

Marketing Challenges of Satisfying Consumers Changing Expectations and Preferences in a Competitive Market

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Abstract

In a prevalent business environment which is highly competitive, firms pay more attention to the needs of customers and offer them quality products to satisfy their ever-rising expectations. Marketers often face challenges from a rapidly changing market condition. Satisfying customers' ever-rising and changing expectations, discovering customers' current needs is a complex process. It involves translating the voice of the customer (VOC) into product features; translating the voice of the business (VOB) into generating profits, through new and improved products; translating the voice of the engineers (VOE) which deals with technical requirement and constraints into physical products. In fact, customer satisfaction and total quality management requires a company ability to accurately determine customer requirements and successfully transform these requirements into finished quality products. Customer satisfaction is considered to affect customer retention and therefore, profitability and competitiveness. This study examines the variables that pose as marketing challenges of satisfying consumers changing expectation and preferences in a competitive market, such as market turbulence, technology turbulence, general economy, competition, management training and intelligence response. The descriptive statistics and multiple regression were used to ascertain how these variables influence customers changing expectations and preferences.

Keywords: customer changing expectations, customer satisfaction, voice of the customer, competitive market, market turbulence, technology turbulence

1. Introduction

Customers' needs and expectations are always changing, and this will lead to a situation where customers keep setting ever higher standards, (Langerak et al., 1997). As most of consumers needs and wants are satisfied, they tend to look for more high quality, more expensive product that give and place them at a higher social class and status. Consequently, implementing customers' satisfaction philosophy means identifying customers, identifying their needs and expectations and finally measuring their perceptions, (Stenberg, 1997). All these indices points to market orientation.

Market orientation is the organization—wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across all departments, and organization—wide responsiveness to market intelligence (Narver & Slater, 1990; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Not being market oriented can be very costly to a business and can result to

- (a) high levels of customer complaints and expensive response mechanism,
- (b) maintaining expensive response mechanism,
- (c) maintaining expensive product attributes that are not valued by customers,
- (d) holding prices too low,
- (e) constantly investing in promotion and selling activities to win new business,
- (f) replacing those customers lost to competitors, and lost opportunities,
- (g) developing new markets from a platform of a secure customer base held in place by sustained service and quality performance (Harries & Piercy, 1997).

There has been a realization in the modern business world, that business undertakings should be customer oriented and marketers should pay close attention to the customers' needs and wants in order to achieve and maintain a successful business relationship (Sevensson, 2001).

Understanding customers changing expectations is critical for a firm's superior performance and long term success in today's highly competitive business environment. Customer expectations have been consistently acknowledged in the literature as the basis on which product/service quality and customer satisfaction judgment are formed, (Oliver, 1993, Parasurman et al, 1988). Customers evaluate quality by comparing their expectations with their perceptions of the product performance. If the product quality meets customer expectation, the customer is said to be satisfied, when the product quality exceeds customer expectation, the customer is said to be delighted, (Oswald et al, 2004). In addition, if the product fails to meet customers' expectation, the customer is dissatisfied and there may be no repeat purchase in a competitive market.

Customer satisfaction has become one of the key issues for companies in their efforts to improve quality in the competitive market place. According to Jones and Sasser (1995), complete customer satisfaction is the key to securing customer loyalty and generating superior long term financial performance. Customer satisfaction occurs when perception of product performance matches expectations that are at, or above, the minimum desired performance level. It is also apparent that high customer satisfaction leads to the strengthening of the relationship between a customer and a company and this deep sense of collaboration has been found to be profitable. A highly satisfied customer stays loyal, longer, buys more as the company introduces new products and upgrades existing products, talks favourably about the company and its products, pays less attention to competing product brands and is less sensitive to price, offers products ideas to the company, and costs less to serve (Kotler, 2002).

Doyle (1995) posits that customers who are satisfied with the value being provided repurchase the product and this result in better economic performance, increase market share and profitability for an organization. According to him, the most appropriate measure of performance is customer satisfaction.

