

Optimising the Marketing Charter in Africa in the 21st Century: An Institutional and Process Approach

1. Emonena Sunny Ekakitie

Department of Business Administration & Marketing

Delta State University

Abraka, Nigeria Email: ekakitiesunny@gmail.com, esekakitie@delsu.edu.ng

2. Uzezi Philomena Omodafe

Department of Marketing

Delta State Polytechnic

Ogwuashi – Uku Email: omodafep@gmail.com

3. Amaechi Sylvester Ekwenu,

Department of Business Administration & Marketing

Delta State University

Abraka, Nigeria Email: asnaventures@yahoo.com

Article Info

Volume 84

Page Number: 116 - 129

Publication Issue:

January – April 2021

Article History

Article Received: 04 October 2020

Revised: 14 November 2020

Accepted: 22 December 2020

Publication: 23 January 2021

Abstract

The African continent is an increasingly complex and dynamic society that is want-driven. The marketing Charter commands practitioners to incrementally deliver value in new ways and meet needs satisfactorily at a profit creatively. It also involves creating excitement at product use to secure customer loyalty imparting the economy for growth and development. In creating this roadmap, the evolutionary trends of marketing from its basic exchange processes were discussed. The study adopted theoretical and logical methods in assessing the situation in Africa. To deliver on the marketing charter, the study x-rayed the action agenda needful of optimization in two dimensions: the Institutional and Process roadmaps. The first requires the need for increased customer rights protection/advocacy, better ethical/quality conformance and improved

marketing associations' supervisory roles, among others. The Process perspective recommends optimization in better value yielding product/services, adoption of global/emerging best practices, driving marketing programmes and events through ICT and R&D capacities of enterprises along with customer relationship management (CRM) techniques, etc. The study contends that should Nigeria and African countries neglect these roadmaps, the mandate of marketing practitioners and scholars will be scarcely achieved. It was recommended that effective ICT adoption, embrace of evolving best marketing practices and engaging effective marketing audits are remedial strategies in optimizing the marketing charter in Africa.

Keywords: Marketing charter, optimization, institutional approach, process approach, Customer satisfaction.

1.0 Introduction

Marketing, a functional arm of the business, have earned respect and maturity over the years as the pivot of all free enterprise activities. As far back as 1776, Adam Smith recognized this central function when he averred that the market is the reason for all productive activities. In consonance with this stance, 20th-century scholars like Peter Drucker (1967) and Gordon, Sharpline and Premeaux (1990) identified the market as the reason why any organization should exist. In modern business therefore the organization is easily equated with its market and its health – if the market fails to sustain the business, the business will of necessity fail or disappear. This is the sheer power marketing wields in the life of individuals, organizations and nations!

The genealogy of marketing as an enterprise function may have its roots in trade and commerce – it is easily seen as the operational arm of the exchange process which in the conception of Iyoha and Ekanem (2015) involves the mutual interchange of goods/services of value to discharge felt needs. Because the exchange wheel must continue to roll – conveying goods/services from the supply side to the demand; ensuring the creation of value to society – the exchange process most times is synonymous with marketing. Several authors like Kotler, (2011) and Ekakitie and Oladipo (2010) share this conception.

Because individuals and organizations are mindful of cost in marketing and trade activities, economists have roundly emphasized the theory of comparative cost advantage in international trade. Nations that produce goods at a cheaper cost often have a better comparative advantage than those that produce at higher costs (Amadasun and Iyoha, 2012). Because all economies of the world are not equally endowed, goods/services must be effectively channelled from areas of production to areas of consumption.

Economic activities pioneered by the ethos of capitalism and free trade across the world (and given accentuation after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1990) have led to the emergence of new markets in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Global organizations now look for new markets to serve – some strategically designed the option of market development to adapt their products to new cultures to grow new markets in a bid to create new uses and users (Kotler and Keller, 2009) and adoptions to local demands and needs. The battle to secure markets to serve has lead to trade treaties and the emergence of economic blocs of

NAFTA, ECOWAS, ASEAN etc, across the globe (Cateora, 2015).

