A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MARKETING ACTIVITIES IN A SERVICE INDUSTRY: *A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITYKANO ZONE.*

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled "A Critical Analysis of Marketing Activities in a Service Industry: a Case Study of National Electric Power Authority, Kano Zone" meets the regulations governing the award of the Degree of master of Business Administration (MBA) of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

To

My Husband and Maamah

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude first to God Almighty for His faithfulness and for sparing my life to see to the completion of this programme

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ABSTRACT

The competitive nature of the business environment today, demands that, the power sector of the country must be up and doing in order to meet the ever-increasing demand by customers. One vital way to succeed is for the National Electric Power Authority to strategically stabilize power supply and improve upon its marketing strategies.

Marketing concepts tries to identify the needs of target markets and develop goods/services to satisfy this wants more effectively and efficiently than competitors. There is evident decline in the revenue of NEPA resulting from complaints about poor services as perceived by customers. This study attempted to find out some of the reasons behind the poor services and customers' perceptions. They found that, vandalization, shortage of operational materials, lack of proper marketing strategy among others are the factors explaining the poor services and perceptions. A number of recommendations were made, including the adopting of modern marketing strategies and development of other sources of power generation.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The continues rise in competition trend in business today calls for prompt attention by marketing executives so as to know how best to survive, become or remain market leaders as well as generate more profit in their respective industries.

Marketing is broader in perspective and purpose than it's generally recognized by practitioners in Nigeria. Therefore, the primary aim of marketing is to identify customers' needs and try to satisfy those needs through the development and implementation of sound and profitable marketing programmes. The development of such programmes requires strong analytical ability and thorough understanding of environmental, institutional and competitive factors.

However, service marketing under which NEPA falls was not taken seriously like marketing of banking services, telecommunications (recently), insurance and transportation to mention a few. The reason is not far from the belief that NEPA operated a monopoly but in the real sense, NEPA has been facing serious competition even before the privatization proposal by the government; such competitions included NESCO and generating set dealers.

The absence of middlemen in service industries hampers the implementation of marketing technique in such industries. Notwithstanding, some service renderings organizations have awaken to this responsibility through

technological development, computerization of operations, recruitment of well-trained professionals etc.

Strategic marketing therefore tries to analyze the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats of an organizations' business environment in order to set priorities and also to counter competitors' moves.

This piece of work centrally aims at examining whether or not the appropriate marketing techniques are being used in the Power and Steel industry.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research work tried to understand the reasons behind declining revenue, lots of customers' complaints and whether really the marketing strategy is being employed in the Power Industry.

To proffer solution to the doubts stated above, research put across the following questions to specified number of respondents.

i) Who are NEPA customers (i.e products/service user)?

ii) To what extend is marketing strategy employed as tool to boost electricity sales?

iii) What are the strategies to improve cash collection?

iv) How can the Authority improve on customer relation?

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The study examined the Marketing activities in an Industry which was considered to be monopolistic though it has competitors, this was with a view to understand how effective and efficient it is in meeting customers' demands. For that, the aims that were considered included:

i) To examine the marketing concept in the industry.

) To examine the marketing performance in the industry .

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGIES

a) NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY (NEPA):

This is a statutory body responsible for generation, transmission, distribution and marketing of electricity to its numerous customers nationwide.

b) MARKETING

It is defined as a process of identifying; anticipating and satisfying customers' needs with a view of maximizing profitability. Marketing strategy of an organization like NEPA cannot be discuss in isolation of "Philip kotlers" marketing mix which is defined, as the set of controllable variables and the level that the organization used to influence the market. These marketing variables are called the 4 ps namely:

CXXIX. Product/Service

I. Price

CXCVI. Place/Distribution

V. Promotion

c) CUSTOMER

A NEPA customer is regarded as a metering point with readings established during a billing period, normally one month.

d) SERVICES

Stallon and Elles defined services as, "separately identifiable, intangible activity, which provides satisfaction of wants when marketed to the customer and or industrial users, which are not necessarily tie to sales of a product/service".

While P. kotler in his book Marketing Management 11th edition, defined services as "any act of performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of physical product".

e) **ELECTRICITY TARIFF**

This is the unit of measurement or charges made on amount of electricity consumed by a customer. This is based on the load in a customer's premises. The load also determines the type of supply that enters the customer's premises. It is either low voltage or high voltage supply. The supply therefore determines the tariff code, rate and billing.

f) **ENERGY BILLED**

This refers to the energy sold to NEPA customers and it is expressed in Kilowatts / hour (KWH). Infact, energy supply is the purpose of NEPAs' existence.

g) HYDRO POWER STATION

Hydro Power generation is a process whereby water is used to drive the turbines in order to generate electricity and the stations, which uses such system of power generation includes: Kainji, Shiroro and Jebba.

h) THERMAL POWER STATION

These generation stations have machines, which uses gas to generate electricity, example: Afam, Delta, Egbin and Ijora.

i) REVENUE CYCLE MANAGEMENT

This is a foreign company, which was contracted and vested with the responsibility of giving NEPA a total turn-around; by enhancing revenue collection through the provision of efficient services and improved customer relationship.

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1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is tended towards giving better understanding of marketing activities in the industry and also serves as guide to the marketing sector. The study looked at the strategies pursue by the Power Industry with regards to he "Marketing Mix". How the ever increasing demands for power supply was being met. And lastly, the performance of the industry over a specified period.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This piece covered the practice of marketing in the service industry with special reference to NEPA, Kano Zone comprising Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State respectively.

It covered a period spanning between 1997 to 2001. it also looked into the problems of declining revenue, customer complaints and general inefficiency.

