



New Perspectives for Managing Relationships through Psychological Marketing Orientations: Insights and Lessons from a New Psychological Contract.

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ABSTRACT

The exigencies of the situation and the increasing dynamics of managing today's business, and the realizations that today's customers are the source of competitive advantage, should compel marketers and firms to build bridges across oceans not walls, in order to dig and uncover hidden treasures, missed opportunities and latent wants. The quests to amass wealth and out-perform competitors have led most marketers to put their selfish interests ahead of customers'. This has created spatial gap between the marketing firm, its products and services on one hand and the customer, and his needs, on the other hand. In the new dispensations, marketers must act decisively to redeem their lost image. Over the years the integrity and reputations of most organizations have been hung in the balance due to shoddy and ineffective marketing practices, leading to sub-optimal performance, poor customer retention, and poor service delivery, and negative perception about their true identities. The existing marketing practices that defined relationships in terms of meeting the immediate needs of both marketers and customers based on pre-defined set of rules, have increasingly become inadequate and inconsequential in the emerging turbulent marketing climates. It has therefore become self-evident that the 21st century marketing firms must design strategies and practices that allow them to partner with customers by giving attention to the psychological aspect of the bargain. Evidently, this study portends to be the first of its kind to examine the psychological thrust of building and sustaining relationships with customers in a social contract exchange platform particularly within the context of Sub-Sahara Africa.

Key words: Managing; Relationships; Psychological Marketing; Orientations; Psychological Contract.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary society such as in Nigeria, forging and keeping relationships with customers, provides a guarantee for long-term business success. A lot has been said about building and improving relationships based on shared values, agreed norms, mutual consent, express or implied terms (Rob and Karen, 2000; Andreasen, 1995; Douglas, 2006; Alan and Andreasen, 2006; Kotler and Lee, 2008; Aliyu and Mahmood, 2014; Slater and Naver, 2000; Webster, Mahmood, and Rothwel 2014; Oyedipo, Idris and Aliu, 2012; Mineo, 2017; Guest, Conway, Briner, and Dickman, 1996).

Under an ideal climate devoid of ambiguities, these relationships may have translated to better customer service, increased job satisfaction, improved labor relations, sustained customer' satisfaction, better profits and higher productivity, etc. In their unrestrained drive to outreach rivals and gaining prominence, a lot of firms have employed different measures ranging from stability, defensive to one of aggressive, counter offensive, reactive and growth strategies. In a contract of employment, both the employer and the employee are bound together by certain conditions which are either explicit or implied. Depending on the nature of such contracts,

participants often act to honor agreements and desist from any procedural or deliberate breach that could inflict pains or could even undermine the substance of the contract in the first place. In this way any perceived infraction is often viewed as an apparent breach of due process and could even attract severe sanctions or award of damages of some sort. From the marketing perspective relationships are often driven by the need to enjoy mutual gains or a kind of intrinsic satisfaction that springs from group synergy, cohesion, reciprocity and trust. In the absence of clearly defined boundaries, there is still a need to honor agreements and keeping them even in their implicit and gentleman postures.

The above scenario in the view of the author, aptly reflects marketing management philosophy where marketers are challenged to consider the needs of the customers in making valuable offers and avoid practices that can erode confidence and trust. Never in the history of contemporary marketing practices has there been increasing need to build relationships beyond that which may be allowed in the explicit and clear terms to one of the vaguest, but mutually reinforcing and enduring one. As humans and customers, today's buyers desire autonomy, recognition, respect, and want to be trusted. The quest to gain competitive advantage, and becoming market leaders, couple with changing customers' needs and expectations, has challenged many organizations to re-brand their existing marketing tactics and strategies, geared toward building relationships that appeal to customers' psychological needs and personal aspirations.

It is no longer news that the basis for surviving in today's business is not just about discovering customers, but taking actions to keeping them and even delivery what may appear to be "unexpected" and to expect what may appear to be "unimaginable but impressive" results at least in the long-run. Like the saying of the elderly, "A person who uses an elephant as a snare in the hurting expedition may have as well thought of something of higher superior value in anticipation". Marketers must look beyond superficial or shadow motives to reading the minds and hearts of customers including their hidden instincts and intentions. The dynamic nature of the customers and the fact that they have conscience may mean that they are likely to behave positively and expectedly so, to offers that surpass their imagination. Marketers must create and deliver needs to close market gaps and reinforce relationships, and thus mounting roadblocks that cannot be undone by any rival or new entrant.