Since the economic unification of Europe in the late 1990s, Africa and its various trade/economic blocs have engaged feeble policy attempt at accentuating the critical matters of trade liberalization; so much so that China and emerging countries of the Middle East and even Latin America have bootstrapped to offload goods on the African continent (Kazmi 2002, Cateora 2015). Thus capturing both the supply and demand sides of its economy – this has become a great undoing on the continent. Here in 2020, Nigeria and indeed most of Africa have become markets for finished goods of oriental nature. This is in addition to eroding the pride of 'buy Africa' and its craftsmanship from our people and enthroning unbridled appetite for foreign goods. We have failed in creating our own 'manufacturing hubs' which should and ought to have been market-driven from within Africa; giving opportunities for us – through marketing intelligence, to create our products for consumption.

Flowing from the above, Africa has equally lagged in the delivery of its products to its demand centres across the continent. Often we see conveyance efforts of critical development inputs consisting of foreign manufactures being marketed directly by foreign enterprises and in some cases by licensed proxies (Ekakitie and Oladipo, 2010), thus eroding any value addition and African embellishments. This is fast becoming a business syndrome and culture in our continent and has robbed us of optimal growth and development; evolution of own best practices, competencies in marketing and development of any meaningful capacity to impact our economy effectively in a fast globalizing 21st century.

Indeed this sad narrative is the fallout of the suboptimal productive and marketing processes on the continent by internal actors. Africa has failed to deliver to expectation on the production and supply side thus impacting negatively on the marketing chatter and related chain processes to satiate individual, corporate and societal needs and wants on the continent. This study is driven to provoke a re-think on the side of marketers, professionals and educators, to critically engage the adoption of a sustainable action framework that can lead to salvaging the weak potentialities of marketing and its charter as a functional arm of business within the African economy.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Marketing: Concepts & Evolutionary Trends

It is not out of place to spare a few lines to illustrate how marketing gained maturity by looking into its basic evolutionary stages. From its narrowest perspective, McCarthy (2002) made an initial distinction about marketing being "macro" and "micro". He conceived the former as the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user to satisfy the customer and then accomplish the company's objectives. In this perspective, two features were identified 1) marketing as a business activity for profit motive 2) marketing only occurring after the goods/services are produced. This macro conception of marketing was criticised for its product orientation. However, the micro perspective offered a better opportunity to view marketing in its proper perspective, that is, as an activity that should focus on individual and personal needs and how to satisfy them (Kalu and Enya, 2019; Agbonifoh, 2016; Achumba, 2000)

Before this conception, marketing as a business activity had passed through some stages – some authors (Kotler, 2006; Schoell and Guiltinan, 2012; Stanton, 1981 etc) are however of the consensus that marketing evolved through the production state, to the product stage, then to the selling concept or era. These authors agree that the product concept lasted till the early 20th century and it was of a subsistence ideology where goods were produced and consumed only when needed. According to Schoell and Guiltinan (2012), during this subsistence phase, each family's major concern was to produce enough for its survival. Customers told producers what they wanted and producers offered them custom-made, hence according to the philosophy of that era, goods were sold before they were produced. Thence products and their production were given more attention and emphasis than selling of the product.

Drawing from the above, it was not long before hi-cups set in. Producers lost valuable time while waiting for orders. A paradigm shift became inevitable as speculative production set in. Production was now targeted at the local market place where those that will buy knew those that produced (Ogechukwu, 2011). This era was boosted by the industrial revolution where machines were applied to produce goods in large quantities. Because production specialists have much-unsold stock in the factory, they sought selling specialists (wholesalers and retailers) to help find buyers and to sell their products for them. It was tagged "seller's market" because demand was greater than supply. Mass selling was rationalized to be the elixir, for excess production; hence mass-selling techniques were evolved to support mass production. This gave vent to the emergence of the selling concept. Emphasis was now on selling rather than

production. As Schoells and Guiltinan (2012) captured it:

"to maximize their sales, producers with excess inventories turned increasingly to hard-selling techniques such as high-pressure tactics and deceptive and fraudulent advertising. The sales orientation was all about harassing people to buy whether they needed the product or not".

According to Schoell and Guiltinan (2012), the marketing concept started in the 1950s – it is a management philosophy that advocates that a business organization 1) exists to satisfy targeted customers' wants, 2) it approached decision-making from a system's view of management and, 3) it sought to earn a satisfactory return on the owners' investment in the firm. Kotler and Keller (2009) captured the marketing concept thus:

"the marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists of the company being more effective than competitors in creating, delivering and, communicating customer value to its chosen target markets. For him, the concept has several colourful phrases: "meeting needs profitably", "find wants and fill them", "love the customer not the product, etc."

