

## APPLICATION OF MARKETING MIX IN RE-POSITIONING ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Marketing performs the role of bridging gaps between producers of goods and services and potential consumer. Marketing information serves as great instrument in repositioning organization's operations. The paper examines the application of marketing mix in the repositioning of Adult and Non-formal Education to meet the global trend of sustainability. The paper presents the marketing mix (price, product, promotion and place) as the wheels upon which Adult and Non-formal Education could ride to greater height. The paper also highlighted the importance of Adult and Non-formal Education in nation building and maintains that these potentials are not fully tapped because of the way the public, students, practitioners and the government perceives Adult and Non-formal Education. The paper concludes that given adequate involvement of government at all levels to Adult and Non-formal Education and the adoption of the marketing strategies presented in this paper, the dream of making Adult and Non-formal Education relevant will be achieved.*

**KEYWORDS:** Adult Education' Application, Marketing Mix, Re-Positioning.

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### INTRODUCTION

Adult education as an educational system in Nigeria has been perceived by many in diverse ways. The difficulty in describing the discipline is adversely affecting its importance and acceptability. Consequently, the discipline is disregarded by the government, professionals in other fields, practitioners in the field and the general public.

Despite these views, adult education according to Omolewa (1981) is "something people need and want as long as they are alive regardless of the amount of their previous education. This definition exposes the importance of adult education to nation building, and so deserves special attention in our educational system. Given the various forms of adult education which according to Hanachor and Olumati (2014) includes; basic literacy, post literacy, functional literacy, extra moral studies, remedial education, in service training trade union education, vocational education, leisure education, apprenticeship education, family life education, population education, peace education, citizenship education, environmental education etc. In realization of the importance of Adult and Non-formal education to national development, the National commission for mass literacy, Adult and Non-formal education was set up with the following mandates according to national policy on education (2014:27):

- i. The co-operation of mass literacy, Adult and Non-formal education programmes nationwide.
- ii. Ensure uniform standard and quality control nationwide.
- iii. Liaise with national, non-governmental organizations and corporation bodies for the implementation of mass literacy programmes;

- iv. Train the required manpower for state agencies.
- v. Develop curricular and didactic materials for mass literacy and adult and non-formal education.
- vi. Provide a nationally recognized basic education certificate.

The questions that call to mind is, to what extent are this policy statements implemented or operational in the states. It is sad to note that Adult and non-formal education practice in Nigeria has not been given the attention it requires and its place relegated to the background even when its usefulness to national development has been acknowledged.

Despite the efforts of the founding fathers of the discipline, the problems facing the discipline in Nigeria have been persistent. The studies of Akinpelu (2002), and Fasokun (2005) in Ihejirika (2012) reveals that lack of funds, inadequate facilities, lack of an organized body, motivation, lack of awareness, legislation professionalism are major challenges of the discipline.

It could be recalled that the Federal, state and local governments in Nigeria have been jointly charged with the responsibility of funding adult and non-formal education in the ratio of FG 15% State 15% and LGA 70% as contained in the blueprint and action plan for mass literacy by the year 2000. If this was not adequately carry out when the economy was better, is now that they would do it. This shows the level of neglect the government show on the discipline. The blueprint also carries the recommendation of the establishment of the department of Adult and Non-formal education in all universities. Today, how many universities have complied, or implemented the recommendation as contained in the blue print.

It is against this background that this paper is set to reposition Adult and Non-formal Education for greater relevance through the application of marketing mix.

### **Concept of Adult Education.**

Generally, education is accepted as the bedrock of development, specifically the education directed towards the operational sector (adults) of every economy. Since adults form almost 90% of the nation's work force, any nation that desires rapid development socially, technologically, economically and politically, but neglects the development or education of its adult population, will find it difficult to achieve their desire. The education of adults is for immediate use, hence very functional. The education of adults is used to solve immediate problems in the society. Adult education is synonymous with development of knowledge, skill, values, competence and ability needed for effective performance of various social and economic roles in the society. Houle, in Ihejirika (2012) presented adult education as

a process by which men and women (alone in group), or institutional setting

Seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, knowledge or sensitivities or it is any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways.

Adult education therefore need be an integral part of any country educational system. Adult education provides programmes for the adjustment of adults in the society through such

programms as: Vocational education, extramural studies, trade union education, in-service training, women education, extension education, long life education, peace education, citizenship education, environmental education, family life education, population education etc. All these and many more are provided through adult education for to development of men and women in the society for both their individual benefit and their contribution to national development.

Despite the roles and contributions of adult education to nation building, many are still yet to understand its usefulness. The government at all levels, by their attitude, wear an ignorant face to the potentials of adult education to nation building. Adult education practitioners have rested enough. This paper is therefore a call to arise from our glossary state to make both the public, the government and non-governmental agencies know that so much stands to gain from adult and non-formal education.

### **Concept of Marketing**

The aim of marketing is to create value for customers or consumers and capture value in return. According to Philip and Gary (2008), marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need through creating and exchanging values with others. There is a saying, that if you did not say I am here, nobody will know you are there.

Adult education as a discipline had been hiding in the crowd of disciplines. It is time for practitioners to market the discipline for grater relevance. The question is how can this be achieved. This paper advocates for the application of marketing mix to achieve this goal.

**Operation of marketing mix:** Marketing mix is a set of strategies and activities that are concerned with production, price, promotion and place. The marketing mix is also referred to as the Ps of marketing, which also is called elements. These four elements of marketing are grouped into one set because they always work effectively in integration.

