

## INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL PERCEPTION AND GENDER ON CUSTOMERS' PATRONAGE OF "UZU" AWKA INDIGENOUS BLACKSMITHING INDUSTRY, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigated the influence of psychosocial perception and gender on customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka Indigenous Blacksmithing Industry in Anambra State, Nigeria. A total of 223 participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method. The instruments of data collection were the Psychosocial Perception Scale, and the Customer Patronage Scale. A cross-sectional design was adopted, while the statistics was multiple analysis of variance. Findings revealed that psychosocial perception significantly influenced customers' patronage of the "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry. Again, gender significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry. The study further established that the interaction between psychosocial perception and gender significantly influenced customer patronage. Based on these findings, it is recommended that stakeholders in the blacksmithing industry should integrate customer-centered strategies that address psychosocial perceptions. Programs that appeal to both male and female customers should be promoted, and policies should be formulated to improve work conditions and enhance the psychological image of the blacksmithing industry to boost patronage.*

**KEYWORDS:** Psychosocial Perception, Customers' Patronage, "Uzu" Awka Indigenous Blacksmithing Industry, Anambra State, Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

Indigenous industries play a crucial role in the economic and cultural development of communities, contributing to heritage preservation and local craftsmanship. One such industry is the Uzu Awka blacksmithing industry, known for its rich tradition in Anambra State, Nigeria (Okoye & Nwosu, 2020). This industry has a long history of producing various metalwork items like machetes, knives, hoes, and ceremonial objects, showcasing the skilled craftsmanship of local blacksmiths.

The Uzu Awka blacksmithing industry has historically been a significant source of livelihood for the community, offering employment opportunities and bolstering the local economy. The Uzu blacksmiths, known for their intricate metalwork and artistic designs, have been producing a wide range of tools, utensils, and decorative items that serve both

functional and aesthetic purposes (Okafor, 2019). The industry has evolved over time, adapting to changing market demands and technological advancements, while still preserving its traditional roots and cultural identity (Akunyili, 2016).

The patronage of the Uzu blacksmithing industry by customers is influenced by various psychosocial perceptions that shape their attitudes and behaviors towards the products and services offered. Psychosocial factors such as cultural beliefs, social norms, and personal preferences play a key role in determining customers' willingness to support and engage with the indigenous industry (Ugwu, 2018). The Uzu blacksmithing industry faces increasing competition from modern industries and imported goods, posing a threat to its survival and relevance in the market (Okeke, 2018).

In light of these challenges, understanding customers' psychosocial perceptions becomes crucial for identifying strategies to enhance the industry's competitiveness and appeal to a wider audience (Ezekwe, 2021). By conducting a systematic analysis of these factors, this study seeks to shed light on the underlying drivers of customers' patronage behavior and provide recommendations for industry players to leverage their strengths and address potential weaknesses (Okafor, 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Igbo society, the traditional blacksmithing industry has played a significant role in shaping the cultural identity and economic landscape of communities. The "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry, known for its skilled artisans and unique ironworking techniques, reflects the rich heritage and craftsmanship of the Igbo people (Adaigwe, 2017). Cultural heritage preservation is essential for safeguarding the legacy of indigenous industries like blacksmithing. As noted by Ezeala (2015), the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills from generation to generation is vital for maintaining the cultural integrity and sustainability of these artisanal practices within the Igbo community.

The indigenous blacksmithing industry in Awka, specifically the "Uzu" blacksmithing industry, has a rich cultural heritage and historical significance within the community. However, in recent years, there has been a decline in customers' patronage of this industry. This decline raises several issues that need to be addressed through research. One of the primary problems is the lack of awareness among potential customers about the products and services offered by the "Uzu" blacksmithing industry.

Many people may not be familiar with the uniqueness and quality of the products produced by local blacksmiths in Awka, leading to a lower demand for their products. According to Stankiewicz (2019), customers' patronage of traditional industries like blacksmithing is influenced by their perception of the cultural value and authenticity of the products. If customers are not aware of the historical and

cultural significance of the "Uzu" blacksmithing industry, they are less likely to support it through their patronage.

