-cost workshops on acting, stagecraft, or playwriting, a theatre company can establish a personal connection or bond with the community. This not only serves as a valuable form of arts education but also creates a sense of participation and enthusiasm among attendees, making them more likely to attend the full production. For example, Before staging a play on the historical significance of the Benin Kingdom, a theatre troupe could organize a workshop on

traditional Edo dance and storytelling in a local community centre. The workshop would attract people interested in the culture, who would then be more inclined to see the play.

Theatre marketing in Nigeria must move beyond mere box office sales and embrace community-building to create a sustainable audience base. As scholar Ugochukwu Akabike argues, "The engagement of the audience in the creative process... transforms them from passive spectators to active participants in the theatre's ecosystem" (Akabike 20). This shift in approach can encourage audience members to become invested in the theatre's success.

Digital Interaction and User-Generated Content

In a digitally driven society, a theatre company can amplify the experiential marketing campaign online. By inviting the audience to share their experiences and become a part of the show's narrative, social media can be used as a powerful way to create a dynamic and immersive experience.

A theatre production could launch a social media challenge asking people to create their own short monologues or to dress up as a character from the play using a specific hashtag. This not only promotes the show but also creates a sense of community and active participation. According to a study by Aigbe and Oladejo on the digital space in Nigeria, "the rise of social media... provides a low-cost, high-reach avenue for theatre companies to foster interactive relationships with their audience" (178).

2.5 Best Practices for Implementing Effective Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance

Effective marketing for theatre in Nigeria requires a strategic shift from conventional, one-way advertising to an integrated, multifaceted approach that incorporates modern digital tools and experiential engagement. The best practices focus on building a sustainable relationship with audiences by transforming them into engaged participants in the theatrical experience, rather than mere spectators.

Embracing a Customer-Centric Approach: Effective marketing for theatre begins with understanding the target audience's preferences and tailoring the experience to meet their expectations or needs. According to Hassan Adedoyin of Lagos State University, theatre is a "service" with intangible, inseparable, variable, and perishable features, just like any other business (Adedoyin). Therefore, a marketing strategy should prioritize audience satisfaction and a long-term relationship. Using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as a tool to track and nurture relationships with audience. This can include personalized emails, birthday wishes, and special offers for returning customers.

Leveraging Digital and Experiential Strategies: In a media landscape dominated by digital content, theatre productions need to create captivating experiences that can be shared and extended with audiences online. This goes beyond simple online ads. Developing engaging online experiences, such as interactive quizzes, games, or challenges that complement the production and encourage audience members to create their own content and share experiences and photos on social media, using branded

hashtags. The play *'Odumegege'* by Miesoinuma Minima, for example, successfully leveraged social media to generate buzz, with an academic study noting how platforms like YouTube and Facebook provided a "low-cost, high-reach avenue" for fostering interactive relationships (Aigbe and Oladejo 178).

Fostering Strategic Partnerships and Community Outreach: Theatre is a community event, and its marketing should reflect that. Collaborating with local businesses and community groups can expand a production's reach and audience base. Hosting a free or low-cost workshops on acting, directing, or storytelling helps builds a direct connection with the community and gives them a stake in the production. Also, by partnering with local restaurants, schools and market square, or with businesses to display flyers and posters. For example, a play about a local market could partner with market associations for co-promotion.

Integrating Traditional and Digital Media: While digital marketing is crucial, it is not a replacement for traditional methods. The most effective strategies combine both. By using, high-quality, visually appealing flyers, posters, and playbills can stand out in a crowd and capture attention in physical spaces. Radio and Television interviews and features as well as local newspapers to reach older demographics who may not be as active on social media. Guerrilla Marketing, use creative, low-cost marketing tactics in high-traffic areas to draw the attention of audience. An example from the legacy of Nigerian theatre is the work of Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya, who would use

parading or humorous street performances in costume to generate buzz and advertise their shows, a practice that is still relevant today.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a survey research design to explore the complex, context-dependent nature of effective marketing strategies for theatre performances. Survey research design is a medium used to collect and analyze data from a sample of participants to gain insights into their attitudes, behaviors, or opinions. Survey research design involves defining research objectives, selecting a sample, designing the survey instrument, collecting data, and analyzing data (Arundel). In this case, question as regarding "Effective Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance" will be asked via a questionnaire and distributed to Theatre students of the Department of Theatre Arts, Ekehuan Road Campus, University of Benin.