Marketing in the middle of the 20th century assumed a wider connotation in the wake of business sensitivity to societal welfare and call for social responsibility. As the 21st-century sets in, the societal marketing concept came on board and required marketers to accept social responsibility as a philosophy of business. It sought to proffer answers to questions on how marketers can strike a balance among targeted customer wants, customer's long-run best interests, society's long-run best interest, and the firm's long-run financial goals. Kotler

(2011) conception of the societal concept is that organizations must determine the needs, wants and interests of the target markets to deliver the desired satisfaction levels more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that preserve and enhances the customer's and society's well-being. This is the marketing charter that is either absent or weak in Africa and this is the marketing charter that marketing professionals and educators should pursue and accentuate as we gravitate deeper into the global business space in the 21st century.

In optimizing the marketing charter on the African continent, the study proffers two (2) approaches as strategies for delivering on the goals of marketing:

- a) Optimization through an institutional approach
- b) Optimization through a process approach

2.1.1 Optimizing the Marketing Charter: The Institutional Approach

Theoretically, this framework consists of prescriptive action protocols designed to re-focus and crystalise marketing in its proper perspective to "bootstrap" it not only for survival and growth but attain the heights required to support 21st-century business and economic challenges of less developed economies, especially on the African continent. The following are germane:

2.1.2 Consumer Rights Awareness & Advocacy: Firstly in this direction, consumers must wake up to be more aware of their rights. Just as individuals and nation-states have universal rights, as contained in the Geneva Declaration, so also do customers, as bonafide citizens of any market-state, have rights that must be upheld, preserved and respected. In this

regard, Kotler and Keller (2008) identified customer rights to include: the right to be properly informed the right to a fair hearing/complaint, the right to be served, the right to seek redress from consuming harmful products and the right to be compensated.

It is perhaps in a bid to accentuate these rights (which constitute a charter in marketing firms and businesses) that consumer advocacy and consumer movement are becoming emerging forces to contend with. Schoel and Gultinan (2012) defined consumerism as a movement designed to strengthen the power of consumers about the power of producers and sellers. As far back, Mitchell (1978) in this vein contends that consumer movement will be needed until the conditions below disappear.

- Economic and commercial decisions, nationally and in firms, are taken without regard for consumer interests
- It is possible for a potentially good product to be spoiled because it has not been designed for durability or ease of use, or economy in use
- It is possible for a good product to be ruined by an almost complete lack of quality control or failure to design packaging appropriate to the particular products so that it is damaged in the distribution
- Servicing is slow and unsatisfactory
- Services fall short of users' expectations
- Suppliers of goods and services fail to give their customers enough information to make a real choice. He concludes that it is because these things still happen that people join consumer organizations. In retrospect, one

can conclude that the above rationalization has been time-tested and have remained valid. In this respect, the advocacy role of consumers should continue to gain ground. The organization "consumer parliament" in Nigeria is a movement that champions the advocacy for better GSM connectivity and billings services. Most times networks are congested, calls become difficult to get through, and incidences of dropped calls with high tariffs are reported and confronted. The *Parliament* provides a platform where consumers "meet minds" with representatives of MTN, Econet (now Airtel) GLO etc.

In the 21st century, advocacy and vocal demand backed by popular agency and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) support should be the norm. The reason is that society is at risk in the consumption of substandard products (many have health and other risk implications).

The coming on stream of SERVICOM policy of the Obasanjo administration (1999–2007) in Nigeria is a commendable programme which the government at national and state levels should continue to promote – the SERVICOM slogan posits: "challenge bad service anywhere any time", "You have to right to be served" is apt.

2.1.3 Producer Rights Protection Drive: Another crucial issue of marketing import in the 21st century is the dire need to protect manufacturers, producers and indeed corporate merchandisers. Much as the above paragraphs have made a strong case for consumerism and consumer protection, the need to optimize the marketing charter via protecting industries, factories and centres of production/merchandising from unfair harassment, extortion and unnecessary legal suits is imperative in marketing. If society

must enjoy a desired standard of living, its production capacities must be protected enough to play the socio-economic role of providing quality goods/services for societal members as we gravitate deeper into the 21st century. In this vein, government regulatory agencies can ensure the institutions in the economy of protective laws and the elimination of deliberate distractions and such practices to protect industries. For instance, certain medical and healthcare products that are wrongly used by consumers have often become an issue of litigations. Wrong use and application of some products outside embedded directives in manufacturer's literature should not be charged to the fault account of the manufacturer. If harm befalls the customer, producers and sellers should be shielded from litigations arising therefrom. The 21st-century marketing agenda must promote responsible and responsive clientele.