On the other hand, this study suffered dearth of literature, shortage of funds and time for a wider research. Despite these, effort was made to ensure that these do not affect the quality of the work.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data collection techniques were employed to suit different needs and situation in the study. Principally, investigation was conducted using interviews, consultation of books, seminar papers, magazines, periodicals and newspapers. In any of the data collection techniques a reasonable number of people were interview which included members of staff from all the Districts under the Zone and the different categories of NEPA customers within and around Kano i.e. private residential, commercial and industrial customers.

In analyzing the data collected, consideration was made in relation to the contribution of their marketing strategies.

CHAPTER II

2.0 GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW.

This chapter discusses the view of some authors as regard marketing generally and service marketing in particular.

3.0 MARKETING DEVELOPMENT

The root of marketing can be traced to the growth of society from the pre-industrial era, this was agrarian individualized to an economy established around division of labour and industrialization. (Stallon 1984) observed that "whether people produced more than they want or want more than they produced, the foundation is laid for trade, and trade is the hearth of marketing".1. People now saw the need to exchange their surplus with one another for other items, which they could not produce. Where some people could undertake the exercise of exchange, others could not, so they employed the services of middlemen. This brought about the distribution and channeling aspect of marketing.

The concept of marketing does not have a universally accepted definition as it has been defined in different ways by different people. Crosier 1975) observed that no definition of marketing seems to encapsulate the whole essence of what marketing is... The word marketing is used in three different contexts thus:

1. The marketing process: it has to do with the marketing channel, linking the producer to the market.

2. The marketing concept: Means that marketing is an exchange process involving willing consumers and producers.

3. The marketing orientation: the phenomenon which makes the concept and process possible, that is, the view that part of human personality recognizes that the sources of every good thing lies on exchange with other individuals at all level in social exchange.

Of the numerous definitions offered for marketing we can distinguish between a social and a managerial definition.

Socially, Philip Kotler in his book Marketing management P.9 defined marketing as "a societal process by which individual and groups obtained what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others".2

For the managerial definition "The American Marketing Association" defined it as "process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distributing of ideas, goods, services to create exchange that satisfy individual and organizational goals".3

Peter Drucker, a leading management theorist on the other hand put it this way, that; "there will always be need for some selling, but the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sell itself. Ideally, marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy; all that should be needed then, is to make the product or service available"4

W. J. Staton (1984) defined more formally as "a total system of business activity designed to plan, price, promote and place (distribute) wants satisfying goods and services to present a potential customer".5

Like products, marketing evolves through four stages:- emergence, growth, maturity and decline.

Emergence:-Before a market materializes, it exist as latent market. Entrepreneur identifies or recognized certain need and imagines technological solutions to such need e.g. the emergence of computers to replace adding machines.

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The growth stage:- if sales of new products are good, new firms will enter the market ushering in a market growth.

In the maturity stage, competitors cover and serve all the major market segments leading to maturity. As the growth slows down, the market split into segments.

At the declining stage demand for the product begin to decrease, may be due to decline in need level or by new technology replacing old one.

From the above definitions it can be seen that the main purpose of marketing is to identify customers' wants and mobilized all the necessary resources to satisfy those wants at a profit.

At this point, it's important to point out some concepts that preceded the marketing concept and these are:

i. PRODUCTION CONCEPT: this concept assumes that "Consumers will favour those products that are widely available and at lesser cost. Managers of production-oriented organizations concentrates on achieving production efficiency, low costs and wide distribution coverage".6 A marketer therefore is expected to find new production techniques at lower cost.

ii. PRODUCT CONCEPT: this concept assumes that "Consumers will favour those products that offer the most quality, performance or innovative

features; Managers in this type of organization focus on making good products and improving them over-time"7 i.e. end-users attached more importance on quality.

iii. **SELLING CONCEPT**: in this, "consumers and businesses, if left alone, will ordinarily not buy enough of the company's products, therefore, the organization must undertake aggressive selling and promotion effort"8. That is, most people ordinarily will not buy certain products under pressure e.g. insurance policy.

iv. **MARKETING CONCEPT**: this concept operates in a dynamic and complex business environment. This was a revolution which arose to challenge the earlier concepts, it is characterized by a shift in production and selling orientation to that of consumer orientation. For that, the concept holds that, "the key to achieving organizational goals consist of the company being more effective than competitors in creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value to its chosen target markets"

The objective of marketing concept therefore, is to seek out the needs/wants of consumers and designs the appropriate products/services to satisfy those needs and wants, bearing in mind the need to achieve overall organizational goals. This concept has advantages and shortfalls, such as:

- . Ability to maintain, retain satisfied customers over a long period.
- . Dissatisfied customers on the other hand can dent the image of the firm by telling prospective customers of his or her experience with the product or service.

The marketing department therefore, is the focal point for developing marketing strategies required to adjust to market changes.

v. **CUSTOMER CONCEPT**: Here, companies collect information on each customer' past transaction, demographics, psychographics, media and distribution preferences. The hope to achieve profitable growth, through capturing a larger share of each customer's expenditure by building customers loyalty and focusing on customer life time value".

THE SOCIETAL MARKETING CONCEPT: This concept hold that, the organisation's task is to determine the needs, wants and interest of target markets and to deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that preserves or enhances the customer's and society's well-being".that is, the product should take into consideration the well-faire of the consumer.

2.2 MARKETING STRATEGIES IN SERVICE INDUSTRIES

For many business enterprises to succeed in the attainment of aims and objectives there's the need for companies to always device new marketing techniques to meet the challenges of the times. In treating the above subject matter, we will consider the terms separately before giving them a joint definition.