An organization should always guarantee satisfying its customers current and future needs by showing commitment, creating value in the product, encouraging customers comments and complaints, collecting relevant information, sharing information among various departments of the company and taking relevant managerial action based on the collected information.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is not possible to anticipate and react to customers' needs and desires without a complete understanding of consumer behaviour. Discovering customers' current needs is a complex process (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Customers' needs are not restricted to product features. A product is anything a consumer acquires or might acquire to meet a perceived need. Consumers are generally buying need satisfaction, not physical product attributes. Customer needs also include types and sources of information about the product, outlets where the product is available, the price of the product, services associated with the product, the image of the product or firm and even where and how the product is produced. This typically involves consumer research (particularly focus groups and depth interviews) as well as logical and intuition, (Hawkins et al., 2001). These need sets are often associated with other variables such as age, stage in the household life cycle, gender, social class, ethnic group or lifestyle. Satisfaction can change with consumers' needs and preferences. A product that is perfectly acceptable one month ago, can fail to satisfy the customer the next month, as lifestyle, tastes and need changes.

Customer dissatisfaction is caused by a failure of the product performance. Customer dissatisfaction is, in part, a function of the disparity between his/her expectations and perceived product performance. Unrealistic consumer expectations created by promotional exaggeration can contribute to consumer dissatisfaction. The meaning and possible types of expectations have generated controversy and considerable debate (Brown et al., 1993).

Again, customer satisfaction is an elusive concept. Satisfaction is defined as "the consumers' response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product after its consumption (Tse & Wilson, 1988).

This overarching comparison standards paradigm of consumer satisfaction is currently being challenged (Lemon et al., 2002). For instance, if consumers initially have low expectations, then they can easily be satisfied by a mediocre, if not a poor performance. That is, this theory predicts that a consumer who expects and receives poor performances will be satisfied.

The customer satisfaction paradigm assumes that consumers compare their past product/service cost and benefit experiences to their current expectations to form satisfaction judgments (which are a function of the difference between their past and the present experiences and expectations). These statements may not significantly explain customer behaviour and satisfaction. Research conducted at service firms e.g. insurance, beauty parlours, Airlines etc, reveals that meeting customer expectations on the basis of performance reliability does not improve loyalty behaviours beyond a certain point—that is, loyalty quickly reaches an asymptote without increasing thereafter (Schneider & Bowden, 1999). Satisfied customers can still and do defect (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

Lemon et al. (2002) contend that customer satisfaction can be influenced not only by one's past expectations and experiences but also by one's future expectations of benefits and anticipated regret.

Today's informed and much sophisticated customers look beyond the mere satisfaction of their desires (Spreng et al., 1996). They seek unique experiences from their buyer—seller interactions (Vandenbosch & Dawar, 2002). They also look for the unique experiences of co-creating the product with producer—consumer engagement, (Pralhad & Ramaswanry, 2003). Consumers today seek much more than a product or service to satisfy them, they want an engagement, an experience, an excitement and in sum, they want consumer delight (Keiningham & Vavra, 2002).

Consumer delight is the reaction of customers when they receive a service or product that provides unexpected value or unanticipated satisfaction. Customer delight is a strong, positive and emotional reaction to a product or service. The questions that beg for answers are what are the causes of customers changing expectations and preferences and what marketing strategies can be adopted to overcome the problems of consumer dissatisfaction.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine the challenges in satisfying consumer changing expectations / preferences in a competitive markets.
- 2) To ascertain the factors that result in consumers changing expectations and preferences.
- 3) To ascertain market orientation variables that facilitates the satisfaction of consumer changing expectations / preferences in a competitive market.

1.3 Hypothesis Formulation

Ho: Market turbulence, technology turbulence, general economy, consumer information, interdepartmental connectedness, intelligence responsiveness, competition and management training does not affect consumers satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Expectation and Satisfaction

Consumers' expectations affect how certain product features are likely to be perceived and evaluated. Long before we make a final purchase, we build expectations about desired products, the benefits they will provide and the needs they should fulfill. The moment a product is purchased and used, we begin to judge it. The level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction we experience depends upon how well the products performance meets our expectations (Harold et al., 1997). If it performs as or better than expected, we are happy, if it falls short of our expectations we are not happy.

Customer satisfaction has been defined as the result achieved when product features respond to customer needs and when the company meet or exceed customer expectations over the life time of the product (Juran, 1991).