2.1.4 Better Ethical and Quality Conformance: The future of marketing cannot be bright if ethical issues are continually relegated in business. Long before now, Mitchell (1978) had called for a framework of fair trading practices that would enable the individual to help himself. In this vein he had adduced a way forward, to wit: that criminal law should be enacted to make it difficult for rogues to operate. Ekakitie and Oladipo (2010) had cited unethical trade practices to include: product faking, product adulteration, product cloning and all such practices that ultimately result in short-changing the customer for his money's worth. Long before now, Akerele and Ndekwa (1989) had bemoaned the lack of statistical and empirical documentation of unethical business practices in Nigeria and across Sub Sahara Africa. If to date this situation still holds, it is the opinion of this paper that the ethical rot in marketing in

2020 is no surprise after all. Kreitner (2015) had seen ethics as the study of moral obligations involving a right versus wrong; while Nkamnebe and Anyanwu (2019) thinks it is a dictate dealing with what is good or bad, what is right or wrong. Ethics, therefore, in the conception of these two authors' deals with what is "right or wrong". Governments and regulatory as well institutional bodies need to up their game in this respect. Government can exert maximum fines on industrial misconduct in the 21st century as a way of discouraging poor product quality and ethical misconduct. In a Gallop Poll in the USA in 2002, Americans were asked to rate ethical standards of various professions, only 18% scored business executives either "high" or "very high" in honesty and ethical standards. Other professions were rated as follows:

- ð Drug Pharmacist – 66 %
- ð Medical Doctors – 52 %
- ð Police Officers – 42 %
- ð Funeral Directors – 35 %
- ð Journalists – 27 %
- ð Stockbrokers - 13 %
- ð Members of Congress – 13 %
- ð Car Sales People – 5 %

CNN in its .. *Business Briefs* programme back in 2017, had emphatically reported on *Wall Street* (America's financial power base)

"...nowhere has unethical and illegal behaviour been more apparent than on Wall Street. US attorney, Rudolph Guiliani, has been waging a remarkable and successful fight to curb Wall Street unethical and illegal practices...."

This admits that unethical practices are not only found in Nigeria but are a global menace that marketers must stand against in optimizing their functional activities.

2.1.5 Enthroning Green Marketing: In the wake of oil prices collapse in late 2016, the non-biodegradable manufactures of most industries and the global concern for a high level of noxious industrial emissions that have implications for global warming, became of strong concern. One cannot but call for a global institutional renaissance. If business and marketing activities must continue, 21st-century global institutional actors must pay more serious attention to the physical environment of business, see Babita (2013), Gupta, Singh, and Thakur (2013). Corporate marketers and institutional bodies in the 21st century must be at the forefront of contending for and requiring organizations to manufacture bio-degradable products or poly-ethylene-based materials that are recyclable. Many companies in the Western world have been at the forefront of recycling containers of their product, firms in Africa should do likewise. Perhaps a remedial action by Legislation is to make laws requiring organizations to manufacture bio-degradable products containers and packaging materials. Recent global trends in enthroning greenness have resulted in the inventions of biofuels, fossil fuels and manufacturing of bio-gasses to power engine and industrial processes with no noxious emissions. The basic objectives of these inventions are to bring about a healthier and more people-friendly environment where consumers can comfortably engage in purchasing, using and disposing of products that will make the world safer and less hazardous for habitation (Chan, 2013; Gupta, Singh, and Thakur (2013). Going green and green marketing according to CNN reports, 2019, is, therefore, the way to go in the 21st century especially for Nigeria and countries on the African continent.

2.1.6 The Role of Professional Associations & SEQUAL: The activities of bodies and

associations like the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, The Academy of Management Nigeria, TAMN, etc., should be galvanized to crystallize a better marketing paradigm. Bodies like these should be at the forefront of encouraging "better marketing", "better enforcement" of marketing and trade practices and better societal participation in ensuring good and safe-conducts in the daily buying-selling activities in Africa. The ethos of service quality conformance: respect for customers, courteous services, responsiveness, access, etc., should be stressed to stimulate the growth and development of marketing.

