

Importance of Marketing Education Courses as Perceived by Students and Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study focused on the importance of marketing education courses for career preparation and job advancement in a global economy. The rapid advancement of the information age and increase in market size are some of the changes that have significant impact in the marketing profession. The primary purpose of the study was to determine the importance of marketing education in a global economy. Two research questions guided the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 340 respondents comprising 50 lecturers, and 290 students in the three universities in Enugu State. Data were analysed using mean. The findings of the study revealed that students are generally positive about the marketing courses as these course, are instrumental for career preparation and job advancement. It was recommended that marketing education should be made compulsory as a course that prepares students, for long life career and job advancement.

Key words: Marketing Education, Career Preparation and Job Advancement.

1.1 Introduction

Marketing is seen from different perspectives, ranging from customer-need identification and satisfaction, movement of goods and services to dimensions of contributions to well-being of the society and the final consumer. Kotler and Keller (2006), defined marketing as a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and services of value with others. Also, Marketing is seen as the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have values for customers, clients, partners and society at large (AMA, 2008). Marketing is inferred to be a performance of activity that directs the flow of products, services and ideas from producers to consumers at the right time, price, and place and with the right communication. Marketing is an organisational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. Thus, consumers and producers should be exposed to the knowledge of marketing education.

Marketing education is a programme designed to teach marketing concepts, skills and underlying business foundations required for the understanding and development of marketing (Adornato, 2009). Marketing education gives students the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that will enable the students to progress through their courses and use the personalized study plan activities to achieve success in the classroom, workplace and become adult consumers. It prepares students for long life career opportunity after the school education in specialized positions in the organizations. Therefore, marketing in schools is not just about selling the product and service but it is about identifying the nature of what is required by the clients and then ensuring that the school gives ultimate priority to supplying that product and service and to maintaining its quality.

Marketing Education Resource Centre (2000) viewed such programme as designed to meet the needs of students with, at least, three interest levels: students desiring marketing career exploration; students wishing to begin marketing career and students wanting to obtain some form of post-secondary education in marketing area. Wikipedia (2009) asserted that marketing education programme as an academic study, prepares a student for long life success. Hatzios and Health-Camp in Adams, Womble and Jones (2012) reported that marketing exhibits 10 tangible and symbolic attributes which include students' trained in marketing job, graduates employed in good paying positions, marketing teachers involved in job placement, students with practical experience and good career choices among others.

Marketing students and marketers have been trained to influence consumer behaviour by providing relevant information at the right time by using appealing communication and imaginary tools. Benneth in Blythe (2008) stated that consumer behaviour is a dynamic interaction of effect and cognition behaviour and

environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives. Students as well as adult consumers should be studied to understand why they behave the way they do, so that there should be good customer relationship management and partner relations management in order to connect effectively with the customers.

All over the world, there are new jobs and million replacement jobs in marketing occupations. Careers in marketing stretch across a wide array of industries and businesses which are found in both private and public sectors (Marketing Education Resource Centre, 2000). Marketing involves million of people as salesmen, advertisers, retailers, wholesalers, bankers, public relations practitioners, teachers, speculators, and internet web users (electronic marketers). Successful marketing professionals have become entrepreneurs and opened up more job opportunities in the world workplace. Such job opportunities include micro small enterprises, publishing, event management, labour management, business consultancy, service providers and market analysts.

The specific objectives of marketing education are intended to meet the social, vocational and personal needs and wants of students and adult consumers. Marketing education helps students to develop job attitude by understanding their personal responsibilities to the society and also engage in activities that will safeguard and promote their health and others. It also develops intellectual, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, technical or vocational aspect of life. Wikipedia (2009) opined that a fundamental understanding of the marketing concept and basic marketing skills are essential not only to students entering the field of marketing but to every one entering the workforce.

The pace at which marketing activities are changing has accelerated due to environmental shifts taking place in business world, like downsizing, outsourcing, mergers, global competition, off shoring and technological innovations (Wikipedia, 2009). The rapid pace of change in the environment in which marketers operate demands periodic assessment and reassessment, thus, student should be familiar with and take courses in marketing education.

In the market environment, there are actors and forces outside the marketing that affect marketing management's ability to build and maintain successful relationships with target customers. There seemed to be threats in the market; such as suppliers, marketing intermediaries, technological, political, competitors and publics, and cultural forces. These forces affect the organization's micro and macro environment where the marketer operate.

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of marketing education in a global economy. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the extent to which marketing education programmes are important in career preparation
2. the extent to which marketing education is important to job advancement.

1.2 Research Questions

1. To what extent are the marketing education courses important in career preparation?
2. To what extent are marketing education courses important for job advancement?

2.1 Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is ideal for use in the study because opinion of respondents regarding the importance of marketing education courses in global economy were required (Osuala, 2005). The study area is Enugu State, Nigeria. The state has three universities made up of one federal, one state-owned and a missionary university offering marketing education courses at postgraduate level.