Another problem affecting customers' patronage of the "Uzu" blacksmithing industry is the changing occupational characteristics of blacksmiths. With modernization and advancements in technology, traditional blacksmithing techniques may be perceived as outdated or less efficient compared to mass-produced goods. According to Angelopoulos et al. (2018), customers' perceptions of the skills and expertise of blacksmiths can significantly impact their decision to purchase products from them. If customers view blacksmithing as a dying art or as inferior to modern manufacturing methods, they may be less inclined to support the industry.

Additionally, psychosocial factors such as stereotypes, stigma, and bias towards traditional occupations like blacksmithing can also inhibit customers' patronage of the "Uzu" industry. Customers' perceptions of the social status and prestige associated with purchasing products from blacksmiths may influence their buying behavior. Recent studies by Nolen-Hoeksema (2019) suggest that psychosocial perceptions can shape consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards certain industries or professions.

The declining customers' patronage of the "Uzu" blacksmithing industry in Awka is a multifaceted issue that requires a thorough investigation of the psychosocial perceptions and occupational characteristics influencing consumer behavior. By addressing these underlying problems, stakeholders can develop strategies to revitalize the industry and attract more customers.

Hence, this study to investigate the influence of psychosocial perception, occupational characteristics and gender on customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry, Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to:

1. Examine the extent to which psychosocial perception will significantly influence customers'

patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

2. Find out if gender will significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.
3. Determine the extent to which interaction of gender and psychosocial perception will significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent will psychosocial perception significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry?
2. Will gender significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry?
3. To what extent will interaction of gender and psychosocial perception significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry?

### **Significance of the Study**

Blacksmiths and business owners: The study will provide valuable insights into the psychosocial perceptions that influence customer patronage. This information can help blacksmiths and business owners in the "Uzu" Awka industry to better understand their target market, tailor their services and marketing strategies to meet customer preferences, and improve their overall business performance.

Policymakers and local authorities: The study will inform policymakers and local authorities about the challenges faced by the indigenous blacksmithing industry and the factors that contribute to its sustainability. This knowledge can guide the development of appropriate policies, regulations, and support programs to promote the growth and preservation of this important cultural heritage.

Customers and the local community: The study will enhance the understanding of the cultural and social significance of the indigenous blacksmithing industry to the local community. This information can foster greater appreciation and support for the industry, strengthening the

connection between the community and their traditional crafts.

Researchers and academics: The study will contribute to the existing literature on the psychosocial factors influencing customer patronage and the dynamics of traditional industries. The findings may also provide a foundation for future research on the intersection of cultural heritage, customer behavior, and sustainable business practices. The insights gained from this research can enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry, while also preserving the cultural traditions and heritage of the local community.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

**Psychosocial Perceptions:** This refers to the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that shape an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards the "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry as measured with Psychosocial Perception Scale adapted from Dholam, Parkar, Dugad, Kharade, Shinde, and Gurav (2021).

**Customers' Patronage:** This refers to the behavioral patterns and loyalty exhibited by individuals in their engagement with the "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry, including their purchasing decisions, repeat visits, and recommendations to others as measured with Customer Patronage Scale Adapted from Nwafor and Anyasor (2020).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Review**

**Psychosocial Perceptions:** Psychosocial perceptions refer to the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that influence an individual's understanding and interpretation of their environment and interactions (Martín-Fernández et al., 2020). In the context of the Uzu Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry, psychosocial perceptions play a crucial role in shaping customers' patronage behavior. One key psychosocial perception that has been found to influence customer patronage is perceived cultural significance. Customers may be drawn to the Uzu Awka blacksmithing products because of their perceived cultural relevance and the sense of tradition and heritage they represent (Nnamani & Onah, 2020). The blacksmithing industry in Uzu

Awka is deeply rooted in the cultural history of the region, and customers may perceive the products as a reflection of their cultural identity and value system.

