

Globalization, Technological Advances and Activities of Marketing Companies in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigated the influence of globalization and technological advances on the marketing activities of marketing companies in Nigeria. 127 managers of registered marketing companies in Cross River State were surveyed. The area of study was Cross River State of Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Four research questions were formulated for the study. Findings revealed that globalization and technological advances had positively influenced the activities of marketing companies in Cross River State. these include; access to information, collaboration and contact among marketers and consumers throughout the whole world. The paper recommended among others that marketing companies should improve on their research functions for current marketing information such as the utilization of integrated marketing communications tools for their marketing activities.

Keywords: Globalization, Technological advances, marketingactivities and marketing companies

INTRODUCTION

The current changes in business and marketing activities which are characterized by tremendous globalization and technological advancements would require adequate strategies that would enable companies to adapt to the prevailing circumstances. Globalization as observed by the researcher is propelled always by information and communication technology (ICT). Globalization is the integration of national economies, culture, social life, technology, education and politics. It is the movement of people, ideas and technology from place to place (Omekwu, 2006). The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines Globalization as the process of making something such as business; operate in different countries all around the world. Quattara in Ominiya (2008) stated that, globalization is the integration of economics throughout the world through trade, financial flows, and the exchange of technology, information and the movement of the people. A pertinent issue one needs to know is that globalization as a change cannot be ignored because the new information revolution according to Omekwu (2001), has come to replace the agrarian and industrial revolution and is rapidly compressing the world into digital global village.

The technological advances in transportation, shipping and communication have made it easier for companies to market in other countries and for consumers to buy products and services from marketers in other countries. This poses a great challenge for companies in a bid to attain their marketing objectives. The role of information technology as a new system in marketing practices cannot be over-emphasized. Information technology can be defined as the convergence of multimedia facilities that are used to transfer record and retrieve information, (Osuala, 2004). We are in the world of technological development. Effective marketing activities vied as a necessary condition for economic growth cannot be achieve without sound knowledge and application of information technology. Gbadomosi (2006) sees

information technology as a factor that can provide quality in any human endeavour. Owen (2003) revealed that it is the backbone of the knowledge of the economy and in recent years has been recognized as an effective tool for promoting economic growth and sustainable development. This implies that companies face challenging roles of utilizing a broad range of technological equipment such as computers, mobile telephone, satellites, Mp3/Mp4/WMA storage devices, file transfers protocols world-wide web, etc for their marketing practices.

According to Esu (2003), company managers face challenges of satisfying their consumers. To him, companies determine consumers' needs and wants and they device means of satisfying them. Furthermore, Okwelum (2005) found out that companies in Enugu State of Nigeria utilize integrated marketing communications (IMC) tools to introduce new products to customers. In addition to these roles, companies render educational, health, legal and other industrial services to their customers within most countries of the world, (Burman, 1995).

Marketing is seen by Kotler (2004) as a social and managerial function. Socially, Kotler defined marketing as a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. Managerially, Kotler sees marketing as the art of selling and buying products produced by manufacturing companies. This art of selling and buying poses challenges for the marketing companies. Marketing companies usually are the companies that are involved in buying and selling products produced by manufacturing companies (Kotler and Keller (2006).

Companies in Nigeria face several challenges in the course of carrying out their marketing practices as a result of globalization and the new technological revolution (Chukwurah, 2009). The nagging issue is the problem of digital division existing between developed and developing countries. This is glaring more when one considers African's web visibility in general and that of Nigeria in particular. Mutala (2002) revealed that Africa has the lowest web presence globally. According to him, African's global web contribution is causing a serious threat to the development and improvement of marketing activities in Nigeria because it would be difficult for Nigeria to globalize her local marketing functions. These functions are made easier with the utilization of new information and communication technology (ICT).

The major purpose of this study is therefore to examine the influence of globalization and technological advances on marketing activities of selected marketing companies in Nigeria.