As expected, performing the unexpected by way of providing more than valuable offer, may not go well without making some sacrifices or compromises. It may require commitment of resources, time, and effort to nurture and sustain this unusual psychological re-unification. Critics may even argue that this kind of unsolicited, implicit re-marriage could itself be self-destructive and a sure gateway to dwindling profits and slow growth. This aptly reflects the marketing practice situations among most Africa countries, where the prime target has been to maximize present relationships but losing sight of the priceless reward that spring from strengthening and sustaining enduring and beneficial future relationships. It has become self-evident that the inability to imbibe the philosophy of psychological contract in forging relationships between the marketing firms and the customers, has been the major cause of most business failures. Among the existing literatures in this area, none has addressed marketing phenomenon in such a significant detail as to present psychological marketing an important force to reckon with in the contemporary society. Some skeletal works in this area merely reflected the opinions of certain writers outside Africa, which may have ignored the realities in the Tran-Sahara Africa, including Nigeria. Besides, the writer is not aware of any in-depth work done in this area. Related works done in this area, (though not exhaustive) were either in pure marketing or human resource psychological contract. Given the above realities, it

has become expedient to adapt psychological marketing philosophy and strategy to the working of marketing firms operating in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

This study thus seeks to critically examine the relationship between psychological marketing and improving servicing delivery capabilities of marketing firms in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The writer intends to achieve this objective with the following specific objectives in focus: First, to investigate how psychological marketing can lead to image building among firms in Sub-Saharan Africa; second, to show how psychological marketing can help marketers and firms to earn trust and confidence of customers; third, to establish how competitive advantage can result from psychological marketing practice in place; and to assess how psychological marketing can add to firms' competitiveness globally. Other related objectives the study seeks to address are to: explore how psychological marketing can help to improve performance at the bottom line, meeting stakeholders' expectations and sustaining enabling marketing climate, among others.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concepts Clarifications and Discussions.

At the on-set, attempt is made to clarify some buzzwords that constitute the title of the study, in order to set our perspectives a-right. Psychological marketing to the author, is coined from two generic terms, namely psychological and marketing, and means relationships built on a set of core beliefs, promises and expectations, and represents unwritten or implicit part of a contract or relationships, and that could potentially enhance both the market worth of a firm and building confidence and trust of customers in a social exchange marketing platform. By its nature, psychological marketing can assume other names such as pre-emptive marketing, marketing by intentions, augmented marketing, mindset marketing or marketing by surprise. The relationship is reciprocal and expected to serve the best interest of both parties in the long-run. In its very subtle form, the relationship is based on belief and assumptions of what both parties ought to and should do in fulfilling their obligations to each other. At its utmost, relationships are often triggered by parties taking a firm stance to deliver a kind of undeserved package or benefit in appreciation for or anticipation of excellence but unsolicited service that add value to people or customers. Psychological marketing appeals to emotions, feelings, desires, minds and motives. These feelings, though evidently un-articulated, could be powerfully re-enforcing if they are reactivated through diligent marketing efforts. Psychological marketing outcomes can also be obtained at no tangible cost to the firm, since it is based on mutual understanding and trust. Due to its qualitative nature, it may be difficult to assess the value of psychological marketing in monetary terms. Increased level of loyalty, the degree of product patronage, profit improvement, increased level of satisfaction, good public image, increased market shares, reduced product defects/rejection, may provide adequate measures to assess the value of psychological marketing outcomes.

Marketing according to Kumar and Meenakshi (2013), is the process of finding out customer needs and serving those needs profitably. The essence of marketing is to provide desired value to customers. Marketing involve two main entities – the marketer looking for needs to satisfy with a view to earning some returns or profits, and the customer at the other end of continuum (at the receiving end), who may have needs to satisfy perhaps in a socially desirable way. Both parties must act in a manner that allows for this symbiotic relationship to thrive. What is known as marketing today has evolved through many stages. The production orientation stage is geared toward improving the production efficiency and capacity. The central assumption underpinning this stage is that marketing organizations should design systems aiming at improving the capacity of the operations to produce on a mass scale to achieve high production efficiency in cost, profit, sales, distribution, and volume. The selling concept, (the second phase in the marketing transition), challenges organizations to adopt any available marketing tools to

