

## CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A PANACEA FOR ORGANIZATIONAL WELLBEING AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The development of Nigeria has been, and still is, a subject of intense national debate and a concern to many. Though, national development has multidisciplinary approach, we draw from and argue that customer behaviour should extend beyond just patronage but positive citizen behaviour. The aim of this paper therefore, is to advance organizational wellbeing as a potent precursor of development in Nigeria; and suggesting how customers citizenship behaviours - affiliation, positive word of mouth, sportsmanship and suggestion for improvement acts as driver to building sustainable social order for organizational wellbeing, which in turn, drive national development.*

*Keywords: Customer citizenship behaviour, development, organizational wellbeing, Nigeria.*

### Introduction

The question of development has remained a perennial one in Nigeria. Individuals and groups representing various interests and professional orientation have offered opinions and ideas aimed at providing adequate solutions to the problem. Developmental economists argue that the key to Nigeria's development is in the effective and efficient production and distribution of goods and services (Gbosi & Amadi, 2017); while science and technology experts contend that Nigeria's development depend on investment in science and technology, basing their argument on the conviction that scientific and technological backwardness is the bane of Nigeria's development. Nonetheless, successive governments have lunched several developmental plans and instituted reforms with a view to kick-starting Nigeria's development (Olowookere, 2012). These developmental initiatives and reforms notwithstanding, Nigeria's development have remained illusory; the simple explanatory factor for this phenomenon is that, business organizations, the entities upon which the development of nations rest, are yet to achieve optimal wellbeing in their operations.

The liberalization of the financial sector is an important policy thrust developing and developed

economies could adopt in view of its nexus with market-determined economic growth and development (Gbosi & Amadi, 2017). Several developing nations have already adopted financial liberalization and free market system to steer development. Gbosi and Amadi (2017) citing Shaw and Mckinnon (1973) contend that "savings are increased by financial liberalization policies that encourage investment, and result to economic growth; arguing that the result of increased interest rates caused by liberalization brings about proper resource allocation, greater investment and economic growth". Barack Obama, the former president of the United States of America dramatizes the benefit of market-based economies when he states that:

*"In those nations with market-based economies, suddenly union movements developed; and health and safety and commercial regulations were instituted; and access to public education was expanded; and social welfare systems emerged, all with the aim of constraining the excesses of capitalism and enhancing its ability to provide opportunity not just to some but to all people. And the result was unmatched*

*economic growth and a growth of the middle class”.*

The rationale of liberalization is the substitution of rigid regimes with market-based policies, with prices that depict economic costs, and which anchors national development on the private sector (Bhadura, 2005). Liberalization positively affects an economy by bringing foreign direct investments and halting capital flight (Akpan, 2004). Financial liberalization in Nigeria has also considered the capital market in view of its role in economic growth and development. Olurotimi, (2008) in Gbosi and Amadi (2017) further stressed that “efficient capital market mobilization and allocation of surplus funds to deficit units of the economy mean that funds would not remain idle and unproductive”. Financial liberalization also provides foreign investors the opportunity to invest in the domestic market (Gbosi & Amadi, 2017). Hence, with financial liberation, business firms can access funds both at home and abroad, and invest same for the furtherance of the wellbeing of the firm.

However, business organizations do not rely only on their financial strength for survival, they also rely heavily on the market, especially the customers they serve. Without customer equity, a firm cannot endure long in the business-scape. Customer equity in terms of value, brand and relationship is what confer competitive advantage on firms; and further their wellness. As competition intensifies

and customers become more knowledgeable, maintaining current customers and acquiring new ones at little or no cost is what business firms crave for. This is due to the realisation that loyal customers perform citizenship behaviours that are not required for the perfection of service deliveries, but which are beneficial to the firm.

The concept of citizenship is proper to civics and political science and administration; but was imported to organizational behaviour studies through the work of Katz (1964) where it was used to represent discretionary behaviours of employees that are not recognised by the reward system of a firm; but which promotes the effectiveness of the firm. Marketing scholars then extended the concept of citizenship to the service marketing discourse and used it to describe unsolicited charitable behaviours of customers that are advantageous to the firm. Customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) thus represent the perception customers hold about their affinity with a firm and the positive volitional behaviours they extend to the firm and its employees which are outside their role expectations, but which are beneficial to the firm. Positive word-of-mouth, display of affiliation, sportsmanship and suggestions for service improvements are common CCBs. The focus of this paper, is to assess the role of CCB in promoting organizational wellbeing and economic development in Nigeria.

