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**Marketing prerequisites of rural Azerbaijan's
traditional handicrafts through purchasing
process**



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ABSTRACT

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This study was carried out as a part of Development of Sustainable Tourism and Support of Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan project. During research execution the capital city Baku and one of the target regions Sheki were visited. The objective of this study was to gather information about rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts, particularly Sheki's traditions. As one of the main aims of the project is to create a tourism marketing strategy for the rural target regions in Azerbaijan, this research was focused on understanding the marketing prerequisites behind the local handicrafts to help realizing what is required to be implemented of them to foreign tourists.

The research data was collected using data triangulation such as interviews, observations, photographs, videos and tourism guide books and booklets. The interviewees were two local craftsmen, silk industry professional, tourism professional and Sheki Handicrafts Association's executive director from Sheki and EKOT NGO's director from Baku. The research method was chosen to be qualitative, because a specific real-life condition was documented and analyzed by usage of acceptable theory. The data was approached deductively and analyzed focusing on understanding the contents and finding the main points. The theoretical section explores traditional handicrafts, folklore and cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, rural tourism and culture tourism, and sustainable marketing, promotion mix and purchasing process.

The interview respondents stated that there is no online marketing for traditional handicrafts in Sheki. In general, the respondents were aware of what kind of assistance they would need such as professional help with promoting the crafts. First, the promotion and advertising objectives should be set as well as defining the target group if it is foreign tourists or not. Also, the results suggest that the rural artisans know best their own crafts, but they do not have enough business skills to develop them being more practical as tourism products.

If conducting future researches of the matter, perhaps complementary results could be found better by using quantitative approach focusing on interviewing foreign tourists. Further, by interviewing foreign tourists visiting rural Azerbaijan, useful details could be adopted considering rural and traditional handicrafts from the aspect of a potential customer. The findings indicate also that local producers should be heard when starting to plan the tourism marketing strategy to avoid creating any separation between them and the potential customers.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is to research rural and traditional Azerbaijani handicraft culture through purchasing process considering also promotion mix and AIDA model to reach ideas of marketing prerequisites. The subject has been chosen because of a high interest in handicrafts in respect of the clothing business degree by the author of this thesis. Design, culture and tourism can be combined together for instance as a successful marketing key in the field of tourism. Generally, rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts have not been explored enough from the aspect of tourism.

This study has been entrusted by the project called Development of Sustainable Tourism and Support of Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan. It is a follow-on project to the undertaking called Developing Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Promoting Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan carried out in 2012 - 2014 funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Furthermore, the thesis was assigned to be written by the project extension. The project would benefit from this thesis considering the future actions in the project areas. The study was written and carried out in Kajaani in Finland during the academic year 2016 - 2017 according to the thesis introductions of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences.

Particularly, the meaning of this research was to map out the current situation of the local handicraft business in rural Azerbaijan. The target areas of the project in Azerbaijan would profit from their own tangible heritage in the field of tourism, but at the moment local handicrafts are not fully accessible products for foreign tourists to purchase. The research focuses to find out what features should be in line with traditional rural Azerbaijani handicrafts to do marketing more efficiently in the near future by the project.

During the first project, the formal research on rural Azerbaijani target regions dealt with sustainable development. Also, a summary of the starting project's achievements, findings, failings and needs was written after the project. In general, lack of marketing material has been found considering many local

handicraft makers' development in the field of Tourism though business skills have been taught to some artisans.

Hence, the aim of the study was to find as much information of rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts as possible by observing, interviewing and gathering material during visiting Baku the capital city of Azerbaijan and one of the project target areas Sheki on the 5th - 13th of November 2016 funded by the project. Qualitative approach was chosen to be the most suitable way to study the matter as not knowing precisely beforehand how much and what kind of data was possible to gather at the target country. In fact, an open mind was wanted to be applied in the real world during the execution point.

Ultimately, Azerbaijan as a tourism destination has several attractions, but this study deals only with traditional handicrafts as an important part of culture and tourism of Azerbaijan. The overall purpose of this research was to describe marketing prerequisites of rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts through purchasing process. The main research questions were: "What is traditional handicrafts' purchasing process like?" and "What are the marketing prerequisites that Azerbaijan's local handicrafts would need to meet to reach foreign tourists better?". Sheki's most important handicrafts are explained in chapter 3 as well as sustainable tourism, rural tourism, culture tourism, traditional handicrafts and folklore.

The study is theory-based and both the collected data and the theory have been examined in detail and miscellaneously. The chosen marketing theories will be described in chapter 4 as sustainable marketing, marketing mix and promotion mix. Furthermore, chapter 5 will consider the concept of purchasing process both in general and from the aspect of traditional handicrafts and rural Azerbaijan's traditional crafts.

This research has offered many development possibilities to the author in the field of tourism such as improving own writing and analyzing skills in English. The research required lots of studying before writing, because the studied matter was not well-known to the author beforehand. International surroundings of the research have offered the perfect experience of bilateral cooperation.

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Development of Sustainable Tourism and Support of Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan project has been started in 2015 as a follow-on project to an undertaking called Developing Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Promoting Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan carried out in 2012 - 2014. They both were and are funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The project continues in co-operation with Finnish non-governmental organization Sustainable Future NGO, local partner Ekoloji Tarazlig (EKOT) and Kajaani University of Applied Sciences.

Particularly, the differences between these two projects are in focus which was developing entrepreneurship skills during the first project. The sequel is now aiming to continue from where the first project was left, which means that more local artisans especially women would be activated and encouraged to get employed in the field of tourism to support local handicraft businesses in the rural Azerbaijan.

2.1 Project cooperation partners

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences is the executor of the project taking care of bilateral communication with Azerbaijan and the annual project budgeting. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland funds the project and Sustainable Future NGO is responsible for other activities in the project. Ekoloji Tarazlig (EKOT), the local partner, is an Azerbaijani non-governmental organization being responsible on implementation of project activities in the target regions. (Merilahti 2016.)

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland explains bilateral liaison as a happening between Finland and some other individual country. Cooperation rests on a local partner's own progress and Finnish partner's consultation. If the local partner would not be determined to achieve changes, Finland cannot entirely take the responsibility of it as its main role is principally to support the associate's development. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2017.)

2.1.1 Sustainable Future NGO and Ekoloji Tarazliq (EKOT)

Sustainable Future NGO is a Finnish non-profit non-governmental organization. Its goal is to support different kinds of projects in developing countries aiming at sustainable development in economical, social and ecological manner. The NGO tries to achieve its priorities by networking with national and international organizations, advocating sustainable development, participating in education, research and development projects, organizing campaigns about sustainable development and creating new data of the matter. (KeTu Ry 2016.)

Ekoloji Tarazlig (EKOT) is an Azerbaijani non-governmental organization. Its main aim is to keep up ecological balance in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's nature is variable and it offers plenty of attractions to people, but it should also be taken good care of to maintain the changeability. (Varsinais-Suomen Yrittäjä 2013.)

2.2 Main objectives of the project

The aim of the project is to create a tourism marketing and branding strategy for the rural target regions: Sheki - Gabala, Guba and Lancaran - Astara. Many experts from Finland and the target country have been tied into the project without mentioning all the local artisans and women from the rural areas. Quality tourism products would help the areas considering both foreign and domestic tourists. (Kajaani University of Applied Sciences 2017.)

Furthermore, cooperation with women would also possibly have an influence to economic development of the target country. All project actions are supposed to strengthen networking between different stakeholders. The local artisans would be offered trainings including entrepreneurship skills, product development, rural tourism marketing and branding as well as communication strategy. (Kajaani University of Applied Sciences 2017.)

Finally, women would be supported to involve the project actions and rural tourism as the concept would also be introduced in the level of school education. The project actions include development of promotional materials, improvement

of tourism base, and establishment of three associations of rural tourism and spreading positive messages about Azerbaijan and the project areas. (Kajaani University of Applied Sciences 2017.)

2.3 Project target areas in rural Azerbaijan

There are five rural project target areas in Azerbaijan: Sheki, Gabala, Guba, Lankaran and Astara.



Picture 1

The map of Azerbaijan and the rural target areas of the project (Google 2017a).

As the map shows, (picture 1) the regions are located both in the north - west and north - east and south - east of the country. There are good bus connections to all rural regions from Baku the capital city of the country. Azerbaijan's climate and nature are both very variable.

There are nine different climate zones in Azerbaijan as tropical and alpine climates. Sheki, Gabala and Guba differ from Lankaran and Astara as being near the mountains and not so close to the Caspian Sea. However, all the regions have their own unique handicraft features preserved from history to this day.

2.3.1 Sheki - Gabala and Guba

Sheki is a very popular domestic travel destination. In the 18th century Sheki was a part of the Great Silk Road and its caravanserais housed traders on their way to Asia and Europe. Sheki has a rich culture in handicrafts from pottery to

embroidery. Crafting skills are passed on from mother and father to daughters and sons. Sheki's several historical monuments offer plenty of fascinating sights and there are quite many accommodation possibilities to choose from. (Advantour 2017a.)

Gabala is full of pictorial villages and its nature and animal life attract hunters during the hunting season. Also Gabala has its history that has remained to this day as the city used to be called the capital of Caucasian Albania for hundreds of years. Today, Gabala International Music Festival is hosted every year in the city. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015a.) Also, there have been several materials found today that tells the city of Gabala was also a handicraft center in the ancient past: wood, metal, stone, bone, pottery, jewellery and knitted and tanned crafts have been found as relics (Azərbaycan Respublikası Mədəniyyət və Turizm Nazirliyi 2015).

Apples are Guba's symbol as Guba is full of apple gardens. The city is famous of its carpets, also outside Azerbaijan. Guba carpets are considered the best carpet artwork in Azerbaijan. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015b.) In general, Azerbaijani carpets are categorized into seven groups by location, patterns, composition, colour and technique (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2014, 42).

There is a World of Carpets Association in Guba which is possible for tourists to visit. It was founded in 2006 and it has hundreds of members. The Association tries to protect ancient patterns and natural methods from disappearing. (Aghamirzayeva 2012.) The founder and her trained weavers have done lots of research on Azerbaijani handicrafts culture. (Rolando 2012).

2.3.2 Lankaran - Astara

Lankaran and Astara are naturally beautiful cities in Southern Azerbaijan by the Caspian Sea and near Iran. They have a perfect subtropical climate for agriculture and Lankaran's local tea is highly noticed as the best tea in Azerbaijan. There are lots of forests in Astara and for instance ironwood is used

in the textile industry. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015c&d & WN Network 2017.)

In the 18th century Lankaran became the center of Talysh Khanate and Talysh people had their ancient traditions that have remained also to this day: copperware, sewing of clothes and pottery (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan c) 2015). Nowadays, most of these Persian ancestors live in small towns or in mountain villages maintaining ancient traditions and handicrafts such as Talysh carpets (King 2006, 57).

Lankaran - Astara region offers culture and history from over 2000 years ago, hot springs and sandy beaches, local handicrafts that can be bought from Bazaars and wild nature to explore. At the region, there is a Hirkan National Park that was created in 2004 to protect the subtropical landscapes and animal and plant species (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015e). There is also a city called Astara at the Iran side that Azerbaijan's Astara borders (Google 2017b).

2.4 The need for the research by the project

As the project considers both traditional handicrafts and tourism, there was a perfect opportunity for a tourism student to do a research for the project. The project executor told the project benefitting from a research of local Azerbaijani handicraft culture. As the project values sustainability and rurally located areas in Azerbaijan, rural tourism, culture tourism and sustainable tourism as concepts are natural parts of this study.

The aim of the project is to create a marketing strategy for the rural target regions, so some kind of marketing aspect to the research was advisable. Rests of the demands for this study were possible to discuss about and handle in a flexible manner. Also, the project provided the material collection visit to the country.

Generally, marketing actions are needed considering the rural target regions to reach more tourists to buy traditional handicrafts made in rural Azerbaijan. More attention to rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts would allow more employment possibilities for local people in the field of tourism. The project would benefit from this research's results as background material for creating the marketing plan for the target regions during the year 2017.