3.2 Sample Size

For this study focusing on "Effective Marketing Strategies for Theatre Performance" among Theatre students at the University of Benin, the sample size will consist of 40 students. This sample size will be distributed across academic levels, with 10 students selected from each level (100, 200, 300, and 400). This medium ensures representation from different stages of the Theatre Arts programme at the university.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

The strategy which would be used for this project is the Stratified random sampling. This technique involves dividing the population into distinct subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics, such as age, income, gender, or levels. A random sample is then drawn from each stratum, ensuring that each subgroup is represented in the sample. This method would be applied with as follows:

Stratification: Divide population of Theatre Arts students at the University of Benin into four subgroups based on academic levels (100, 200, 300 and 400).

Random Sampling: From each subgroup, randomly select 10 students.

Combine Samples: Combine the samples from each subgroup to form the final sample of 40 theatre arts students

Stratified random sampling ensures that each subgroup is represented in the sample, reducing sampling bias between different academic levels within the theatre arts program.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument of Data collection for this study will be questionnaire designed to gather information and data from Theatre Arts students at the University of Benin. The questionnaire will consist of several sections and questions designed to gather information from students.

The questionnaire will feature both closed-ended questions, which offer predefined response options and simple binary questions, which offer a yes and no response. Response options for the closed-ended questions will include check boxes.

The questionnaire will be designed to clear and easy to understand in order to encourage maximum participation and accurate response from the target audience.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The research instruments have undergone extensive validity and reliability assessments to test the questionnaire's effectiveness. Furthermore, reliability testing, consistency analysis were conducted to verify the stability and consistency of response over time. This research instruments has been reviewed and approved by the research supervisor.

3.6 Data collection Method

For data collection, a well-organized questionnaire was administered to Theatre Arts students at the University of Benin. The questionnaire featured inquiries relating to this research topic. A closed-ended questions provided specific answer options, while the binary questions required a simple affirmative or negative response. The questionnaire was distributed in-person to maximize participation and ensure varied response rate.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

After collecting the responses via structured questionnaire administered to the Theater Arts at the University of Benin, the information will be analyzed using

quantitative techniques to gain comprehensive insight into effective marketing strategies for theatre performance.

Quantitative Analysis:

Quantitative analysis is a research methodology that involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to understand a phenomenon or relationship.

Descriptive Statistics: We would begin by compute summary statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for demographic variable (e.g., age, gender), theatre performance preference and marketing strategies.

Cross-tabulation: Performing cross-tabulation analysis to investigate the relationship between different variables. For example, analyze how theatre marketing varies across demographic groups or how marketing strategies influence demographic group decision.

By using a quantitative analysis approach, this research aims to provide a complete understanding of effective marketing strategies for theatre performance among University of Benin theatre arts students.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Presentation

Section 1: Demographic Information

Table 1: Gender Distribution

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 22 | 55% |
| Female | 18 | 45% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 1 shows that 18 respondents which represent 45% are females and 22 respondents which represent 55% are males. This data shows that the majority of respondents are males.

Table 2: Age Distribution

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 16 - 26 | 28 | 70% |
| 27 - 30 | 12 | 30% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that those who fall between the age of 16 - 26 are only 28 respondents which represent 70% of the sample and those within 27 - 30 are only 12 and constitutes 30% of the sample. This shows that majority of respondents (70%) are between the ages

of 16-26 years old, indicating a strong interest in theatre performances among young adults.

Table 3: Level

| Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| 100 | 10 | 25% |
| 200 | 12 | 30% |
| 300 | 8 | 20% |
| 400 | 10 | 25% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 3 shows that students in 100 level are only 10 respondents which represent 25% of the sample followed by students in 200 level with only 12 respondents which is a percentage of 30% of the sample, 300 level students with a frequency of 8 respondents which represent 20% of the sample and 400 level students with only 10 respondents which constitutes to 25% of the sample. This indicates that the respondent are relatively evenly distributed across different levels, with a slight majority in the 200 level category.

Table 4: How often do you attend theatre performance?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Frequently | 8 | 20% |
| Occasionally | 15 | 37.5% |
| Sometimes | 10 | 25% |

| | | |
|-------|----|-------|
| Never | 7 | 17.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 4 shows how often students attend a theatre performance. Frequently, 8 respondents accounting for 20% of the sample will attend frequently. In contrast, 15 respondents will occasionally attend which accounts for 37.5% of the sample. Students that sometimes attend a theatre performance are 10 respondents accounting for 25% of the sample and students who never attend a theatre performance are 7 which constitutes to 17.5% of the sample. This shows that majority of respondents occasionally attend theatre performances, indicating a moderate level of interest.