encourage higher patronage of firm's products. The starting point is the product but not necessarily the customer. Next the seller employs available aggressive means such as the use of marketing promotion tools to stimulate purchase or consumption. The major bottleneck with this approach is giving undue attention to seller's needs but less on customers'. This notwithstanding, the selling concept portends to be an ideal marketing strategy for firms experiencing hard sales, or wishing to penetrate certain segments in the markets. After passage of times, there was a need for further refinements at least with the increasingly dynamic marketing environments, and volatile customer group. This era witnessed the birth of the third "marketing concept" which is oriented towards customers and their needs. This evolving concept underscores the need to forge stronger ties with customers for social economic gains, perhaps by providing valuable offer and at the same time achieve relatively cost advantage. Marketers using this philosophy see customers as central to either staying long in the business or falling out due to lack of competitive will and moral backbone to exist. The orientation calls for a more integrated and cohesive approach to address issues relating to customers and their wants and also to incorporate same into mission statements, goals and objectives. The societal marketing concept focuses on the needs of three entities, namely – the organization and marketer, the customers and the society. The underlying assumption is that better results are most likely if marketers direct their efforts toward meeting the needs of the customers, and other stakeholders. The concept thus implies that marketers act in a socially responsible way in conducting their activities and in their drive to maximize profits.

The above analogies, while quite noteworthy, are mere assumptions and assumptions alone may not make for successful marketing. Granted, they may not have provided clear - cut guidelines to direct managerial actions and behavior. However, marketers can strive for excellence, if they base most of their decisions and actions on assumptions about people and the environments. Today's customers are complex so also is the underlying business environment. In the recent times, newer concepts such as relationship marketing, holistic marketing, and sustainable marketing have evolved.

There has been this age long belief that marketing facilitates exchange processes between the marketer and the customer and that once the needs of both parties have been met, marketing ceases to be a driving force. In this way, the urge to satisfy immediate needs tended to have watered down the long-term substance of marketing. These beliefs are also in tandem with some contemporary marketing organizations, which see no economic and moral justification to engage in activities and practices designed at spurring long-term results that are mutually reinforcing. But marketing in an ideal sense, should go beyond mere assumptions to purposeful and goal-directed action plans, which must start with understanding of and delivery of want satisfying goods and services, to building long-term relationships. This is even more demanding in today's marketing climate characterized by heightened competition, increased customers' expectations, cultural diversity, and emerging technology.

In the recent times and past, many firms have suffered one form of litigations or the other due to their lackadaisical and carelessness dispositions toward matters bordering on personal and public interests. This is even more worrisome with the increasing spate of intensifying competition, and diversified customer group. New technology and evolving government regulations have also added to the increasing dynamics and complexity of the present environments of marketing, thus putting added pressures on today's servicing organizations to rethink and redefine their existing marketing practices as gate-way to gaining competitive advantage in the industry.

The increasing awareness for better service, improved product quality, shared decision, and customer's autonomy, has challenged millennium organizations to cut the traditional boundaries of serving customers to that of more personalized, informal and strategic relationships that are sustainable. The existing marketing practices with all the tactics, strategies, and devices, are quite within the reach of and understanding of all marketers and consumers. What may be alien to today's customers and perhaps more powerfully reinforcing, could be concern for their psychological needs for acceptance, self-respect, trust, autonomy and citizenship.

The reality is that the anxieties of doing today's businesses, coupled with the increasing pressures to meet economic returns, have pushed marketers to engage in activities for improving the performance of the bottom line, while neglecting the mental and psychological needs of customers. This has created a marked lacuna between the customers' needs and firm's capacity to respond to, and filling the needs. This thus called for the new concept propounded by the author of this paper.

Psychological marketing orientations revolves around core marketing practices and underpinning philosophies, strategic re-thinking, social re-awakening, and new understandings, to enhance the value of psychological exchange contract between the marketer and customers for long-term mutual advantage.

Related Theories, Concepts and Principles in Psychological Marketing

IN This article, the author discusses some theories, concepts and principles, which are the cornerstones of psychological marketing. As expected, these theories and principles will provide additional insight and understanding to further enhance our appreciation of psychological marketing and optimizing the results thereof.

Sustainable marketing: The focus of sustainable marketing is on relationship between a buyer and a seller (Svensson, 2001). Furthermore, Gronroos (1989) argued that sustainable marketing revolves around customer relations and that the goals of each party are met through exchanges which in turn establish and maintain these relationships. The sustainable marketing concept, however, is broadened to include other relationships. The importance of taking into account all the members in the marketing channel (Svensson, 2001) and also the needs and wants of multiple stakeholders or publics (Lusch & Laczniak, 1987) are highlighted.