Specially, the study ascertained:

- a. The influence of globalization on marketing companies activities in Cross River State
- b. The impact of technological advances on marketing companies activities in Cross River State.
- c. The role of marketing companies in providing marketing information in Cross River State
- d. The strategies for effective marketing activities by marketing companies in Cross River State.

METHODS

This study was carried out in Cross River State of Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study because it focused on the people and their opinions. Osuala (2004) stated that survey research design is most suitable for study that focuses on the people, facts about the people and their opinions. The population of the study consisted of 127 managers of

registered marketing companies in Cross River State. They comprised of 46 purchasing managers, 40 sales managers, and 41 advertising managers the entire population was used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in statistics in University of Calabar. Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained which was high enough to confirm the reliability of the instrument. Four research questions were formulated and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The acceptable level of mean score is 2.50. If criterion mean (2.50) is greater than the item mean result is unaccepted while if the item is greater than criterion mean, the result is accepted.

RESULTS

Table 1. Mean and standard Deviation rating on the influence of globalization on marketing activities of companies

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision Accepted (A)
1.	Globalization provides marketing opportunities for companies	3.22	0.73	A
2.	Globalization enhances the use of Integrated marketing communications (IMC) for marketing practices	3.34	0.78	A
3.	Globalization improves collaboration among companies within and outside the country	3.56	0.88	A
4.	Globalization promotes indigenous Industries	2.86	0.92	A
5.	Globalization helps to increase sales force of companies	3.28	0.66	A

Analysis in the above table showed that all the items rated above the accepted mean of 2.50. This indicates that globalization has positive influence on the companies marketing activities in Cross River State.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation rating on the impact of technological advances on companies marketing activities

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
1.	Technological advances enhance building data base of customers by companies	3.45	0.84	A
2.	Marketing communication is diversified and made easier by our companies with technological advances	3.37	0.76	A
3.	Technological advancement has encouraged our companies effective use of direct mail marketing practices.	3.04	0.95	A
4.	Access to information by our companies has improved remarkably through technological advancements	3.58	0.68	A
5.	Internet is an important tool in accessing marketing information by companies	3.60	3.60	A
6.	Catalogue marketing by our companies can now be done through the use of CDs, videos or online for marketing activities	2.95	0.72	A

Analysis in table 2 shows that all the items rated above the accepted mean of 2.50. This indicates that technological advancement has impacted companies marketing activities positively in Cross River State.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation rating on the roles of companies in providing marketing information

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Item description</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Decision</i>
1.	Our Company use integrated marketing communication (IMC) to inform consumers about the available goods and services	3.58	0.79	A
2.	Our Company Links brands with other people, places and brands	3,00	0.80	A
3.	Our company use internet to communicate directly with consumers	3.65	0.69	A
4.	Our Company have face-to-face interaction with prospective purchasers in marketing practices	30.1	0.84	A
5.	Our Company selects efficient communication channels for marketing practices	3.06	0.90	A

Analysis in table 3 also showed that all the items rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. This shows that companies have challenging roles in providing marketing information in Cross River State.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation rating on the strategies for effective marketing activities by companies.

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Item Description</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Decision</i>
1.	Our Company emphasizes on provision of quality products	3.44	0.82	A
2.	Creating customer value, satisfaction and loyalty to enhance effective marketing activities	3.55	0.92	A
3.	Utilization of ICT to enhance effective marketing activities	3.80	0.74	A
4.	Conducting marketing research and forecasting demand to promote marketing activities	3.42	0.85	A
5.	Our Company taps into global markets for effective marketing activities	2.88	0.64	A
6.	Our Company adopts market development, market growth, market retention, market segmentation and market balancing strategies for effective marketing activities	3.24	0.81	A

Table 4 above indicated that all the items rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. This result shows that all the strategies above need be adopted by companies for effective marketing activities.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that globalization has positive influence on marketing activities of companies in Cross River State. It was evidenced in its ability to provide marketing opportunities for companies operating in Cross River State. Furthermore, it enhances the use of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), it improves collaboration among companies within and outside the country; it promotes indigenous industries and it increases sales force of companies.