MARKETING: There are many definitions to marketing but for the purpose of this work, we adopt the one given by Stanton (1984) which states that "a total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote and place (distribute) want satisfying goods and services to present and potential customers"10. In developing marketing strategies, marketing managers make use of the marketing mix, namely product planning, price, promotion and place (4Ps). So it's the marketing manager that manoeuvres the marketing mix at different levels and stages of their progressive market plan for achieving the set objectives.

STRATEGY: Simply defined as a techniques used to achieve set objectives. Its origin is from the Greeks army. Thus it has to do with how the military men devised both defensive and offensive attacks against enemies.

Strategy has also been defined by Glueck and Jauch (1984) as "a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan that relates the strategic advantages of the

firm to the challenge of the environment and that is designed to ensure that the basic objectives of the enterprises are achieved through paper execution by the organization" or it could be seen to mean a proposed action or sequence of actions intended to have a far-reading effect on the company's ability to achieve its objectives.

Based on the foregoing, one can confidently define marketing strategy as that action taken by marketers in order to gain advantage over their competitors. Kotler sees a marketing strategy as "defining the broad principles by which the business unit expects to achieve marketing objectives in a target market. It consists of basic decisions on total marketing expenditure, marketing mix and marketing allocation"12. Marketing strategies must therefore be developed and implemented by marketing executives in order to place their organization at the right fitting where it is advantageous over others.

For the strategy to be successful, it must begin with a well coordinated plan involving all the functional areas of business. A typical strategic market plan involves four sets of related decisions thus:-

1. Defining the business; that is what business I am in? Which is the target market? Who is the customer to be satisfied? Attention is given to market segmentation.

2. Determining the mission of the business; that is the overall set objectives to be pursuit e.g. sales growth, market shares, net income etc.

3. Formulating functional strategies; this is where all functional managers liaised with general management, these functional strategies can be formulated after the business has been defined.

4. Budgeting; this is the allocation of resources to carryout planned activities, the company competitive size and position in a market place:-

i. Market – leader

ii. Market – Challenger

iii. Market – follower and

iv. Market – nicher

Faced with the dwindling revenue situation due to varied negative factors and wrong marketing strategies adopted over the years in the sale of its product (electricity), some of these factors inhibit the authority from recouping funds commensurate with energy supplied to the public; some of these factors ranges from poor metering, inaccurate meter billing, illegal connection (consumers), poor bill distribution and the like, which has given rise to colossal losses in both energy and cash. The Authority therefore adopted the following strategies.

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The establishment of a comprehensive data bank on the Authority's total customers' population through registrations of all categories of legal and illegal customers.

The Provision of efficient services to its valued customers and also the creation of good customer relationship.

Thirdly, the introduction of revenue circle management (RCM). This is a project designed to invite private companies to assist using NEPA's human and natural resources to collect monies due to NEPA. The management of this project is made up of a maximum of five members and the programme is expected to span through a period of five years; affecting only twenty out of fifty- six districts nationwide from the on set.

Furthermore, all marketing staff from the Zonal level to the undertaking level should embark on massive task force to achieve a radical improvement in the revenue base of the Authority.

The above mention points and many others form the marketing strategy being adopted by service oriented organizations.

2.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

HISTORY OF ELECTRICITY GENERATIO IN NIGERIA

The electricity industry in Nigeria has come a long way in development, from the period it was run on isolated power generation machines under the Public Works Department (PWD),which in 1896 installed its first sixty (60) kilowatt generating set in Lagos through the consideration of the various electricity undertakings under: first, the Nigerian Government Electricity Undertakings in 1964 and later the Electricity Commission of Nigeria (ECN) in 1950 and Niger Dams Authority (NDA) in 1962 and eventually NEPA in 1972.

The first power station was sited at the location of the former NEPA Headquarters Marina, Lagos by the PWD in 1896; 16 years after the inception of electricity in the world. The Marina power station consisted of 2no, Davery – Paximan locamotive type boilers with two other type compound double acting engines. Electricity was distributed through switchboards to 10 over head circuits of 11 solid copper wires carried on insulators supported by iron poles along the Marina.

The chronicle of stages of the development of electricity in Nigeria was slow since the PWD period because of the increase in demand after the Nigeria Civil War. The story of electricity development in Nigeria will not be complete without a brief mention of the private electricity generating companies. The first private electricity generating company was the Nigeria Electricity Supply Company (NESCO). This company was constructed and

commissioned in 1923 at Kwall fall on the tributary of the Kaduna River in order to provide necessary power required for the operation of the Tin mines in Jos Plateau, it is still serving part of Jos. By 1929 it had harnessed the contribution of the Benue River and established a new hydropower station at Kura falls. By 1972, there were six (6) Stations.

During the period under review, Nigeria metamorphosed from isolated generating stations to more sophisticated and large power station like Jebba hydropower station commissioned in 1985; the 2nd in Shiroro commissioned in 1990 and the 3rd hydro power station really the first in the country was commissioned in 1969, i.e. the kainji power station.

rt from the hydropower stations, there are also thermal stations, which are,

The Ijora power Station commissioned in 1956 by Queen Elizabeth II, which now serves to supplement the national grid supply during peak load as it were designed to function.

The Lagos thermal Power Station Egbin, the largest of the power stations in the country and the biggest in Africa was commissioned in 1987.

Beside the above mentioned generating stations there are many that are located in different towns throughout the country.

NEPA has become the fastest and biggest growing electricity industry in Africa and the developing world with a customer population of about 5

million. The table below is a comparative status of the electricity supply systems from inception of NEPA in 1972 and 1999.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SYSTEM	**1972**	**1999**
Total installed generating capacity	532.6 MW	5,958 MW
Nation peak demand	390 MW	2, 446 MW
Length of 330 KV lines	1,262 KM	5,000 KM
Length of 132 KV lines	1,012 KM	6,000 KM
415 Volts network	15,000 KM	55,143KM

Despite these improvements in the availability of supply, the demand is still not yet satiated.