Creating satisfied customers, and thus future sales, requires that customers continue to believe that the brand meets their needs and offer superior value after they have used it. This means that the marketer must deliver as much or more value than the consumers initially expected and it must be enough to satisfy their needs (Hawkins et al., 2001). This requires an even greater understanding of consumer behaviour.

According to Harold et al. (1997), satisfaction is not easily measured for a number of reasons. First, it means different things to different people. While some are quick to complain about even minor shortcomings, others are more tolerance. The exact same level of performance can be judged either satisfactory or unsatisfactory, depending upon the person experiencing it.

Secondly, level of satisfaction can change, for better or worse, over time. In some situation, we know immediately if a product meets our expectations—a new pair of running shoes feels great during the first few weeks of wear. In others, it takes time to make that judgment—the same shoes wear down too quickly at heels and are soon too uncomfortable for jogging.

Thirdly, satisfaction can change with consumers' needs and preferences. A product that is perfectly acceptable one month ago, can fail to satisfy the next, as lifestyle, tastes or needs change. All these issues complicate not only how but when satisfaction is best measured.

To narrow the gap between expectations and product experience, the first step is to understand exactly what benefits whether they are promised by the marketer or are not expected by consumers. In other words, the marketer must discover which requirements the products actually meet and which it does not. To do this, it is useful to classify products experiences into three types, according to the degree to which the consumers' expectations are fulfilled. This is known as expectancy disconfirmation (Harold et al., 1997).

- i. Simple confirmation: The purchase performs as expected, resulting in satisfaction.
- ii. Positive disconfirmation: Performance is better than expected, leading to a high level of satisfaction.
- iii. Negative disconfirmation: The purchase falls short of expectations, resulting in dissatisfaction.

Negative disconfirmation is particularly interesting. It has been found that if there is a wide negative disparity between expectation and actual performance; customers tend to magnify this poor performance. This is known as the contrast effect, (Harold et al., 1997). Due to the contrast effect, the level of dissatisfaction can seem out of proportion with the level of poor performance.

Additionally, there is an extensive difference between the loyalty of merely satisfied customers and those who are completely satisfied. Customers who are first satisfied find it easy to switch suppliers when a better offer comes along. Consequently, the significance of customer satisfaction is emphasized in markets where competition is intense (Kotler, 2004; Jones & Sassar, 1995).

A company must periodically measure customer satisfaction in order to learn how satisfied its customers are. Customer satisfaction is one of the key elements in total quality management (TQM), an approach that emphasizes overall satisfaction through continuous improvement of products.

2.2 Market Orientation and Customer Satisfaction

Market orientation has been characterized as a culture of the organization that requires customer satisfaction been put at the center of business operation (Liu et al., 2002), and therefore produces superior value for customers and outstanding performance for the firm (Day, 1994, Narver & Slater, 1990). Customer needs and expectations evolve over time and delivering consistently high quality products and services, are imperative. Consequently, responsiveness to changing market place needs, become important for the success of firms (Jaworski & Kohli 1993). Responsiveness to changing market needs often calls for the introduction of new products and services together with innovation capacity for a firm.

Market orientation has also been described as the implementation of marketing activities designed to satisfy customers' needs, better than competitors are able to satisfy customer needs (Martin & Grback, 2003).

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) developed the intelligence perspective of market orientation. They viewed market orientation as the implementation of the marketing concept. According to them, market orientation is a mixture of three activities.

- i. Organization of market intelligence pertaining to current and future needs of the consumer.
- ii. Dissemination of intelligence within the organization.
- iii. Intelligence responsiveness

The analysis of the above elements resulted in the following arguments that are notable in their perspective of market orientation.

- (a) Effective market intelligence involves not just customers' current needs but also future needs and so it should go beyond the verbalized needs and preferences of customers.
- (b) Market intelligence also includes monitoring competitors' actions and their effect on customer preferences as well as analyzing the effect of other factors such as government regulation, technology and environmental forces.
- (c) The generation of market intelligence relies on both formal and informal mechanisms such as customers' surveys, meetings and discussions with customers and formal market research. The validity and reliability of instrument used for these research posses challenges
- (d) Intelligence generation is not the exclusive responsibility of the marketing department. Consequently, all functional departments in the company such as R and D, Manufacturing and Finance, Production and engineering should also obtain information regarding customers and competitors.