In this way, sustainable marketing can be thought of as a means to achieve long-term objectives (Turner & Spencer, 1997) and its often suggested consequence is profitability (Lusch & Laczniak, 1987; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). The application of the sustainable marketing philosophy is seen to lead to the enhancement of sales figures, new product success, product quality, market share, *esprit de corps* and overall business performance (Nakata & Sivakumar, 2001).

Green Marketing: Green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Green marketing advocates products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, innovative packaging, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other. An example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are environmental marketing and ecological marketing. Green, environmental and eco-marketing are part of the new marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing

marketing thinking and practice, but seeks to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective. In more detail, green, environmental and eco-marketing belong to the group of approaches which seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Relationship marketing: Relationship marketing was first defined as a form of marketing developed from direct response marketing campaigns which emphasizes customer retention and satisfaction, rather than a focus on sales transactions. It differs from other forms of marketing in that it recognizes the long term value of customer relationships and extends communication beyond intrusive advertising and sales promotional messages (Dawkins & Reichheld, 1990). With the growth of the internet and mobile platforms, relationship marketing has continued to evolve as technology opens more collaborative and social communication channels.

Socially Responsible Marketing: Socially responsible marketing is critical of excessive consumerism and environmental damages caused by corporations. It is based on the idea that market offerings must not be only profit-driven, but they must also reinforce social and ethical values for the benefit of citizens. The idea of socially responsible marketing is sometimes viewed as an extension of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Corporate Social Responsibility is promoted as a business model to help companies self-regulate, recognizing that their activities impact on assortment of stakeholders, including the general public (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is sometimes described in terms of a pyramid, starting with economic as its base, then legal, ethical and philanthropic actions at the top. It is in the last two layers of the CSR pyramid, ethical and philanthropic, that socially responsible marketing opportunities appear the greatest. Meeting the first two layers, economic and legal, are necessary for a business to thrive in order to engage in the latter two (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011).

Ethical marketing: Social responsible marketing and ethical marketing intertwine with one another. However ethical marketing transcends the former in the sense that ethical marketing questions the rightness or otherwise of behavior and action designed at expediting exchange processes. It lays corresponding obligations on both marketers and consumers on the need to uphold high moral values and sound ethics. It calls for developing a new mindset and understanding from both parties to further improve the quality of relationships for a long term benefits. That an action or behavior is socially desirable may not mean that it is ethically right. On the other hand, an action that is ethically right is very much likely to be socially desirable. Fairness, equity, moral rights, justice, is the bane of ethical marketing which should guide and direct the behavior and actions of marketers and customers, in enforcing the ideals of psychological marketing.

Social Marketing: Andreasen (2006) defines social marketing as the application of proven concepts and techniques drawn from the conventional sectors to promote changes in diverse socially important behavior such as drug use, AIDS awareness, smoking, sexual behavior, and gender sensitization. Social marketing theory blends ideas from behavioral theory, psychology, and marketing science.

Action Plans to Promoting Psychological Marketing Orientations

The following checklists reflect the perspectives of the author on ways to promoting psychological marketing orientation.

1. Build commitment and trust through transparency and open-mindedness. Customers want assurance that marketers are sincere to promises made and must act to fulfill them without any precondition.
2. Marketers must be obsessed with basic motivation theories and judiciously apply them, bearing in mind differences in customers' needs and their situational contexts. To maximize their potential benefits, effective use must be made of intangible motivation practices.
3. Build marketing programs around core ethics. Marketers must act to preserve the value system of the society. They also have corresponding obligations to provide guarantee for the safety of lives of people and general well-being in their quest to maximize profits.
4. Providing mentoring and counseling assistance to deserving customers on product usage, personal safety, and other perennial matters. This may also involve rendering spiritual counseling as may be necessary.
5. Providing a platform for social networking to promote cross fertilization of ideas and information sharing. The forum should facilitate learning and acquisition of marketing-oriented skills and trainings bordering on product awareness, financial management, business plans, product performance, business opportunities, and other challenges.
6. Provide added value service to your customers at personal expense even though it may not be economically feasible at present.
7. Be truthful and honest to your clients always and desist from behaviors and practices that could damage age-long relationships. Occasionally, it may be tactful to disclose some trade secrets to your clients without any prejudice attached to it.
8. Provide other valuable services to your customers such as off-setting their hospital bills, providing free medical cares and lunch, rendering free transport services, and inviting them to some forms of recreations at your own expense.
9. Treat your customers the same way you desire to be treated. Let them feel that they are loved, trusted and needed. Accommodate their errors and always be willing to extend an olive branch. Try to dwell more on their positive sides and less on their negative sides.
10. Forge a strong alliance with the consumers and always respect their opinions on issues affecting product decisions, channel selections, promotion strategies, and pricing. While you may retain authority for final decision in these areas, it is hoped that the views and interests of customers will also be respected.
11. Maintain a stock pile of all your customers and their contact numbers, making it a tradition to always reach them and asking about their welfare or providing other support services as may be required.
12. Don't brag; always maintain peace with your customers and not antagonizing them. Let them see your store as a second home, after the day's stress and perhaps hostilities coming from families and acquaintances.
13. Never turn your business into sex factory, rather, maintain high moral standard on fidelity matters, and incorporate same in the statement of missions, visions, corporate purpose and the organizational culture.
14. Cultivate the mindset and mentality of servant leadership and always willing to defend and serve your customers even in the most unpleasant circumstances.
15. Use clues, questions and other IQs to read your customers minds, so as to uncover hidden motives and emotions and using these as starting points to build and develop relationships.
16. Adopt the philosophy of green marketing by instituting policies and programs that promotes environmental friendly climates that provide guarantee for healthier living and safe habitation.