2.3.1 BRANCH NETWORK

The National Electric Power Authority is made up of seven sectors with executive directors heading them and a managing director/chief executive as the overall boss.

These sectors are generation, Transmission, Distribution, Marketing, Corporate planning and Strategy, Finance and Administration and finally operations. The Network is further subdivided into Zonal, District and undertaking offices.

There are impeding conditions like the over-rising customer population, outstanding debts vandalisation of NEPA installations, high cost of maintenance, inadequate gas supply, low H20 (water), level at the hydro stations and the abysmal low tariff regime; NEPA has always strive to meet its distribution and marketing of stable supply to its customers against all odds.

Besides the nation network, there are other principal beneficiaries of NEPA's extended program. They are Republic of Niger under the agreement with NIGELEC (Niger Electric Company), the Communaute Electrique Du Benin (CEB) and republic of Togo.

2.4 NEPA SERVICES

According to P. Kotler PP.445 services can be categorized into tangible and intangible. NEPA's services can be liken to Kotler's classification of tangible good with accompanying services. Lewitt observes that the more technologically sophisticated the product, the more dependent are its sales on the quality and availability of its accompanying customer services.

In this case the provision of electricity begins with the generation of the energy from the Power Station through the transmission to the distribution of this supply to the final consumer. It is called a tangible product because its effect can be seen and felt by the consumer.

NEPA is an organization that brightens our lives and makes our existence more efficient by ensuring the convenience of our productive endeavours. Among the services rendered by NEPA to its numerous customers includes: the sole provision of electricity in the country: we can't do without this essential social services, which is central to our socio-economic well- being. Certainly the coming of electricity is the secret to human technological advancement; it's the steam that forces the engine of human creativity and ingenuity.

However, inspite of the effort by the Authority to lighten up and energized the economic sector of the nation, NEPA has never escaped the anger and frustration of the consumers each time there's a black-out, even when it is due to an uncontrollable circumstance.

Secondly the marketing department of NEPA is in charged of testing, sales and maintaining of calibrated meters from electricity Meter Company Nigeria limited (E.M.C.O.M); The meter is an instrument used for measuring customer consumption which is later used to bill the respective customer. Due to the fact that the meters are transported from the calibrated site to different destinations, it becomes very necessary for this equipments to be retested to ascertain it efficiency and lack of distortion at the cause of transportation.

Thirdly, it's not just enough for the power to be generated, transmitted and distributed through the network.

The marketing section is also vested with the responsibility of registering the interested customer and extend the services of connecting the customer's premises to the NEPA main supply. Readings are also obtained on a monthly bases from the installed meters, after which bill are produced and distributed to the individual customers based on their consumption for payment to the authority.

One of the basic problems facing the Authority today is failure by some of its customers to settle their outstanding bills as and when due, this makes it difficult for the Authority to replace or maintain their equipments. In order to realize funds for this purpose, the marketing department has to adopt strategies to make defaulting customers comply. Some of such strategies are persuasion of defaulters, disconnection of supply and deduction from source in the case of government parastatals, ministries and agencies. This is just to mention a few among the many services rendered by NEPA.

2.5 MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF NEPA, KANO ZONE

2.5.1 CASH COLLECTION

The Kano Zonal touring cashier sends his collection details on a daily basis; that is,bills paid in cash and cheques by electricity consumers to the cash office. A report is also sent to the undertakings on daily basis. The undertakings in turn send all cash reports collected to the District Office. This collection is made from different classes of customers as follows:

i) Government Customers

ii) Non-government Customers

iii) Reconnection fees

iv) Special elimination

v) Connection fees

vi) Security deposits

vii) Capital contributions

2.5.2 METERING

The NEPA marketing sector has the responsibility to fix and read meters and also keep records of all meters in and out of the distribution network.

Meter readers (salesmen) are assigned the responsibility of appropriately and accurately obtaining the meter reading and report illegality discovered in the network.

TYPES OF METERS

i. Maximum demand meter (for premises with high consumption).

ii. Non maximum demand meters (for low consumption premises)

a) Single phase meter.

b) Three phase meter.

2.5.2 BILLING

The monthly meter readings which are recorded in computer reading sheets are sent to the computer sections for bill production. When this is done, the bills are despatched to the customers by the salesmen (marketers).

2.5.3 CUSTOMER TYPES

An electricity customer is any person or company supplied with electricity by the authority. Customers are categorized based on the tariff classes, i.e, consumption capacity. These are:

ii. Residential customers: This is one who uses his premises exclusively as a residence. This category of customer form over 45% of the total population and a large number of defaulters in terms of bill settlement comes from this group of customers.

iii. Commercial customer: is one who uses his premises for any purpose other than as a residence.

Both the federal and state governments account form the bulk of this group which is always referred to as "difficult to collect" due to the sensitive nature of some of these accounts.

iv. Industrial customers: These are those who use their premises for manufacturing or assembling of goods. This is where a huge amount of the Authority's revenue comes from.

Usually NEPA, District offices are given targets in respect of customers to be captured for a specified period so as to increase the customer's population. Also based on the customer population and the energy delivered to the respective districts from the Grid, targets are set in respect of the revenue expected from the individual district and Zonal offices.

2.6 THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON NEPA

Most economic policies formulated by the government to enhance and develop the economy in the past affected NEPA.

It is however, necessary to review briefly how these policies affected the marketing activities of NEPA either directly or indirectly.