2.5 Tourism in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is a Caucasian republic with nearly 9 700 000 inhabitants. The majority of the country's population is Muslims and in 1918, Azerbaijan was the first democratic country with Muslim-majority in East. Although, the country retrieved its independence quite recently in 1991 after belonging to Soviet Union from the year 1920. (Fuzzy 2012.) Today, tourism is developed in Azerbaijan and many successful hotels can be found there (Aliyev 2017).

However, Azerbaijan is still not a popular tourism country among foreign visitors even though the country has much to offer for both foreign and domestic tourists. In the 1980's - 1990's the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan affected Azerbaijan's tourism going down after Soviet control (The Council of Foreign Relations 2017). Now, there are Armenian armed forces in Nagorno-Karabakh region and in seven other districts nearby and tourists are not advised to go near the region, because it would not be safe (Ministry of Culture and Tourism Republic of Azerbaijan 2015a1, 85).

Despite all above, Azerbaijan has a lot of attractions that not all countries in the world can offer at the same time: history, culture, food, nature, art, and mud volcanos, wellness, different animal species, plants, beaches and sports. There are nine different climate zones represented in Azerbaijan. Also, the country is a mix of many different cultures from East to West. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015f).

2.5.1 Tourism statistics of Azerbaijan considering foreign tourists

In 2015, there was 2 006 176 foreign citizens arriving to Azerbaijan. The number of accommodated foreign tourists was 495 648 and domestic tourists 342 497. Both domestic and foreign tourists have mostly stayed in guest houses and hotels during their stay in Azerbaijan. (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016.)

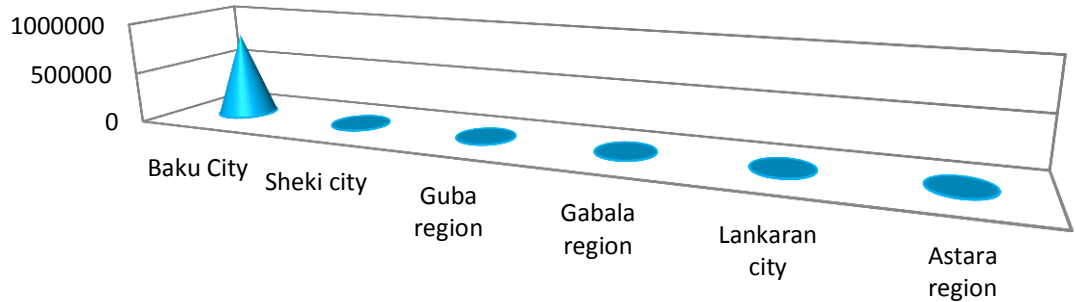
Also, foreign tourists had mostly business purposes to travel the country. Baku city has been the most popular destination in Azerbaijan for foreign tourists. They have mostly stayed 1 - 3 days in the country. For the past five years most of the foreign tourists arriving Azerbaijan were from Russian Federation. Other popular foreign countries were Georgia, Turkey and Iran. Further, there were 1 234 Finnish tourists arriving Azerbaijan in 2015. (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016.)

Moreover, there were 243 travel agencies and touroperators in Azerbaijan in 2015 from which 6 were foreign enterprises. The number of package tours sold to foreign citizens for traveling within Azerbaijan territory was 1918 package tours worth of 812, 3 thousand manats. Most of the foreign tourists using package tours were travelling for pleasure. (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016.)

Obviously, Baku city is the most accommodated and overnigheted city by foreign tourists in Azerbaijan as seen in the figures 1 and 2 on the page 14. As Sheki is the second most popular tourism destination among foreign visitors, it is also the second most accommodated and overnigheted city in Azerbaijan. In Guba region 2450 foreign citizens stayed overnight and 942 of them were accommodated. Lankaran - Astara had also some foreign visitors staying overnight couple of years ago. Foreign tourists did not stay overnight or were not accommodated in Gabala in 2015.

Figure 1

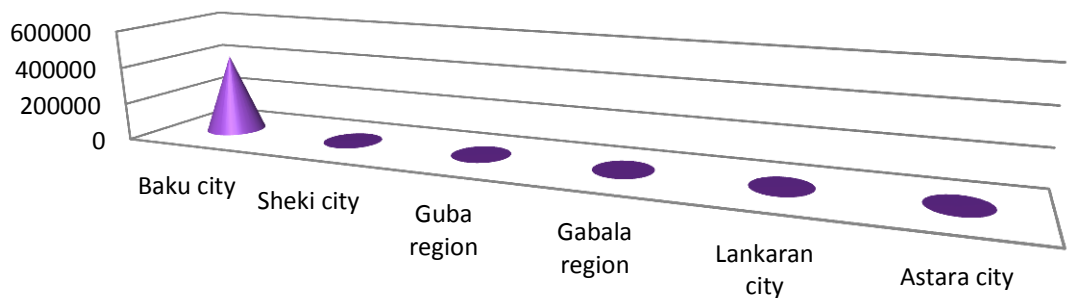
The number of overnights of foreign citizens in hotels and similar establishments by economic regions (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016).



	Baku City	Sheki city	Guba region	Gabala region	Lankaran city	Astara region
■ The number of overnights of foreign citizens in hotels and similar establishments by economic regions	825509	3132	2450	0	1176	177

Figure 2

The number of accommodated foreign citizens in hotels and similar establishments by economic regions (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016).



	Baku city	Sheki city	Guba region	Gabala region	Lankaran city	Astara city
■ The number of accommodated foreign citizens in hotels and similar establishments by economic regions	422564	2852	942	0	707	177

2.5.2 Baku the capital of Azerbaijan

Baku city was visited as a part of the research execution including for instance The Old city, The Palace of Shirvanshahs, Azerbaijan Carpet Museum, Market Place, Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University, restaurants and tea houses. Baku is the capital city and the center of Azerbaijan and it is one of the biggest cities in the Caucasian area as it already was in the Soviet Union (Hudman & Jackson 2003, 317). Every year several tourists visit Azerbaijan and most of them explore Baku. There are approximately 2, 5 million inhabitants in Baku and the city has many theaters, museums and festivals, and modern art. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism Republic of Azerbaijan 2015a2.)

There are seven main tourism routes in Azerbaijan considering Baku: Baku and The Absheron Peninsula, Baku-Khachmaz, Baku-Balakan, Baku-Astara, Baku-Gazakh, Baku-Nagorno-Karabakh, and Baku-Nakhchivan. In the Inner/ Old City (Icherisheher) of Baku, many handicraft departments were developed and produced such as pottery, metal and glass wares. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism Republic of Azerbaijan 2014, 118 & 106.) In 2015, there were 364 121 persons accommodated in Baku city with just tourism purposes, mainly leisure and recreation tourism (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016).

2.5.3 Rural Sheki

Also, Sheki was visited as part of the research execution including for instance Sheki Khan's Palace, Karvansaray (picture 1), Silk Factory, Albanian church in Kish village, Sheki Tourist Information Center, Sheki Craftshouse and many other places. Sheki was the only project target area visited during the execution because of the limited time visiting Azerbaijan. Sheki was chosen to be visited, because it was not been explored earlier by Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, not even during the first project.

Sheki is considered possibly to be the most ancient city in Azerbaijan and the whole Caucasian area from over 2 500 years ago (Hudman & Jackson 2003, 317). There are about 175, 5 thousand inhabitants in Sheki and it is about 305 kilometers apart from Baku. Nowadays, several crafts are still supported, made and sold in Sheki (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015g).

Picture 1

Some of the Sheki craftsmen make and sell their works down by the Karvansaray hotel in Sheki. These rooms are free for artisans to use made possible by the Sheki Handicrafts Association.



3 HANDICRAFTS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable tourism includes many basic aspects, but considering this study the main matter is man-made heritage such as traditional handicrafts. Generally, sustainability in all industries would need all stakeholders' mutual understanding in achieving shared future goals as the figure 3 also indicates. However, tourism usually requires for instance transportation and other things that can hardly be defined sustainable. (Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2013, 226 - 227.)

Rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts' strengths are traditional practices and dyeing fabrics with natural dyes. In general, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has created common and nationwide standards of sustainable management for tourism, particularly both for private travel sector and tourism destinations. The Council's aim is to share information of sustainable tourism to all stakeholders in the world. (Global Sustainable Tourism Council 2017.)

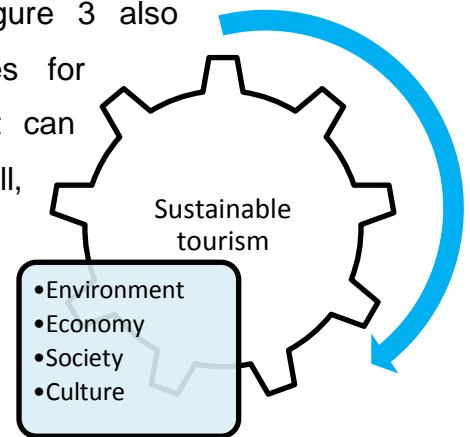


Figure 3
These fields should be in balance and respected to achieve sustainability (UNWTO 2017a).

3.1 Rural tourism as an aspect to rural Azerbaijan

Simply, rural tourism happens in countryside of an area, but not all above kind of areas can be defined the same way. Rural tourism itself is said to be incomplete as a concept. For instance, tourism can have an urbanizing influence to rural regions, but also in some rural areas both rural and urban tourism can coexist. (OECD 1994, 8.) Azerbaijan is both modern and rural, but these features are rather unevenly divided throughout the country.

Baku the capital city of Azerbaijan is an urban center of the country. In a comparable manner, some towns' everyday life gets on in a more traditional way

than in big cities. Traditional handicrafts are an ancient part of Azerbaijan and in rural regions most of the locals make their living by making and selling handicrafts or would like to with a little business assistance. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan is working very hard to achieve economic development in producing export-oriented products such as silkworm cocoons and cotton and creating more farms than just focusing on petroleum industry (Aliyev 2017).

3.2 Culture is the main part of cultural tourism

Culture itself is a wide concept, but simply it can be understood being a part of humans, communities and societies (Ivanovic 2008, 6 - 10). Azerbaijani culture is very rich as it has been influenced by the East and the West. Culture can be seen both as a process and a product (Ivanovic 2008, 75). As the project wants to achieve comprehensive sustainability with traditional handicrafts in the field of tourism, cultural tourism can be introduced. Handicrafts are a tangible part of culture.

According to the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) (cited as Ivanovic 2008, 77) cultural tourism is defined as people travelling to destinations because of interesting culture features such as places, arts, heritage and so on to get more information and experiences in a new location. The European Commission (2017) says on their internet site that 40 % of European tourism is cultural tourism. Also, WTO (as cited in UNWTO, 2017b) tells that Asia has the world's most diverse cultural heritage. So, Azerbaijan has lots of potential as cultural tourism destination.