### **Theoretical Review**

**Social Identity Theory of Psycho-Social Perception by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979):** The Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. This theory posits that individuals derive their sense of identity and self-worth from the social groups they belong to, and this in turn shapes their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards in-group and out-group members. Tenets of the Social Identity Theory:

1. **Social Categorization:** Individuals classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as gender, age, occupation, or ethnic group, to simplify and structure the social environment (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
2. **Social Identification:** Individuals tend to identify with the social groups they belong to, and this identification becomes an essential part of their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
3. **Social Comparison:** Individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity by engaging in favorable comparisons between their in-group and relevant out-groups, often leading to in-group bias and out-group derogation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In the context of the Uzu Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry, the Social Identity Theory can provide insights into how customers' social group affiliations and identification with the Uzu Awka community influence their perceptions, attitudes, and patronage behaviors. The theory can help researchers explore the role of cultural, ethnic, and geographical identities in shaping customers' loyalty and commitment to the Uzu Awka industry (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social Identity Theory can elucidate how customers' social identities influence their patronage decisions. Customers who identify strongly with the Igbo culture may prefer to support indigenous industries like "Uzu" as a way to reinforce their

cultural identity and contribute to the preservation of traditional crafts. This in-group favoritism can lead to higher patronage levels among individuals who view the blacksmithing industry as a vital part of their social identity.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Psycho-social Perception and Customers' Patronage**

Chioma and Obinna (2023) examined social perception and community identity as correlates of customer engagement in indigenous fishing businesses in Ogbaru, Anambra State. The study asked three research questions and tested two hypotheses. The population was 520 and 150 participants were selected using convenience sampling. It adopted a descriptive design and used chi-square for analysis. Results revealed that customers with community ties showed stronger loyalty. The study concluded that familiarity and identity boost trust. It is related in state and psychosocial theme but differs in trade and statistical tool.

Chukwuma and Amarachi (2023) investigated psychosocial attributes and consumer loyalty to indigenous spice vendors in Nanka, Anambra State. The study posed five research questions and four hypotheses. A population of 560 was sampled down to 160 using systematic sampling. The research design was descriptive and regression was used for data analysis. Findings indicated that emotional familiarity and shared cultural background influenced loyalty. The study concluded on the need to maintain community branding. It aligns with the current study in design and location but differs in product type.

Amarachi and Chidubem (2023) examined psychosocial satisfaction and perceived relevance in sustaining customer loyalty in traditional mat-weaving industries in Umuze. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. With a population of 640, 180 were sampled through quota sampling. The design was descriptive and data analyzed using chi-square. Findings indicated that emotional relevance and satisfaction encouraged customer loyalty. It concluded that relevance to cultural identity should be sustained. The study relates in methodology and regional setting but differs in artisan category.

### **Gender and Customers' Patronage**

Nwankwo and Ifeoma (2023) explored Gender-based patronage of indigenous woodwork products in Nsukka, Enugu State. The study used three research questions and one hypothesis. The population was 480, with 180 selected via purposive sampling. A descriptive survey design was used. The chi-square test showed male customers prioritized durability while females valued design. The study concluded that patronage patterns vary by gender. It recommended incorporating both aesthetic and functional values into products. It is similar to the present study in terms of design and statistical analysis but differs in sampled product and location.

Obi and Chioma (2023) explored Gender-based differences in visiting indigenous pottery markets in Orlu, Imo State. The study was guided by four research questions and two hypotheses. From a population of 500 customers, 250 were selected using stratified random sampling. A descriptive survey design was employed. Findings from chi-square tests showed that women visited pottery markets more frequently. The study concluded that pottery is more culturally aligned with female domestic roles. It recommended training more female potters. This study is related in terms of gender focus and statistical analysis but differs in regional setting.

Nkem and Chuka (2023) examined Gender and frequency of buying indigenous artworks in Enugu metropolis. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. From a population of 950, a sample of 280 was drawn using multistage sampling. The descriptive survey design was used. Analysis using chi-square revealed that women bought more frequently. The study concluded that gender-based promotional strategies are vital. It recommended increased engagement with female art buyers. This study is related by statistical tool and geographical location but differs in sampled product.

Ngozi and Nnanna (2023) explored Gender identity and patronage of traditional music vendors in Imo State. The study used four research questions and two hypotheses. A population of 600 was sampled down to 240 through random sampling. A survey design was

used. Data analysis with chi-square revealed that women patronized more for events. The study concluded that gender identity plays a role in cultural consumption. It recommended gender-targeted promotions. This study relates to the present in design and statistics but differs in industry.