17. Practice white marketing by shunning any shoddy practice that could be injurious to the customer. White marketing to me, is marketing without blemish. It is a clean form of marketing that does not allow for illicit or questionable behavior but stresses the importance of wholesome marketing practices that are potentially beneficial. Marketers above all must be integrity keepers, not men of double tongues.
18. Be adaptive. Treat each customer as an individual who may require a unique and personalized service. Tailor your marketing offers to meeting the varying needs of the customers by taking cognizance of differences in their needs, tastes and motives, social and psychological makeups.
19. Shun unethical practices. Unwary marketing practices such as pressured pricing, internet fraud, deceptive advertising, false representation, maliciousness, fake and unsafe products, can do more harms than good. The fact that some of the above practices may not be bad in the eyes of law does not mean that they should be encouraged if there are sharp manifestations of both ethical and moral breach.

Customer's Actions to Promote Psychological Marketing

The dividends of psychological marketing are better maximized through the combined effort of the marketer and the customer. In the preceding section, the author highlighted marketing actions and practices to promote psychological marketing. Besides marketers, it is also evident that, customers can act or behave in a manner that can make psychological marketing to thrive in the following ways:

1. Be a trusted and confident ally. Never betray a confidence reposed on you by your firm with whom you are having dealing with. Do not sell trade secret or having a form of divided loyalty. Be loyal and committed to deals both in the favorable and unfavorable times.
2. Practice true courtesy by always willing to defend the cause of the organization with whom you are dealing. Disseminate information that can uplift the image of the organization and publicize this to the outside world.
3. Be willing to open up if there is any cause for complain about aspects of the firm's operation that are not too satisfactory. As a matter of policy though, this disclosure must not be made known to the third party.
4. Have appreciative heart by reciprocating any act of kindness done in an unusual way though not solicited for but fulfill a special need. .
5. Do not dwell only on the negative side of the transaction, but highlight more on the positive side. A one-time transaction that is perceived poorly should not erode prior deals with exceedingly positive consequences.
6. Imbibe the culture of altruism in building and forging relationships with your dealer, by always willing to make sacrifice and identify with the firm with whom you are dealing. This may be at a greater cost to you at present but remain un-bulged and forge ahead in view of future reward.
7. Avoid actions and demeanor that can damage relationships such as stealing and other fraudulent practices. Stealing and lying can kill trust and confidence, including the organization itself.
8. Keep agreement and fulfill promises made during the course of business. If payments for goods or services are to be made in future date, keep to them, otherwise communicate the reason to your dealer/client.
9. Avoid all forms of irrational and unethical behavior that can damp the corporate image of the firm with whom you are dealing. Questionable practices such as cheating, misrepresentation, over-pricing, bickering, are antinodes of failures and poor marketing.

10. Look for opportunities to provide creative and constructive ideas that can help position your firm in the industry.
11. Surrender your personal interest for the overall group interest by looking what the present relationships can offer to the long-run mutual interests of all concerns.
12. Be a good ambassador by learning and imbibing the tenets of sound marketing and allow this to shape your view of the firm, its culture, norms, and corporate identity and reflect same in the way you treat others.
13. Honor and fulfill promises made in the course of business transaction and never allow these to sever already-established relationships. Guard against any form of divided loyalty.