3.3 Traditional handicrafts as a part of a culture

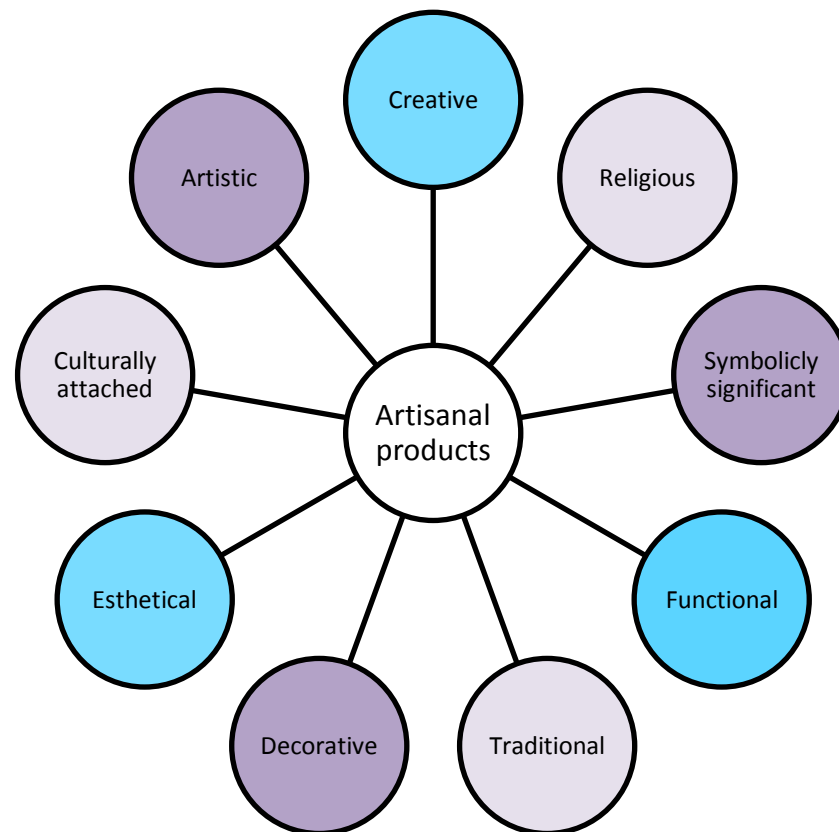
Artisans can have different statuses depending on countries such as comparing developed and developing countries. Many kinds of materials and techniques can be used producing crafts. However, both visual and crafted arts mean basically the same thing, but with a little difference, such as visual arts are only

meant for human senses when crafts can be concretely used at the same time (WIPO 2003, 4 - 5).

Mainly traditional handicrafts are always made by hand by local artisans with maybe a little help of some useful tools or machines. The idea is that the artisan plays the main role in producing the products. Traditional handicrafts are made from raw materials using sustainable resources. (UNESCO 2009.) Handcrafted fabrics can describe several different affections as the figure 4 shows below.

Figure 4

The special nature of artisanal products (UNESCO 2009).



3.3.1 Folklore and cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is part of sustainable tourism as it can also attract tourists to a destination (Fletcher et al. 2013, 234). Folklore or oral tradition identifies a community's history, cultural and social identity, and values. Usually folklore is said to be passed on either orally or by examples considering for instance literature, art, handicrafts, knowledge and so on. Folklore is always tied to

religion and other cultural expressions. It is constantly being recreated within the community. (WIPO 2016, 5.)

Particularly, traditional cultural expressions aka folklore is made either by individuals showing artistic value or by a community implementing traditional artistic heritage. Folklore can be both a physical product and verbal expressions. Poetry, folk music and rituals are good examples of spoken and sung expressions while for instance pottery, carpets and needlework are more likely to be concrete. (WIPO 2016, 6.)

3.4 Traditional handicrafts in rural Azerbaijan

UNESCO (1990, 4) has defined the main craft categories being basketry, textiles, pottery, wood, metal and leather. All these craft types can be found as parts of rural Azerbaijan's everyday life in the past and today. Also, many of UNESCO's (1990, 5 - 6) complementary and extra-categorized material usages match Azerbaijani handicraft culture such as stone and glass, and costumes, accessories and musical instruments.

Rural Azerbaijani traditional handicrafts could be considered having lots of stories to tell with their rich variety in materials, symbols and shapes. Interestingly, Louise Waldén (as cited in Sipilä 2004) describes textiles as tales written by women through time. Rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts are true stories of life picturing everything aesthetically.

3.5 Traditional Sheki

Azerbaijan as a culture is a mix of Caucasian heritage and many other countries have influenced it such as Iran and Turkey. There have been also some Russian influences as Azerbaijan was a Soviet republic. Azerbaijan is located between Europe and China and it used to be a point of contact of these two locations when crossing the Silk Road on the caravan routes. (Advantour 2017b.)

There were five caravanserais in Sheki where merchants and traders gathered when travelling through the Silk Road in the 18th - 19th centuries. Merchants lived on the second floor of caravanserais, traded on the first floor and stored their goods in cellars. Nowadays there are only two caravanserais left in Sheki and the other one is used as a hotel. (Advantour 2017c.)

Next three handicraft types introduced are chosen inspired by visiting Sheki as there are such many traditional crafts in Azerbaijan to explain them all in this text. According to the Executive Director of Sheki Handicrafts Association Farhad Azizov (2016), Takalduz, Shabaka and Kelagayi are Sheki's most important and popular handicrafts. He also highlights that there are nearly 34 types of crafts made by hand in Sheki comparing to other towns and cities having only 3 - 4 kinds of crafts. These crafts are at the same time both admirable artworks and useful objects as the definition of applied arts indicates (Dictionary 2017).

3.5.1 Takalduz

Takalduz is an ancient art first drawn and then woven on dark colored velvet with one hand using silk threads. Making Takalduz takes time, usually months. (Azerbaijans.com 2017a.) According to a local Handicrafts entrepreneur and Takalduz Master Vafa Mustafayeva (2016) from Sheki, in the 18th century Takalduz was mostly made by men.



Picture 2
Visiting Sheki Crafts house
where a woman was gold
sewing Takalduz.

Takalduz is artistic embroidery with spiritual symbolism. The most popular ornaments were and still are different flowers such as roses, poppies, lilies and so on.



Picture 3
Collection of Takalduz
in Sheki Crafts house.

Birds, geometrical
patterns and
household utensils

are also consumed. (Advantour 2017d.) Takalduz was not only used as artwork on wall but also on pillows, on curtains, on collars, on veils and so on (Sheki Tourism Information Centre 2017, 9).

3.5.2 Shabaka

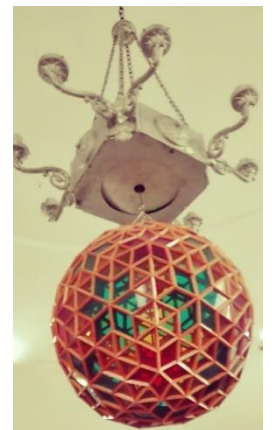
Shabaka is a window work made of colored glass and wood without any other parts. Nowadays Shabaka is used as a rebuilding method as colored glass can be



Picture 4
Shaki Khan's Palace's Shabaka window from outside and inside in Sheki. utilized instead of ordinary doors and

windows. (Azerbaijans.com 2017b.) Making Shabaka requires lots of skills and knowledge and Shabaka makers are called Shabaka masters. (Azvid Media 2012).

The main idea in Shabaka is a symbolic transmission. Sheki is the main center of Shabaka in Azerbaijan. The secret of Shabaka is in the decorative method of cutting. The most common symbol used is an eight-pointed star. The symbolism of Shabaka is unique and traditional assimilated to other countries in the world. "Sometimes Shabaka is compared to European stained glass window, but they have absolutely different figurative language and technology in making" (Azvid Media 2012).



Picture 5
A round Shabaka lamp in Sheki Crafts House.

3.5.3 Kelagayi

Kelagayi is a name for an Azerbaijani headscarf made of fine silk. It keeps women cool in summer

and warm in winter. Kelagayi is an ancient work of art and it is known from its high quality when considering Azerbaijan. Sheki is one of the cities in Azerbaijan that had a famous silk production. (Jafarova 2013.)



Picture 6
Traditional Azerbaijani silk scarfs Kelagayis made in Sheki.



Different colors and patterns play important role in silk scarfs and they have symbolic meanings. Women in different ages, married and unmarried, use variety kelagayi styles in different occasions such as funerals and so on.

Picture 7
A Kelagayi master using natural colors and methods to dye silk.

The traditional Kelagayi is square-shaped and the most popular figure used on it is called buta in Azerbaijani. (Jafarova 2013.)

In 2014, Kelagayi was added into UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List (UNESCO 2017). Different patterns used in Kelagayis have different meanings. The stamps that are used to make the patterns on silk are called "galib" in Azerbaijan. Kelagayi is a symbol of human life considering for instance universe and after life world. All different colors used are symbolizing all these worlds. There are several stages of making Kelagayi: making silk threads, weaving threads to fabric, cutting fabric in pieces and boiling in hot water, drying and decorating fabric, and dyeing. (Sadraddinli 2016.)



Picture 8
Incomplete silk scarfs sundrying outside the old but functional silk factory in Sheki.

4 SUSTAINABLE MARKETING AND TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS

Generally, marketing actions are done to increase sales. Customers do not buy items they do not know about and traditional handicrafts are also products that are wanted to be sold to customers. As the project aims to develop rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts' visibility in tourism markets, marketing plays an important role in this study. Purchasing process is the main concept in this research, but it was not possible to start explaining it before describing marketing first. Also, sustainable marketing supports sustainable aims.

Particularly, customers need impulses before other buying stages that purchasing process proposes. These impulses can be given to potential customers through advertising and promotion elements as marketing actions. Promotion mix demonstrates these elements as promotion is one of the marketing mix elements. To reach marketing prerequisites of traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts through purchasing process, it was enough to limit the marketing theory base according to purchasing process stages such as promotion strategies as creating impulses.

Marketing simply is a promotion tool for products and services used by businesses. Generally, economics, along with business, have influenced marketing through time. Today, the term has been defined for instance mechanistically, socially and scientifically and it has been expressed in several ways by many organizations. However, value can be combined strongly with marketing concept when looking at it from the aspect of tourism. Businesses have to find the values they want to offer to their customers. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 488 - 492, 491.)

According to the American Marketing Association's marketing dictionary (2013) marketing is a tool that offers value for consumers, clients, partners and society as an activity that creates, communicates, delivers and exchanges offerings. Sustainable marketing focuses on customers' and businesses' current and future needs paying attention to both social surroundings and environment. As any kind

of marketing would require, also sustainable marketing needs systematic cooperation between different stakeholders with mutual ethical and responsible goals to succeed. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 609.)

Marketing is a wide field to be understood as businesses any kinds would have to find suitable strategies to promote their products and services to the right markets. It would be important to understand how customers and competitors behave, and is there any demand for the product. There are lots of marketing challenges for traditional crafts such as machine-made products versus hand-made products, consumers' different needs to what the traditional crafts would offer or inappropriate pricing as too high or too low numbers and so on. (WIPO 2003, iii.)

4.1 Marketing research and marketing research process

Marketing research is usually made for companies by hired researchers. These kinds of researches aim identifying marketing opportunities, evaluating marketing actions and sharing the results with the management. Marketing research can be divided into four steps as it is a process that tries to specify the problem and research objectives, develop the research plan, implement the research plan and report the findings. (Kotler et al. 2006, 164 - 165.) Also, in this study the research objectives were set, data was collected and analyzed and conclusions were drawn.

However, this research is not a marketing research as it has more likely features from marketing research than being one. The process of this study follows the marketing research steps, but it bases on purchasing process to create marketing development ideas for the project. Any kinds of common marketing research activities were not engaged such as market-share analysis, competitive product studies or long-range forecasting (Kotler et al. 2006, 164).

4.2 Marketing mix

Marketing mix is a combination of advertising and sales with promotional elements such as product, price, promotion and place (distribution) aiming to the chosen target market. Marketing professionals are often needed to work with these four P's. However, the aim using marketing mix is to achieve attractive products that can be sold easily, and satisfied customers. (Kotler, Bowen & Makens 2006, 9 - 10.)

Particularly, promotion includes many more groups to reach than just the target market and customers: traders, suppliers, retailers, sponsors and journalists, and travel writers, professionals, politicians and so on. Communication between companies and customers works both ways as companies reaching customers and companies offering possibilities for customers to reach them. Nowadays it is easy for both businesses and consumers to contact each other because of social media and technology that develops all the time. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 563 - 564, 541.)

4.3 Promotion mix

Promotion mix, also called promotion strategy, is a blend of marketing elements consisting at least advertising, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (Kotler et al. 2006, 542). There are lots of traditional handicrafts with similar features to each other for tourists to buy. Promotion could be needed to change consumers' buying habits as attracting them to buy different or certain products (Strydom 2004, 137).

Also, today's customers are more selective as knowing what they want, so good might not be enough. Through promotion businesses can already contact customers to choose their product as informing about quality products, persuading to buy and reminding to buy more. Anyways, different promotion methods can have different objectives as for instance explaining the product or the brand and so on. (Strydom 2004, 137 - 139.)