Ifunanya and Obinna (2023) explored Gender and trust in indigenous service providers in Nsukka zone. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the research. A population of 700 patrons was narrowed to 200 using quota sampling. A descriptive design and chi-square test were employed. Findings indicated women showed higher trust levels. The study concluded that trust levels are gendered. It recommended customer relationship programs. It shares statistics and methodology with the present study but differs in geographical area.

Kelechi and Nkiru (2023) examined Gender influence on brand loyalty to indigenous artisans in Awka North. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A sample of 240 was selected from a population of 850 via stratified sampling. A descriptive survey design and regression were used. Results showed stronger loyalty among women. It concluded that emotional branding should target women. This study shares the same geographical location with the present study and method but differs in product type.

Chioma and Ikechukwu (2023) investigated Gender patterns in patronage of local arts exhibitions in Anambra South. The study had three research questions and one hypothesis. From a population of 600, 200 participants were selected using purposive sampling. A descriptive survey design was adopted. Data were analyzed using t-test statistics. Results showed higher attendance by females driven by aesthetic appeal. The study concluded that gender influences art appreciation. It recommended incorporating female preferences in art curation. It is similar in geographical region and design but differs in focus.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Psychosocial perception will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

2. Gender will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.
3. Interaction of Gender and Psychosocial perception will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

## METHOD

**Participants:** The study involved a sample of 223 participants, who were drawn from the population of customers and potential customers of the "Uzu" Awka Indigenous Blacksmithing Industry. To ensure a representative sample, a multi-stage sampling technique will be employed. This method will help in achieving a balanced and diverse sample that accurately reflects the demographics and characteristics of the population. In the first stage, the population of Awka and its surrounding areas were stratified based on key demographic

variables such as age, gender, occupation, and socioeconomic status. This stratification ensures that all relevant subgroups within the population are adequately represented in the sample.

Stratified sampling is essential in studies where different subgroups might have distinct perceptions and behaviors, thereby providing more accurate and generalizable results the second stage involved the use of simple random sampling within each stratum to select participants. Simple random sampling is chosen to ensure that each individual within the stratum has an equal chance of being selected, thereby eliminating selection bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings.

The final sample consisted of 223 participants, with proportional representation from each demographic subgroup. This approach will facilitate the collection of comprehensive and nuanced data on the psychosocial perceptions and occupational characteristics affecting customers' patronage of the blacksmithing industry.

**Table 1: Participants' Sampling Distribution**

Cluster	Sample	N
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	131
	Female	102
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	Married	75
	Single	128
	Divorced	15
	Widowed	5
	Separated	10
	Postgraduate	5
<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	First Degree	88
	Diploma	45
	Secondary	80
	Primary	15
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	Technology	25
	Agriculture	15
	Administration	15
	Private Venture	15
	Artisan	50
	Business	78
	Education	10
	Engineering	5
	Health	5
	Student	10
	Nil	5

**Source:** Questionnaire primary data

Table 1 shows the participants distribution for the clusters of gender, marital status, educational level, and occupation. More males (131) than females (102) participated. Range variations of

the five categories of marital status showed single (128) was highest while widowed (5) was lowest;

five categories of educational levels had first degree (88) was highest while postgraduate (5)

was lowest; and eleven categories of educational of occupation had business (78) while Engineering (5), Health (5), and Nil (5).

**Table 2: Participants' Sampling Distribution**

Cluster	Sample	N
<b>STATE OF ORIGIN</b>	Anambra	133
	Delta	5
	Enugu	25
	Abuja	10
	Kogi	15
	Kwara	5
	Ebonyi	15
	Benue	5
	Imo	10
	Edo	10
<b>RELIGION</b>	Christianity	173
	Islam	15
	Traditional	40
	None	5
<b>CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION</b>	None	35
	Catholic	80
	Anglican	25
	Pentecostal	83
	Sabbath	5
	Others	5
<b>ISLAMIC DENOMINATION</b>	None	213
	Sunni	5
	Shi'te	10
	Others	5

**Source: Questionnaire primary data**

Table 2 shows the participants distribution for the clusters of State of origin, religion, Christian denomination, and Islamic denomination. Range variations of the ten States of origin showed Anambra State (133) was highest while Delta State (5), Kwara State (5), and Benue State (5) were lowest; five types of religion had Christianity (173) was highest while None (5) was lowest; six Christian denominations had Pentecostals (83) while Sabbath (5), and Others (5) were the lowest.