The population for the study consisted of 340 respondents, made up of fifty lecturers (50) and two hundred and ninety (290) students enrolled in marketing education in 2011/12 academic session. The federal university had 10 lecturers and 40 students, state-owned university had 20 lecturers and 120 students while the missionary university had 20 lecturers and 130 students. No sampling was carried out because the number is small and manageable. Out of the 350 copies of the instrument distributed, 340 were returned, giving a return rate of 97%. All the returned copies of the instrument were used for the analysis. The instrument contained 20 items structured on a 4 point scale of very highly important, (4 points), highly important (3 points), important (2 points) and not important (1 point).

The face validation was established by three experts in the Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82 was computed for the scale used in the instrument. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. SPSS was utilized in the calculation of all statistical analyses.

3.1 Results of the Study

Table 1 revealed that all the items had their grand mean score ranging from 3.21 to 3.77 which falls within the responses category of highly important and moderately important. The standard deviations ranged from 1.20 to 1.43. This implies that the entire items are highly important in career preparation. (See Table 1).

Table 2 show that the 10 items have their mean values ranging from 2.98 to 3.54. This signified that the respondents agreed with the 10 items as important for job advancement.(See Table 2).

3.2 Discussion of the Findings

The results of this study showed that all the 10 selected marketing education courses were rated as important by both students and lecturers in Enugu State, Nigeria. Although both the students and lecturers perceived the items from highly important to very high important, the rating of students was generally higher in importance than the lecturers. This implies that students perceived their occupational courses more important than the lecturers. The findings of Egbule (2010) are in line with the above position.

Table 2 further reveals that marketing education courses are important for job advancement, by both students and lecturers as evidenced by their combined mean ratings, which include enabling students to select occupation, give insight in making purchasing decisions, and students forming strong customer bonds. This finding agrees with the statement of Warner 2009 who stated that marketing education is becoming more important as organisations strive to develop products and services that appeal to their customers and aim to differentiate their offering in the increasingly-crowded global market place. The results of this study also shows that marketing education courses enable student select occupation and advance on job.

3.3 Conclusion

In any sector, marketing is a vital activity that shows how a company operates, and the need for effective marketing education is becoming increasingly sought after. The findings of this study revealed that respondents perceived marketing education course as important for career preparation and job advancement. The findings therefore provided information that marketing education courses have become an integral part in building a successful career. For adults already in employment, marketing education courses are very effective means of career preparation and job advancement.

3.4 Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Marketing education should be a general course that will prepare students for life long career.
2. Marketing education should build a relationship with prospects by providing information for students to develop leadership skills in the society.
3. Marketing education should be a service education that will provide guidance to variety of activities.

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Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the extent of Marketing Education Courses Perceived as Important for Career Preparation

S/N	Item Statement	N = 340						Remarks
		Lecturers N = 50		Students N = 290				
		\bar{X}_1	SD_1	\bar{X}_2	SD_2	\bar{X}_g	SD_g	
1	Fundamentals of distributive education	3.24	1.14	3.52	1.26	3.38	1.2	MI
2	Marketing information management	3.86	1.38	3.20	1.33	3.53	1.36	HI
3	Product planning.	3.60	1.50	3.29	1.05	3.46	1.28	''
4	Advertising and sales promotion	3.79	1.57	3.43	1.17	3.61	1.37	''
5	Procurement and purchasing	3.88	1.28	3.22	1.43	3.55	1.36	''
6	Risk management	3.81	1.27	3.72	1.47	3.77	1.37	''
7	Financing and budgeting	3.54	1.44	3.32	1.14	3.43	1.29	''
8	Application of ICT in marketing situations	3.51	1.22	3.40	1.33	3.46	1.28	''
9	Sales management and sales forecasting	3.26	1.36	3.15	1.17	3.21	1.27	MI
10	Marketing concept and marketing mix.	3.32	1.45	3.26	1.40	3.29	1.43	MI
Grand Mean		3.58	1.36	3.35	1.27	3.47	1.32	

Key: VHI = Very Highly Important
 HI = Highly Important
 MI = Moderately Important

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on the extent to which Marketing Education Courses are Important for Job Advancement

S/N	Item Statement	N = 340						Remarks
		Lecturers N = 50		Students N = 290				
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_g	SD _g	
11	The course prepares students for employment	3.18	0.83	2.77	1.11	2.98	0.97	MI
12	The courses are relevant to todays marketing	3.26	0.76	3.20	0.93	3.23	0.85	HI
13	The course gives insight, in making purchasing decisions	3.55	0.73	3.38	1.08	3.47	0.91	HI
14	It enables students to design business strategy	3.26	0.76	3.20	0.93	3.23	0.85	MI
15	It enables students to understand how government contributes to the welfare of consumers and workers of an organisation	3.25	0.71	3.35	0.80	3.30	0.76	MI
16	The course enables students to select occupation	3.69	0.13	3.38	1.08	3.54	0.61	HI
17	Provides students with guidance and direction to a variety of circular activities	3.30	0.73	2.98	0.78	3.14	0.76	MI
18	It provides students with educational preparation about marketing skills, careers and employment characteristics vital in marketing occupations	3.46	0.76	2.55	1.05	3.01	0.91	''
19	Students can become employers of labour instead of being employed.	3.26	1.36	3.15	1.17	2.75	1.07	''
20	Marketing education guarantees students to obtain the insight and expertise to survive and succeed in the challenging arena of marketing	3.31	0.72	1.06	0.97	3.19	0.85	''
Grand Mean						3.18	0.85	

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