Section 2: Theatre Performance Preference

Table 5: What is your preferred method of communication?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Media | 20 | 50% |
| Email | 10 | 25% |
| Word of mouth | 5 | 12.5% |
| Television | 3 | 7.5% |
| Poster | 1 | 2.5% |
| Text message | 1 | 2.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 5 shows students preferred means of communication as 20 respondents, constituting for 50% of the sample, prefer social media as their primary means of communication. 10 respondents which represent 25% of the sample prefer email, followed by students who prefer television are 3 respondents which accounts for 7.5% of the sample and finally students who prefer posters and text messages are 1 respondents each which constitutes of 2.5% each of the sample.

This indicates that majority of students prefer social media as their means of communication and theatre marketers should prioritize social media platforms to reach their target audience.

Table 6: What motivates you to attend theatre performance?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Storyline/theme | 18 | 45% |
| Cast/director | 12 | 30% |
| Reviews/recommendation | 5 | 12.5% |
| Discounts/promotions | 3 | 7.5% |
| Social experience | 2 | 5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 6 shows what motivates students to attend a theatre performance as 18 respondents which constitutes for 45% of the sample are drawn to productions with compelling

storylines or themes. Also the cast/director another motivator, influencing 12 respondents which represent 30% of the sample, reviews/recommendation has a frequency of 5 respondents which constitutes of 12.5% of the sample, students who are motivated by discounts/promotions are 3 respondents which represent 7.5% of the sample and students who are motivated by social experience are 2 respondents each which constitutes of 5% of the sample. Majority of respondents are motivated by engaging storylines/theme.

Table 7: What would encourage you to share a theatre performance with others?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Unique storyline | 15 | 37.5% |
| High production quality | 10 | 25% |
| Special offers | 8 | 20% |
| Social media engagement opportunities | 7 | 17.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 7 shows what encourages students to share a theatre performance with others as 15 respondents due to its unique storyline are encouraged to share which accounts for 37.5% of the sample. High production quality is another factor with 10 respondents which constitutes 25% of the sample, special offers has a frequency of 8 respondents which represents 20% of the sample, and social media engagement opportunities has a frequency of 7 respondents which constitutes 17.5% of the sample. This indicates that

majority of respondents encourages others to see a theatre performances with unique storylines.

Table 8: What prevents you from attending theatre performance more often?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Cost | 18 | 45% |
| Time constraints | 12 | 30% |
| Lack of awareness | 5 | 12.5% |
| Accessibility | 5 | 12.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 8 shows what prevents students from attending theatre performances as 18 respondents are prevented by cost accounting for 45% of the sample, 12 respondents by time constraints which represents 30% of the sample, lack of awareness and accessibility also a major factor both having a frequency of 5 respondents each which accounts for 12.5% of the sample. This indicates that the cost of a theatre performance prevents majority of respondents from attending.

Table 9: How do you prefer to purchase theatre tickets?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Online (theatre website) | 20 | 50% |
| Box office | 10 | 25% |
| Third-party ticketing site | 7 | 17.5% |
| Phone | 3 | 7.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 9 shows the preferred method of purchasing theatre tickets by students as 20 respondents prefer online purchase through the theatre website which constitutes 50% of the sample. Purchasing tickets at the box office chosen by 10 respondents accounting for 25% of the sample, third-party ticketing site as 7 respondents which constitutes 17.5% and phone have a frequency of 3 respondents each which constitutes 7.5% of the sample. Majority of respondents prefer to purchase theatre tickets online through the theatre website.

Section 3: Marketing Strategies

Table 10: How do you usually find out about upcoming theatre performance?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Media | 22 | 55% |
| Newspapers | 3 | 7.5% |
| Friends/Family | 7 | 17.5% |
| Online search | 5 | 12.5% |
| Flyers/Poster | 2 | 5% |
| TV/Radio | 1 | 2.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 10 shows how students find out about upcoming theatre performances as 22 respondents find out through social media which constitutes 55% of the sample followed by newspapers with 3 respondents which represents 7.5% of the sample, friends/family with 7 respondents which represent 17.5% of the sample, online search has a frequency

of 5 respondents which constitutes 12.5% of the sample. This basically indicates that most of the respondents find out about upcoming theatre performances through social media.