**Instruments:** Three instruments were utilized, which are: Psychosocial Perception Scale adapted from Karasek, R., Kawakami, N., Brisson, C., Houtman, I., Bongers, P., & Amick, B. (1998), Occupational (job) Content (characteristics) Questionnaire Adapted from Dholam, K.P., Parkar, S.P., Dugad, J.A., Kharade, P.P., Shinde, A.A., and Gurav, S.V. (2021), and Customer Patronage Scale Adapted from Nwafor, D. O. and Anyasor, O.M. (2020).

**Psychosocial Perception Scale:** The Psychosocial Perception Scale is a meticulously developed instrument designed to measure

individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward the "Uzu" Awka Indigenous Blacksmithing Industry. The scale comprises 15 items, each rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much). This format allows participants to express the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement, providing a nuanced understanding of their psychosocial perceptions. Scoring on the Psychosocial Perception Scale involves summing the responses for all 15 items.

The possible scores thus range from 15 to 75, with higher scores indicating more positive psychosocial perceptions of the blacksmithing industry. For instance, a total score closer to 75 would suggest a highly favorable perception, whereas a score nearer to 15 would indicate a less favorable or negative perception. The scale reported a content validity of 0.97. The reliability of the Psychosocial Perception Scale was determined through a pilot study involving a sample of 50 participants similar to the study population. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating that the items on the scale are

consistently measuring the same construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Additionally, test-retest reliability was assessed over a two-week interval, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.82, which suggests that the scale produces stable and consistent results over time.

**Customer Patronage Scale:** The Customer Patronage Scale is an evaluative tool designed to measure various aspects of customer patronage. The scale is divided into five subscales: Customer Care, Product Awareness, Service Quality, Managerial Judgment, Customers Attraction, and Relational Influence. Each subscale assesses a distinct dimension of customer patronage, providing a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing customer behavior. The Customer Patronage Scale uses a Likert response format, where participants rate each item on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much).

This format allows for the measurement of the intensity of participants' perceptions and experiences related to each dimension of customer patronage. Scoring involves summing the responses for each item within a subscale. The scores for each subscale can range from a minimum, depending on the number of items in the subscale, to a maximum that reflects the highest possible agreement with the statements. Higher total scores for a subscale indicate stronger perceptions of that particular dimension of customer patronage. Construct validity was evaluated using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and scale reported a construct validity of 0.87.

The reliability of the Customer Patronage Scale was assessed through internal consistency and test-retest reliability methods. The internal consistency of the subscales was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which ranged from 0.82 to 0.90, indicating excellent reliability. Test-retest reliability was assessed over a four-week interval with a sample of 150 customers, yielding correlation coefficients between 0.80 and 0.88 for the subscales, demonstrating the stability of the scale over time.

**Procedure:** Prior to data collection, informed consent will be obtained from each participant. They will be briefed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their

participation, and their rights as research subjects. Participants will be assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they will have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. The questionnaires will be administered by trained research assistants who are familiar with the local language and customs to ensure clarity and understanding of the questions. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification during the administration process.

Ethical considerations will be strictly adhered to throughout the study. The research will be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and standards for research involving human participants. Specifically, the study will respect the principles of beneficence, respect for persons, and justice. To protect participant confidentiality, all data collected will be anonymized and stored securely. Only aggregated data will be reported in any publications or presentations resulting from the study. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant before their involvement, ensuring they are fully aware of their rights and the implications of their participation.

Moreover, the study will minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. Efforts will be made to ensure that the research process is non-intrusive and respectful of cultural norms and sensitivities. Participants will be treated with dignity and respect throughout their involvement in the study.

**Design and Statistics:** A cross-sectional design adopted for this study. A cross-sectional design enables the study to collect data from a diverse group of participants at a single point in time. The primary inferential statistical method employed in this study is multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA).

Multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA) allows for the examination of the simultaneous influence of multiple independent variables (psychosocial perceptions, occupational characteristics, and gender) on a single dependent variable (customer patronage). This analysis will help in identifying which specific psychosocial perceptions and occupational characteristics significantly predict variations in customer patronage of the "Uzu" Awka Indigenous Blacksmithing Industry. SPSS



(Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version  
26 will be used to analyze the data.

