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MARKETING PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

BY

PROF. QUEEN I. OBINAJU

&

VICTORIA VICTOR PETERS

Abstract

This paper described briefly the meaning of education and its importance in the life of an individual. As a vehicle for social change and a powerful tool for social, economic, political and technological development of any country, it should be given adequate attention. It also examines the concept and origin of pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria, the concept of marketing, marketing strategies currently adopted in the marketing of pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria and the effect of marketing on the Nigerian system of education. The paper concludes that, for marketing of pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria all hands must be on deck in order to achieve the desired result.

Introduction

The term Education has been defined differently by many authors throughout the world. However, the meaning of education has changed over the past few hundred years. Before the era of formal schooling, Education was regarded as any process of bringing up or rearing children in a given society. It was an important instrument for transmitting the accumulated knowledge and culture from generation to generation and for developing human traits that contribute to economic, output, social stability and the production of new knowledge. Such system of education was termed traditional or informal education. Prior to the introduction of western education, Nigerian societies were noted for their rich cultural and traditional values which they preserved and transmitted to their members from one generation to another

through a system of traditional education (Esu, 2004).

Education recently has been considered as a vehicle for social change and a powerful tool for social, economic, political and technological development of any country. Education is also viewed as a life-long process which is not limited to formal schooling but it involves all life experiences. In essence, it is a process by which individuals within a particular community improves their well beings and their community (Denga, 2006). Omojuwa (2009) observed that education is the all-round development of a person physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually. This implies that education encourages a wholesome development of the individual through participation in the activities of the social group. It therefore follows that such education must take into consideration the active involvement of the person to be developed. It is

important to state that the traditional system of education made it possible for western or formal education to be established firmly in Nigeria. This is because, a cursory examination of traditional system of education, revealed that it embodies many scientific, verifiable, psychological, philosophical and sociological concepts which are major contribution to educational thought. The need for Nigeria to educate her citizen cannot be over emphasized, bearing in mind that, education is the bedrock of any successful nation. The five main national goals of the Nigeria Education as stated in the NPE (2004) which are the building of:-

- A free and democratic society.
- A just and egalitarian society.
- A united, strong and self-reliant nation.
- A great and dynamic economy.

A land full of bright opportunity for all citizen cannot be achieved. When the Nigerian citizens are adequately educated they will learn to appreciate these goals of education without any one using force, thereby creating an enabling environment for others to co-exist. Fafunwa (1993) see education as "comprising all efforts, conscious and direct, incidental and indirect, made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individual's needs as well as the needs of society where the programme is based".

Concept and Origin of Pre-Primary/Primary Education in Nigeria

Pre-primary education is referred to as education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten (National Policy on

Education, 2004). In the Nigerian society, early childhood education occurred even before school was established. This type of education was largely informal.

The new born child is considered to possess all that an adult has. This could be seen in the way adult treats the infant as though he understands. Education of the child therefore begins immediately he is born. Starting with getting the child to move his muscles, throwing him up and down so that he could get used to sudden movements. He is helped to suck the mother's breast and so on. As the child gradually grows, he is exposed to various objects of play. He becomes exposed to many other people other than the parents and caregivers so as to encourage identification by the child.

Gradually, the child is exposed to sitting position, crawling and walking. The child learns to adapt self to happenings within the environment and gradually develops a habit of independence and freedom. Occasionally he is left to do what he liked but under the supervision and watchful eyes of adults or older children. In the traditional society, children are encouraged to imitate adults within the environment. They are exposed to domestic chores that suit their age, namely, sweeping the floor, going to fetch water from close streams, looking after the younger ones etc. all those help our children to mature faster than children elsewhere and expose them to several activities early in life. With the advent of colonialism, education was equally introduced by the missionaries.

They trained people in different spheres of life but in the 1970s the concept of Nursery education spread into the urban centres. Day care centres, where infants below the age of two years are kept, were also opened. The major

objectives of these centres were very similar to those of the whiterman to give care to babies of working class mothers. From the day care centres are attached Nursery Schools which are run in a more formal way just as the Primary Schools. Here children receive formal education through the use of various methods. These types of schools run for about 4½ hours per day. It is at this early stage that conceptual learning sets, interest, habit patterns are developed. Such learning and habits patterns contribute a lot to the personality of the child in later years (Maduewesi, 2001). Okon (2004) observes that the syndrome of Nursery schools have come to stay as a result of the need to give children functional education.

Primary Education is the education given in an educational institution to children age 6 to 11 plus. Primary education is the beginning of formal education for a large majority of children in the developing countries. The foundation for higher education is laid at this level for the few who may be fortunate to further their education beyond the primary school level. The basic education provided at this level is also aimed at equipping those pupils who may terminate their education at this level with basic skills for engaging in gainful employment in their communities (Omojuwa 2002). The history of primary education in Nigeria is traceable to the efforts of the British missionaries in 1842. Education at this time was regarded as of fundamental importance to the spread of Christianity.

The spread of western education therefore went hand in hand with the spread of Christianity in Nigeria. In these early days of their educational activities, the missionaries were those who established and run the early schools in Nigeria. They also designed the

curriculum for such schools. They devoted a good part of their resources to the opening of schools for young Nigerians. In the early 16th Century some catholic missionaries visited Benin kingdom. They set up a school in the Oba of Benin's palace for his sons and those of his chiefs who were converted Christians. They were taught the rudiments of Christian faith. The establishment of the first stations at Badagry in 1842 and at Abeokuta in 1843 marked the effective beginning of missionary activities in Nigeria. The Badagry Station was established by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. Williams de Graft of the Wesleyan missionary society while Rev. Henry Townsend in 1843 established a station at Abeokuta (Esu and Ntukidem, 2000).

