

De-Marketing of Harmful Products in Nigeria

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Abstract: Harmful products are sometime being marketed to the consumers by manufacturers and their distributors most especially the wholesalers and the retailers. The consequences of this phenomenon has made it imperative for government and private sector to employ de-marketing strategy to address this situation. The objective of this study therefore is to examine the major problems facing these de-marketing strategies being employed by both the government and private sector and proffer the needed solutions to these problems. In other word, the objective of this study is to examine how de-marketing tools have been effectively used against consumption of harmful products in Nigeria. The t-test and Chi-square were the statistical techniques employed to test the hypotheses raised in the study. The results of the findings indicated that the de-marketing strategy has been effective while inadequate legislation serve as one of the major problems facing this policy. The study recommends that a stiffer penalty in form of capital punishment or life imprisonment should be imposed on offenders who are involved in production and sales of harmful products so as to serve as deterrent to others.

Key words: Harmful products, de-marketing, killer beans, staple food, promotion, techniques

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is described as a mechanism for increasing and then satisfying demand. One of the traditional functions of marketing therefore is to make goods and services available to the final consumer. The consumer can only be satisfied when the goods are delivered at the right time, place and quantity. The demand may be below, equal to or in excess of those desired by an organization. There is need to reduce or control demand and the tool for doing this is known as de-marketing (Lawther *et al.*, 1997). The concept of de-marketing dated back to 1971 when it was proposed by Kotler and Levy.

There are researches on de-marketing from researchers such as Lawther *et al.* (1997) they saw the need to reduce the use of general anaesthesia through the development of a de-marketing plan and Beeton (2001) in their study considered de-marketing undesired film-induced images. De-marketing has also been extensively used by scholars in tourism and public health care field; its effectiveness has been given considerations in most of these forums (Beeton, 2001; Benfield, 2000; Borkowski, 1994; Clements, 1989; Mallhourta, 1990; Kindra and Taylor, 1990; Reddy, 1989). Kotler and Levy (1971) defined de-marketing as that aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers in general or certain class of customer in particular on either a temporary or permanent basis. In other word de-marketing is perceived as a method of controlling demand as well as generating and satisfying it (Lawther *et al.*,

1997). In de-marketing the traditional marketing tools are used but in reverse. Lawther *et al.* (1997) said that advertising and promotion activity could be suspended, price may be increased or distribution channel changed to make the product less accessible. This adjustment in marketing variable results to control in demand and product effectively de-marketed. Beeton and Benfield claimed that de-marketing is an intrinsic aspect of marketing management. De-marketing is applied in various ways by individuals, companies and government.

For instance, insurance company generally de-market their product from potentially costly consumer by screening through questionnaire. De-marketing is also used by cities to keep away certain visitors; a pub or club house may discourage certain age group (teenagers) from visiting; hospital and tourist centers have effectively used it against certain group of people they don't want to patronize them and is also used by government to discourage the consumption of certain products like tobacco and alcohol or products that are of finite resources like oil and mineral resources to be used carefully to maximize its utility (Kumar, 2010).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study attempts to give definitions of some important concepts related to this topic amongst which includes.

Marketing: American Marketing Association defined marketing as an organizational function and set of process

for creating, communicating and delivering value for customers and for managing customer relationship in ways that benefit the organization and its shareholders. There was a revised definition by American Marketing Association which described marketing as the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large. This definition try to explain that marketing is a set of activities which give value to customers. Marketing is therefore an integrated activity which involves all functional areas in organization for the purpose of satisfying and delivering value to the customers.

De-marketing: The other definition given by Lasco was de-marketing is an attempts to discourage customer in general or certain class of customers in particular for consumption of a specific product on either a temporary or permanent basis.

This definition is clearly similar to that of Kotler and Levy (1971) and therefore it can be said that de-marketing specifically concerns discouraging customer or particular group of people about making use of a product or service.

Harmful products: There is no standard definition but Udupa definition has been adopted for this study and it described harmful products or injurious consumption as consumption of any toxic substance including chemical, plant or animal derivative, drug which is taken in overdose and alcohol or tobacco or products of it whose consumption causes damage of tissues or having adverse effect on human or animal body. In other word harmful product can be described as any product whose consumption may cause ill-health or result to death of human or animal.

Types of de-marketing: Lawther *et al.* (1997) and Kotler and Levy (1971) gave 3 types of de-marketing.