Table 11: Which social media platform do you use most for theatre info?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Instagram | 18 | 45% |
| Facebook | 10 | 25% |
| WhatsApp | 4 | 10% |
| Twitter | 3 | 7.5% |
| TikTok | 3 | 7.5% |
| YouTube | 2 | 5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 11 shows the social media platforms used most by students for theatre information as 18 respondents use Instagram accounting for 45% of the sample followed by Facebook with 10 respondents which represent 25% of the sample, WhatsApp with 4 respondents which constitutes of 10% of the sample, Twitter and TikTok has a frequency of 3 respondents each which constitutes 7.5% of the sample and YouTube with 2 respondents which is 5% of the sample. Respondents uses more of Instagram for theatre information.

Table 12: How likely are you to attend based on social media campaigns?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Very likely | 15 | 37.5% |
| Likely | 12 | 30% |
| Not likely | 13 | 32.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 12 reveals how likely students are to attend theatre performance based on social media campaigns, 15 respondents are highly inclined to attend theatre performances due to social media campaigns, accounting for 37.5% of the sample. An additional 12 respondents, representing 30% of the sample, are likely to attend. Also, 13 respondents, representing 32.5% of the sample, are not likely to attend. This indicate that most respondents are positively influenced by social media campaigns.

Table 13: Which marketing strategy would most likely influence your decision to attend?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Media | 20 | 50% |
| Word-of-Mouth | 7 | 17.5% |
| Influencer partnership | 5 | 12.5% |
| Traditional advertising | 3 | 7.5% |
| Print Advertising | 3 | 7.5% |
| Public Relations | 2 | 5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 13 shows which marketing strategy would most likely influence a student decision to attend a theatre performance, 20 respondents are influenced by social media, making up 50% of the sample. Word-of-mouth is also influential with 7 respondents, representing 17.5% of the sample. Influencer partnerships also play a role, with 5 respondents, constituting 12.5% of the sample. Traditional advertising and Print advertising both have 3 respondents which is 7.5% each of the sample. This results shows how students are greatly influenced by social media in attending a theatre performances.

Table 14: How important are reviews and ratings in your decision making?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very important | 18 | 45% |
| Somewhat important | 12 | 30% |
| Not very important | 6 | 15% |
| Not important | 4 | 10% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 14 shows the importance of reviews and ratings in a students decision making, it indicates that 18 respondents consider reviews and ratings to be crucial in their decision-making process, accounting for 45% of the sample. Another 12 respondents, representing 30% of the sample, view reviews and ratings as somewhat important. 6 respondents, representing 15% of the sample view reviews and ratings as not very important. The results demonstrate how positive reviews and ratings is significant in attracting audiences.

Table 15: Would you attend if discounts were available?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 25 | 62.5% |
| Maybe | 10 | 25% |
| No | 5 | 12.5% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 15 show that 25 respondents would attend theatre performances if discounts were available, constituting 62.5% of the sample. An additional 10 respondents, representing 25% of the sample, might attend. 5 respondents which represents 12.5% of the sample would not attend. This indicates that students attends theatre performance when discounts are given.

Table 16: How important is venue accessibility to you?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very important | 16 | 40% |
| Somewhat important | 12 | 30% |
| Not very important | 8 | 20% |
| Not important | 4 | 10% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 16 reveals that 16 respondents consider venue accessibility to be a critical factor, accounting for 40% of the sample. Another 12 respondents, representing 30% of the sample, view venue accessibility as somewhat important, followed by 8 respondents which represents 20% of the sample view venue accessibility as no very important and 4 respondents which represents 10% of the sample view venue accessibility as not important. The results emphasize the need for accessible venues to accommodate diverse audiences.

Table 17: Would you recommend theatre performance to your family and friends?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 24 | 60% |
| Maybe | 10 | 25% |
| No | 6 | 15% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Table 17 indicate that 24 respondents would recommend theatre performances to their family and friends, constituting 60% of the sample. An additional 10 respondents, representing 25% of the sample, might recommend, followed by 6 respondents would not recommend, representing 15% of the sample. The results highlight the potential for word-of-mouth marketing in promoting theatre performances.