- (e) The collected information should be disseminated effectively and efficiently in all parts of the organization.
- (f) The company should respond according to market needs. Responsiveness takes the form of selecting target markets, designing and offering products/services that cater to customers current and anticipated needs, and producing, distributing and promoting the products in a way that elicit favourable end-user response.

2.3 Customer Value Chain Innovation and Customer Satisfaction

The concept of customer values chain involvement implies that the target customers of a firm should be exposed to the value chain of the firm, that is, exposed to its persons, process, products and brands and to their networking relationships. This exposition is not passive like the spectator audience of a trade show but rather it is an active interaction and participation with all players and elements of the value chain, as long as this innovation adds value to its customers and its products. It is the competitive experience of co-creating the product with the company, (Pralhad & Ramswamy, 2003). It is the experiences of co-producing and co-owning the product (Lengnic-Hall 1996). The added value to the producers are the insights from customer interaction and participation continuous feedback, co-reactions and co-ownership of products, customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer delight, the loyalty that comes from such interaction and the positive referrals that results from happy and delighted customers (Oswald et al., 2004).

Basically, any person, process, product or brand that adds value (tangible or intangible) to a product or service constitutes a value chain. Typical persons that add value to a product or services, whether new or old, are corporate executives, creditors and shareholders, engineers and employers, suppliers and consultants, customers, marketers, and channel partners (Sawhney & Zabin, 2002).

2.4 Customer Knowledge Management and Customer Satisfaction

Gilbert et al. (2002) opined that one of the strategies of customers' satisfaction is customer knowledge management. They stressed that this concept can be explained in three perspectives

- i. Managers should understand the needs of customers in order to address them. This is "knowledge about customers".
- ii. The information needs of the customers in their interaction with the firm are "knowledge for customers".
- iii. Customers' knowledge about the products and services they use. This "knowledge from customers" is valuable as it brings into measures to improve products and services.

Gilbert et al. (2002) further explained the concept of customer knowledge management as depicted in the table below:

Table 1. The concept of customer knowledge management

Variables	Customer Knowledge Management (CKM)
Knowledge sought	Customers experience, creativity, (dis)satisfaction with products/services
Axioms	"If only we knew what our customers know"
Rationale	Gaining knowledge directly from the customer, as well as sharing and expanding the knowledge
Objectives	Collaboration with customers for joint value creation
Metrics	Performance against competitors in innovation and growth, contribution to customer success
Benefits	Customers satisfaction
Recipient of incentives	Customer
Role of customers	Active, partner in value creation process
Corporate role	Emancipate customers from passive recipients of products to active co-creators of value.

Source: Gilbert et al., 2002.

The customer knowledge management for innovative product development can also be depicted as shown below. The emphasis is on customer satisfaction.

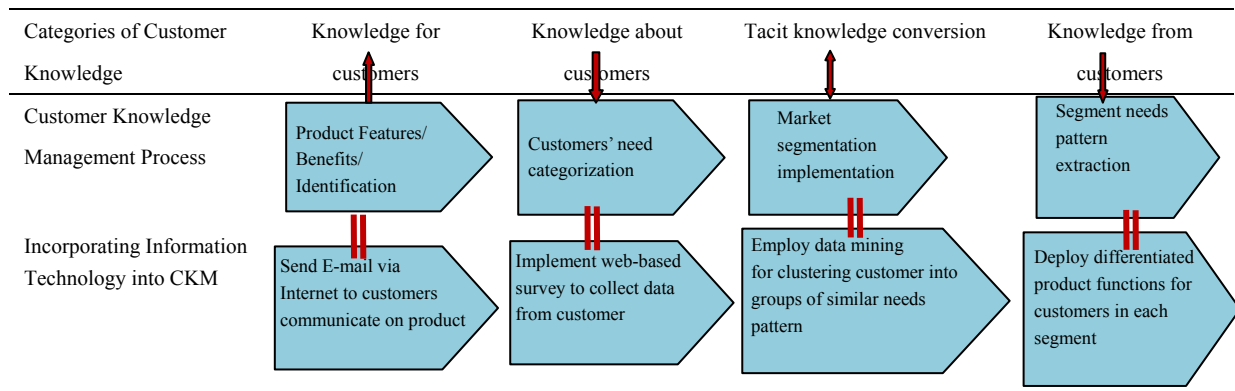


Figure 1. The E-CKM model as applied in customer knowledge management for innovation product development

Source: Su et al., 2006.