This could be discussed under the following:

iii) Until September 30th 1998 NEPA was a monopoly. The federal government has liberalized the electricity sector to pave way for private sector financing and Management. This way, government's role has been cut by separating policy making from regulation and operation of utilities. To this objective, transparent regulatory systems with predictable price – setting rules and procedures were worked out.

iv) The rural electrification sub – sector started as a small section in NEPA's commercial department and was charged with the responsibility of electrifying rural communities which satisfied the Authority's financial viability criterion and also took over state's rural electrification projects closed to the National grid.

v) In the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, electric power came up under the concurrent list of the legislators. This means that not only the federal and state governments but also local

governments and communities take part in the provision of electricity to their communities.

vi) Electricity tariff to all classes of customer were government subsidized. The level of subsidy granted to all Nigerian electricity consumers was evident in the differences between the regulated tariff charged and what NEPA was to charge for cost of recovery and self-sustainability.

In recent times, the draft electric power sector reform bill was developed to provide a legislative frame work for the reform of the Nigerian power sector. In relation to this, a board was instituted and charged with the immediate task of unbundling and restructuring NEPA into viable new business units; the board was charged with some responsibilities, among which are:

i. Ensuring that restructuring of NEPA is with due consideration and sensitivity to human and economic considerations.

ii. Ensuring that the new business units are prepared to operate in the electricity supply sector under new market rules.

iii. Ensure the constitution and reinvigoration of NEPA's change management program to ensure that members of staff of NEPA take over their new roles in the new business units with minimal disruption to the provision of electricity services to the general public.

iv. The board was also charged with the task of designing and implementing a plan that enhances the financial sustainability of NEPA and its subsequent successor companies.

In as much as this policy was aimed at turning the power sector around, it is brought about the down-sizing of the human resource of the organization thereby throwing many bread-winners into the already saturated labor market.

CHAPTER III

3.0 RESEARCH METHOD

Research is usually designed to tackle problems, that is, a subject matter that need to be described, explained, improved upon or where more information is needed so as to enable prediction of future occurrences and policy formulation .Research enables us to arrive at solution to problems.

3.1 SOURCES OF DATA

Taking the nature of the study into consideration, more than one method of research was adopted. personal interviews and the use of official documents. Questionnaire would have been used but considering respondents attitudes to filling and returning questionnaires, due to factors like tight schedules, illiteracy, costs of distributing and colleting filled questionnaires. The researcher opted for the oral interview, which saved time, costs and gave a good percentage of responses.

3.1.1 PERSONAL INTERVIEW

This has to do with putting question across to respondents by the interviewer and recording respondents' responses for analysis.

In order to get a good representation, sampled data was drawn from the four NEPA district offices in the zone .These districts comprises of Nassarawa and Dala both in Kano state, Katsina and Dutse districts in Katsina and Jigawa state respectively.

The respondents were selected through random sampling technique of equal number of employees (staff) and customers from the respective district offices.

3.1.2 OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

The document used in collecting the relevant data included:

i. Monthly returns/ Reports
ii Quarterly Reports
iii Annual Report
iv Seminar paper, Journals,Periodicals.

These documents contain facts and figures on marketing activities,performances and revenue collection. The use of just personal interview would not have provided sufficient information/data for this research work; thus, it made the use of the above stated documents necessary. For instance, experts' opinion on the emergence and development of the electricity industry would not have been obtainable without past records.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

The data collected through the use of the above named sources were presented and analyzed in chapter four. The responses to the interview on staff performances and customers' satisfaction over the period under study were presented in the subsequent chapter. This shows the trend of marketing activities in terms of cash collection, energy billed KWH (units), and amount (revenue) billed presented in tabular form.

CHAPTER IV

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter four dealt specifically with analysis of data collected through personal interviews with Staff and customers and data retrieved from official documents as well as telephone conversations with some of our esteemed customers around the zone.

There was a population of forty (40) respondents for this study consisting of twenty (20) customers who were further subdivided into ten (10) maximum demand (MD) customers and ten (10) non-maximum demand (non-MD) customers. The other twenty (20) was made up of the employees of the Authority who were also subdivided into ten (10) Senior Staff and ten (10) other marketing Staff.

Out of the customers' population (sample), when they were asked about the nature of their businesses, six (6) i.e. 30% of the maximum demand (MD) customers run manufacturing firms, example leather tanneries, plastic factories, oil mills, iron smelting factories etc.

Three (3) i.e. 15% were government parastatals and they are mostly the difficult customers and are highly indebted to the Authority. One making 5% out of the MD customers sampled was a residential customer.

From the above analysis therefore, a large number of MD customers are manufacturers and bulk of the Authority's revenue comes from this category of customers. The non-maximum demand (Non- MD) customers interviewed on the other hand had five (5) i.e. 25% purely residential, three (3) which is 15% uses their premises for both residential and commercial purpose, while the remaining two (2) i.e. 10% were purely commercial customers. These categories of customers are also indebted to the Authority due to their poor attitudes to settlement of bills. Among this category, the Authority foresee the likelihood that a greater percentage of their indebtedness has to be written-off because according to the research some of the accounts are demolished premises, abandoned accounts, crazy billing and the likes.

4.0.1 **CUSTOMERS RESPONSES**

The responses of customers interviewed on the question of power supply generally; 95% of the total customers interviewed expresses dissatisfaction over the epileptic power supply which affects their operations, damage their equipments/ installations and life generally. About 15% i.e. (3) MD customers said they had to close down their factory because they were operating at a lost due to the erratic supply. To some Non-MD customers, the situation is pathetic since they have to stay sometimes for days or even weeks without supply, infact they showed a greater dissatisfaction.

As regard the question of field Staff (Marketers) performance especially those in charge of billing non-MD customers, the responses were not encouraging. About 65% of these categories of customers complained that their meters were read only once or twice a year and this they said always leads to high estimations.

Apart from the expression of dissatisfaction by commercial customers, they also complained of being placed on high tariff, which makes their bills to be more than those of residential customers by far.