### RESULT

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
<b>AGE</b>	233	20	67	38.23	10.89	.75	.159	.16	.318
<b>PSYCHOSOCIAL PERCEPTION</b>	233	31	67	45.19	8.33	1.16	.159	1.70	.318
<b>CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE</b>	233	56	151	110.28	19.64	.02	.159	-.17	.318
Customer Care	233	9	29	17.79	4.70	.05	.159	-.88	.318
Product Awareness	233	6	28	15.62	5.10	-.33	.159	-.77	.318
Service Quality	233	8	25	17.06	5.46	.43	.159	-1.20	.318
Managerial Judgement	233	10	26	17.14	2.81	.12	.159	1.14	.318
Customers' Attraction	233	7	30	19.74	3.34	-.64	.159	4.32	.318
Relational Influence	233	11	29	22.52	5.79	-.16	.159	-1.34	.318

Table 3 showed that mean for psychosocial perception (45.19 of 67), and customers' patronage (110.28 of 151), indicating above

average performance. Their respective SDs were 8.33, and 19.64, indicating high variability performance for the respective three variables.

**Table 4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Psychosocial Perception, Gender, and Age on Customers' Patronage of "Uzu" Awka Blacksmithing Industry**

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
GENDER	CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE	557.525	1	557.525	14.482	.000	.064	14.482	.966
	Customer Care	79.628	1	79.628	27.058	.000	.113	27.058	.999
	Product Awareness	21.793	1	21.793	2.989	.085	.014	2.989	.406
	Service Quality	50.441	1	50.441	18.351	.000	.080	18.351	.989
	Managerial Judgement	7.735	1	7.735	1.965	.162	.009	1.965	.287
	Customers' Attraction	5.572	1	5.572	3.164	.077	.015	3.164	.425
	Relational Influence	50.752	1	50.752	12.441	.001	.055	12.441	.940
AGE	CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE	917.974	1	917.974	23.845	.000	.101	23.845	.998
	Customer Care	23.532	1	23.532	7.996	.005	.036	7.996	.804
	Product Awareness	2.427	1	2.427	.333	.565	.002	.333	.089
	Service Quality	64.687	1	64.687	23.534	.000	.100	23.534	.998
	Managerial Judgement	26.346	1	26.346	6.694	.010	.031	6.694	.731
	Customers' Attraction	45.281	1	45.281	25.712	.000	.108	25.712	.999
	Relational Influence	15.003	1	15.003	3.678	.056	.017	3.678	.480
PSYCHOSOCIAL PERCEPTION	CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE	76775.972	15	5118.398	132.952	.000	.904	1994.287	1.000
	Customer Care	3636.913	15	242.461	82.391	.000	.854	1235.870	1.000
	Product Awareness	3623.835	15	241.589	33.138	.000	.701	497.077	1.000
	Service Quality	5564.042	15	370.936	134.949	.000	.905	2024.241	1.000
	Managerial Judgement	773.939	15	51.596	13.110	.000	.481	196.650	1.000
	Customers' Attraction	2086.748	15	139.117	78.996	.000	.848	1184.940	1.000
	Relational Influence	6230.345	15	415.356	101.818	.000	.878	1527.272	1.000
GENDER & PSYCHOSOCIAL PERCEPTION	CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE	808.355	3	269.452	6.999	.000	.090	20.997	.979
	Customer Care	115.605	3	38.535	13.095	.000	.156	39.284	1.000
	Product Awareness	103.902	3	34.634	4.751	.003	.063	14.252	.896
	Service Quality	39.395	3	13.132	4.777	.003	.063	14.332	.898
	Managerial Judgement	21.570	3	7.190	1.827	.143	.025	5.481	.471
	Customers' Attraction	33.448	3	11.149	6.331	.000	.082	18.993	.965
	Relational Influence	44.360	3	14.787	3.625	.014	.049	10.874	.791
Total	CUSTOMERS PATRONAGE	2923129.000	233						
	Customer Care	78832.000	233						
	Product Awareness	62877.000	233						
	Service Quality	74735.000	233						
	Managerial Judgement	70302.000	233						
	Customers' Attraction	93400.000	233						
	Relational Influence	125923.000	233						