Often marketing professionals are needed to assist with business promotions. These experts might use customers' buying process stages to find out the best ways to reach potential customers. Successful communication is planned well as considering identification of the target audience, the communication objectives, the message, the communication channels, the message source and the result evaluation. (Kotler et al. 2006, 542.)

4.3.1 Advertising

Marketing and advertising are not equal concepts as advertising is a part of marketing (Kotler et al. 2006, 786). Anyway, the aim of advertising is to share information and/or change people's way to think or act about certain products by small and big businesses. The most common places to find advertisements are in public spaces, on TV and online as nowadays ads can be found anywhere and on anything. Today, companies might use a very large amount of money to advertise their goods, existing or new ones, or not of course. (Green 2012, 6 - 8.)

At first, companies should know what their advertising objectives are as these are the goals that are wanted to be achieved with the certain target group during the advertising time. Particularly, there are different advertising types; informative, persuasive, comparison and reminder advertising. These classifications work well as introducing new products, standing out from the competitors and reminding of old products through online, TV, billboards, newspapers, phone or direct mailing. Generally, if businesses want to increase their sales, they should try to take over the competitors' market share. (Kotler et al. 2006, 564 - 567.)

4.3.2 Personal selling

Mainly, Face-to-face and telephone contacts give a personal touch for communication between customers and the seller. Personal selling intents to make, stimulate and complete sales through a range of concrete sales skills. It

rests on the seller's abilities to show empathy to the customers and customers' response to that. Particularly, through personal selling it is easier to evoke feelings of awareness and attention in customers as in advertising these must be anticipated and planned well before. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 568 - 569.)

Actually, personal selling is the most ancient sales method with advertising. As personal selling naturally is more physically sensible thing than advertising, it can also cost more, and it is not as easily changeable as advertising campaigns can be. Particularly, more money and commitment are needed for personal selling than advertising. (Kotler et al. 2006, 559, 660.)

4.3.3 Sales promotion

Promotion of sales happens with sales tools such as coupons, free samples, contests and other deals. These incitements might attract people to buy something they were not even planning to buy. Businesses can use sales promotion to boost their sales and increase the number of potential future regular customers. (Kotler et al. 2006, 559, 612.)

In fact, sales promotion works best with either advertising or personal selling, because they complete each other very well. However, businesses must do many preparations when planning to use sales promotion such as set objectives, select tools, develop and pretest a sales program, and evaluate the results. (Kotler et al. 2006, 612 - 613.) Generally, it is important to plan any campaigns well to avoid any unwanted effects on the image of the brand. All kinds of merchandises used for instance in stores are also parts of sales promotion as in-store promotion can remind customers of current sales. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 568.)

4.3.4 Public relations

Public relations offer an optional marketing tool for businesses comparing for instance to advertising as PR can turn out to be very profitable. Often, public

relations reach those people who do not really care about advertisements, coupons or salespeople. With public relations companies can try gaining good publicity with several stakeholders as sharing a positive image of their products. Businesses can communicate with the public and media through for instance public appearances, press releases, events, web pages and so on. (Kotler et al. 2006, 542, 559, 591.)

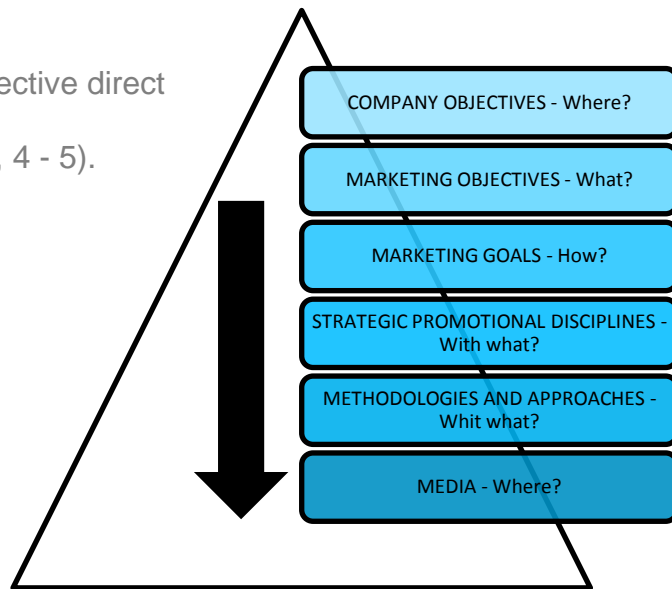
The publics are the most important stakeholders for businesses as being customers, employees, suppliers, local community, the media and the government. Businesses can plan their publicity as sending for example photos to papers or letters to local newspapers or making speeches in tourism events and so on. Unplanned publicity can also happen as usually negative publicity is originated from somewhere else than straight from the company itself, so unwanted publicity can be tried to be changed through planned publicity. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 570.)

4.3.5 Direct marketing

Direct marketing has changed its meaning through time as becoming more precise concept for current time. First, it was understood being a communication tool by Gerardi (as cited in Krafft, Hesse, Höfling, Peters & Rinas 2007, 5) and then a distribution tool by Dallmer (as cited in Kraft et al. 2007, 6). According to Meffert (as cited in Kraft et al. 2007, 6), direct marketing is a management tool as customer relationships being in the center of business activities. Generally, direct marketing is made by usage of advertising media to communicate directly with planned target groups (Fletcher et al. 2013, 624).

According to Meisner (2006, xii) direct marketing is much more than just direct mail, interactive marketing, telemarketing, or database marketing. He thinks that direct marketing is a strategy that aspires to solve business problems as achieving the marketing goals. Meisner (2006, 4 - 5) has created a strategic marketing pyramid which he advises marketers to start from the top to achieve their direct marketing goals as seen in the figure 5 below.

Figure 5
Developing effective direct
marketing
(Meisner 2006, 4 - 5).



4.3.6 So called new media

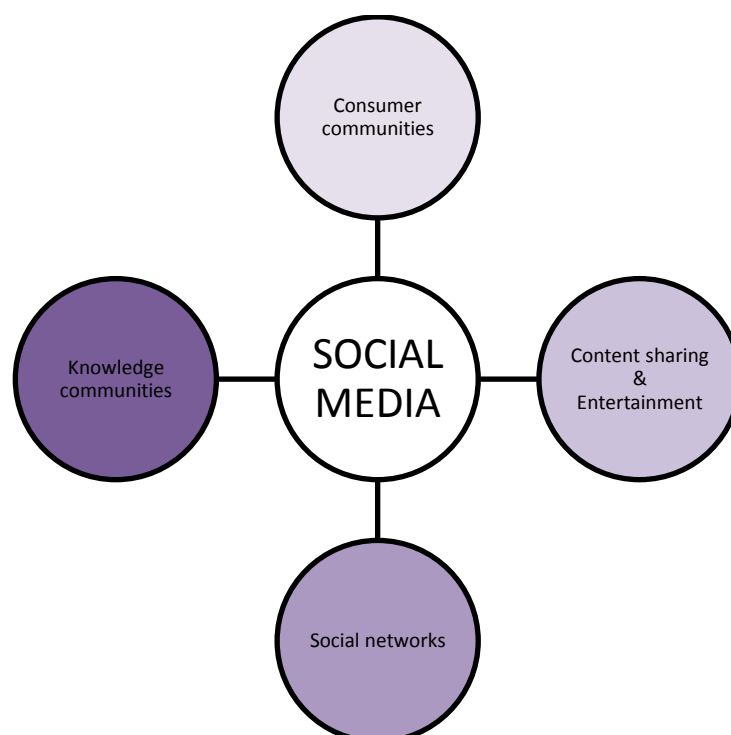
The concept of new media can change daily as technology keeps developing quickly all the time. New media happens online through technology, images and sound as through digital interaction including mainly Internet, websites, Social Media, computer multimedia and games, CDs and DVDs, mobile apps, virtual technology and inconspicuously integrated computer technology as using so smart technology that it cannot even be noticed. (Socha & Eber-Schmid 2014 & Koskinen 2007, 17.) Generally, Social Media offers businesses possibilities to be more aware of market and consumer demands (Fletcher et al. 2013, 398).

Today, companies should keep up with the Internet technology to stay competitive, because there is a risk to be left unnoticeable instead (Kotler et al. 2006, 686). The charm of social media is the real-time connection with others all the time and everywhere. Blogs can also be counted to be a part of the new media concept such as a web journal including text, images, data and other media material. (Taprial & Kanwar 2012, 21, 28.)

Today, there are several Social Media platforms that people can use online. Tourismusukunft (ITB Berlin 2016) explained the platforms by dividing them into four different groups (figure 6): Knowledge Communities, Consumer Communities, Content Sharing & Entertainment and Social Networks. The first group includes weblogs, microblogs, WIKIS and collaboration, forums and social bookmarking with the idea of sharing thoughts collectively. In consumer communities consumers can share their experiences of products and services as reviews and ratings, social shopping, and social marketplaces and sharing economy. Sharing contents and entertainment include video sharing and live streaming, sharing photos, podcasts and music, social gaming, social news, location based services and other contents. These sharings are usually made for entertainment purposes. Lastly, parts of social networks would be global social networks, regional networks, networks with a focus on communication and social networks having a special interest. (ITB Berlin 2016, 12.)

Figure 6

The world's most popular social media platform is Facebook. Over a half of the world's whole population use mobile devices to access Internet as 42 % people are active Internet users and 29 % use Social Media. (ITB Berlin 2016, 9).

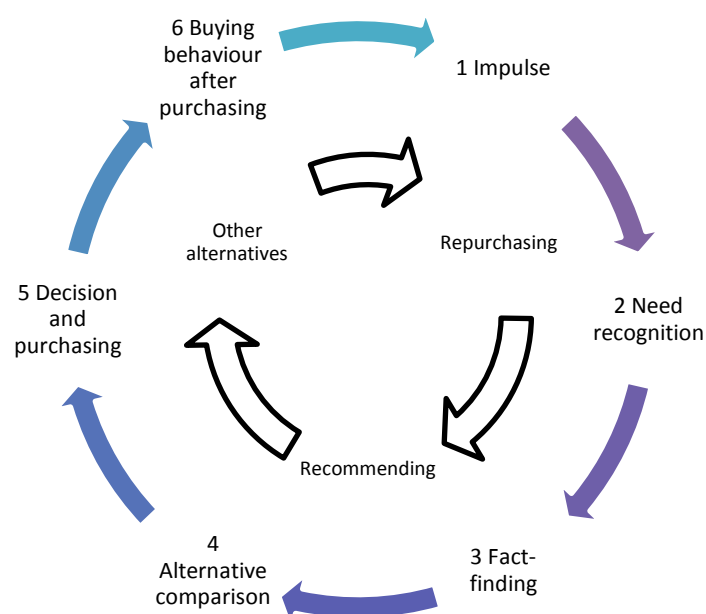


5 PURCHASING PROCESS

Usually, consumers' buying processes start before purchasing a product or a service. Purchasing is just a part of the whole buying process as there are such many features affecting buyers in the process. Sometimes, consumers might skip some of the purchasing process steps, for example, if the buyer is buying for a need and does not want to change a brand as repurchasing a product. (Kotler et al. 2010, 177.)

Generally, purchasing process includes consumer's interest to buy a product, the actual purchasing and satisfaction after buying. However, purchasing can vary between complex or simple processes. (Bergström & Leppänen 2005, 121 - 122.) Purchasing processes comprehend several, but logical stages as the figure 7 shows below.

Figure 7
Buying process stages in general (Bergström et al. 2005, 122).