General de-marketing: This occurs when demand for a product or service becomes too high. De-marketing is undertaken to bring demand to acceptable level. It is used when firm or government wants to de-market to everyone for instance, alcohol and cigarettes (discourage goods) and hard drugs (banned goods). The reason for excess demand over supply may be as a result of temporary shortage of a product over popularity for product or service and decision to eliminate a product for which a level of demand exist (Lawther *et al.*, 1997).

Selective de-marketing: This is an attempt to reduce demand within segments of the markets amongst specific types of consumer. This may be for example, a resort center that does not want singles but prefer couples or a

motor way service that seek to discourage football fans (Lawther *et al.*, 1997). Promotion can be employed to attract the desired target and make unattractive the de-marketed segment. This type of de-marketing is necessary when there is a limited supply of a product and very heavy demand. Gasoline, electricity and water can be de-marketed where the supply is not adequate. Installation of water and electricity meter in homes is another way of conserving these facilities through charging the household per usage. Kotler (1988) argued that classification of customers into desirable and undesirable may result to ethical questions being raised and be interpreted to mean discrimination.

Ostensible de-marketing: In this type of de-marketing the manufacturer discourage the demand with the actual intention of increasing it. This is based on the principle that customers will become attracted to the product the harder it becomes to obtain the product. In other word, this kind of de-marketing is used when a firm wants to create shortage of the product to increase customer's appetite for example, Oil Producing and Exporting Counties (OPEC) employed this means to increase their oil prices. This is also used by promoter when encouraging people to buy ticket because limited number of tickets are available with the hidden intention of selling more tickets (Lawther *et al.*, 1997; Kumar, 2010).

De-marketing tools: The following are some of the common tools used to de-market products or services:

Higher price: Government can bring about increase in price for a product through high taxes on the product. This is done to discourage customer from buying more of the product.

Counter advertising: This can be in form of advertising advising people not to use the product for example cocaine, cigarettes and alcohol. In Nigeria there is commercial message both in print and electronic media making the public to be aware that the federal ministry of health warns that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Warning labels: It is mandatory for cigarettes packet to carry warning label advising the youth that smokers are liable to die young. There are some other products like pharmaceutical products that are also required to carry warning. This can be in form of statement advising patients to consult their physician if symptom persists after 3 days.

Limited advertising: There are certain products that are banned from being advertised on television in Nigeria for example cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Government has also banned advertising of certain product at sport and cultural events. It outlaws smoking in public places, most especially in Nigeria and India.

Limited distribution: There are products whose distribution have been restricted to stores or pharmaceutical shops. These products are also sold with a License, for example alcohol and drugs.

Legislation: This is the enactment of Law or Act to proscribe the sale of a product or use in some particular place.

Development of substitutes: Companies may develop a substitute for a product that wants to be totally eliminated from the market.

Reduce quality of product: This is in the form of reduction in quality content of product and may result in decrease demand for that product at a slower phase.

De-marketing strategies: According to Cullwick (1975), there are 2 types of de-marketing strategies: a de-marketing strategies that either ration demand or reduced demand. Rationing demands involve spreading limited supply of products while reducing demand involves making active efforts to lower the overall demand for the product. Cullwick (1975) further grouped de-marketing strategies to the degree of which they reduce or control demand. The de-marketing strategies include:

Passive de-marketing: In this situation consumers may not use the product but it is available to those consumers un-persuaded by the de-marketing strategies. The objectives of this de-marketing strategies are educating the consumer about the negative impact of the product on the society, alternative products and behaviour to that product. It will enable special interest groups, regulatory agencies and executives of the firm have evidence that the firm is moving in a positive direction in terms of social responsibility pursuit.

Active de-marketing: This involves the use of marketing mix to ration, decrease or restrict demand in several or every market segment. This strategy has been used in several situations by chemical companies, electricity and water corporations.

Lawther *et al.* (1997) identified key elements used in de-marketing as positioning, segmentation, targeting and

the marketing mix. Kotler (1988) described positioning as developing appropriate image for de-marketing in the minds of the target segments while Andreassen (1995) considered segmentation as identifying areas of problem incidence and severity. Lawther *et al.* (1997) explained that targeting is the method of communication. They further gave explanation on the marketing mix elements employ in de-marketing as follows:

- Product-the need to reduce use of a product or service
- Promotion-the communication process which is the key element of the mix
- Price-the financial implication of change. They suggested compensation for previous capital investment
- Place-key areas of high provision identified by the research. There is need for locating patients/ customers and this must be convenient

Complete de-marketing: This cease sale of the product. This strategy can be implemented if marketer feels that the product is no longer required by consumers. Forced complete de-marketing would be carried out if it was being enforced due to outside pressure. A good example may be government recalling products not suited to be in the market. Procter and Gamble is another example where the company withdrew its product Rely tampons and informed customer not to buy the product and return it to retailer.