4.2: Answering Research Questions

1. What are the most prevalent marketing strategies used in promoting theatre performances?

The most prevalent or preferred marketing strategies used in promoting theatre performances include social media marketing, influencer partnerships, email marketing, word-of-mouth referrals, and print marketing. These strategies have been proven to be effective in reaching and engaging with a wider range of target audiences thereby driving ticket sales, and increasing audience engagement. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are widely used by theatre organizations to create engaging and entertaining content, promote shows, and interact with audiences. These medium provide a powerful way to reach a large audience, build a community, and encourage audience engagement. Theatre organizations uses social media as a tool to share behind-the-scenes content, sneak peeks of rehearsal, and exclusive promotions to create buzz around their shows. Email marketing is also an powerful tool for theatre organizations, by building an email list and creating targeted campaigns, theatre organizations can reach subscribers and encourage ticket sales. Email marketing allows theatre organizations to personalize their messaging, offer exclusive promotions, and build a loyal audience base. Influencer partnerships have now become increasingly popular in theatre marketing. By partnering with influencers who have a large following on social media, theatre organizations can tap into new audiences and generate buzz around their shows. Influencers can also help promote theatre shows, share their

experiences to their followers, and provide exclusive content to their followers. Word-of-mouth referrals remain a major powerful tool in promoting theatre performances. Encouraging audience members to share their experiences with friends and family can help generate buzz and drive ticket sales. Theatre organizations can incentivize word-of-mouth referrals by offering discounts, rewards, or exclusive content to audience members who refer their friends.

Traditional marketing techniques such as print advertising, outdoor advertising, and publicity are still used by theatre organizations to promote their shows. Print advertising, such as posters and flyers, can be effective in reaching local audiences and creating visibility. Outdoor advertising, such as billboards and bus shelters, can also be effective in generating buzz and reaching a wider audience. Publicity, including press releases, media coverage, and reviews, can also play a crucial role in promoting theatre performances. Positive reviews and media coverage can increase ticket sales, improve credibility, and enhance the reputation of the theatre organization.

The use of data analytics and audience segmentation has become more prevalent in theatre marketing. By analyzing audience data and behavior, theatre organizations can create targeted marketing campaigns that are more effective in driving ticket sales and increasing audience engagement. Data analytics can provide valuable insights into audience behavior, preferences, and demographics, allowing theatre organizations to tailor their marketing efforts to specific audience segments. Theatre organizations can use

data analytics to track how effective the marketing campaigns is, identify areas that need improvement, and make data-driven decisions. By making use of data analytics and audience segmentation, theatre organizations can enhance their marketing efforts, increase efficiency, and achieve greater impact.

2. How effective are digital marketing tools such as social media and email campaigns in driving theatre attendance?

Digital marketing tools such as social media and email campaigns are highly effective in driving theatre attendance. These tools provide a powerful way to reach and engage with wider range of target audiences, create buzz around shows, and promote ticket sales. In today's digital age, theatre organizations can no longer rely on traditional marketing methods to attract audiences. Instead, they must make effective use of digital marketing tools to stay competitive and drive ticket sales.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram provide a powerful way to reach and engage with target audiences. By creating engaging content, theatre organizations can build a community, generate buzz, and drive ticket sales. This also provide a way to target specific audiences, increase brand awareness, and promote shows.

Email marketing campaigns are also an essential tool for theatre organizations. By building an email list and creating targeted campaigns, theatre organizations can encourage ticket sales, promote special offers, and retain loyal audience members.

The key to effective digital marketing is to create engaging content, target the right audiences, and measure the impact of marketing efforts. By track of metrics such as engagement rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates, theatre organizations can refine their digital marketing strategies and improve their effectiveness. This can also provide valuable insights into audience behavior, preferences, and demographics, allowing theatre organizations to tailor their marketing efforts to specific audience segments.

3. What roles do traditional marketing techniques still play in promoting theatre in the 21st century?

Traditional marketing techniques still play an impact role in promoting theatre in the 21st century. While digital era, traditional techniques such as print advertising, guerrilla advertising, and publicity remains effective in reaching and engaging with target audiences. These techniques can be used to complement digital marketing efforts and provide a more suitable marketing approach.

Print advertising, for example, can be effective in reaching older audiences or those who prefer physical media such as Newspapers, Posters, flyers, and brochures. This can also be distributed in public areas, such as libraries, market square, saloon, and community centers, to reach a wider audience. It is a more tangible way to promote a theatre performance as it allows audiences to hold onto physical materials and revisit them later. Outdoor advertising, such as billboards and posters, can also be effective in creating visibility and generating buzz around shows. These forms of advertising can be placed in

high-traffic areas to reach a large audience. This create a sense of excitement and anticipation around a show, helping to build momentum and drive ticket sales. By combining traditional and digital techniques, theatre organizations can maximize their marketing efforts and achieve greater impact.