In addition to the activities of the National Institute of Management (NIMN), a marketing student association should be formed and sustained in all African Universities with Faculties of Management sciences. The student associations can help in awakening the consciousness of not only students bodies on campuses but societal awareness of what marketing is, the role it can play in socio-economic development and even the personal well-being of every individual. This is crucial because every person or organization is involved in the exchange and consumption process. In this direction, therefore, student bodies can promote awareness through the organization of symposia and workshops, marketing week, etc. and all such events that will permit the sensitization of the public. Corporate organizations whose activities are in the nucleus of the marketing system should be invited to give talks and share their experiences in the industry with learners of the trade in the Universities (Nkamnebe and Anyanwu, 2019). They in turn can learn what marketing best practices are evolving and re-align their sales force and selling strategies and policies in adopting them. An attempt should be made

to approximate the ideal. This is a desirable and generic pattern marketing should be going in the 21st century on the African continent. Let us look at the process approach.

3.0 Optimizing the Marketing Charter: The Process Approach

This perspective serves to x-ray the core activities that should drive marketing excellence, best practices and accentuate the myriad of trends and innovations that will lend credence to optimization by key actors' efforts and functions that surrounds marketing activities if the 21st-century marketer and marketing firms must realize set expectations both nationally, continentally and globally.

3.1 Better Product Innovations, R&D Efforts: Marketing in Africa may never make its expected contribution to world economic growth if the crucial factor of R&D is not accentuated. Much of why many African countries are in recession today is largely attributable to ignorance of the market pulse and heartbeat. Asika (2000) conceives research as any organized enquiry that aims at providing information for solving identified problems. Kotler and Keller's (2008) view is more marketing-specific. Marketing research is the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation facing a company.

Researching and developing new and better products is crucial for the 21st century. Because consumers' taste and preferences change over time, smart marketing must accommodate correct anticipation and determination of industrial trend: by evolving and making new products that deliver high-value utilities to target client

and market. Late in 2018, CNN reports the manufacturing of a prototype car that has the capacity for sea navigation – the scientists involved in this research efforts projects that the car will go commercial in the year 2023. Through R&D scientists are daily in search of better productive capacities, better products and innovative ways and methods of service delivery to meet customer need profiles.

If Nigeria and indeed Africa must improve in line with global trends and be strong participants in the globalization agenda, it must embrace fastly the R&D culture. Granted that the West will not wait for Africa to "grow up", Africa must bootstrap its capacities and become a strong global player by frog-leaping its R&D drive. Africa cannot afford continually to be the buying partner of Western and Asian manufactures (Tajudeen 2013). The wake-up call of this paper is for the effective adoption of R&D if Africa is not to be perpetual dumping grounds and consumers of goods we don't need but have to consume due to lack of specific choice products that align with our culture as a people.

3.1.1 Increased Adoption of ICT to Drive Marketing Program: Side by side with R&D is the need for quick and speedier adoption and use of information and communication facilities. Information is crucial to business operations and indeed decisions. The future of marketing depends strongly on ICT – it powers and provides faster access, a more dependable and reliable data set; it can be adjusted to various uses and help to synthesise a database to aid marketing efforts (Pratminingsih, Lipuringtyas, and Rementa, 2013; Eszes, 2010; Doren, Fenchner, and Green-Adelsberger, 2000). Organizations in Africa and Latin America and other LDCs will find

it hard in the 21st century to do business or even survive without ICT support. Rural telephony is still at its lowest - most of Africa still has one or fewer telephone line per 100 persons, whereas over 50 telephone lines to 100 persons in the West. On the usage of computers, far less than one person per 100 own a personal computer in Nigeria and about the same figure holds for computer illiteracy levels.

All these take their toll on business and marketing activities in recent times. The 21st century is the info-tech age and the conception of Ekakitie and Obire (2020) in this direction is that organizations that will succeed in the 21st-century business environment are those that would seek investable opportunities abroad, develop a strong business culture, along with a purposeful application and adoption of ICT to their operations; scholars like (Dubelaar, Sohal, Savic, 2005; Doherty, Ellis-Chadwick and Hart, 2003) also holds this view. This declarative statement makes a strong case for ICT and info-tech adoption as a critical success factor in 21st-century marketing.