1) *Product Features/Benefit Identification*: “Benefit” is defined as the needs a customer wants satisfied from purchasing and using a product (Su et al., 2006). After a new product idea is conceived, the firm identifies potential product benefits in terms of a customer’s perceived value, in the form of features, functions and other attributes which can be communicated to the customers. This means, at this stage, the firm delivers product knowledge for the customers. Each customer may make response based on her / his own attitudes towards these features or benefits, via a bi-directional communication channel like personal interviews, phone interviews, self administered questionnaire etc.

Information technology can improve communication efficiency and effectiveness by including product knowledge in the self administered questionnaire and e-mailed it to the customers or by sending an e-mail to customers and persuading them to answer the survey instrument posted on a predetermined website.

2) *Customer Needs Categorization*: A questionnaire provides response from customer about their attitude, preference, needs and perceived value for product features offered. If a company wants to suggest products to target customers, a method should be developed for segmenting customers in the study, based on their pattern of needs towards a set of potential benefits existing in the product.

The next step would be categorization of the customers’ needs. The firm obtains knowledge ‘about’ the customers by understanding the customers’ background needs and preference pattern towards product attributes.

Roofing sheets product used in high temperate regions may differ from those used in low temperate regions.

3) *Market Segmenting for Converting Tacit Customer Knowledge into Codified Knowledge*: Recent studies shows that benefit based or needs based segmentation methodology is the most appropriate, if taking into account the overall performance (Kamakura & Wedel, 2000). The point is that demographic segmentation simply describes customers’ behaviour, but fails to enlighten the reasons why it is, while the benefits a product delivers can change the customers’ attitude towards the product (Halley, 1985).

Through communication by web-based survey, a company is able to make use of knowledge “for” customers and perform the appropriate market segmentation mission.

At this stage the tacit customer knowledge, discrete among the individual customers is elicited and gathered and it can be converted into explicit customer knowledge desired company.

4) *Customer Needs Pattern Extraction*: After finishing segmentation, the characteristics of the customers’ needs in each segment should be studied in order to extract the needs patterns in each segment.

The knowledge, therefore, ‘from’ customers enables the firm to target the right market segments. It also allows them to make the right strategic business decisions. Knowledge from customers helps the company to fine tune the original definition of the product, put priorities for product attributes to be developed, advance the functionality of the desired product features and rule out product features in which the customers show no interest, that lead to product low acceptance.

2.5 Variables that Affect the Satisfaction of Customer Changing Expectations and Preferences

According to Jaworski and Kohli (1993), the satisfaction of customer changing expectations has attracted some challenges with respect to such constraining factors as:

1) Market Turbulence

Jaworski and Kohli (1993) defined market turbulence as the nature of change in the composition of customers and their preferences. Companies do not have to develop a market orientation if it operates in a familiar, stable and predictable market. However, a problem arises when markets do not remain stable or predictable all the time and thus a company should take more effort to cope with this instability and unpredictability.

Jaworski and Kohli (1993) asserted that organization that operate in the more turbulent markets are likely to modify their products and services continually in order to satisfactorily cater to customers changing preferences.

2) Technology Turbulence

The correct manufacturing technologies can provide the organization with considerable operational and competitive benefits (Sohal, 1995). Grewal and Tansuhai (2001) opined that both the pace and degree of innovations and changes in technology induce technological uncertainty. Technological turbulence should be identified as an antecedent in determining the level of customer orientation of an organization in competitive market (Hages & Wheelwright, 1984).

3) General Economy

Economic conditions of a country have an impact on spending power and behaviour of the customers of that country. As consumer income bracket increases, they tend to look for more high quality, more expensive products that give and place them at a higher social class and status. It is justifiable to consider the general economy of the country when determining the level of market orientation (Slater & Narver, 1994).

4) Gathering and analyzing accurate information of customers' current and future needs

In order to serve the market better than competitors, there must be availability of all the various kinds of information regarding existing and latest needs and wants of the customers and the factors affecting the fulfillment of those needs and wants. An effective and efficient market intelligence, appropriate data gathering and data analysis techniques must be used.