4. In what ways can experiential marketing tactics enhance audience engagement?

Experiential marketing tactics can enhance audience engagement by creating immersive and memorable experiences that connect audiences with the theatre performance on a deeper level. These experiences engages the audiences emotionally, intellectually, and socially, creating a deeper connection with the performance. Experiential marketing can include a wide range of tactics, such as behind-the-scenes tours, meet-and-greets with the cast, interactive installations, and immersive performances.

These experiences increase audience engagement by providing a memorable experiences that go beyond the traditional theatre performance. By giving audiences a chance to participate, interact, and engage with the performance using storytelling and making it interactive, experiential marketing can create a sense of ownership and investment in the show. This can lead to increased audience loyalty, positive feedback, and increased ticket sales.

Creating experiences that are shared among audience members experiential marketing foster a sense of community within the audience and create brand loyalty, theatre organizations can effectively use experiential marketing to achieve their marketing goals.

5. **What are the key barriers theatre organizations face in implementing modern marketing strategies?**

Theatre organizations face several key barriers in implementing modern marketing strategies. These barriers makes it difficult for theatre organizations to effectively promote their shows and reach their required target audience. Some of the key barriers include limited resources, lack of expertise, and competition for audience attention.

Limited resources, including budget and personnel, can make it difficult for theatre organizations to invest in modern marketing strategies and technologies. The Theatre organizations may not have the budget to hire a full-time marketing team or invest in suitable marketing software. This can limit their ability to develop and implement effective marketing strategies.

Lack of expertise can also be a barrier, particularly for smaller theatre organizations that may not have the in-house expertise to develop and implement effective marketing strategies. The Theatre organizations may not have staff members with the necessary or required skills and knowledge to create and implement modern marketing campaigns. This can make it difficult for them to effectively promote their shows and reach their target audience.

The ever changing marketing landscape can also make it difficult for theatre organizations to keep up with the latest trends and technologies. Technologies and Marketing strategies are constantly evolving, and theatre organizations must be able to adapt quickly to stay ahead of the curve. This can be challenging particularly for smaller

theatre organizations that may not have the resources or expertise to keep up with the latest developments.

Competition for audience attention is also a significant barrier as audiences are bombarded with entertainment options and marketing messages. Theatre organizations must find a way to stand out in a crowded market and capture the attention of potential audience members. This can be challenging, particularly in urban areas where there are many entertainment options competing for audience attention.

In order to overcome these barriers theatre organizations can develop strategies such as:

- Partnering with marketing experts or consultants to provide expertise and guidance.
- Investing in marketing training and education for staff members.
- Using cost-effective marketing strategies and technologies, such as social media and email marketing.
- By focusing on targeted marketing efforts to reach specific audience segments.
- Building relationships with audience members and encouraging loyalty.

By understanding these barriers, theatre organizations can create strategies to overcome them and implement effective modern marketing strategies and achieve their marketing goals.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide an insights into the preferences and behaviors of potential audience members for theatre performances. Based on the data, the following discussion highlights the key findings and implications for marketing strategies.

Demographic Information

The majority of respondents are male (55%) and between the ages of 16-26 years old (70%). This proves that theatre performances may appealing to young adults, and marketing strategies could be tailored to suit this target demographic.

Theatre Performance Preference

The majority of respondents which is 37.5% occasionally attend theatre performances, while 20% attend frequently. This shows that there is a moderate level of interest in theatre performances among the respondents.

Marketing Strategies

According to the findings the most effective marketing strategies for theatre performances appear to be:

1. **Social media marketing:** Most of the respondents prefer social media as a means of communication, and more than half finds out about upcoming theatre performances through social media. Instagram is the most popular social media platform used by respondents for theatre information.

2. **Online ticket purchasing:** Half of the respondents prefer to purchase theatre tickets online through the theatre website.

3. **Unique storyline:** Most respondents are motivated to attend theatre performances with compelling storylines or themes.

Barriers to Attendance

The main barriers to attendance are cost and time constraints which prevents respondents from attending theatre performance.