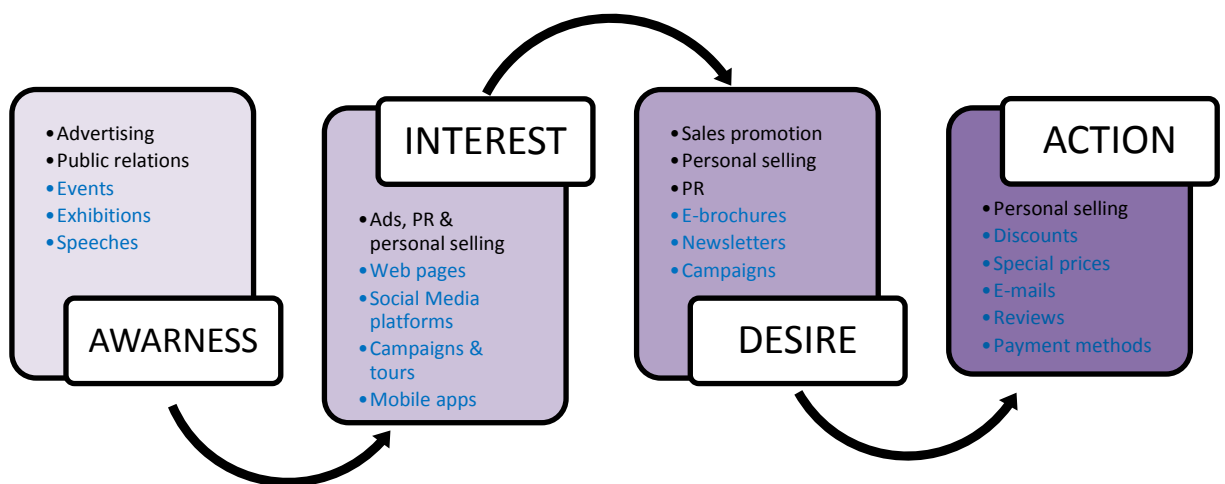


Actually, there is a concept called AIDA that can help businesses to achieve their promotional objectives. The letters A.I.D.A come from the words Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. As consumers go through different stages during

purchasing products, the AIDA-model (figure 8) combines effective use of promotion elements and consumers proceeding from impulse to exact buying. (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel 2012, 483 - 484.) A customer cannot buy a product if not knowing first that it even exists. This is where AIDA model might come beneficial as making promotional plans.

Figure 8

AIDA model is often used to understand what happens in the advertising and selling process (Clemente 2002, 26).



5.1 Purchasing process of traditional handicrafts

Tourists (Marwick as cited in Du Cross & McKercher 2015, 88) buy traditional handicrafts mostly for their own personal needs and desires as traditional handicrafts are usually offered for foreign visitors as souvenirs. Traditional handicrafts as souvenirs remind one from for instance a certain place, people or their way of life reflecting local culture. Marwick also proposes that traditional handicrafts are much more personal and valued items than other souvenirs in creating personal touristic experiences. Most of the tourists (Ventacachellum as cited in Du Cross et al. 2015, 88) want to buy real and unique things as souvenirs and it might not always be easy to recognize which items are authentic.

Usually, foreign tourists buy souvenirs face-to-face from local craftsmen as being concretely in foreign country when travelling. A tourist sees an interesting handicraft and wonders if buying it or not. Information about the product is essential as the tourist wants to know more about the product, for example where and how was it made. Then the tourist might wonder if the other artisan across the street has better colors and price of the product and the tourist has to make a decision where to buy. After these stages, the tourist purchases the product and he/she might come back for more if the buying process was successful and the product is pleasing.

5.1.1 Purchasing process of traditional and rural Azerbaijani handicrafts

Rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts are mainly sold face-to-face for mostly domestic but also for foreign tourists. In Azerbaijan, there are bazaars where local craftsmen sell their crafts or they can be bought from souvenir shops, for example in Baku. The word "Bazaar" sounds like a big outdoor or indoor marketplace usually located in the Middle East, but this change in Azerbaijan as the size of the cities and the towns does. Anyways, the idea is always the same such as to sellers to sell their goods and to buyers to buy things at a bargain.

Nowadays, Fair Trade products are more and more supported and wanted for instance as many businesses being interested in to selling and purchasing Fair Trade products. The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) supports the producers of Fair Trade products as they usually are people, who do not own land or cannot do any other work instead of handicrafts. Making handicrafts is usually the only matter that brings income for many women and families in several rural and poor areas in the world. (WFTO 2014a.)

Also, WFTO (as cited in Folk Art Baku 2017) has created 10 principles that all Fair Trade organizations should follow: creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers, transparency and accountability, fair trading practices, payment of a fair price, ensuring no child labour and forced labour, commitment to non-discrimination, gender equity and freedom of association, ensuring good

working conditions, providing capacity building, promoting Fair Trade and respect for the environment. Namely, there is a Fairtrade store following these principles called Folk Art in Baku that supports sustainable development of local producers by selling their handmade traditional products. The store does not support factory-made products as not selling any of them. All the products are made in the home environments of the artisans in different regions of Azerbaijan. The main customers of Folk Art are foreigners that are living in Azerbaijan and local people who like buying the products. (Folk Art Center 2014.)

5.1.2 Sheki Handicrafts Association

There is a non-governmental organization called Sheki Artisans Association in Sheki that was founded in 2002. Its aim is to develop traditional handicrafts as well as support their promotion and advertising. The Association was mainly established to improve local craftsmen's social position and reputation. Also, it has been recognized and it is gaining its aims. (Sheki Handicrafts Association 2016.)

According to the Executive Director of the Association Farhad Azizov (2016), there are 74 artisans from Sheki joined the organization and they all represent some of the Sheki crafts: Shabaka, ceramics, carpets, jewellery, batik, wood engraving, musical instruments, takalduz (embroidery), kalagayi (silk scarf), sandig (caskets), metal embossing, harrat (woodturning products), shoes, copper products (tinker), papag (hats), furrier products and sheet iron blacksmithing products. Azerbaijani Cultural Heritage Support project assisted the Association to network with other organizations. The Association has participated both local and international exhibitions. (Sheki Handicrafts Association 2016.) The project was closed in 2006 (Devex 2017).

Anyone with traditional Azerbaijani handicraft skills can join the Sheki Handicrafts Association as an individual craftsman. At the moment, all Association's members are independent as they are all working just for themselves. The Association has provided 26 crafting rooms for artisans to use

for free from Karvansaray and there are also 17 artisans working in the Sheki Crafts house. In both places all rooms are used both for making handicrafts and selling handicrafts. Rests of the artisans are working at home. (Azizov 2016.)

6 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The research method of this study was chosen to be qualitative, because a specific real-life condition was documented and analyzed by usage of acceptable theory. The best way to approach the matter was to keep an open mind and collect as much data as possible using several material collection methods. Qualitative study strives to picture real life as comprehensively as possible (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 161).

Qualitative method is usually used to research human and human life considering individual, community, social interaction, values and other things involving human relations (Varto 1992, 23). This study concentrated on things being related to people as communities and things made by humans of these communities as rural areas of a country. Many issues were possible to clarify by examining different people's experiences and thoughts about the matter studied.

6.1 Case study research

Case study research is a traditional study strategy, which focuses on small events or groups. The most of the rural Azerbaijan's artisans are women. It is typical that the chosen matter is researched in its natural situation using more than one method to collect data. It was significant for this study to visit the target country. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 134 - 135.)

The aim is usually to describe the phenomenon of the issue (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 134 - 135). Actually, it was important to create concrete information about the current situation of the research matter. Also, to achieve the results, it was enough to study small group of people.

6.2 Research questions

Azerbaijan as a tourism location has several attractions, but this study focused only on rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts limited by the project. When visiting the target country only one of the rural areas was observed as the time was limited. However, the overall purpose of this study was to map out marketing prerequisites of traditional handicrafts through purchasing process in rural Azerbaijan:

- a) What is traditional handicrafts' purchasing process like?
 - What are rural Azerbaijan's local handicrafts?
 - How are rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts purchased?
- b) What are the marketing prerequisites that Azerbaijan's local handicrafts would need to meet to reach foreign tourists better?
 - What is promotion mix?
 - How to combine promotion mix to purchasing process?

6.3 Data triangulation

Data triangulation in research includes usage of many various techniques to collect data. The idea was to form a rich and profound picture of the research matter through the data collected in several different ways. (McMurray, Pace & Scott 2004, 263.) In this case, data triangulation combined many different data collection methods used forming a bigger picture of the material.

The data was collected by interviews, observations, photographs and other material found during the research execution such as tourism guide books and booklets. The idea was not to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods so much as different ways to collect data by one person. This approach might give a researcher an extended approach to the matter studied (Flick 2014, chapter 14).

6.3.1 Interviews

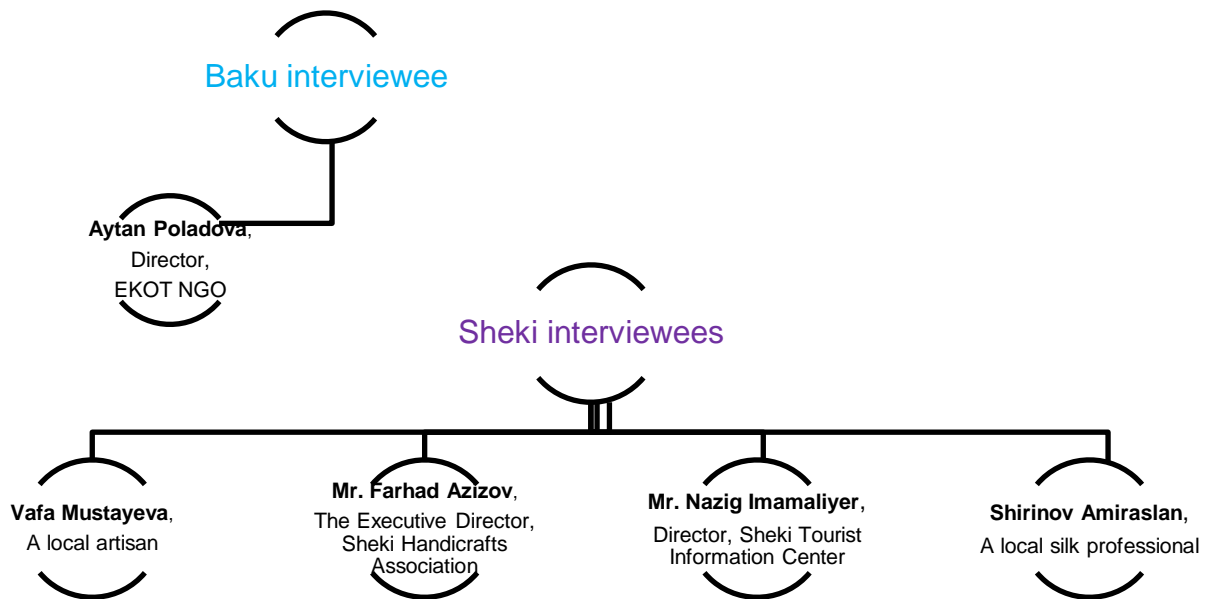
Interview is a flexible method especially used in qualitative researches as questions can be presented in researcher's way (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 75). A semi-structured interview method was used in this study. It means that mainly themes than questions were set before interviewing. Open plan guided all interviews to more likely discuss about the research matter than just asking questions.

Unfortunately, e-mail interviewees decided to not to take part in the research in the middle of the study. The research would have benefitted from their view of the matter as they had lots of experience in local Azerbaijani handicrafts and marketing. However, all people interviewed were suggested by the executor of the project as the time was limited and it is not as punctual concept in Azerbaijan as it is in Finland.

The idea was to interview people with different statutes as shown in the figure 9 on the page 40: local artisans, a local project partner, a local project participant and a local tourism professional. As the research is a thesis, the amount of interviewees was considered to be enough as transcribing takes time and research resources were limited. The interviewees were extremely cooperative.

Figure 9

The research interviewees were interviewed in the 5th - 13th of November 2016 both in Baku and Sheki.



6.3.2 Observations and other collected data

Observing does not only mean looking at things but also for instance listening to surrounding world. All matters seen, heard, felt, tasted and smelt can be considered as observations. There are often observer's emotions and thoughts present while observation. (Vilkka 2006, 8.)