Still on this issue, (i.e. field staff performance) there were impressive commends from the MD customers about the performance of the marketers who they said don't fail to read their meters monthly but that the Authority needs to improve seriously on power supply so as to keep their businesses going.

Another borne of contention raised by the consumers was the issue of "Meter Maintenance Charge" (this is a kind of levy that is built into the customers' monthly

billing which is meant to be used for maintenance or replacement of the customers' meter in case of damage or theft), which about 85% of the customers contested that they don't see the rationale behind the Authority overburdening them with more charges (monthly, instead of once a year) when they're struggling to settle their normal bills.

Furthermore, most customers complained about the attitudes of some of the marketers as regard their work, customer relationship and the interest of the organization as a whole. They sited instances where staff were not patient to listen to their complains and where some Staff showed non-challant attitudes to distributing bills and reading customers' meter in designated or assigned areas.

The issue of the upward review of tariff was viewed with serious displeasure by all the respondents, this is because many complained of erratic supply and yet having to cope with outrageous bills every months.

4.02 **EMPLOYEES'RESPONSES**

The employees that were interviewed both face to face and through telephone conversation had the following responses.

First and foremost concerning meter readers' qualification, almost all of them i.e. 75% of those in charge of non-maximum demand meters are secondary school and

even primary school leavers; for that reason, most of them don't even have the basic requirement and marketing skills required to perform their duties.

Because of this, you find some of them picking wrong meter reading and sending same to the computer centers for capturing and lots of other mistakes that could be avoided by employing the qualified staff.

Secondly as regards performance, 35% of the employees interviewed attributed their poor performance to lack of necessary working tools, incentives, training and also the purder system being practice in this part of the country, which limits the extend they can go to read meters, place bills and also disconnect defaulting customers.

To paraphrase further on performance problem, there is dearth of the necessary working tolls, i.e., they complained of having to walk or trek long distances under the sun (without umbrellas) or in the rain (without rain coats) on many occasion trying to perform their responsibilities.

Besides that, there are no enough vehicles for cash drive, for that, you find them carrying ladders on their shoulders from one customer premises to the other so as to achieve a set target; the question posed at me by some of them was that, how can there be effective marketing/performance with all these inadequacies?

Similarly, regarding staff versus customers' relationship, five (5) numbers of staff constituting 25% of total number of employees interviewed complained bitterly of undue treatment or harassment by some consumers at the course of discharging their

responsibilities, especially during cash drive. They sited instances where some of them (marketers) were beaten while others were threatened with dangerous weapons; still, some thrown off the ladder in their attempt to discharge their responsibilities and yet without the Authority taking any serious step. All these and lots more they said affects the relationship between NEPA customers and staff and also the staff general performances.

Finally a concerned staff put across the following questions (reproduced) to the management.

1. Why do we allow customers to provide vehicles before we can clear faults affecting their supply lines? How much have we been able to manage our available resources?

2. Why are distribution materials not available? For instance we have used improvised fuses for too long and the result has been very devastating to staff moral and customers satisfaction.

3. In most cases, the customer's first contact with NEPA is through the fault rooms and dispatch centers, which remain as eyesore. What does it take to make these public reception centers decent?

4. If some of these customers' complaints are true, then, why are meters not read, bills not distributed, why do we have more crazy bills? Why are some

customers' payments not reflected in the next bill? NEPA owes its customers certain obligations.

5. We have mistakenly placed some customers on wrong tariff. Why is it difficult for necessary adjustments to be effected after investigations are carried out and found to be true?

The concerned staff at the end suggested that, Headquarters should issue proclamation that some of these things we consider irrelevant or take for granted be taken more seriously.

TABULAR PRESENTATION OF BILLING AND CASH COLLECTION

This technique enables us to ascertain the performance of the origin as it concerns billing and the actual cash collection. When we look at the figures on tab.1, we will discover that revenue billed increased in a geometrical progression for a period of three years and then it started declining. This was found to be due to some controllable and uncontrollable factors, which were considered.

TABLE 1 CASH COLLECTION FOR THE PERIOD UNDER STUDY.

PERIOD	ENERGY BILLED KWH	CASH COLLECTION ₦
1997	1,398,509,198	907,434,983
1998	1,483,788,098	963,453,973
1999	2,542,453,453	1,515,748,197
2000	2,202,137,116	1,523,356,030
2001	2,048,546,045	1,662,675,665
TOTAL	**9,675,433,910**	**6,572,668,848**

During the period under review, the total energy billed amounted to Nine billion, Six hundred Seventy-Five million Four hundred Thirty-Three thousand Nine hundred and Ten units (9,675,433,910 kwh units). But the actual cash collected amounted to only six billion five hundred and seventy two million six hundred and sixty-eight thousand, eight hundred and forty-eight naira. (6,572,668,848).

TABLE 2 PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN COLLECTION AT THE END OF EACH YEAR

PERIOD	CASH COLLECTION ₦	ANNUAL INCREASE ₦	PERCENTAGE INCREASE ₦
1997	907,434,983	---	---
1998	963,453,973	056,018,990	06.06%
1999	1,515,748,197	552,294,224	57.49%
2000	1,523,356,030	(7,607,833)	0.50%
2001	1,662,675,665	139,319,635	9.15%

Going by the figures on tab.2, it shows that cash collection increased during the first three years and dropped on the forth year, this shows the instability or fluctuation in collection due to obvious reasons.