5) Sharing existing and anticipating information throughout the organization

Total quality management (TQM) that aim at satisfying the needs and wants of the customer is a task that must be done by all departments. Thus, there must be an effective and efficient sharing of existing and anticipating information throughout the organization. There must be cooperation and collaboration of all the departments in the organization as effort to satisfy the changing expectations of the customers. This is because the organization is a system made up of different departments and no one department can operate successfully in isolations of other departments. Responding effectively to a market need requires participations of all departments in an organization. There must be interdepartmental connectedness and interdepartmental conflict must be avoided.

6) Intelligence Responsiveness

Intelligence responsiveness means taking action based on the information gathered about the customer. It is one thing to gather the accurate and right information about the customer; it is another to implement them.

Intelligence responsiveness involves developing, designing, implementing, and altering products and services in response to customers' current and future needs (Jaworski & Kohli 1993).

7) Competition

Organizations succeed in a competitive market place over the long run because they can produce better products or services or can do certain things their customers value better than their competitors (Porter, 1998).

Jobber (1998) opined that competitor analysis seeks to answer five key questions.

- (a) Who are our competitors?
- (b) What are their strength and weakness?
- (c) What are their strategic objectives and thrust?
- (d) What are their strategies?
- (e) What are their response patterns?

According to him, competitive information can be obtained from marketing research surveys, recruiting competitor's employees and distributors, stripping down competitors' products and gathering competitors' sales literature. A company's competitive strategy consists of the business approaches and initiatives it undertakes to attract customers and fulfill their expectations, to withstand competitive pressures and to strengthen its market position.

8) Management Training

Training programs help marketing managers not only to develop the skills of serving customers but also ensure that they serve customers better and differently than their competitors.

Morgan and Piercy (1991) argued that senior management with high levels of management training tend to pay more attention to market evolution, environmental changes and how a company's resources can be utilized. Lack of training is one of the factors that inhibit customers' satisfaction in particular and marketing in general (Harris & Piercy, 1997).

3. Methodology

Data for this research article was collected using questionnaire survey. A sample size of 120 senior staff (marketing managers, production managers and sales representatives) from roofing sheet product industry in Delta, Edo, Enugu States in Nigeria was used, based on stratified sampling technique from the three categories of senior staff. A descriptive statistics was used to determine the variables that affect satisfying customers changing expectations in roofing sheet product industry which has become very competitive. A 5 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was adopted. Out of the 120 questionnaire, only 95 was found useful for the research work.

The multiple regression analysis was in addition used to determine the extent to which eight independent variables affect satisfying consumers changing expectation and preferences.

Decision rule for the Descriptive Analysis

If mean < 2.5 the respondents agree

If mean \geq 2.5 the respondents do not agree.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the variables that affect the satisfaction of customers changing expectations and preferences

S/N	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Market Turbulence		
	i. It is not possible to offer new products all the time, if our customers' product expectations and preferences change overtime	1.9	0.8
	ii. Lack of resources, lack of proper technology, government regulations and political unrest in the country hinders responds to consumers changing expectations and preferences	2.3	0.7
	iii. Market turbulence has no role in determining the level of market orientation.	3.2	1.0
	iv. Organizations that operate in a more turbulent market are likely to modify their products and services continually in order to satisfactorily cater for customers changing preferences.	1.5	0.6
	Mean	2.23	
2.	Technology Turbulence		
	i. Replacing old machinery in order to provide better quality products and meeting the competition, result in customer satisfaction.	1.7	1.2
	ii. Rapid technological changes supplement market orientation.	1.8	0.8
	iii. Rapid technological development is beyond employees' capacity in Nigeria; it is only possible in advanced countries.	2.8	1.1
	iv. Innovation and creativity helps in customer satisfaction.	1.5	0.8
	v. Technological orientation is an alternative means to market orientation in building sustainable competitive advantage.	3.2	1.0
	Mean	2.20	
3.	General Economy		
	i. Our customers always look for better quality product with no extra cost.	2.57	0.86
	ii. Weak economic conditions attract more market orientation.	1.98	0.74
	iii. Government inconsistent policies affect effective market orientation.	1.96	0.65
	iv. Market orientation improve standard of living of consumers.	1.8	0.8
	Mean	2.08	

