

## CHALLENGES OF HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS MARKETING AND PROMOTION AMONGST IBAN ENTREPRENEURS IN SARAWAK

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The main objective of this study was to examine challenges faced by handicraft marketing in implementing product promotion strategies amongst Iban entrepreneurs in Sarawak. This study specifically focused on strategy, the effectiveness of the strategy, and the challenges in implementing the promotion strategy. Fieldwork was carried out at several locations in Kapit and Song district. The data were collected through open-ended questionnaires by email and followed by face-to-face interviews with the respondents. The result showed that personal selling is the effective strategy and the other promotion strategies through public relations. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, personal selling, and trade fairs are not commonly applicable. Government negligence, exploitation, lack of training, lack of financial support, lack of promotion assistance from stakeholders, expensive working tools, and lack of ownership to the working places were the most critical challenges these marketing strategies face, especially in the rural area. The study recommends that the government come up with support or policies that would create an environment for all stakeholders, including financial institutions, training institutions, and NGOs, to lend a helping hand in promoting skills development in the area.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurs, handicraft, Iban, rural development, marketing strategies