By understanding the preferences and behaviours of potential audience members, theatre organizations can develop effective marketing strategies to promote their performances and attract a loyal audience base.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The modern theatre industry, a unique and vibrant segment of the arts and culture sector, faces an increasingly competitive and dynamic landscape. The study sought to investigate the most effectual and innovative approaches for engaging audiences and ensuring the commercial and artistic viability of theatrical productions. Through an extensive review of existing literature and case studies, several key findings have been collectively redefined for strategies in theatre marketing. The research indicates a definitive shift from a singular pattern by relying on traditional marketing channels towards a multifaceted, data-driven, and audience-centric approach.

Historically, theatre marketing was anchored in traditional methods such as print advertisements in newspapers and magazines, radio spots, billboard placements, and direct mail campaigns. While these methods retain a degree of relevance, the study reveals their declining efficacy as stand-alone strategies. The contemporary theatre audience are particularly younger demographics who are predominantly engaged through digital platforms. Social media has been identified as a cornerstone of modern theatre marketing. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube serve not merely as promotional tools but as vital spaces for building community, telling stories, and offering a direct window into the creative process. The research also underscores the

effectiveness of content marketing specifically, the use of behind-the-scenes footage, cast interviews, rehearsal clips, and compelling visual assets to generate genuine interest and a sense of shared experience long before opening night.

The study highlights the critical role of audience segmentation and data analytics. Successful marketing strategies are built on a deep understanding of the theatre's diverse audience base, segmenting it into distinct groups based on demographics, psychographics, and past behavior. This level of segmentation, supported by data from ticketing systems, website analytics, and social media engagement, allows for the creation of highly personalized and targeted campaigns. Email marketing's strength lies in its ability to nurture relationships with would be audience members providing them with exclusive content, pre-sale access and personalized recommendations that make them feel valued and connected to the theatre.

Finally, the study reaffirms that for a marketing to be successful it is an exercise in integration. Effective strategies do not simply replace traditional methods with digital ones but rather create a seamless, cohesive marketing mix. This shows that a well-placed print ad can still drive a patron to visit a theatre's website, where they can then be retargeted with social media ads. This synergy ensures that the theatre's message is consistent and compelling across all touch points, reinforcing its brand identity and artistic mission.

5.2 Conclusion

The study unequivocally demonstrate that the future of theatre marketing lies in a dynamic, integrated, and audience-centric approach. The era of relying on a few traditional channels to fill seats is over. Theatre companies, regardless of their size or budget, must embrace a holistic marketing philosophy that combines the proven strengths of digital and traditional methods into a unified, synergistic strategy. The central conclusion is that effectiveness is not measured by the adoption of a single "best" platform but by the seamless orchestration of multiple channels to tell a consistent and persuasive story about the production and the organization itself.

A second, equally important conclusion is the absolute necessity of a data-driven mindset. The ever changing digital revolution has provided theatre marketers with an unprecedented wealth of data offering deep insights into who their audience is, what motivates them, and how they behave. The most successful organizations are not just broadcasting information; they are actively listening and adapting their strategies in real-time based on concrete evidence. By leveraging analytics to segment audiences, track campaign performance, and measure return on investment, theatres can move beyond guesswork and make informed decisions that will maximize their marketing resources. This approach ensures that every money spent and every piece of content created is working towards a specific, measurable goal, leading to greater efficiency.

Furthermore, this study concludes that a thriving theatre marketing strategy is built on cultivating relationships with the community. In an age of digital noise audiences are always seeking for genuine connection and a sense of belonging. The theatrical experience begins not when the curtain rises but the moment a potential audience encounters the first piece of marketing material. By using social media to create a dialogue, email marketing to build loyalty, and community partnerships to foster a sense of shared ownership, theatres can transform passive audience members into active advocates. This transition is crucial for building a stable and sustainable audience base, as word-of-mouth recommendations and a loyal community are among the most powerful drivers of ticket sales. Ultimately, the research concludes that effective marketing for theatre performance is not simply a transactional process of selling tickets, but a strategic imperative of building and sustaining a vibrant, engaged community around the art form.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to implement effective marketing strategies for their performances.

1. **Adopt a Hybrid and Multi-Channel Marketing Model:** Theatre companies should move away from a "digital-only" or "traditional-only" mindset and instead should develop a hybrid model that intelligently integrates multiple channels. This means using traditional advertising to build broad brand awareness and drive initial interest while

simultaneously making use of digital platforms to engage specific audience segments, nurture relationships, and ultimately convert interest into ticket sales to watch the theatre performance.