**P< .05, N = 233; Source: Questionnaire primary data**

Table 4 shows tests of between-subjects effects for psychosocial perception, gender, and age on customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry. Table 4 shows that gender ( $F(1, 233) = 14.482; p=0.05 > 0.000; \eta^2 = 6.4\%$ ) significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry. Age ( $F(1, 233) = 23.845; p=0.05 > 0.000; \eta^2 = 10.1\%$ ) significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry. Psychosocial perception ( $F(1, 233) = 132.952; p=0.05 > 0.000; \eta^2 = 90.4\%$ ) significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry. Interaction of Gender and Psychosocial perception ( $F(1, 233) = 6.999; p=0.05 > 0.000; \eta^2 = 9\%$ ) significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka blacksmithing industry.

#### **Summary of Findings/Results**

1. Psychosocial perception significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.
2. Gender significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.
3. Interaction of Gender and Psychosocial perception significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Hypotheses one which stated that psychosocial perception will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry was rejected. The result showed that psychosocial perception significantly influenced customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry.

This finding indicates that customers' psychological and social interpretations of the blacksmithing industry in Awka play a crucial role in their decision to patronize the industry. This supports the study by Umeh and Okafor (2021) who found that consumer attitudes and perceived value greatly affect patronage of indigenous craft industries in Enugu State.

Similarly, Eze and Nwafor (2020) emphasized that social perception and cultural attachment influence purchasing behaviors of traditional products. The study aligns with Agu et al. (2022) who discovered that identity association and social relevance were predictors of customer interest in indigenous arts in southeastern Nigeria.

Hypothesis two which stated that gender will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry result revealed that was rejected. This result shows that gender differences contribute meaningfully to variations in customer patronage, with males potentially being more likely to patronize the industry due to occupational alignment. This finding agrees with Eze and Okonkwo (2021) who reported that men are more inclined toward products associated with physical labor and indigenous craftsmanship. Similarly, Okafor and Obi (2022) found that women were less likely to purchase tools from indigenous craft shops, perceiving them as male-oriented.

Hypothesis three which stated that interaction of gender and psychosocial perception will not significantly influence customers' patronage of "Uzu" Awka indigenous blacksmithing industry. This result reveals that the joint influence of gender and psychosocial perception has a significant effect on how customers perceive and engage with the industry. In line with this, Okoye and Ahanonu (2023) found that men and women respond differently to psychosocial cues when choosing indigenous products. Similarly, Amaka and Okoro (2021) established that gendered expectations mediate how individuals psychologically engage with traditional industries.

#### **Implications of the Study**

The significant influence of psychosocial perception on customers' patronage of the Uzu Awka industry implies that cultural beliefs, societal attitudes, and individual values play a vital role in sustaining indigenous enterprises. When people perceive an indigenous product or service positively—seeing it as relevant, prestigious, or symbolically valuable—they are more likely to patronize it. This underscores the

need for cultural reorientation programs that elevate the public's view of indigenous craftsmanship. Marketing and outreach strategies should consider gender-specific preferences, encouraging broader acceptance and support for the blacksmithing industry. Stakeholders should adopt targeted interventions that are sensitive to gender, occupation, and cultural perceptions to effectively boost patronage and revitalize indigenous industries.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it recommended that there is need:

1. Strengthen public awareness campaigns to improve the psychosocial perception of the Uzu Awka blacksmithing industry.
2. Incorporate indigenous blacksmithing into cultural festivals and school curricula to promote cultural pride and early awareness.
3. Foster collaboration between artisans and research institutions to integrate modern technology with traditional techniques.
4. Promote partnerships between the blacksmithing industry and trade associations to expand market access.

### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by its geographical focus on Anambra State, particularly the Awka area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other indigenous blacksmithing communities in Nigeria. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which is subject to social desirability bias, as participants may have over- or under-reported their patronage behaviors. The study also did not consider other influential factors such as economic conditions, product pricing, or government policies that may affect patronage.

### Suggestions for Further Study

1. Investigate the role of pricing, quality assurance, and product availability in influencing patronage of indigenous crafts.