As far as this study is concerned, observing was an important data collection method as the execution took place in a foreign culture. The possible theory base for this research was mainly thought before the execution which eased the data collection. Theory base and existing knowledge guide one's ability to observe surroundings (Vilkka 2006, 9).

During the research execution other material collected along with the interviews and observations were photographs and videos, and other concrete material found such as tourism guide books, booklets and local handicrafts. All photographs and videos were taken and recorded by the author of this study and

they were used as collected data material as the interviews. Also, combining several data collection methods might allow researcher to make spontaneous findings that can benefit the research.

Technically, qualitative research method allowed flexible approach to collect data in this study. The interviews were arranged before interviewing as happening in agreed schedule by all the participants. Conversely, other data collection activities were executed all the time during the data gathering trip as observations and going with the flow.

6.4 Theory

The studied matter in this research was described mostly from the aspect of purchasing process and as the concept is part of marketing, it also needed to be explained. Obviously, the abstract of marketing is extremely wide so it was limited to sustainable marketing, marketing mix and promotion mix because

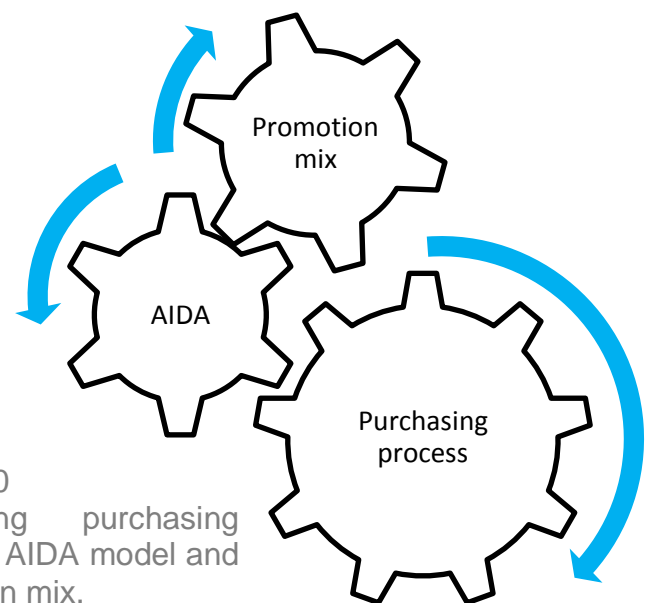


Figure 10
Combining purchasing process, AIDA model and promotion mix.

of the nature of the researched issue. This was decided to be done to ease describing the results of this study, which were the marketing prerequisites of rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts. The concept of AIDA model combines purchasing process and promotion mix together as the figure 10 shows above.

Also, Azerbaijan's tourism statistics from 2015 were used to visualize the Azerbaijani tourism and foreign tourists with numbers. As there are several traditional handicrafts in Azerbaijan, only Sheki's traditions were decided to be presented as visiting the place as part of the research execution. As well, this

research is part of tourism studies, so the tourism standpoint required more information of the project target areas and the target country as tourism destinations. Traditional handicrafts, cultural heritage and folklore are also essential part of this study as well as the concepts of sustainable, culture and rural tourisms.

6.5 Deductive approach and data analysis

This research was approached deductively as most of the research concepts needed to be explained before creating the research results basing on them. The idea of this research was to accept the chosen theory more than refuting it. Inductive approach to this study would have not been credible enough, because the data was collected using qualitative method. The chosen theory base has an important role in this study as the core of the research combines the theory, the collected data and the research method leading to reliable results through explaining and analyzing all chosen content of the research.

At first it can be stated that for instance marketing methods are needed to evoke consumers' interest to a product. Then, it can be assumed that rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts are no exception to this as they are products that are wanted to be bought by tourists. Also, basing on the collected data, rural Azerbaijani handicrafts would need marketing planning to be included as a part of Azerbaijan's tourism and economy.

All the collected data was already started to be analyzed straight after collecting it. In qualitative researches, data is not analyzed only in one research point but all the time during the whole study process (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 223). In general, there are several ways to analyze collected data, but in this study the main analysis was done by understanding the material.

In qualitative studies not all collected data is needed to be analyzed fully especially if several data collection methods have been used. The researcher cannot always benefit from all material as the key signals have to be found and it

might not be wise to express issues that are not relevant to the research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 225.)

The collected research data by interviews was analyzed after transcription. The main features found from analyzing the interviews were used in analyzing the other collected material to defend the issues raised from the discussions. Particularly, the key features, such as lack of marketing skills and lack of marketing funding came up several times during the interviews and these points easily formed the collected data analysis results. Other collected material strengthened these facts, so the developing targets were obvious such as creating tourism marketing strategy is one of the main objectives of Development of Sustainable Tourism and Support of Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan project.

7 DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND TRADITIONAL AZERBAIJANI HANDICRAFTS AND FOREIGN TOURISTS

Finally, the results of this study are focusing to answer the main questions “What is traditional handicrafts’ purchasing process like?” and “What are the marketing prerequisites that rural Azerbaijan’s local handicrafts would need to meet to reach foreign tourists better”. These results are created mainly with the chosen theory base of this study such as concepts of purchasing process, AIDA model and promotion mix including advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and Internet and Social Media platforms. Traditional handicrafts have been recognized as an important part of culture in several countries all over the world.

Also, many countries are already offering a peek to this part of their culture as tourism experiences, for example Cyprus Tourism Organization (2017) tells about the Island’s Handicrafts Centers and workshops that are open to visitors to observe artisanal skills of the craftsmen in action and to buy these handicrafts as souvenirs. Cypriot traditional lace is on UNESCO’s Intangible World Heritage list, which includes traditional practices all over the world that need safeguarding. Azerbaijan is on the list for Novruz (New Year), copper craftsmanship of Lahij, Kelaghayi, Chovqan (a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game), carpet weaving, art of Azerbaijani Ashiq (traditional performance art) and Mugham (a traditional musical form). (UNESCO 2017.) Also, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey (2017) has lots of information of Turkish traditional handicrafts in English on their website. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations & Quah 2017) also fights for its member states’ traditions from disappearing.

Likewise, several researches on traditional handicrafts have been executed around the world. As there are so many studies from different aspects, it is impossible to list them all here. However, there is an interesting study made (Nguyen 2015) of traditional handicrafts and tourism from the aspect of community’s economic growth in Vietnam. In this study lack of recognition and investments in handicrafts tourism was mentioned. Perhaps, traditional handicrafts are not getting enough attention from certain facets either in

Azerbaijan, because they are seen as parts of everyday life of the locals and not as possibilities for economic growth. Anyway, the earlier research (Roinila 2015) for the project's preceding undertaking Developing Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Promoting Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan considered some development ideas to improve rural tourism in the project target regions of Sheki-Gabala and Lankaran-Astara from the aspect of sustainable tourism. In the study, Azerbaijan's tourism potential was highlighted several times and naturally traditional handicrafts are an important part of the Azerbaijani culture.

Further, there were lots of publications made by several organizations that were beneficial to this study considering traditional handicrafts and marketing, Fair Trade, sustainability and other useful concepts. These organizations were The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), UNESCO, World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Also, The Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) global standards for sustainability were viewed. In fact, lots of information of traditional crafts and arts were found through these organizations as not finding as detailed features anywhere else.

Usually, creating impulses of products and services happens through advertising and promotion, mostly through internet or social media. The Executive Director of Sheki Handicrafts Association Mr. Farhad Azizov (2016) says that Sheki would need lots of help with marketing their local handicrafts as the whole Sheki bazaar would need some developing from inside and outside. There are no marketing professionals in Sheki and Azizov highlights that the problem is more likely financial as hiring a professional would need some money as well as most of the marketing features would too. A Local Handicrafts entrepreneur Vafa Mustafayeva from Sheki (2016), also admits the lack of money to do any marketing but she also states that it is not all about money as people with own businesses should be active educating themselves to use, for example social media. She says that local craftsmen could at least try improving own language and reading skills as herself already uses Facebook, Instagram and Google.

A tourism marketing strategy is going to be created for the project target areas by the ongoing project. This action has already been started for instance with workshops and lectures in Baku (Merilahti 2017). However, a promotion plan is needed to be designed to meet the need of the customers. It is essential to find out the features that rural Azerbaijani handicraft professionals want to tell about their works to the world. The results of this research are described below as parts of the marketing prerequisites of traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts. The results are being based on the research theory and the research data.

7.1 Identifying the target audience - to whom

The interviewees in Sheki are welcoming foreign tourists to Azerbaijan. They have noticed some features foreign tourists like in their country. Also, in general, the country would like to attract more tourists from foreign countries to visit Azerbaijan.

Example 1

“Our country is working to make Azerbaijan known in other countries and -- also, lots of foreign languages are taught in Azerbaijani schools” (Mustafayeva 2016).

Example 2

“Baku and Sheki are the most famous destinations for foreign tourists. Most of the tourists visiting Azerbaijan are interested in Sheki, especially Arabic tourists” (Azizov 2016).

Example 3

“More and more foreign tourists are coming to Azerbaijan every year from Europe, Russia, Asia and USA” (Imamaliyer 2016).

The comments of the interviewees on foreign tourists indicate that more and more foreign tourists are visiting Azerbaijan every year from all over the world. According to Azerbaijan’s tourism statistics half of a million foreign tourists are

visiting Azerbaijan mostly from Russia. These tourists are mainly staying in Baku for business purposes for 1 - 3 nights. In other words, these foreign tourists do not visit rural areas or buy traditional handicrafts as they are not the target group for rural Azerbaijani traditional handicrafts.

Obviously, the target group here is foreign tourists, but perhaps the audience could be more specified for instance from which countries these tourists would most likely travel to rural Azerbaijan in addition to Baku and buy traditional handicrafts. All kinds of tourists from all over the world are quite a large target audience for rural Azerbaijan's tourism considering traditional handicrafts. It would not even be strategically or financially possible to reach all people in the world.

Before creating awareness of a new product, it is essential for businesses to set out the target group to whom the products are wanted to be sold. There are many types of tourists with different kinds of classifications according to, for example their interests in travel destinations and buying habits. Different personalities of tourists cannot be ignored when setting the target audiences for tourism businesses. Also, business tourists are interested in different elements when travelling than cultural tourists. These customers also have different features along with the location such as demographic characteristics as age, gender and income level. Particularly, what kind of a foreign tourist is a potential target customer for rural Azerbaijani traditional handicrafts? Where is he/she coming from? What does he/she do? What is he/she interested in? What makes him/her happy? In general, what kind of a person is this foreign tourist travelling rural Azerbaijan?

7.2 Specifying the communication-based objectives - what

One of the aims of the project is to spread positive messages of rural Azerbaijan as a travel destination through media. This does not yet describe the details that these positive messages would include, but this research has found some facts that could be used as the content of the positive messages of rural Azerbaijan

considering traditional handicrafts. The idea in creating awareness of rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts is to get attention for both the products and also for the rural producers. Different kinds of product labels could help marketing products as including all the product details customers would need before, during and after buying. When asked about product labels from the interviewees in Sheki, they could not understand the question.

Example 4

"Sheki silk is known everywhere in the world -- There is silk from Sheki everywhere" (Mustafayeva & Imamaliyer 2016).

It is not yet sure if rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts are a brand itself or is there going to be several labels on different producers' products. Most of the rural Azerbaijani handicrafts look alike and there are no features to help customers to tell the difference or get any information of the products. Perhaps a group of producers could reach more customers by branding one label instead of many. The label could include the name of the product, and who made the product, where was the product made in, how was the product made, what materials and dyes were used and how to contact the producer.

Today, different kinds of tourism stories are spreading around the world as blog posts, destination reviews and customer experiences. Stories could also be a great way explaining rural Azerbaijani handicraft culture to foreign people. The stories could include stories of the Silk Road, ancient handicraft method descriptions, life stories of the producers, and detailed product information from materials to production. According to Visit Finland (2016), foreign tourists are very interested in stories about true Finns considering Finland's tourism. This could also work as a communication tool between rural Azerbaijani handicraft culture and the chosen target audience.