Issues and Challenges to enforcing the ideals of Psychological Marketing in Contemporary Organizations

Psychological marketing though portends to be a life-saving jacket for both low-performing and high-performing organizations, is not without some daunting challenges that could undermine its potential relevance. In the view of the author, the challenges can take any of the following dimensions:

1. Measurement problem. Unlike other forms of social exchange, psychological marketing by its nature is not amenable to quantitative measurement and its outcomes may not be easily discernible to the concerned parties. The best estimates are often judgmental and assumption about what the participants expect of each another.
2. Enforcement problem. Just as psychological contract breaches cannot be easily enforced in the court of law, actions, intentions, and attitudes that produce psychological marketing cannot be litigated upon in the court of law, should there be any perceived or apparent breach. Lack of sound legal basis to enforce psychological marketing principles tends to have reduced its potential relevance as there are no accountabilities and commitment attached.
3. Unreal time factors and economic pressures to amass wealth can pose a serious impediment to the smooth process of enforcing psychological marketing principles with a view to maximizing its potential benefit. In their unbridle quest to meet or out-perform their competitors, marketers are often tempted to compromise core moral values that may jeopardize their long term survival.
4. Trust and distrust are too side swords that could threaten the working of psychological marketing in practice. Mistrust and betrayal can erode confidence and in turn, can undermine the value people attach to relationships. In the absence of firm legal platform for agreement, trust and commitment are essential ingredients to synergize and re-validate the relationships. In reality though, this is far from being the case among business firms in Sub-Sahara Africa.
5. An ideal psychological marketing requires enabling environments and workable infrastructures for its workability. Even with good intentions, psychological marketing may lose its potential importance in the absence of supporting infrastructures and operational frameworks for its smooth operations. As expected, psychological marketing may not yield immediate payoffs, except costs and risks to the enforcer. An enabling and supportive environment is crucial to drive motivation and commitment to the deal.
6. Intentions and capacity to act. Psychological marketing requires that marketers rise above the level playing ground to providing excelling and far-reaching services that are value laden. The implication is that marketers have to bear additional cost to provide these augmented services.
7. Human factors. The tendency not to take seriously promises or agreements not springing from sound legal platform is typical of an average human and could severely

negate the force of psychological marketing contract.

8. The novel nature of this new contract. African marketers and customers are used to the rudiments of marketing in its traditional terms. The new marketing relationships being proposed is novel and may require special skills and new mindsets to enforce it so as to maximize the potential dividends.

The Theoretical Framework of Psychological Marketing Contract.

The psychological contract and the commitment and trust theories are the main thrusts upon which the study rests.

Psychological Contract: According to Armstrong (2013), the psychological contract expresses the combination of beliefs held by individuals and his or her employer about what they expect of one another. As defined by Schein (1965), the notion of psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that group. A psychological contract developed in contemporary research by a renowned scholar Rousseau (1995), who described the concept representing the mutual beliefs, perceptions, and informal obligations between an employer and an employee. Psychological contract, according to him, is distinguishable from the formal written contract of employment which, for the most part, only identifies mutual duties and responsibilities in a generalized form.

The concept of psychological contract was first introduced by Argyris (1960). The philosophical basis for psychological contract is summarized thus *“Since the foremen realize the employees in this system will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesized to evolve between the employees and the foremen who might be called “the psychological work contract”*. According to him, the employees will maintain the high production, low grievances, etc. ..., if the foremen guarantee and respect the norms of the employee informal culture.

Psychological contracts are formed by beliefs about exchange agreements and may arise in a large variety of situations, not necessarily between employer and employee (Coyle-shapiro, Jacqueline, and Parzefall (2008). Multiple scholars define the psychological contract as a perceived exchange of agreement between an individual and another party (Rousseau, 1989). It can thus be inferred that the psychological contract is a type of social exchange relationship that provides for meeting the mutual social needs of individuals under a social exchange platform. The implicit nature of psychological contract makes it difficult to define, although there is some general consensus on its nature. This consensus identifies psychological contract as “promising, implicit, reciprocal, perceptual and based on expectations”.

Within organizations, as Katz and Kaln (1966) pointed out, every role is basically a set of behavioral expectations. These expectations are often implicit, not defined in the employment contract. Yet by their nature, employees generally behave in ways they expect will produce positive outcomes. Oftentimes, employees may not know in clear terms what their expectations are. The significance of psychological contract was well illustrated by Sims (1994) when he wrote: “A balanced psychological is necessary for a continuing, harmonious relationship between the employees and the organization. Although psychological contract lacks strong legal basis for its enforcement, its violation can signal to the participants that the parties no longer share a common set of values or goals.