2. Explore the impact of media representation and cultural storytelling on psychosocial perceptions of indigenous industries.
3. Study the effect of modernization and globalization on the sustainability of traditional blacksmithing practices in Nigeria.

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**PSYCHOSOCIAL PERCEPTION**

S/N		Not at All (1)	A Little (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Most of the Time (4)	Very Much (5)
1.	How much comfortable are you as a blacksmith?					
2.	In your day-to-day life, how much satisfied are you as a blacksmith?					
3.	As a blacksmith, how much confident do you feel?					
4.	How much satisfied are you with your work ability?					
5.	A blacksmith is contented about himself?					
6.	How much do other people respect you as a blacksmith?					
7.	How much does your family like you as a blacksmith?					
8.	Being a blacksmith, how much does your spouse like you?					
9.	As a blacksmith, how much do your friends like you?					
10.	In general, how much hopeful are you about your life as a blacksmith?					
11.	What is the extent of your happiness as a blacksmith?					
12.	As a blacksmith, how much enthusiastic are you about your occupation?					
13.	Have you ever felt helpless recently as a blacksmith? If yes, how much?					
14.	Do you feel worthless recently? If yes, how much?					
15.	To what extent do you feel socially admired as a blacksmith?					

**SOURCE:** Adapted from Dholam, K.P., Parkar, S.P., Dugad, J.A., Kharade, P.P., Shinde, A.A., and Gurav, S.V. (2021). Development of a psychosocial perception scale and comparison of psychosocial perception of patients with extra oral defects before and after facial prosthesis. *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry, June*. DOI:10.1016/j.prosdent.2021.03.017.

**CUSTOMER PATRONAGE**

S/N		Not at All (1)	A Little (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Most of the Time (4)	Very Much (5)
	<b>CUSTOMER CARE</b>					
1.	Courtesy attracts customers' patronage to us.					
2.	Our pleasant welcome increases customers' patronage.					
3.	Treating customers' complaints effectively enhances their patronage.					
4.	Good public relations increase customer patronage.					
5.	Customers reach us through multimedia channels.					
	<b>PRODUCT AWARENESS</b>					
6.	Frequently advertisement increases patronage on our products/services.					
7.	Social media platforms help to increase customers' patronage.					
8.	Our sending regular messages on new products/services to customers increases their patronage.					
9.	Phone calls on customers on new products increase their patronage					
	<b>SERVICE QUALITY</b>					
10.	Our punctuality to customers' demands increases their patronage.					
11.	Feedbacks received from customers suggest that our services meet with their expectations.					
12.	Quality of our services impacts consumers' patronage intentions.					
13.	Our customers' loyalty is maintained by our empathy.					
14.	Our responsiveness to customers' request increases their patronage.					

	<b>MANAGERIAL JUDGEMENT</b>					
15.	Our business environment satisfies our customers for more patronage.					
16.	Dynamism in getting customers educated increases their patronage.					
17.	Blacksmiths are trained on how to relate with customers to retain them.					
18.	A colleague can take a customer to another to purchase a product.					
19.	We desist from diverting colleagues' customers.					
20.	Optimum attention to our customers increases their patronage.					
21.	<b>CUSTOMERS ATTRACTION</b>					
22.	Customers' satisfaction of blacksmithing products is increasingly.					
23.	More blacksmithing products are being purchased by customers.					
24.	We have newer customers regularly.					
25.	Our service qualities attract newer customers.					
26.	Our old customers are still patronizing us.					
27.	Our periodic gifts attract customers to us.					
	<b>RELATIONAL INFLUENCE</b>					
28.	The satisfaction of our customers entails their continued patronage.					
29.	Our customers make repeat purchase of our products/services.					
30.	We have the best interest of our customers at heart when producing articles and it yields good patronage.					
31.	Repeat purchase is an indication of customer loyalty with our services and products.					
32.	Our respect to customers adds value to customers' experiences					
33.	Our products/services are encouraging continued patronage.					

**SOURCE:** Adapted Nwafor, D. O. and Anyasor, O.M. (2020). marketing public relations and consumer patronage of bank products in Anambra State, Nigeria. *British Journal of Management and Marketing Studies*, 3(1), 1-19