**Product:** One of the four Ps in marking mix is production. Most people had always misconceived the word product to only mean or refer to the physical or manufactured item. The word product also refers to services, ideas and the benefits derived from the issues, relationship or interaction with something. Product in this context would refer to the numerous intangible benefits offered by the programmes and activities of adult and non-formal education. Our products in terms of manpower have stood the of time in the pool of products from other disciplines. A contemporary example is the overall best graduating student in 2015 convocation of the University of Port Harcourt, was a student of the department of Adult and Non-formal Education. Others in their fields of endeavour have also displayed some ability and competence that should make gainsayers believe that the discipline of adult education is needed living up to expectation if not more. It is therefore the task before the practitioners to document package and showcase this product for the public to see, just as the physical products or manufactured goods are packaged and displayed for admiration by the consumers.

**Price:** price refers to the cost paid by a consumer or customer for the goods or services. In marketing, price is always determined in monetary terms or value. The issue of pricing is really a bad one, due to the economic situation of the country. Apart from adult educators in government establishments, those in literacy centres are rendering their services for almost nothing in return. Even the little agreed upon do not still come regularly. In any case,

practitioners and professional should overcome the temptation of giving their service without consideration.

Practitioners should seek for collaboration with both local and interventional agencies and NGOs where their service will be recognized and rewarded adequately.

**Promotion:** promotion is often taken to mean advertising by some people, though advertising is an aspect of promotion. Promotion can be defined as the way and manner the producer communicates with consumers to inform, persuade and remind them about the features and benefits of their products.

Promotion covers a chain of interrelated activities designed to attract, stimulate, interest and awareness of consumers. Promotional activities are sometimes combined into a promotional strategy. A promotional strategy is a plan aimed at employing the four elements of promotion mix: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations for effectiveness.

### **Repositioning strategies using promotion mix.**

The four elements of promotion stated above if used would effectively reposition adult education discipline. The elements would be examined one after the other.

**Advertising:** According to Okwandu and Ekerete (2003) advertising is informing or stimulating the market about the existence of certain products and services. From all indications the discipline of adult education is as old as some of the disciplines making names in our society today (e.g. Law, engineering, Accounting etc). The reasons why these other disciplines have moved to the level they are today is because of the publicity given to them by both institutions and individuals involved in them.

People could be stimulated about adult education through organizing radio programmes, press releases, magazines, television and internet. Programmes could be mounted on radio or television on a monthly basis where contemporary issues are discussed. This will make the public be aware of the discipline.

Relevant agencies could be consulted and collaborations sought for programmes that will make the activities of the discipline to be given wider publicity. Things like competitions on certain areas, prizes for best performing students and even the award of scholarship. All these programmes and activities will bring the discipline closer to the public and thereby create value and stimulate interest.

Programmes, such as induction of new students or graduations or send-offs should not be student concern only. These ceremonies could be used as a means of advertising the discipline to the public. Relevant agencies at the local or state levels could be invited and press men and radio houses made to cover these programmes.

In the views of Okwandu and Ekerete (2003) this will create awareness in the minds of the public and the more popular the discipline the more relevant. According to Aaron (2008) promotion in form of advertisement produces seven graduating effects. The consumers who are unaware of a particular product are made aware, from then, become informed, attracted, pooled to become inclined and convinced before actual consumption.

This could effectively apply to adult education discipline. Through effective publicity and persuasion, those unaware of adult education discipline will become aware and informed of the

potential of adult and non-formal education. Been informed, they will be attracted, inclined and convinced about the importance of the discipline and even decide to identify with it.

**Personal selling:** The next element in the promoting mix is personal selling, personal selling is the act of persuading prospective consumers to buy a product or service. Robert Louis Stevenson in Philip and Gary (2008) noted that “every one lives by selling something” companies, institution or organizations, one way or the other are involved in selling. Colleges or institutions use programmes or activities such as inter-house sport or matriculation ceremonies, to market their institutions to prospective new students. The discipline of adult education could also employ these strategies. Personal selling involves one to one communication in a way that make the contrary person to fill there is much to benefit from the person selling himself or institution. This is where most of our students in the discipline have failed.

In some of our institution it is common to find students of adult education telling fellow students they belong to their teaching subject options as against mentioning adult education. Those in adult education economics option, will rather choose to say that they are in department of economics or political sciences. They are not bold to market the discipline to their fellow student.

**Public relation:** The next promotion mix relevant to this paper is public relations. Public relations according to the British Institute of public relations, in Okwandu and Ekerete (2003) is a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public. In the views of Offonry (1985) in Okwandu and Ekerete (2003) public relations creates goodwill for organizations and its products and services or ideas with groups of people which can affect its present and future welfare. Public relation is indeed an important strategy which if effectively used would reposition adult and non-formal education. Practitioners should endeavour to create goodwill with government and non governmental agencies both local and international and the public, as this will increase the chances of collaborations and sponsorship.

### **The Way forward**

The following measures if put in place will move the discipline of adult and non-formal education to a greater height

- 1 Practitioners of adult and non-formal education beginning from the students should build positive self esteem in themselves.
- 2 Practitioners at all levels, individually and collectively, should market adult and non-formal education to non practitioners.
- 3 Programmes such as inductions and graduation ceremonies should be used as means or channels of advertising the discipline for greater relevance.
- 4 People with outstanding achievements should be documented, publicized and celebrated.
- 5 Building of goodwill both locally and internationally should be our priority in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- 6 Activities and programmes of the discipline should be publicized through the media (radio, television and press).

## CONCLUSION

Have presented all marketing strategies which aids new products to penetrate the market and make name, this paper believes that if all these strategies are put into use, the discipline of adults education, like other disciplines will get to enviable position in the nation and beyond.

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