2. **Prioritize Data-Driven Audience Segmentation:** Marketing efforts should be underpinned by a robust system for collecting and analyzing audience data. Theatre companies should segment their audience based on past attendance history (e.g., musical lovers vs. drama enthusiasts), demographics, and digital behavior. This segmentation will enable the creation of highly targeted campaigns, such as offering a pre-sale for a new musical performance exclusively to audience who have attended similar shows in the past. This not only increases conversion rates but also makes the marketing feel more personal and relevant to the recipient.

3. **Invest in High-Quality, Engaging Contents for Digital Platforms:** Theatre marketing should be fundamentally a content-driven enterprise. Theatre companies should dedicate resources to creating and consistently disseminating high-quality, authentic, and shareable contents. These include professional photographs and videos from rehearsals, interviews with cast and crew, behind-the-scenes blogs, and engaging social media posts. The goal is to create a compelling narrative around the production that builds anticipation and invites the audience into the creative process. This content is crucial for sparking dialogue, generating organic reach, and making the production feel accessible and exciting before a ticket is even purchased.

4. **Foster Strategic Community Partnerships:** To broaden their reach and connect with new audiences, theatre companies should actively seek out and foster partnerships with local community organizations, businesses, and educational institutions. Collaborating with a local restaurant on a pre-theatre dining promotion, working with a school to offer a workshop for students, or partnering with a local bookstore for a themed event can all introduce a theatre to new demographics. These partnerships not only expand the marketing footprint but also embed the theatre more deeply within the cultural fabric of the community.

5. **Implement a Robust Measurement and Analytics Framework:** To ensure the long-term effectiveness of their marketing strategies, theatre companies must implement a system for continuously tracking and analyzing their performance. This involves setting clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each campaign, such as social media engagement rates, website traffic, email open rates, and conversion metrics. Regular reviews of this data will provide actionable insights, allowing the company to identify what's working, what's not, and to make necessary adjustments. This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that marketing strategies remain relevant and effective in an ever-evolving market.

In conclusion, implementing these recommendations can empower theatres to harness the full potential this marketing tool. This helps theatres promote their

performances, connect with people, sell tickets, and theatres can achieve long-term sustainability and success.

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September 2025

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE.

I am IGBOAMAKA, GREAT NWAKAEGO, a final year student of the above named institution. I am conducting a research titled "EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THEATRE PERFORMANCE" This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts.

I hereby solicit for your Co-operation to get the questionnaire complete. Please fill in your thoughts by ticking your preferred answers to the questions provided below. Note that your response will be confidential, it is just for research purposes. Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Igboamaka, Great Nwakaego
Researcher

Questionnaire

Sections 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender: Female () Male ()
2. Age group: 16-26 years old () 27-30 years old ()
3. Level 100lv () 200lv () 300lv () 400lv ()
4. How often do you attend theatre performance? Frequently () Occasionally ()
Sometimes () Never ()

Section 2: Theatre Performance Preference

5. What is your preferred method of communication? Email () Television ()
Social Media () Text message () Poster () Word of mouth ()
6. What motivates you to attend theatre performance? Cast/director ()
Storyline/theme () Reviews/recommendation () Discount/promotions ()
Social experience
7. What would encourage you to share a theatre performance with others? Unique
storyline () High production quality () Special offers () Social media
engagement opportunities ()
8. What prevents you from attending theatre performance more often? Cost ()
Lack of awareness () Time constraints () Accessibility ()
9. How do you prefer to purchase theatre tickets? Online (theatre website) ()
Third-party ticketing site () Box office () Phone ()

Section 3: Marketing Strategies

10. How do you usually find out about upcoming theatre performance? Flyers/Poster
() Online search () Friends/Family () Social Media () TV/Radio ()
Newspapers
11. Which social media platform do you use most for theatre info? Facebook ()
Instagram () Twitter () TikTok () YouTube () WhatsApp ()

12. How likely are you to attend based on social media campaigns? Very likely ()
Likely () Not likely ()
13. Which marketing strategy would most likely influence your decision to attend?
Social Media () Influencer partnership () Traditional advertising () Print
Advertising () Word-of-Mouth () Public Relations ()
14. How important are reviews and ratings in your decision making? Very important
() Somewhat important () Not very important () Not important ()
15. Would you attend if discounts were available? Yes () Maybe () No ()
16. How important is venue accessibility to you? Very important () Somewhat
important () Not very important () Not important ()
17. Would you recommend theatre performance to your family and friends? Yes ()
Maybe () No ()