From the employees' side, a typical psychological contract should affect how they are affected in terms of fairness, equity and consistency, security of employment, scope to demonstrate competence, career expectations and opportunity to develop skills, trust in management of the organization to keep their promises, and safe working environment. On the other hand, through psychological contract, employer/organization elicits competence, effort, compliance, commitment and loyalty from its employees (Guest, 1996). Giving the above as a background, Guest (1996) has suggested a model for psychological contract to include such operative measures as fairness, trust, and the extent to which the explicit deal or contract is perceived to be delivered.

Trust and Commitment Theory: The works of the writers such as Morgan and Hunt (1994) had underscored the importance of trust and commitment as mediating variables to link buyers to sellers. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), customer commitment to the vendor has been found to mediate the effects of numbers of variables such as quality, shared values, communication and trust on a number of consumer behavioral intentions, including customer retention, advocacy, and acquiescence. Trust according to Morgan and Hunt (1994), serves as a governance mechanism that limits opportunistic activities as well as facilitating mechanism for developing commitment. Commitment includes the desire to continue the relationship, meaning a kind of long-term orientation of a party toward another.

The Appropriateness of the Theories to the study.

The twin theories of the psychological contract and trust and commitment, are very much appropriate for the study. Implicit in the theories is the value of trust, commitment, faith, and waiting attitude in creating and forging relationships. Since psychological marketing contract is based on un-written set of assumptions, expectations and beliefs about the reciprocal roles of both the marketer and the customer in the social exchange platform, it becomes glaring that trust and commitment, perseverance, alongside with self-sacrifice, are deciding factors to re-invigorate the relationships. On the other hand, betrayals, distrust, dishonesty, greed, are easy gateway to damaged relationships, misplaced confidence, and poor judgment. More than ever before, marketers are increasingly challenged to eschew practices that could damage already established relationships. The saying that one's good turn deserves another has remained a dominant slogan to shaping marketing behavior and actions.

RESULTS

Literatures on psychological marketing contract are either scanty or non-existent. From available records, the writer is not aware of any prior work on psychological marketing contract at the time of this study. However, there were instances of skeletal works done in the related areas such as social marketing, relationship marketing, psychological contract, psychology and marketing, green marketing and marketing orientations, reflecting mostly the philosophies and ideologies of the older concepts of marketing. Some of the works, apart from addressing general issues, were carried out outside the African context, that are far from addressing the local realities of forging relationships between marketers and customers. Marketing practices within the sub-Sahara Africa are bedeviled with environment of uncertainties, unstable political climate, unhealthy competitions, social and industrial unrest, fraud, greed and deceit. Participants have become egocentric both in their outlooks and ways of live. In the recent times, a lot of people are craving after their personal aggrandizement, thinking only in terms of themselves and less on others.. Marketing decisions are made at the will and caprices of marketing institutions, with little or no inputs from the consumers. By taking the markets and customers for granted, many firms have returned to their early grave, due to lack of competitive and moral wills to strive.

The existing infrastructures are either grossly inadequate or non-existent. Neither are the institutional and legal frameworks conducive for sound marketing practice. Overwhelmed by the above bottlenecks, many marketers have failed woefully to properly define the needs of their customers within the backdrops of established missions, goals and objectives.

In the contemporary society such as ours, successful marketing practice would require effective structures rooted in sound ethics and virile leadership. In reality, the reverse is often the case, particularly in developing Sub-Sahara Africa. Granted, some countries including Nigeria have made earnest efforts to sustain workable structures and other interventional programmes designed at improving healthier relationships between marketers and consumers. That climate as expected should strengthen motivation to provide value-added service beyond that which may be possible by the traditional marketing practice. In the recent times, the Federal Government under the leadership of President Buhari has initiated people-oriented programmes to stern the tide of poverty, corruption, crime and other indecent behaviors among Nigerians. Part of the measures included sanitizing the marketing sector of the Nigerian economy, thus guiding against shoddy practices, and restoring the dignity of man. Anticipations are high among Nigerian for the full realization of the on-going developmental and change agenda of the Federal government. This notwithstanding, the darkened air of uncertainties and anxieties that crowded these change interventions, could have signaled the need for a more proactive and action-oriented approach to customize their gains after all.