3.1.2 Better Competitiveness: One of the cardinal ethos of the capitalist system is free-market competition. Competition spins the wheel of the economy; without it, growth and development would become illusionary and elusive and the incidence of grinding poverty, relative and absolute, would become permanent, pervasive, perennial and intractable (Familoni, 2001; Amadasun, and Iyoha, 2012). Industrial forces drive the wheel of competition. For a long, Porter (1981) identified these forces to include *suppliers* (bargaining power of suppliers), *buyers* (bargaining power of buyers), and potential entrants (threats of

new entrants and presence of substitutes (threat of substitute product or services).

Because competitors jostle for customer patronage, many firms have been identified for initiating competitive patterns, which are inimical to good/acceptable marketing practices. Competition is aimed at making organizations more effective in their operations and more efficient in their resource deployment and usage. Monopolies stifle competitiveness and stagnate economies from growing stable growth vectors on a sustainable basis. The adoption of better technology in production, and better-cost management can result in lower prices and better quality of products and manufacturers. If good competition is enhanced, the industry can pride itself as a matured and developed market-driven industry that has sustainable capacity.

But bad competitors/competition must be discouraged if marketing is to reach its deserved heights in the 21st century in Africa.

3.1.3 Environmental Scanning/Market Intelligence: Within the context of the above discourse, marketing organizations in Africa should focus on macro and microeconomic factors that affect their operations. A better appraisal of technology and machine types, a better understanding of socio-economic changes, government policy thrust etc., and how these affect their business and market segments is proactively needful. Environmental scanning should also include watching competitor types, their nature and competitive character. Achumba's (2000) reasoning in this direction is very insightful: 1) who are your competitors, 2) what are their goals, 3) what are their strengths, and weakness 4) what are their strategies, 5) what are their reactions and patterns.

In addition to the above, every organization should achieve greater effectiveness in SWOTing and carrying out correctly their strategic internal audits – especially in the marketing and finance area. For the marketing area, the appraisal should focus on 1) product-related factors (variety, differentiation, mix, quality, packaging etc., 2) price-related factors etc. Thus marketers should gain efficiency essentially in the 4Ps and seek to achieve strength in these areas. Porter (1980) counsels that strategic audit should involve assessing and analyzing those internal and external resources and potential of the organization with which it hopes to overcome competitors in their attempt to satisfy their market segments.

3.1.4 Adoption of Customer Relations Management (CRM) & Enterprise Systems, (ES): Customer relations management, CRM, has an emphasis on *attracting, maintaining* and *enhancing* (AME) the customer and securing customer loyalty by providing a flow of benefits to him (Ekakitie, 2012). A dynamic and strategic mix of product, price, place and distribution is therefore necessary through constant attention to customer request through traditional marketing channels and indeed on the Web sites. Davids and Thompson (2015) provide a deeper dimension into the existential context of CRM. For him, it consists basically in:

- Helping an enterprise to enable its marketing departments to identify and target their best customers, manage marketing campaigns and generate quality leads for the sales team
- Assisting the organization to improve telesales, account, and sales management by optimizing information shared by multiple

employees, and streamlining existing process e.g. taking orders using mobile devices.

- Allowing the formation of an individualized relationship with customers, to provide customer satisfaction and maximize profit; identifying the most profitable customers and providing them with the highest level of services possible.
- Providing employees with the information and process necessary to know their customers better, understand and identify customer needs and effectively build a relationship between the company and its customer base, and distribution partners

ES are a collection of competency tools and machines that aid productivity, efficiency and increased service delivery - Materials Handling Systems, Robotics, Work Planning Systems, etc. The acquisition and use of these capacities are needed in the realization of the marketing charter in the 21st century.

3.1.5 Better Service Quality Delivery: One of the giant strides that need to be taken in the 21st century is the leap forward to tending to the needs and complaints of the customer. As rational consumers, every individual compares the quality and level of satisfaction expected from a product at consumption to actual benefits delivered. A negative discrepancy will result in complaints and when not correctly handled may result in cognitive dissonance. The cognitive dissonance state should not be allowed to persist if it unfortunately occurred. Research efforts in the USA (Forrester Research, 2004) suggest that a dissatisfied customer will tell at least 5 other potential customers – this has a negative implication for any market segment. The

way forward in the 21st century is that every organization should set up a customer-care or customer-complaint system. It should have a systematized method of receiving and handling customer complaints.