4.	Gathering and Analysing Accurate Information of Customers' Needs		
i.	Information about customers in relation to their earnings, savings, standard of living and education help to satisfy the customer, as these variables influence their consumption patterns.	1.5	0.8
ii.	Survey is not very important before production.	3.22	1.90
iii.	The extents to which a company obtains and uses information from customers determine the level of market orientation.	1.8	0.82
iv.	Information on the customer must be deeply rooted on the set values and beliefs of the customer.	1.22	0.42
v.	The best time of survey is during purchase to see their reaction about the product	1.28	1.18
	Mean	1.81	
5.	Sharing of existing and Anticipated Information throughout the Organisation (Interdepartmental Connectedness)		
i.	Interdepartmental connectedness fosters market orientation.	1.61	0.73
ii.	Interdepartmental conflict is an obstacle for market oriented activities of a company.	1.22	0.42
iii.	Production work for marketing, marketing work for finance.	1.64	0.83
iv.	Cooperation and collaboration of all departments on product/service quality is a competitive advantage.	1.28	0.45
	Mean	1.44	
6.	Intelligence Responsiveness/Taking Action		
i.	In order to be responsive to the needs and wants of the market place, an organization should implement and execute its corporate strategy.	2.39	1.76
ii.	Companies should execute well coordinated decisions with a sense of commitment.	2.00	1.41
iii.	In order to be market oriented, a company should focus on responding to customers' needs and wants as well as disseminating information.	1.28	0.45
iv.	Responding to customer needs and wants lead to business success.	1.86	0.76
v.	Top management of the organization must commit the organization to customer satisfaction, by ensuring total participation of the human resources.	2.00	0.89
	Mean	1.91	
7.	Competition		
i.	Quality products, new product development and better promotional activities are competitive advantage.	1.98	0.75
ii.	Company's comparison of their success to that of stronger competitors challenges the company to serve customers better.	2.25	1.18
iii.	Prompt response to competitor offensive and aggressive move; help the company to keep its customers and not to lose them to competitors.	1.22	0.42
iv.	Competition contributes positively in determining the level of market orientation of a company.	2.20	0.66
v.	In order to gain competitive advantage, a company should design offers that satisfy targeted customer needs better than competitors.	2.25	1.18
vi.	Collections of information about competitors help to understand their abilities, strategies and current and future activities.	1.64	0.83
	Mean	1.92	
8.	Management Training		
i.	Training programs help marketing manager not only to develop the skills of customers but also ensure that they serve customer better and differently than their competitors.	1.64	0.83
ii.	Reliance on outside, trained managers do not give effective market orientation.	1.81	0.82
iii.	Lack of training is one of the factors that inhibit marketing, that is, limited training to marketing staff is a barrier to customer satisfaction.	1.22	0.42
iv.	Training help to update and upgrade employees regarding competitors' products, strategies and activities and also help them to deal with and face challenges.	2.25	1.18
	Mean	1.73	

3.1 Discussion of Findings of Descriptive Analysis

The result of the analysis of the eight variables shows that they affect the satisfaction of consumers in a competitive market, specifically in the roofing sheet product industry.

Based on the decision rule earlier stated, a "mean" less than 2.50, shows that the respondents agreed that such variable influenced customer satisfaction, consequently, if not properly handled, they inhibit satisfying customer expectations and preferences.

Consequently, the result of each of the eight variables stands as follows. Market turbulence (2.23<2.50), technology (2.20<2.50); general economy (2.08<2.50) information of customers needs (1.81<2.50), sharing of existing and anticipated information to all department (1.44<2.50), intelligence responsiveness (1.91<2.50), competition (1.92<2.50), management training (1.73<2.50).

Deducing from the nature of the questions, if these variables are not properly managed, they pose a great threat to the satisfaction of the consumer. For example, market turbulence has to do with the rate of change in the composition of customers and their preferences. The challenge here is that, an organization that operate in a more turbulent market are likely to modify their products and services continually in order to satisfactory cater for customers changing preferences (Mean 1.5 < 2.50). Where this is not effective, customers would defect to competitors' products, and market share is reduced.