It is important to note that all the missionaries be it Anglican or Roman Catholic, American or Irish, combined evangelistic and educational work together. For instance, other missionary who arrived Nigeria (Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the Rev. C. A. Gollmer, their wives and Mr. Marsh and Mr. Philip, etc.) spread Christianity and western education.

Consequently, early mission schools were founded by both the Methodist and the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S). However, the Presbyterian mission also established a station at Calabar in 1846 (Esu, 2000).

The establishment of the Mission was followed by the opening of primary schools, missions were established in other parts of the country. For instance, by 1882, the Church Missionary Society had already 17 elementary and infant day schools for boys and girls in various parts of Lagos. Nine of them were under the direction of the Lagos Church of England School Board while others were managed by the local board of Church Missionary

Society. The spread of primary schools went on and on from one state to another by the Church Missionary Society.

The Concept of Marketing

Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers. It can sometimes be interpreted as the art of selling product, but selling is only a small fraction of marketing.

Marketing can be looked at as an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, delivering and communicating value to customers, and managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its shareholders. Market management is the art of choosing target markets, as well as acquiring customers through providing superior customer value (Kevin, 2012).

Marketing is all about creativity. Essentially, it is all about finding unique and interesting method for introducing you and your services to potential new clients and reminding your older clients that you are still alive and kicking, still performing the same services even better.

It is about telling everyone who you are and why they should patronize you again and again. For instance, on a daily basis you see electronic shops, boutiques, supermarkets, hotels, designing homes, etc. on television. At times you hear them on radio, advertising their goods and services, telling you how wonderful they are, giving you reasons why you should not fail to purchase them, at the end of the day, after purchasing the goods you may discover that, it is not as good as what the advertiser painted it to be. When advertising goods and services the advertiser will try as much as possible to entice the public with either words or making promises, so as to capture their interest. After getting them to patronize

them, those promises may not be fulfilled any longer. The same is applicable today to the pre-primary and primary level of education.

Marketing Strategies Currently Adopted in Marketing Pre-Primary and Primary Education In Nigeria

Education today has become a commodity to be sold. Pre-primary/Primary schools are established in all nooks and crannies of the society. Such as residential homes, church premises, uncompleted buildings, drinking palours, etc. No one is interested in finding out the fate of these children in the hands of such proprietors and proprietresses (Dennis, 2002). Most of the schools are owned and managed by individuals who are not professional are not ready to employ the services of a professional in education because they are interested in maximizing profit and nothing else. The quality of teachers employed to work in such schools are basically SSCE holders and one or two NCE holders. The curriculum of pre-schools for some of the proprietors and proprietresses who have been able to lay hands on it, do not enforce its usage. It is only kept in the school for record purposes. Each pre-school has its own scheme of work to be used in teaching the pupils, whether or not it is in line with the approved pre-school curriculum.

Some of the pre-primary and primary schools established by rich individuals are always on television, radio, newspaper, bill boards etc. advertising the school, telling the public how great and wonderful the school is, enticing people with all kinds of stories regarding academic performances of pupils and students, Disappointingly, some of the acclaimed academic excellence are not based on merit for a lot happens during national Examinations.

Denga (2002) observed that primary education is surely the foundation on which secondary and tertiary education are built. If the foundation is fragile the superstructure will definitely fall.

The Nigerian Child is a product of his total environment. The average Nigerian child lives within his cultural environment and is educated to become a conforming member of this enduring, complex and highly organized village society. The child is expected, in turn to perpetuate the culture by passing on the same tradition to his own offspring (Edwin, 2000). Child psychologists, the world over agree that the first six years of life are vitally important for future progress. The educational foundation laid for the child at the pre-primary and primary level is a determinant of the secondary and tertiary education. The issue of making education as a commodity to be sold in the society will only make the entire educational system run into a serious catastrophe. When marketing is brought into education what do you expect?

Individuals are bound to use all the marketing strategies in attracting their customers in order to make profit not minding whether life are been destroyed or not. The following are some of the problems of marketing on Nigerian Educational System:-

- i. Production of half beaked graduate.
- ii. Production of citizens who will not be law abiding.
- iii. Inadequate man power.
- iv. Shortage of qualified professionals.
- v. Production of citizens without basic skills for engaging in gainful employment.
- vi. Lowering the standard to satisfy customers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the marketing of pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria is a huge task that needs all hands to be on deck. In order to achieve the aim of developing a total child this responsibility start from the home, to the school and to the society at large.

Since pre-primary and primary level of education is the foundation for which the super structure is laid upon, the interest of the child should be given first priority in marketing that level of education and not maximization of profit. The major goal of developmental changes is self realization, which involves the strife to be one's best both physically and mentally (Dennis, 2002). When the child is not allowed to strife on his or her own to be his best or her best at a tender age, the child grows up to become a problem to both himself, people around him and the society in general.

Recommendations

To curb this trend of marketing education in Nigeria as a commodity to be sold the following should be practicalized:-

1. The government should set up adequate monitoring programmes to check the running of pre-primary and primary schools in order to achieve to desire result
2. proprietors and proprietresses should to build the Nigerian system of education and not destroying it. (Quality and not Quantity).
3. Parents and guardians should not be carried away by the wonderful advertisement done on television, radio, newspaper and bill board but, should seek to know in detail the operation of a particular school

- of interest to them before enrolling their wards.
4. The government should enforce a standard for quality of teachers employed in private pre-primary and primary schools to teach the pupils.
 5. NGOs and well meaning Nigerians should be encouraged to support the smooth running of private-owned nursery schools in their capacity.
 6. From time to time government should organize a symposium where proprietors and proprietresses will come together and exchange their views. This will also create an enabling environment for them to be encouraged to work hard, reminding them on the essence of quality and not quantity.

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