Lastly, there is a dire need to be empathic in marketing activities. This is so because customers have emotions, intuitions and feelings that drive their buying behaviour. If client services officers put themselves in the customers' shoes, they will discover that applying the Golden rule is a needful marketing practice. In this direction, Igbokwe and Salami (2007) recommends the Platinum Rule – for them, it rests on five (5) basic principle of service that hinges on attitude which will help to provide excellent service to customers whether internal or external.

ð *Feel good about yourself:* You must learn to smile, have a positive attitude to life and things around you. Do the right things at the right time.

ð, *Practice the habit of courtesy:* customers are not an interruption to our job; they are the reason for our jobs. They pay our salaries

ð, *Use positive communication:* learn to say "please" and "thank you". Remember, it is not what you say alone that matters, but how you say it and your body language.

ð *Listen to your customers first and ask questions later:* this will help you to understand and solve their problems better.

ð *Perform professionally:* you must have a good understanding of the products, services and policies of your organization to attend to your customers professionally and efficiently. They concluded by reiterating: "if

we do all these, we gain our customers' loyalty and we can retain them."

4.0 Summary, Conclusion & Recommendations

Summary

The study has looked into the conceptual meanings of marketing, its functions and essence to any society and the evolutionary trends it has coursed through over the decades as a functional arm of a business enterprise. The discourse also touched on the basic need for business organizations to give high priority to market needs in addition to tracing the basic origins and what provoked consumer movements as a reaction to attempts of many manufacturers, merchandisers, etc., to cheat unsuspecting customers via selling substandard goods to them. The consumerist movement was pinpointed as one that draws global and consumer attention to puffery as a system of cheating the consumer via a denial of promised value at a price. Much space was given to the articulation of what the researchers regard as the 21st-century marketing action framework which spotlights critical areas global marketing should and ought to pay critical attention to in the attempt to optimize product/service value and create customer satisfaction. Some of these key areas include practices of green marketing, consumerists' movements, protection of manufacturers from unwarranted attacks, increased roles of marketing institutions, etc. These were discussed along the lines of institutional and process action frameworks; pointing the way forward as marketing cannot afford to remain silent in the face of 21st century business challenges.

Conclusion

The above analyses have given us as scholars and practitioners of marketing in Africa a window of opportunity to see areas needing serious focus and attention as we continue our march into the 21st century. Marketing and marketers cannot afford to remain *silent* in the affairs of socio-economic development of nation-states; especially the African continent. Hence, the action framework presented above should be a working document or even a handbook for marketing managers' actions in the very dynamic marketing environment we live in.

Recommendations

In this regard therefore organizations and marketing practitioners should refocus their efforts, be alive to emerging global patterns and evolving best practices in marketing. Marketers should be alive to their environment and adopt environmental scanning, marketing intelligence gathering and R&D activities supported with effective ICT capabilities if they are to survive the competition.

In this vein, the place of strategic audits should not and never be relegated to the background. In the light of the above, strong scientific marketing is advocated as marketing in the 21st century is gravitating into hi-tech and high touch strategies - this should impact on individual and household living, delivering satisfaction and uplifting economies and wealth of nations, especially for Nigeria and the African continent.