Again, replacing old machinery facilitates producing quality products efficiently resulting in economics of scale, thereby satisfying the customer (1.7 < 2.5). Old machines produce products with defects and also limited output.

More so, information about customers that influence their consumption patterns, also affects their satisfaction (1.5 < 2.50). This information among others is changes in their earnings, savings, education, standard of living etc.

It is again revealed that cooperation and collaboration of the entire department (total quality management) is a pointer to customer satisfaction (1.28 < 2.50).

The above revelations are in line with the assertion of Narver and Slatear (1990), Kohli and Jaworski (1990), who pointed out that, not being market oriented, can be very costly to a business and can result to high level of customer complaints and expensive response mechanism, maintaining expensive product attributes that are not valued by customers.

3.2 Regression

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

	Mean	STD Deviation	N
Consumer satisfaction	2.73	.54863	95
Market turbulence	2.23	.19426	95
Technology turbulence	2.20	.43253	95
General economy	2.08	.41251	95
Accurate information	1.18	.36208	95
Interdepartmental connectedness	1.44	.50523	95
Intelligence responsiveness	1.91	.45426	95
Competition	1.92	.44986	95
Management training	1.73	.38878	95

Table 4. ANOVA of regression

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f	Sig.
Regression	8.618	8	1.078	14.958	.000 ^a
Residual	6.305	87	.072		
Total	14.923	95			

a. Predictors: (Constant) markturb, techturb, Geneco, accuinfor, interconnet, intellresp, comp, mgnetrain

b. Dependent variable: Consumer Satisfaction

Table 5. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.284	.195		16.774	.000
Marturb	.481	.239	.143	2.015	.045
Techturb	.568	.111	.313	5.130	.000
Geneco	.275	.083	.207	3.300	.001
Accuinfor	.269	.077	.220	3.511	.001
Interconnet	.338	.144	.325	2.339	.002
Comp	.936	.065	.431	7.441	.000
mgmtrain	.797	.171	.260	4.670	.000

Dependent Variable: Consumer Satisfaction.

The F-value of 14.958 at $P = .000$, shows the existence of significant collective effective of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The eight independent variables (market orientation variables) have effect on consumer changing expectation satisfaction. In other words there is a significant relationship between these variables and consumer satisfactions. The p.values of each of the variables is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

4. Summary and Conclusion

Understanding customers changing expectations and preferences is critical for a firm's superior performance and long term success in today's highly competitive business environment.

It is apparent that high customer satisfaction leads to the strengthening of the relationship between a customer and a company and this deep sense of collaboration has been found to be profitable.

There are different challenges that may affect the satisfaction of the customer but if properly handled, a company can still remain an industry leader in a competitive market. These challenges among others include market and technology turbulence, general economy, intelligence responsiveness, competition etc.

The road map to overcoming some of these challenges involve eliciting knowledge for customers, knowledge about customers, knowledge from customers and tacit knowledge conversion. The different knowledge helps in understanding customer changing expectation and preferences.

5. Recommendations

- 1) Accurate information gathering that point to knowledge for the customers, knowledge about customer and knowledge from the customer is imperative in customer satisfaction. This knowledge helps the marketer to know why, when and how consumer expectations and preferences are changing.
- 2) Innovation and creativity in line with customer changing expectations and preferences facilitates customer satisfaction. Competitive strategy is about being different (Porter, 1998). Organization succeed in a competitive market place over the long run because they can produce better product or service or can do certain things their customers value better than their competitors.
- 3) In every business there is element of risk. Generally, life is an embodiment of challenges. Marketing managers should not see market and technological turbulence as a marketing threat. The solution to every problem is in the problem. There should be a continual modification of products and services to cater for customers changing preferences. Customer satisfaction is vital to customer retention and to the success of the organization and profitability.
- 4) An organization is a system like the human body. No one part of the body can work effectively in isolation of the other parts. There should be cooperation and collaboration of all departments on product/service quality which serve as a road map to customer satisfaction.
- 5) There should be quick response to customer complaints. This involves intelligence responsiveness and management taking action on customers' requirement.
- 6) Competencies have to be consciously built and developed through management training, if customers are to be satisfied.

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