The finding is attributed to the fact the globalization enhances integration of economics throughout the world through trade, financial flows the exchange of technology, information and the movement of the people (Quattara in Ominiya, 2008). It then means that for

companies in Cross River State to survive, they should provide adequate human and material resources as a challenging role for effective global marketing activities. This finding could also be attributed to the emergence of globalization and technological advancement that has resulted to changes in marketing activities in Nigeria.

The result further showed that technological advancement has impacted companies marketing activities in many ways. The finding supports Owen (2003) who revealed that information technology is the backbone of the knowledge of the economy and in recent years has been recognized as an effective tool for promoting economic growth and sustainable development. It is also in consonance with Gbadomosi (2006) who sees information technology as a factor that can provide quality in any human endeavour. Therefore, companies in Nigeria face challenging role of utilizing broad range of technological equipment for effective marketing activities. The result might be because of the fact that every marketing company has become conscious of the competitive nature in every aspect of marketing world wide.

The study further revealed that marketing companies play remarkable roles in providing marketing information in Nigeria. They utilize Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) to inform consumers about available goods and services, linking their brands, with other people, places and brands; using Internet to communicate directly with customers, having face-to-face interactions with prospective purchasers and selecting effective communication channels for their marketing practices. This finding could be attributed to the recent changes in business and marketing practices as a result of globalization and technological advances. The finding is in line with Chukwurah (2009) who revealed that manufacturing companies in Nigeria face several challenges in carrying their marketing activities as a result of globalization and technological advancement. The reason behind this finding could be as a result of the necessity of information dissemination for marketing effectiveness. Consumers need to be well informed always.

The finding of the study also revealed that companies in Nigeria employ different strategies for effective marketing activities. These strategies are; provision of quality goods and services, creating customer value, satisfaction and loyalty, utilization of ICT, conducting marketing research and forecasting demands, tapping into global markets and adopting market development, market growth, market retention, market segmentation and market balancing strategies.

This finding could be due to the fact that companies are aware that it is inevitable that they witness environmental changes, unpredicted buyers attitudes and behaviours, increase in competition, and the need for new products, and so on. It is also as a result of the need for customer value and satisfaction. It therefore becomes very essential that certain marketing disaster strategies are adopted by companies to prevent marketing problems as a result of unpredicted changes and to provide the needs and wants of the consumers. The companies have greater role to play in this regard because to embark on these strategies, it requires provision of adequate resources in order to cope with the changes in business and marketing activities created by technological advances and globalization. The findings of some prominent studies on marketing were added. Also the main reasons behind the survey results for each section of questionnaire were included. Some other prominent studies on marketing were cited in the reference.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Most company staff used for the study seemed not to be receptive to the researchers because probably they thought that the study might be disadvantageous to them. Also lack of proper exposure and fewness of registered marketing companies in the area of study must have

affected the quality of their responses and the generalization made in this study. However, in spite of these, the result represents a high degree of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

Globalization and technological advances are increasingly influencing the companies marketing activities in Nigeria. It has brought about companies adopting innovative marketing practices.

Managers of companies have greater roles to play in order to be able to address the prevailing changes in business and marketing activities occasioned by globalization and technological advances. The modern trend in the development and improvement of marketing practices seem to have led to the idea of using Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) to provide marketing information, and applying adequate marketing strategies to prevent any unforeseen disaster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The companies should improve on their research functions for current marketing information.
2. Companies should see the provision of adequate human and material resources as a challenging role for effective marketing.
3. Financial institutions in Nigeria should assist companies by providing loans and grants for them to procure adequate technologies necessary for marketing activities
4. Training and retraining company managers in modern marketing management should be a priority of the companies to acquaint their managers with the global marketing practices and the use of modern technologies.

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