As it is true for all humans, an average customer values offer that makes special appeal, and comes particularly when it is least deserved. Evidently, customers are very much likely to shift their loyalty to marketing firms that show consideration for their self-worth, self-confidence, and self-dignity. There are also proven facts that most marketing firms lack the skills, moral wills, and motivations to enforce the new relationship, perhaps due to its novel nature. Just like any other concept, marketers as well as individuals require congenial climate to learn the new concept and to know how it works.

Even with the above identified constraints, there are strong reasons to believe that the new contract has the capacity to bridge already existing lacuna between the marketing firms and customers, if carried out in an ideal climate favorable for it. Indications are also strong that under the atmosphere of trust and confidence, the new re-union will wax stronger in fostering synergies and closer tie between marketing firms and the people.

CONCLUSION

Hardly can any firm exist without a definite purpose and distinctive competencies it wishes to explore in order to strengthen its stronghold that makes it possible for it to enjoy competitive advantage and gaining prominence in the industry. In the recent times, many firms and groups have come to realize the strategic role of customers in driving the force and vehicle of change and meeting preset targets. The existing practices among marketing firms that defined relationships basically in terms of rigid set of rules and doctrines, have become unfashionable in the contemporary world society such as ours. Forward looking organizations must act decisively to gain competitive advantage through value delivery offering. They must reach emotions, feelings and motives. They must break the age-long barriers between their organizations and the target market by providing something of far superior value than can be delivered by rivals. From all practical purpose and intent, it has become glaring that both marketers and consumers, included other stakeholders must built trust and commitment into relationships and be willing to make sacrifices for the mutual benefits of all concerned. The

opposite is also true for firms and individuals that may remain adamant or passive, as they are very much vulnerable to turbulent change and threats of summary extinction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The marketing firms operating in the Sub-Sahara Africa must adopt the philosophy of psychological contract in order to remain competitive in the 'local industries and global world.
2. To build commitment and trust, marketing firms must desist from unholy acts capable of killing motivation and confidence in the deal.
3. Business organizations as well as marketing firms must strive to add value to product and service delivery by moving beyond the traditional edifice of transaction exchange to building and maintaining relationships with customers.
4. Marketers must be proactive and forward looking by having a long term view of relationships that can produce mutual gains rather than maintaining a short-term view with all the attendant consequences.
5. Relationships built around the nature of humans, their emotions, beliefs and expectations (psychological) are most likely to thrive better than those based on fixed and formalized terms (traditional). While one may not rule out the existing relationships based on some mutual agreements, it is recommended that optimal results are most assured if marketing firms maintain a balanced view of both types of relationships.
6. As the landscape of doing business is shifting swiftly from organization or sellers' centered marketing to customers or people's focused marketing, the millennium organizations and individual firms are urged to employ inward looking approach to their marketing practices to accommodate the psychological needs of people in a way to forging strategic partnership with them.
7. For its enforceability and potential practical results, the new deal may require undiluted commitment from the parties and climates devoid of questionable and unethical practices.
8. The existing governmental authorities and other stakeholders should engender a climate that could stimulate actions and behavior that address people's emotional and mental needs through enabling infrastructures and interventional programmes.
9. Need to forge strategic integration with the customers based on shared values, shared visions, and a common sense of identity.
10. In marketing their products, services and ideas to people, the relevant governments and other stakeholders must imbibe the culture and tenets of psychological marketing contract and integrate same into mission definition, policies, and people-oriented programmes.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

This study has made contributions to knowledge in the following ways:

1. The existing studies particularly from Sub-Sahara Africa, could not address the psychological dimensions of relationships between marketers and consumers in such significant details. The study extrapolates beyond the rudiments of establishing relationships in their natural patterns to forging group synergy built on trust and fairness.
2. The study has established that by adapting the philosophy and ideologies of the new psychological contract to influence marketing decisions and practices, organizations and individual firms are better positioned to gain competitive advantage in the industry. The study has thus added to the existing management literatures on managing relationships.

3. The study prescribed shared accountability between the marketer and the consumer on the task of creating and maintaining relationships for mutual advantage.
4. The paper has stressed the need among marketers and firms to reflect human factors in formulating their marketing plans and policies by thinking more in terms of customers' wellbeing than personal interests and profits.
5. The ultimate test of marketing superiority is how much value one can add to product and service offer. This can only be achieved with distinctly designed marketing efforts that make special appeal to consumers more than what other competitors can afford. In the new era there are no other better ways marketers can add value to products than addressing the psychological and mental needs of customers.

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