Product's de-marketing in Nigeria: There has been several efforts made by the government in Nigeria to de-market the demand for harmful products such as reported case of poisonous rice and killer beans in Northern and South western Nigeria in (2009), respectively.

The consignment of contaminated Asian rice allegedly rejected by the Sierra Leonean government was imported by Nigerian business men to Nigeria. This rice was bought by several unsuspecting customers from the market in Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and other neighbouring states. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) later warned members of the public to avoid buying the rice because the commodity was not fit for human consumption. It must be recalled that in 2007 about 600 bags of expired/poisonous rice was impounded in Nigeria by the government in Imo state. The rice might have become poisonous due to improper or long term storage. Rice is highly susceptible to the formation of aflatoxins by mould due to long storage. Aflatoxins are highly carcinogenic and cause cancer of the liver. The rice can

also be made to look normal by bleaching, polishing and adding mineral oil despite being tainted by aflatoxin B1. There was an example of such treated rice in Guandong China in December 2000 when rice that has been stored for 17 years was marketed as new rice. Other examples of places where poisonous rice have been found include Japan and Indonesia. In June 2009 in Indonesia about 25 people were reported to have died after drinking contaminated rice wine on a resort island (Nigerian Daily News, 2009; EnowNow.com, 2009; All.Africa.com, 2009; Nigerian Compass, 2009; Vanguard Online Edition, 2009a).

The case of killer beans was reported in South Western Nigeria in 2009 and 14 people were reported to have died after eating beans in Lagos. There was a similar report in the North that killer beans kill toddler and 63 hospitalised in Bauchi, 20 people hospitalized and 10 people died in kano and over 120 students of Government Girls Secondary School Doma Gombe state were hospitalized after eating beans.

In other parts of Nigeria such as Calabar it was reported that 112 people were hospitalized and 2 children confirmed dead while in Oshogbo 10 persons died and 20 hospitalised after eating beans delicacy at a burial ceremony. There was also story about killer Apple that the ones in the market were poisonous. These reports caused major scare and controversy making most people to stop consuming beans and apples pending the time the government came out with the result of their investigation. However, vendors claimed the report was a deliberate attempt to reduce the price of beans and demand of apple for local substitutes.

The result of government investigation indicated that the beans became poisonous because more pesticide was added than normal in the bid to preserve it. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) urged the people to discountenance the text messages being circulated about apple as false. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) therefore advised people to stay away from buying the beans until it is effectively withdrawn from the market. They further advised that if they must eat beans it should be per boil, wash thoroughly and cook extensively over a period of time before eating. NAFDAC in addition organized workshops to enlighten farmers, grain merchants and the general public about the developments.

The Institute of International Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in her own effort at finding solution to this recurring problem of food poisoning developed a new technology for storing cowpeas without the use of chemicals (Olori, 1996; Vanguard Online Edition, 2009a; www.ifreke.blogspot, 2010; Vanguard Online Edition, 2009b). Government de-marketing strategy are not only

directed at consumable products but also on pharmaceutical and other products such as fake electrical appliances and electronics, tobacco and alcohol. NAFDAC has helped greatly in reducing the quantity of fake drugs in the market to very minimal level. The government also enacted law making smoking in public places an offence and limit advertising of cigarettes to certain media. In 2009, there was rumour about killer brand of paracetamol in the market, the government quickly went in to action to investigate and found the story to be a lie (Online Nigeria, 2009).

This and other effort of government has shown its determination to de-market harmful products in Nigeria. This government effort probably might have encouraged other African countries such as Kenya to follow example of Nigeria by banning over 50 cosmetics products which are found to be harmful to customers. These products contain mercury and its derivatives, hydroquinone, oxidizing agents and hormonal preparations. The banned cosmetics include creams, lotions, lipsticks, nail polish, soaps and skin lighteners. This study focused on various efforts of government and private sector at de-marketing harmful products in Nigeria. About 1227 Ilorin residents were randomly selected for the study.

The study was conducted in September 2009 at the peak of the period when there was general scare about poisonous apple fruit in the market. A stratified sample design method was used to select the respondents from ten different locations in Ilorin amongst which include: Tanke, Kulende, GRA, Garage Offa, Gaa Akanbi, Oloje, Shao Garage, Sabo Oke, Oja Oba and Asa Dam. This was done to present a fair representation of different social class residing in Ilorin and also allow for objective and improve quality of the instrument used for the research. It was also necessary to give a balance coverage in terms of the geographic area used for the study.