According to the project coordinator Aytan Poladova from Baku (2016), foreign tourists cannot find enough information of rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts before purchasing them.

Example 5

"Foreign tourists cannot find any information of our local handicrafts" (Poladova 2016).

Also, the language barriers might make the purchasing processes more difficult for customers if asking product details during decision making process just to find out there is no mutual language with the salesperson. Ready-made product catalogues and brochures in different languages both online and on paper could be offered to customers instead of spoken information to avoid possible language barriers and to keep customers experiencing their purchasing process.

Example 6

"If customers want, they can be taken to see how some of the local handicrafts are made, but not without a permission" (Azizov 2016).

Example 7

"Perhaps customers can go and see how traditional handicrafts are made -- Why not" (Poladova 2016).

Workshops are a great way for foreign people to get to know local traditions. Also in Azerbaijan it is possible to see how some of the traditional crafts are made as the local people are welcoming and warm-hearted people. On the other hand, this might need tourists to have adventurous attitudes as even the project participants are not exactly sure if it is possible or not to see producers working and what happens if doing it without permission. Today's travelers could act spontaneously, which means they need instructions especially if they are wanted to be behaved in a certain way.

Further, there are several organizations acknowledging values that can also be adapted to rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicraft culture as increasing

cooperation between producers and other professionals. These values could be used as communication objectives such as Folk Art in Baku is doing. They are following WFTO's principles every day and they have information of these statements on their website.

Example 8

“Poverty reduction through trade -- supports small producers, whether these are independent family businesses, or grouped in associations or co-operatives. -- to move to economic self-sufficiency and ownership” (WFTO 2014b).

7.3 Selecting the communication channels - where

Significantly, today's absolute communication and marketing channels are Internet and Social Media platforms. Nearly everyone can take for instance photos and videos with their mobile devices and publish them online as there are several Social Media networks to be used. One can find more information nearly on anything via web search engines on World Wide Web. However, EKOT NGO's director Aytan Poladova (2016) tells that there is no online marketing for rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts at the moment.

Example 9

“The future is online. -- Rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts should also be found online; photos, videos and other detailed information. -- Can foreign tourists find more information of local Azerbaijani handicrafts online? -- They can't” (Poladova 2016).

Azerbaijani handicraft professionals could communicate with foreign people and the other way around easily online. Through own websites the producers could easily share large amounts of information of their work for many people simultaneously. Craftsmen could share sales campaigns on Twitter and events on LinkedIn to network with other handicraft professionals. Potential customers

would need possibilities to interact with the producers such as like, comment and share the media contents. As mentioned, today's communication is interactive and producers could also contact the potential customers directly through e-mails, text messages, e-newsletters, telephone calls, sending printed material through the post and organizing events. Perhaps, this could work better with domestic tourists than foreign tourists.

Communication via for instance a Facebook company webpage offers possibilities for customers to have stronger ties to the people behind the businesses (ITB Berlin 2016, 4 - 5, 31). Facebook is the most used Social Media platform in the world as it is easy and cheap to use and it has many features from content sharing to live streaming. Of course, Facebook is not the only possibility to create a company webpage and contact customers. Traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts could evoke conversation in other web forums and blogs too. A local Takalduz professional Vafa Mustafayeva (2016) from Sheki explains that she communicates with her customers through Facebook.

Example 10

"I also keep uploading photos of my work to my Google+ account" (Mustafayeva 2016).

Many foreign tourists have already bought rural Azerbaijani traditional handicrafts and they have probably shared their experiences at least with their friends. Through online reviews and ratings producers could see what customers are thinking of their products. Today, location based services such as mobile travel apps can easily locate people and offer more information of the searched matters. Today's tourists have no limitations in searching for information online, but local Azerbaijani handicrafts cannot be found without any shared content online.

In rural Sheki local craftsmen sell their products to cover their living and material expenses. However, they do not understand all the possibilities there are to

increase their customer numbers. According to Azizov (2016), the only focus of the producers is to sell their products, but no matter to whom.

Example 11

“The only “ads” for rural Azerbaijan’s traditional handicrafts are craftsmen themselves as they show their products outside bazaars for only those people, who are passing by” (Azizov 2016).

It could be easy to skip rural traditional handicrafts as there are no physical ads of them in cities, especially not in Baku or in Sheki. If a foreign tourist is not interested in finding any information of local handicrafts, he/she won’t notice them. According to Roinila (2015), there is a lack of useful tourism brochures found in Azerbaijan considering rural areas. These tourism booklets and guidebooks should be made more and consider more ads of rural handicrafts and craftsmen. Also, when travelling from Baku to Sheki by bus, several items from kids’ toys to popcorn were sold to bus customers, but not any traditional handicrafts. Also, there were no physical ads of traditional handicrafts in the streets or at the International airport in Baku. The airport is fancy, but it has no features of Azerbaijan’s ancient handicraft culture.

Customers are not the only stakeholders to businesses. Producers and salespeople also have to cooperate with, for example the local community, suppliers, the media and the government. To gain some publicity, rural Azerbaijan’s handicraft professionals have to choose where they would like to be seen (TV, radio, newspapers, events, Internet etc.) and with whom they would like to cooperate to enable the publicity. The idea in publicity is to spread positive messages about the products and the producers. Today, loading videos to YouTube and sharing them in global Social Media platforms can possibly reach foreign people better than just a TV ad in local news.

Example 12

“There are occasionally some exhibitions here in Azerbaijan or in Europe, for example France, where it is possible for us to introduce our handicraft culture for foreign people” (Mustafayeva 2016).

Example 13

“For instance in South Korea, there was a tourism project carried out couple of years ago to attract more tourists to visit Azerbaijan from there” (Imamaliyer 2016).

Different kinds of tourism exhibitions have potential to gather travelling people together. In exhibitions professionals can present their products by themselves. Also, an online exhibition could be quite a smart channel to reach people as rural Azerbaijani traditional handicrafts are interesting to look at. Online exhibitions could include advertisements of those handicrafts that could be bought online or physically from rural Azerbaijan. When searching information from online, it is easy to keep finding different extensions of one product such as sites with product details, similar products, or user experiences, price comparisons or store ratings. Local Azerbaijani handicrafts have the same features around them to be found by customers and used by professionals.

As rural Azerbaijan’s producers do not have any skills in using Internet, search engines, Social Media platforms or creating own web pages, perhaps working with a marketing and communication professionals would be a good idea as well as the project could organize workshops to train local people to use Internet. In this case, it is not necessary to start using all networks at once but find the most suitable channels for creating awareness of the products and give customers possibilities to contact the producers if possible.

Example 14

“We would need continuing marketing actions instead of occasional actions” (Azizov 2016).

At first, couple of communication channels could be chosen such as creating a website, choosing suitable Social Media platforms, for example Facebook and Twitter as social networks and LinkedIn as professional network, create e-newsletters and organize events. Couple of postings could be published on Social Media twice a month and link the postings to the website. It would be clearer if the information of rural Azerbaijani handicrafts could be found as a package of linked web pages and Social Media networks used instead of instead of having confusing information here and there online. Different kinds of events could be promoted using Social Media networks as sending invitations to all followers of the network. Usually, the followers send the event invitations to their friends too.

7.4 Creating the message - how

It could be wondered why foreign tourists should buy rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts instead of other similar ones made in big factories as they are cheaper and sold everywhere. Rural and traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts have unique features as implementing the local culture. There are lots of interesting and desirable features in the traditional handicrafts as for instance there are several craft types, the crafts have ancient methods in making and natural dyes and materials are used. However, it is not easy to recognize which of the handicrafts are the real rural crafts and which are not. Mustafayeva (2016) sells both real Kelagayis and other scarfs made of both silk and synthetic materials.

Example 15

“Only a silk professional can tell which silk products are made of 100 % silk as it is not easy. -- A real silk scarf smells like weather as pure nature and real silk scarfs are also easier to dye” (Mustafayeva 2016).

Usually, buying impulses are those elements that make customers feeling that they need to buy something. Some people might not be interested in the handicrafts, but they might start being interested in them if they are offered

impulses that are attractive enough for them to see the handicrafts from another aspect. The story of the Silk Road could work well as an impulse in promoting Sheki's local handicrafts. The traditional handicrafts are wanted to be productized, but the crafts have to be seen as more than just items. They are part of Azerbaijani culture, which has its own elements remained from the past. The traditional rural Azerbaijani handicrafts are a strong part of the local nature, the rural communities, stories from the history and the local culture.

Example 16

Mustafayeva's (2016) specialty is making traditional Azerbaijani craft Takalduz.

"Foreign people are very interested in watching how it is made" (Mustafayeva 2016).

Rural Azerbaijan's local producers make their crafts passionately as they are talented in making them. It is enjoyable to watch how traditional crafts are made. For instance it is quite extraordinary to watch local women weaving silk carpets. It happens fast and it takes months to finish one carpet, especially if many colors and shapes are used. Even little facts could catch the attention of foreign tourists.

Most of the customers buy rural Azerbaijani handicrafts without any plans or prior information of the products. Tourists are mainly visiting Azerbaijan for other reasons and they might buy traditional handicrafts or not. There is a term called impulse buying which can be divided into four different customer actions such as pure, suggestion, reminder and planned impulses. A customer can buy a product without seeing any ads or having any information of it before buying. One can also buy a product as planned for instance, because there was such a good discount of it. Sometimes a customer just remembers that this was the product that was on TV yesterday and buys it. (Kumar 2009, 479.)

Further, rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts are very beautiful artworks to watch. These products have lots of potential to just sell themselves. Mustafayeva (2016) says that foreign tourists like different colors and shapes in products than domestic tourists. Also, Mr. Azizov (2016) brings out an interesting point that

affects foreign tourists' souvenir buying considering traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts.

Example 17

“Some of the local crafts are very big and heavy such as Shabaka artworks and they are very difficult to bring home as souvenirs, which affect instantly customers' purchase decisions negatively. Who would buy those” (Azizov 2016)?

Different kinds of deals and product developing ideas could reduce customers' negative purchase decisions. Customers could be informed if they could influence product sizes, colors, and deliveries and so on. If they buy more, they could get more discounts. If they pay more, they could get additional services, if possible. Sales should not seem impossible to customers.

7.5 Aiming customers to take purchase actions - why

Salespeople are usually the first contact between the producer and the customer. It does not matter if the salesperson is the same person, who also makes the products as in rural Azerbaijan producers often sell their products themselves or they have other family members helping them. Actually, producers know best their own products and possibly have detailed answers to customers' queries. According to Mustafayeva (2016), she herself is the only one who can make and sell her products well, but if she would have enough money, she would like to expand her business and hire other craftsmen to work with her.

Example 18

“Actually, I can't speak any foreign languages as other artisans can't either, but I use body language to achieve the best communication with my customers as it can be enough as foreign customers do not usually speak the local language either. -- A strong seller doesn't give up when encountering new situations” (Mustafayeva 2016).

After getting the target customers to the products the main aim is to get them to buy the products. In this point the products have been advertised and promoted to attract people to come to the products. The customers have the inner desire and the need to buy the products, but some actions might also be needed from the salesperson to do to help the customer to make the positive purchase decision.

After meeting the customer, the salesperson often waits the customer to make an offer of a product. In rural Azerbaijan bargaining on prices is often used as making both purchasing process participants happy. Not all products have prices ready on them as the idea is to make a conversation about the price as finding out how much the customer is ready to pay for the product and what is the monetary value of the product for the producer. Sellers can also give quantity discounts for customers if they are buying more than one piece of the product.

As customers usually have different needs and reasons to buy products, these can vary from for instance buying a silk scarf as a gift to someone or buying woolen mittens to use them in winter. If the customer feels like one does not need the product, one won't buy it. Usually, a feeling of a need could be a stronger reason to do something than just a thought.

Example 19

"I bought a beautiful real 100 % silk scarf from Sheki just because it was lovely and dyed with my favorite color. I bought it as a souvenir for myself" (The Author of this Research 2017).