TABLE 3 PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN AMOUNT (REVENUE) BILLED AT YEAR END

PERIOD	AMOUNT (REVENUE) BILLED ₦	ANNUAL INCREASE ₦	PERCENTAGE INCREASE ₦
1997	1,398,509,198	---	---
1998	1,483,788,098	85,278,900	6.10%
1999	2,542,453,453	1,058,665,355	71.35%
2000	2,202,137,116	(340,316,337)	-13,39%
2001	2,048,546,045	(153,591,071)	-6,98%

There was an increase in amount billed for the first three years under study, and then it decreased in the last two years under consideration. This is due to reduction in the number of customers billed and adjustment effected on accounts crazily billed.

TABLE 4 SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER POPULATION AND AVERAGE C COLLECTION PER CUSTOMER.

PERIOD	NO. OF CUSTOMERS ₦	CASH COLLECTION ₦	AVERAGE COLLECTION / CUSTOMER. ₦
1997	181,071	907,434,983	5,011.5
1998	186,783	963,453,973	5,152.8
1999	204,307	1,515,748,197	7,419.0
2000	197,865	1,523,356,030	11,129.0
2001	208,646	1,662,675,665	9,818.0

As more and more customers are being captured, this in returns all things being equal increases revenue collection; the periodic review in tariff also affects average collection per customer.

TABLE 5 PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN COLLECTION / CUSTOMER AT THE END OF EACH YEAR.

PERIOD	COLLECTION / CUSTOMERS ₦	ANNUAL INCREASE ₦	PERCENTAGE INCREASE ₦
1997	5,011,49	---	---
1998	5,152,79	141.30	2.82%
1999	7,418,97	2,266,18	44.98%
2000	11,129.0	3,710.0	50.0%
2001	9,818.0	-1,311.0	-11.8%

TABLE 6 SUMMARY OF BILLING AND COLLECTION

PERIOD	AMOUNT (REVENUE) BILLED ₦	CASH COLLECTION ₦	PERCENTAGE VARIANCE ₦
1997	1,398,509,198	907,434,983	35.1%
1998	1,483,788,098	963,453,973	35.1%
1999	2,542,453,453	1,515,748,197	40.1%
2000	2,202,137,116	1,523,356,030	30.8%
2001	2,048,546,045	1,662,675,665	18.8%

In business as we know, it is always difficult to eliminate debt completely; the debts are either good debt (collectable) or bad debt (uncollectible), for this reason the expected revenue is always higher than the actual.

4.3 CUSTOMERS SATSFACTION

Whether the customer is satisfied with the product or service depends on the product's performance in relation to the customer's expectations.

Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product or service perceived performance in relation to the customer's expectations. Based on this definition, satisfaction is a function of performance. If performance falls short of expectation, customers are dissatisfied and will seek satisfaction elsewhere. If it matches expectation, customers are satisfied and may or may not switch with an alternative offer elsewhere. And if satisfaction exceeds expectations, they are highly satisfied and are much less likely to switch. Therefore customers only get into an exchange relationship when they feel that utility derived matches the price he pays for the product/services. Where there's an imbalance to the customer's detriment, he switches over to close substitutes or discontinue consumption.

4.4 MEASURING SATISFACTION

Measurement is defined as "the assignment of numbers to characteristics of object or event according to rules, that is, a scale of measurement which allows comparisons of amount and changes in characteristics being measure is required" 12

In other words, measuring customers' satisfaction has to do with criteria used to determine the feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from the consumption of a product or service in relation to expectations.

The different categories of NEPA customers have different expectations; therefore, customers can only be satisfied if such expectations are met. From the finding residential customers wants constant power supply for everyday domestic use all year round; while some commercial and industrial users despite the fact that they need constant uninterrupted supply, may not loss if supply is interrupted outside working hours but factories which operates twenty-four hours insist on constant supply all the time. At any point the producer and consumer meets, an impression is created.

4.5 PROBLEM MILITATING AGAINST CASH COLLECTION.

Revenue as we know is the backbone of every organization. And there's no business that can survive without funds. In similar manner, National Electric Power Authority [NEPA] as a service outfit cannot survive without revenue. The sources of revenue have earlier been discussed. What we will focus on now are these factors that hamper revenue collection within the organization. These factors based on the research are divided into internal and external.

Internally the research revealed the following:

1. Shortage of operational materials:

Working materials such as vehicles, ladder, safety belts, cash receipting machines, meters, computers and so on according to the research are in short supply; therefore, the research discovered that this affects effective cash collection adversely since disconnection of defaulting customers cannot be effected without the above mentioned tools.

2. The northern culture:

As opined by the respondents, this was another big problem to marketers especially in the zone. With this system we know that a male who is not a member of a particular household is not permitted to enter the house in the absence of the owner (husband) of the house. This is a serious hindrance because when meter readers go to take the reading, distribute bills or disconnect, the male who are the bread winner must have gone out and the marketers reveal that for fear of harassment or frame up, they always go back without performing their duties. They therefore confirmed that most of outstanding of non-MD customers comes from such customers.

3. Load shedding:

This is a deliberate power interruption so as to effect maintenance or repairs on NEPA installations and or to bring relief to the equipments.The Research showed that when this happens collection in the affected area will have to drop. Load shedding could also be as a result of the following:

a. Power generation limitation due to low water level at the hydro stations:

b. Over aged plants and equipments crying out for refurbishment, failing which a total collapse of the system is imminent.

4. The Research also revealed that there's shortage of trained-man-power (marketers), particularly in areas of meter reading and billing and this has adversely affected marketing activities in the zone.

5.The study also discovered that, the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees depends on the importance laid on staff welfare by the management as this will boost the morals of the employee and encourage them to shun illegal practices like corruption, negligence of duty etc. It was discovered that some of these welfare packages if not given prompt attention can make the staff to device other means of meeting their need either by defrauding the Authority or exploiting the customer thereby affecting collection.