The study instrument consists of 25 close ended structured questions divided in to 3 sections. The section A had 6 questions and provides information about the sample's profile. An examination of the profile indicates that the demographic groups were generally well represented.

The section B contains 9 questions on government de-marketing policy while section C presented 10 questions on private sector's de-marketing strategy. The focus is on government and private sector because they are the major players involved in developing a de-marketing policy. An individual effort can be grouped with the private sector. There was 93% response rate indicating that a total of 1181 questionnaires were returned and used for the study. The Statistical techniques used for the study are t-test and Chi-square analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study presents the following sample demographic profile:

- About 12% of the respondents were over 50 years of age
- About $\frac{7}{10}$ of the respondents were married while 30% were single
- About 54% of the respondents were female and 46% male
- About $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents had a university degree, 46% had completed secondary school while 20% had no formal education
- About 50% of the respondents were Moslem while the remaining 42% were Christians
- About 70% of the respondents were Yoruba, 24% were Ibo and 6% were of Hausa ethnicity

This demographic profile clearly indicates that in terms of age distribution of the respondents there was a fair representation for all the age groups. The adults and the children are well represented and at the same time the elderly, most especially those over 50 years were equally represented considering the fact that they form smaller proportion of the total population. The study take in to consideration those without formal education which in the study are 20% of the respondents. This is to enable us have the view of this group of people about government policy as it affect them. The study also indicates that the three major tribe in the country were represented, though the largest proportion of the respondents being of Yoruba extraction.

This probably was as a result of the fact that the study was conducted at Ilorin where Yoruba tribe dominates. In the study, it was revealed that food stuff and consumables representing (61.8%) of total respondents are the products government mostly de-marketed. This is because of the frequent manner in which food poison or contaminated products are been reported in the market annually. This prompts government effort towards de-marketing the products.

Alcohol and Tobacco products also drew government attention because they are considered harmful products. There is increase in government effort at reducing or bringing about complete ban of the sale of these products. The government effort is also extended towards reducing the sale of fake pharmaceutical products. This is done through the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) which considerably help in reducing cases of fake drugs in the market. The agency prosecute and punish the

offenders caught involved in these shoddy dealings. The government use complete de-marketing strategy (58%) and legislation (38%) to de-market harmful products. This was in form of high tax levy on companies producing Alcohol and products in order to bring about higher price for these products. The major problem facing government de-marketing effort was inadequate legislation (50.1%). This was followed by corruption (24.2%). This is because government enforcement of this legislation is not very effective due to the level of corruption of some law enforcement agents who take bribe or gratification from suspect or offenders.

The most important objective of Government de-marketing policy is to discourage the use of harmful products (74%) while the medium of communication effectively used to achieve this was radio (44%) followed by television (40%). Result for the analysis also reveals that for private sector de-marketing, pharmaceutical drugs (32%) are the most de-marketed products while complete de-marketing strategy (44%) was also employed. Limited distribution (20%) was the tool used to de-market products while conflict of interest (46%) was revealed as the major problem confronting the de-marketing policy by the private sector. The conflict of interest can be in form of considering benefit in terms of profit to the social cost (harmful effect on health of consumer) by the manufacturer of such products. There are some manufacturers that are ready to continue production in order to make more profits, not minding the effect that the consumption of such products will have on the health of consumers. The study also reveals that the objective of private sector de-marketing is to control the proliferation of unstandardised and fake products.

Newspapers and magazine (54%) are the most preferred media of communication by the private sector while Inadequate legislation (42%) constitute the major problem facing de-marketing policy.

Hypotheses: From the literature review and others related works consulted, the following hypotheses are proposed for the study:

Hypothesis 1: There is significant difference in the opinion of both male and female respondents about government de-marketing policy in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no association between people's support for government de-marketing policy and its effectiveness.