Example 20

According to Azizov (2016), local producers would also need some professional marketing assistance and good ideas in developing their products to be more attractive for foreign customers to buy.

"A marketing professional could perhaps tell us how to make our products more attractive to tourists" (Azizov 2016).

Personal selling enables sellers to observe their customers and make a conversation for instance about the possible product improvements. Rural producers could also interact with customers by sharing product catalogues, brochures, guide books and handicraft skills with them as the rural crafts are mostly bought in the physical environment. When considering the natural manufacturing materials, customers might also appreciate instructions of how to take good care of the product.

As lots of information of nearly anything is easily accessed these days, less could be more. A potential customer might lose one's interest if too much information is offered. Also, no information has the same effect as there is no information of the products in rural Azerbaijan. However, the goal is to get customers contacting the company or the producer for more information especially if they are not buying anything. The salesperson could give the website information to potential customers and encourage them to buy products later with for instance a discount coupon delivered to a customer's e-mail when joining to the website's monthly mailing list.

7.5.1 Payment methods and after buying behavior

Today, foreign tourists are quite aware of what makes a quality product with a good price. With the lack of enough business skills, rural Azerbaijani handicraft producers might not entirely understand how to price their products. During Developing Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Promoting Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan project during 2012 - 2014 rural Azerbaijani local craftsmen were offered business skills educations. Anyway, too low or too high price might stop customers from acting.

Example 21

“There have never been any problems with customers paying by cash, because foreign tourists usually carry lots of cash with them as travel money” (Mustafayeva 2016).

Of course, it would need both financial and educational features to enable card payments in rural areas. Same goes for paying via usage of different mobile apps. In this case, developing the payment methods might not be the first thing to be improved as some of the rural areas have ATMs too, but of course limited payment options could influence negatively to some customers' buying actions.

It is important to find the right way for rural Azerbaijan's handicraft professionals to keep contact with their customers after selling them something. This would give producers possibilities to grow as salespeople and customers to give feedback. At the moment, rural Azerbaijan's local craftsmen are not contacting their customers and customers cannot contact them.

The purchasing process does not end after customer has paid the product and left the store as one of the stages in purchasing process is customer's buying behavior after purchasing. This is also called post-purchase behavior meaning that customer starts wondering if he/she made the right decision when buying the product. This customer might come back to buy more products or make a complaint. If customer's experience of the product exceeds the expectations, one most likely comes back or at least recommends the product to someone else. (Raji 2007, 23.)

7.6 Summary

At the moment rural Azerbaijani producers are not making enough money with their sales to make any improvements to their work. It seems that creating the tourism marketing plan for the rural target regions plays an essential part in the project activities. However, Poladova (2016) tells that local women can apply initial capital for founding own businesses from local Azerbaijani banks, if they have a good business plan with budget details and future views.

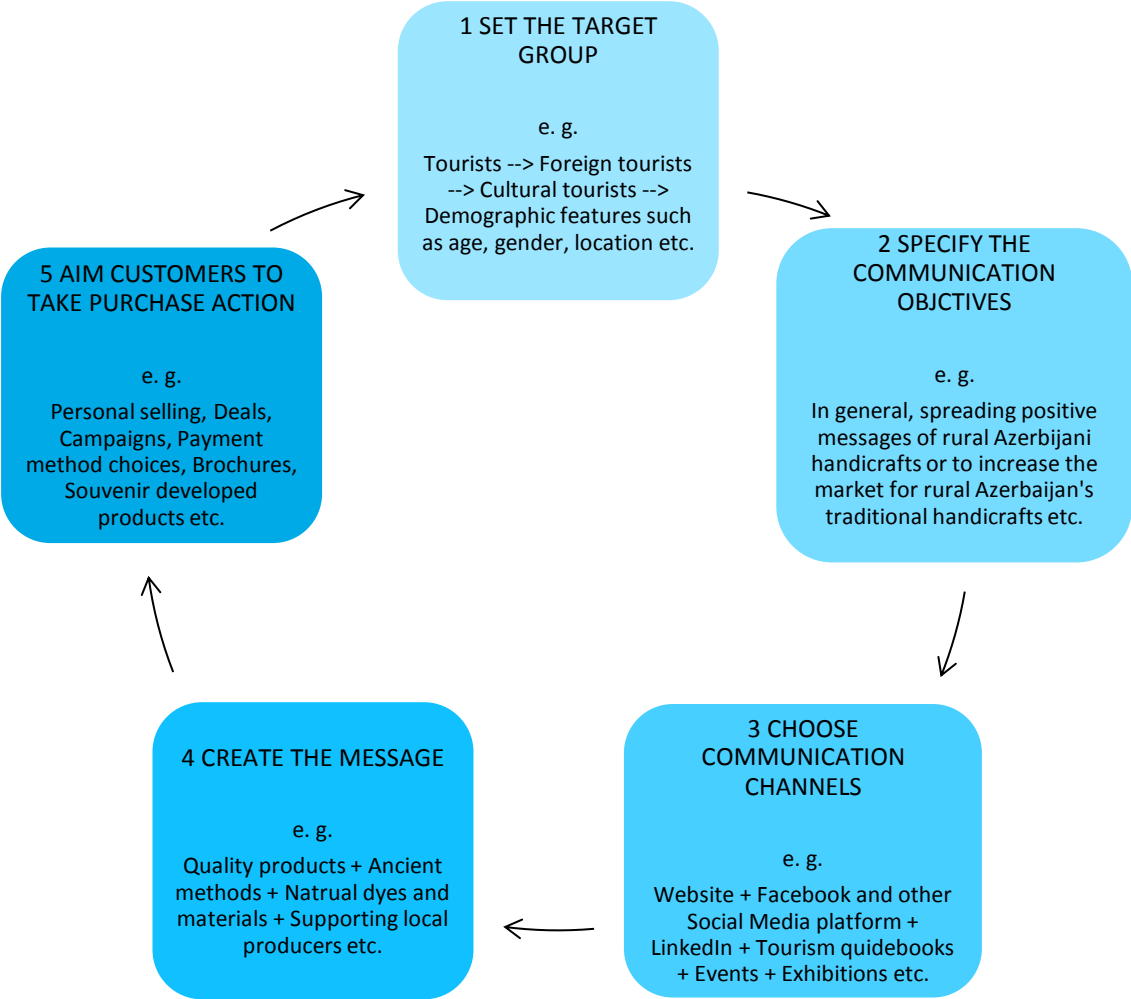
Anyway, all actions start with a good plan. According to this study, creating a marketing plan should include thoughts of to whom, what, where, how and why. To whom would one communicate? What is one communicating? Where would one communicate? How would one communicate? And, why would one

communicate? To whom means identifying the target audience and what is for setting the communication objectives for the actions. Where means choosing the marketing channels and how is for creating the message. And, why stands for why the actions are wanted to be done as the products are wanted to be bought. Repeatedly, the products as rural and traditional Azerbaijani handicrafts are wanted to be bought, but by whom, how to reach them, where to reach them and how to get their attention.

As setting the communication objectives, one can start from the general goal of the actions and head to other objectives from there. These would be for instance advertising and promotion objectives. Generally, rural Azerbaijani handicrafts are wanted to be bought as tourism products by foreign tourists to increase employment of rural Azerbaijani craftsmen, mainly women, and spread positive messages of rural Azerbaijan as a tourism destination.

The figure 11 on the page 61 describes the marketing prerequisites of rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts through purchasing process and gives quick ideas on how to reach these prerequisites. The target group is needed to be set in detail as just the expression of foreign tourists is not enough as the target audience. The communication objectives have been already specified a little by the project such as spreading positive messages of rural Azerbaijan. However, there could be more than just one objective for the marketing actions. The communication channels should be chosen carefully and focus on creating social webpages in global Social Media networks instead of just Azerbaijani channels. Rural Azerbaijani handicrafts already include the marketing messages as product details of for instance the usage of natural dyes and ancient methods. These just need to be shared with the target audience. Naturally, one of the aims of these future marketing actions is to make the potential customer to buy the handicrafts. Rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts are wanted to be tourism productized.

Figure 11
Developing effective communications between rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts and foreign tourists.



8 CONCLUSION

Traditional handicrafts are and were a part of rural Azerbaijani culture today and in the past. The history of Azerbaijan such as the story of the Silk Road works as an additional secondary product that foreign visitors visiting the country can enjoy when buying traditional handicrafts. Stories, product labels and producers create an illusion of a bigger product than a traditional handicraft concretely is. Kelagayis were and are the most famous crafts made in Sheki as Sheki was part of the ancient Silk Road. Also, the traditional and colorful glass art Shabaka from the 18th century can still be admired when visiting Sheki Khan's palace. Sheki's story and traditional crafts are offering additional elements to foreign tourists' tourism experiences. Also, as people take local crafts back home with them and show them to their friends, the crafts support the tourism marketing actions as marketing themselves.

The results of this study seem to indicate that it is not enough that only handicraft professionals can recognize for instance a real silk product. Customers should also feel convinced that the products are made of the materials that they are told to be made of. Product labels would increase trustworthiness between producers, salespeople and customers. A product with just a simple label would look more like a quality tourism product than a product without any significant tags. Particularly, a label could be a concrete proof of a product made in rural Azerbaijan with ancient traditions as there are no products certificates.

Furthermore, a product label could include several information of the product such as materials and dyes used, who made the product, where was the product made in, how was the product made, how should the product be treated and how to contact the producer. This would be the only information customers would need before, during and after buying the products.

Even the rural Azerbaijan's traditional handicrafts have lots of potential as tourism products; some of them need product developing. As these products can easily be used as marketing material such as photos and videos; all the products are not easy to deliver or bring home as souvenirs as they are too big in size or

fragile. As creating the marketing plan, perhaps also a plan for product development could also be made.

The results seem also indicate that traditional crafts could provide employment opportunities in rural Azerbaijan in the field of tourism. The future might bring new challenges for traditional handicrafts as when they gain publicity with the help of marketing professionals, producers and customers might not near as planned. This is why local producers should also be involved in the possible future marketing actions. Also, local producers could be offered education in what benefits Internet and Social Media can offer to their business and how to use them.

The research succeeded to solve the problems and answer the research questions, because of a matching theory base and an interesting subject to the author. The research added information to the researched matter from the aspect of tourism and how many details should be considered when making improvements in creating awareness of rural and traditional handicrafts. There were no limitations considering the chosen research method as using several data collection methods, but perhaps in the future complementary results could be found better by using for instance quantitative approach focusing on interviewing foreign tourists visiting Azerbaijan. Conducting market researches such as surveys and interviews to find out customers' buying habits would help the producers to understand their customers better.

The research findings are truthful as the collected data was gathered from real-life situations and the details used from the chosen theory-base were researched from several different resources. The results of this study can also be applied to other rural areas of other countries as rural areas considering traditional handicrafts have lots of similar features to each others for instance passing traditions from generation to generation and trying to achieve economic growth by bringing tourism and traditional handicrafts together. The study results can also be defined dependable as they started to replicate, especially the lack of marketing financing and skills kept repeating themselves during interviews. The results are formed by researcher's own observations, biases and aspects. Also,

the data triangulation increases the trustworthiness of this study and the study results.

The on-going project Development of Sustainable Tourism and Support of Local Handicrafts in the Rural Azerbaijan is creating a marketing strategy for the rural target regions and they have already started planning it as having workshops and lectures in Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University in Baku. Generally, the idea is to find for instance Azerbaijani and Finnish marketing professionals to work together with other project participants. (Merilahti 2017.) This research would be a part of the background material with, for example the workshop outputs.

Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University publishes Tourism and hospitality studies International journal every year. An article of the research will be written and published in the journal of 2017. The deadline for the article is on 15th of December annually.

This research has not created future challenges to the studied matter as it has created more knowledge instead. At least, the next research could be in place after the project's marketing plan has been made, evaluated and put into practice. Also, in the future more researches made in rural Azerbaijan in cooperation with Universities should involve students as this has been a positively eventful opportunity for the author of this research. The research was a change knowing a new culture and study an interesting matter in the field of tourism.

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