References

1. Achumba, I.C. (2000) Strategic Marketing Management In the 21st

- Century, Mac-Williams and Capital Publishers Inc., Charlotte U.S.A
2. Akerele, A and Ndekwu (1989) Work Ethics in Nigeria: An Investigation into Worker Attitudes to Work in Two Textile Mills, *Nigerian Management Review*: (4)2, 4 - 12
 3. Amadasun, D.E. and Iyoha, M.A. (2012) Theory of Corporate Finance and Policy (*Business Finance*). Lagos: Rally Height Publishing.
 4. Asika, N (2001) *Research Methodology in the Behavioural Sciences*, Longman Nigeria Plc.
 5. Babita S. (2013). Green Marketing and its Impact on Consumer Buying Behavior, *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention*. (2)12, 61-64.
 6. Cateora, P.R. (2015) International Marketing, 13th ed, Boston Massachusetts, Irwin McGraw-Hill
 7. Chan, E.S.W. (2013). Gap Analysis of Green Hotel Marketing. *Emerald:InternationalJournal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25 (7), 1017-1048.
 8. David, J. Sepulcri, D. and Thompson, E. (2005) "CRM in Italy: A Market Appraisal and Overview" *Gartner*
 9. Doherty, N, Ellis-Chadwick, F and Hart, C (2003) An Analysis of the Factors Affecting the Adoption of the Internet in the UK Retail Sector, *Journal of Business Research* (56)6, 888-897.
 10. Doren, D.,Fencher, D. and Green-Adelsherger, K. (2000) Promotional Strategies on the World Wide
 11. Web, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 6(9), 21 – 35.
 12. Dubelaar, C. Sohal, A and Savic, V (2005) Benefits, Impediments and Critical Success Factors in B2B E-business Adoption, *Technovation* 25(11), 1251 – 1262.
 13. Ekakitie, E. S. (2012) An Assessment of Willingness of Nigerian Business Organizations to Adopt Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Being PhD Thesis of the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.
 14. Ekakitie, E.S. and Obire, O. J. (2020) ICT As an Equalizing Mechanism for SMEs Competitiveness in the Global Market, *International Research Association for Talent Development and Excellence, IRATDE*, ISSN 1869 – 0459.
 15. Eszes. I (2010) An Introduction to Internet Marketing: The Role of Internet in Economic Development of Vikos-Aoos National Park, Greece. Available at <http://www.eszes.net/intmarketing.htm> retrieved 12-12-2019
 16. Familoni, K (2001) Macro-Managerial Economics, Lagos, Panaf Publishing Inc.
 17. Gordon, J. R, Monday M.R., Sharpline, A and Premeaux, S. R. (1990); *Management and Organisational Behaviour*, Allyn and Bacon.
 18. Gupta, S, Singh, D & Thakur, K.S. (2013). Green Products and Green Marketing: Are Customers Aware? *Pacific Business Review International*, 5(9)6.
 19. Igbokwe and Salami (2007) "Customer Service: "Attitude Makes The Difference" *UBA: The Lion King* an In-House Publication of the United Bank for Africa, for the

- African Group Vol. 2 Issue 1 January – April
20. Kalu, S.E. and Enyia, C.D.(2019) Marketing Ethics and Stakeholders' Commitment in Fast Food Restaurants, Port Harcourt, *International Journal of Science and Business*, 3(1), 111 – 117
 21. Kazmi, A (2005) *Business Policy and Strategic Management* 2nd, Tata-McGraw Hill
 22. Kotler P., (2011) Principles of Marketing, 14th ed. Boston: Prentice-Hall.
 23. Kotler, P (2006) Marketing Management: Millennium Edition, Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey, Upper Saddle River.
 24. Kotler, P and Keller, K. (2009) Marketing Management, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
 25. Mitchell, J. (1978) Marketing and The Consumer Movement, McGraw-Hill Book Company (UK) Limited
 26. Nkamnebe, A.D, and Anyanwu, G.S. (2019) eds, Marketing Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility: Festschrift in honour of Professor Ogwo E.Ogwo, Port Harcourt, SCOA Heritage Publications.
 27. Ogechukwu, A.D. (2011) The Role of Small Scale Industry in National Development in Nigeria. *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 1, 23-41
 28. Oladapo, P and Ekakitie, S (2010) *Introduction to Business Management*, Lagos Moreways Publications Ltd.
 29. Perreault, Jr. E, and McCarthy, J. (2002) Basic Marketing, 14th ed. New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education
 30. Peter Drucker (1967) *The Practice of Management*, London, William Heinemann Limited
 31. Porter, M.E. (1980) *Competitive Strategy; Techniques for Analysing Industries and Competitors*, The Free Press
 32. Pratminingsih, S.A., Lipuringtyas, C., and Rementa, T (2013) Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty towards Online Shopping. *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 4(3) <http://doi.org/10.7763/IJTEF.2013.V4.268>
 33. Schoell, F.S. and Gultinan, J.P (2012) *Marketing Contemporary Concepts and Practices*, Allyn and Bacon.
 34. Tajudeen, O. (2013) SMEs Business risk and Sustainability in Nigeria" *European Journal of business and social science* (2) 9, 76-94