Externally the research also reveals the following factors to militate against cash collection:

6. Based on the research, vandalisation of NEPA installations and equipments by unpatriotic elements, erosion, accident, rainstorm and a host of other causes deprive the affected areas the comfort that light gives and thereby affecting cash collection negatively.

7. The issue of non settlement of bills was discovered by this piece of work to be a problem that affects cash collection. This has to do with customer who due to one reason or the other refuses to pay their bills, this lowers the amount of money (revenue) the marketing section is expected to collect in a particular month or

period. The research also reveals that unfortunately, government parastatals, ministries, agencies and military formation fall within this category of difficult customers. Worst still in this category are the bad debts which has to be written off by the Authority because the debtors' accounts either are demolished premises, abandon accounts, duplicate accounts etc and this was discovered to run into millions of naira.

These and a host of others were found to be seriously affecting revenue collection in the Authority generally.

4.6 ON-GOING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE REVENUE COLLECTION

Based on the aforementioned problems, the Authority as revealed by this study has adopted strategies to help combat the problem or to improve on cash collection. Some of these strategies include:

1. **Stability of supply:** There is a slogan that says "value for money" the Authority's priority therefore is to improve and stabilize Power Supply nation wide, this is through the effort being put in by the management through the construction of new generation stations, maintenance and repairs of the existing ones.

2. **The marketing sector,** which is the financial nerve center of the Authority is being given attention, this is because as about 95% of the commercial managers presently are graduates. Couple with these, working materials such as vehicles and

other operational materials are being provided to the various marketing section in the Zones to enhance their performance and efficiency.

3. **The problem of vandalisation** is now every citizen's affair. This is seen in instances where communities help the management to apprehend and arrest vandals. Vandalisation has cost the management some huge sums of money to tackle, e.g. erosion problem in south eastern part of the country and other natural disasters that affect NEPA installations and equipments.

4. **Staff welfare** have received a boost recently and this has help in checking/ reducing cases of cash leakages from the organization, corrupt practices such as extorting money from customers, nonchalant attitudes to work and lots of other illegal practices perpetuated by some staff has reduced, because employees gets their entitlements at least in good time: for that reason they don't risk the security of their job for sheer greed, though more needs to be done by the management to completely eliminate these ills.

5. Of recent the Federal Government contracted the services of private foreign companies in the management of NEPA's revenue cycle process. Revenue cycle management has to do with all those activities that have direct bearing with revenue collection. For instance, metering, billing, cash banking, customer relation, services etc. This is aimed at solving the perennial poor state of revenue collection process of the Authority.

These and a lot more other strategies have been put in place to improve on revenue collection for the survival of the organization.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Summarily, testimonies of professionals in the field of business all had credence to this philosophy that, "more organizations today do not just stop creating a functional marketing department but go further to transport the whole organization to be customer oriented" (Borah).

The degree at which an organization tries to satisfy the needs of her consumers determines her degree of success. This fact is appreciated in the definition of marketing by (Bagozi 1975), which emphasized the exchange relationship, where something of value is exchanged for some other thing of value (quid-pro-quo).

An examination of the marketing activities of NEPA, Kano Zone was made. The research revealed that the zone has the tendency to grow if the modern marketing concepts are properly put in place.

Marketing concept therefore, seeks out the needs/wants of target market and delivers the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors. This can

help to retain satisfied customers, on the other hand, dissatisfied customers poses a great danger to the organization.

The purpose of the research was to find lasting solution to customers' complaints about poor services which affect their businesses and life in general; there were also complaints about irregular billing, poor customer relation etc.

The reasons for declining revenue were discovered to be due to poor implementation of the marketing strategies, load shedding, vandalisation of **NEPA** installations and so on. Having identified the lapses, recommendations to improve the situation were proferred; some of which are, development of other sources of energy generation e.g. solar energy, tackling the vandalisation problem, most importantly adoption of modern marketing policies and techniques and many others.

CONCLUSION

The finding in this research work revealed that much is being done in order to fully implement that long neglected marketing strategies to the operation of the National Electrical Power Authority **(NEPA).**

There is, for instance, improvement in areas of power supply, Staff/customer relationship, billing, contracting of the **"revenue cycle management" (RCM)** and the like. The new billing system which has to do with paying for the units of energy you consume in advance, all this aimed at reducing customer indebtedness, inefficiency and improving revenue collection of the organization.

RECOMMENDATION

Power supply in Kano is monopolized, that is, there is no other source of power generation except **NEPA**. Therefore, in the light of the problem observed in the course of this research; the following suggestions were recommended for the improvement of **NEPA** services to their esteemed and numerous customers;

1. First and foremost, the issue of monopoly needs to be reconsidered. That is, by developing other sources of power generation e.g. solar energy or inviting private individuals/companies to compete with **NEPA** for efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Secondly, dynamic leadership/management and effective work-force, Human resources constitute the back borne of every organization. A well trained and positively motivated workforce is essential in the marketing of electricity, this runs from the selection of the top executives to the recruitment of field salesmen.

3. The organization should make sure modern marketing policies and strategies are implemented to the core, this relates to products/services and research and development.

4. Marketing environment: This affects the success of the organization as such, the organization should examine the environment under which it operates. That is, the organization's opportunities and threats.

5. More so, the authority should constitutes consumer consultative council which will serve as a forum for enlightening the general public on the activities of the organization; its goals and objectives as well as improving staff/ and customer relationship through exchanging of ideas on prevailing problems and ways of improving them.

6. Settlement of electricity bills: Once the awareness has been created it makes it easier for staff to operate, this is because they will get the full Corperation of the customers. Problem of the 'purdah system' in the zone which affects the effective operation of the marketing should also be tackled.

7. Last but not the least, the authority should review the connection (cost of meters) downward to enable our numerous customers purchase meters, in order to reduce the cases of illegal connections we have in the system.

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