The test of hypothesis H₁ with t-test statistical technique: The hypothesis 1 above was tested using 2 sample t-test technique. The p-value for the equal variances t-test is $p = 0.000$ (Table 1 and 2), since this p-value is >0.05 the

Table 1: Descriptive statistic

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Govdemart 12	Male	861	1.1301	0.33659	0.01147
	Female	1020	1.0784	0.26898	0.00842

Table 2: The t-test statistical techniques

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Govtdemart equal variances assumed	55.46	0.000	3.698	1879	0.000	0.0517	0.0139	0.0243	0.7904
Equal variances not assumed	3.629	1636	0.000	0.0517	0.0142	0.0237	0.0796	-	-

Table 3: Support *effective cross tabulation

			Effective		
			Yes	No	Total
Support	Yes	Count	1689	112	1801
		Expected count	1617.2	183.8	1801.01
		% within support	93.8%	6.2%	100.0%
	No	Count	0	80	80
		Expected count	71.8	8.2	80
		% within support	0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		1689	192	1881
	Expected count		1689.0	192.0	1881.0
	% within support		89.8%	10.2%	100.0%

Table 4: Chi-square test

Characteristics	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.	Exact. sig. (2 sided)	Exact. sig. (1 sided)
Pearson Chi-square	735.010 ^b	1	0.000	-	-
Continuity correction ^a	724.814	1	0.000	-	-
Likelihood ratio	400.943	1	0.000	-	-
Fisher's exact test	-	-	-	0.000	0.000
Linear by linear association	734.620	1	0.000	-	-
Number of valid cases	1881.000	-	-	-	-

^aComputed only for a 2x2 table; ^bcells (0%) have expected count <5, the minimum expected count is 8.17

decision would be that there is no significant difference in the opinion of both male and female respondents about government de-marketing policy in Nigeria.

This means that there is no enough evidence to conclude that their opinion about government de-marketing policy is different. If unequal variance is assumed the p = 0.000 (Table 1 and 2) which is also similar to the equal variance p-value. Thus the decision for the study are the same for the 2 situations. Hence, researchers reject the Null hypothesis and accept Alternative hypothesis that there is no significant difference in their opinion about government de-marketing policy. This in other word means that the respondents share similar opinion about government de-marketing policy.

The test of hypothesis H₂ with Chi-square statistical technique: The hypothesis 2 attempts to determine if there is significant relationship between people's support for Government de-marketing policy and its effectiveness (Table 3). A Chi-square techniques used to test this hypothesis. A higher proportion of the supporting group

showed that the government de-marketing policy was effective, $\chi^2(1, N = 1881) = 735, p = 0.000$ (Table 4). The continuity correction reduces the size of the Chi-square value while the p-value remain the same. In this case, the corrected Chi-square value is 725 (Table 4) with Fisher's two side test was p = 0.000. All these results lead to the rejection of null hypothesis at the $\alpha = 0.05$ and thus conclude that there is significant relationship between the respondent's support for de-marketing and effectiveness of government de-marketing policy. This attempts to explain that most respondents give support to government de-marketing policy and also agreed that the government de-marketing policy is effective.

CONCLUSION

This study to certain extent has examined government's effort at de-marketing harmful products. The study has also reveals that government de-marketing effort though effective is facing the problem of inadequate legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are therefore suggested for further improvement in government de-marketing strategy. The government should encourage Agricultural and Industrial Research Institute to develop technology that would help in ensuring better production of quality and standard products. In Nigeria, for instance the Institute of International Tropical Agriculture has developed technology for storing cowpea without the use of chemicals. This is necessary in order to abate the cases of annual food poisoning that usually occur when farmers try to store their farm products through excess use of pesticide and other chemicals.

Efforts should be made to encourage local production of farm products like rice which happen to be one of the import goods that serves as staple food to the people. The local production of some of these products will not only reduce the degree of dependence

on imported goods but also save the country a lot of revenue which normally accrued to import trade and hence bring about improve balance of payments. It will also serve as avenue to reduce unemployment, through the engagement of some of the unemployed youths in agricultural productions and other allied industries.

There is need for collaboration between the government and International Institutions such as World Health Organisation (WHO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), British Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and other development partners, over strategies for addressing the challenges posed by harmful products. The government should seek alternative sources of funding that would help them tackle these problems rather than depending solely on these developing partners for assistance. In the study it was revealed that inadequate legislation serves as the major problem facing government de-marketing policy there is need therefore, to propose a law that would impose stiffer penalties on offenders and other culprits caught involving in production and distribution of harmful products.

This may be in form of capital punishment or life imprisonment on offenders or culprits upon conviction. It is believed that this will serve as a restraint to other who may want to be involved in this heinous and criminal act.

Government should team with various Institutions such as National Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Excise and Customs Department, Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Pharmacist Council of Nigeria (PCN), Local Government Council and other private sector operators to control the proliferation and distribution of harmful products such as pharmaceutical drugs, electrical and manufactured products. This will in no doubt contribute to the success of government de-marketing policy.

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