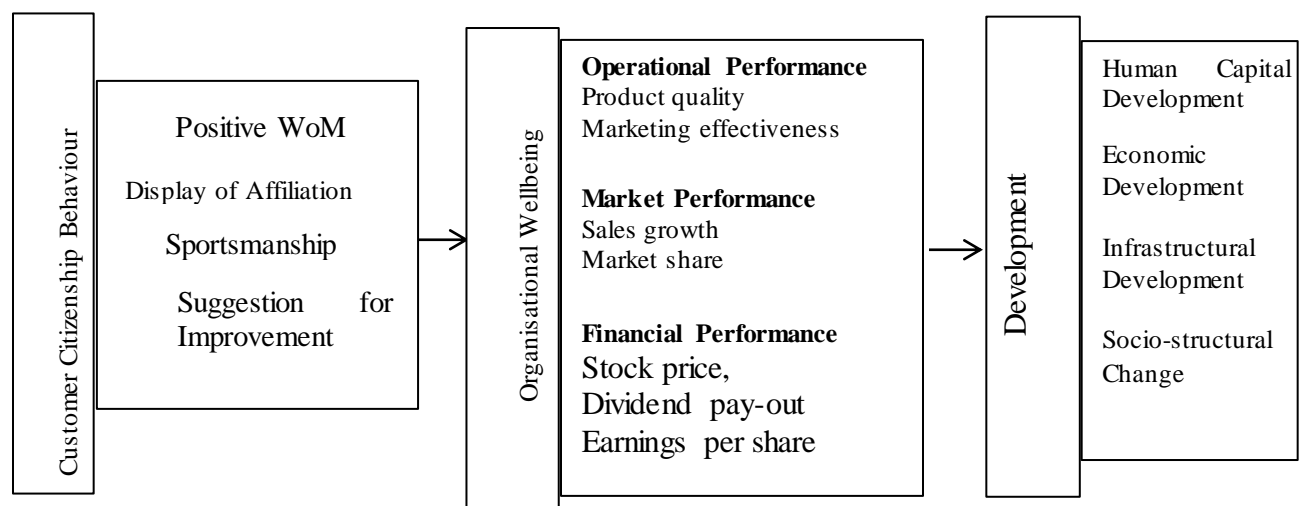


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework of Customer Citizenship Behaviour, Organizational Wellbeing and Development  
Source: Researchers' Conceptualisation from Review of Literature (2019)

### **The concept of Customer Citizenship Behaviour**

A citizen is someone recognized by law as a member of a given sovereign state; and has the right and protection of that state, and has owes certain obligations to that state. Citizenship is thus the status conferred on individuals by virtue of their being members of a country, and involves rights, obligations, and privileges. The concept of citizenship has its roots in civics, but was introduced to organizational setting through the work of Katz (1964). The concept has been of interest since the late 1970s; and received the attention of business theorists and practitioners (see Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). The coinage of organizational citizenship behaviour (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983) prompt allusions to behaviours akin to citizenship emerged in diverse literature, including economics, leadership, community psychology, industry and labour law, human resources management, hospital and health administration, strategic and international management, marketing, etc. (Fowler, 2013).

In concert with scholars in other fields, researchers in service contexts in the body of marketing knowledge who deal with citizenship behaviour have often made explicit or implicit reference to various aspects of citizenship. Thus, the perception customers hold about their affinity with a company and the positive volitional behaviours or actions they extend to the company and its employees which are outside their role expectations, but which are beneficial to the company are identified as CCB. CCB is thus a type of unsolicited charitable behaviours customers display that are advantageous to the firm, and by extension, the nation.

The concept of CCB is enriched by ideas from civic and organizational citizenship (Fowler, 2013). Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch (1994) opine that responsible citizenship involves balancing interrelated duties, while Graham (1991) propose that citizenship encompass three interrelated categories of beliefs and behavioural tendencies: Obedience, loyalty and participation. According to

Fowler (2013), "obedience entails respect for orderly structures and processes, recognition of rational-legal authority, and respect for laws. Loyalty involves serving community interests and values, promoting and protecting it, and volunteering efforts for the common good, while participation involves active and responsible involvement in community self-governance". In a related annotation, Van Dyne et al (1994) maintain that "responsible citizens keep informed about issues that affect the community, exchange information and ideas with one another, contribute to community self-governance, and encourage others to do likewise".

Scholars have proffered varying but avid definitions of CCB. Groth (2005) defines it as voluntary and discretionary actions customers perform that are neither within the usual expectations of firms nor rewarded by them, but which improves, or have the capacity to improve the effectiveness of the firm. Bettencourt (1997) refers to CCB as volitional behaviours of customers that involves acting as partial employees and cooperating with employees in manners that impacts the firm positively. Playing the role of partial employees, customers help the firm to develop and deliver quality service through actions that are commonly associated with employees. CCB is also described as customers' voluntary behaviours that promote the interests of the firm, by acting as partial employees and cooperating with employees (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007). Shared ideas in the definition of CCB are (1) CCB is voluntary in nature (2) it does not attract a reward (3) it is displayed in various forms (4) it enhances the development, production and delivery of a firm's offerings, and (5) it adds to the success of firms. CCB is not a necessary prerequisite for the production and delivery of services, but are service performance enhancers (Fowler, 2013). Thus, CCB is different from co-production or customer involvement. With CCB, extra-role behaviours, which firms ordinarily neither expect from customers nor reward, are enacted by customers. Common citizenship behaviours customers enact include positive word-of-mouth,

display of affiliation, sportsmanship and suggestions for service improvements.

### **The Concept of Organizational Wellbeing**

Organizational wellbeing represents the health of a business as an outcome of management processes measured against nominated corporate goals or compared to the health of competing firms (Ateke & Kalu, 2016). It is a measure of a company's capacity to achieve set goals by optimizing scarce resources (Daft, 1991). Organizational wellbeing captures the outcome of management processes and organizational dexterity in terms of performance outcomes in relation to set goals and other considerations that are broader than what is usually captured in the firm's assessment and economic valuation by stakeholders (Fauzi, Svensson, & Rahman, 2010). A business organization is healthy if it is able to cope, survive and make progress amidst the competitive pressures and constraints of the business-scape (Ateke & Dida, 2017; Amah, Daminabo-Weje, & Dosunmu, 2013). Organizational wellbeing is an abstract concept that cannot be measured directly; indirect indices are often used to represent it. The most frequently cited proxy measures of organizational wellbeing include market share, sales turn-over, customer satisfaction, profitability, productivity, cost minimization and business development (Richard, 2009). Strategic marketing literature reveals that organizational wellness have been viewed from the operational, market and financial perspectives (Fauzi et al, 2010; Nwokah & Maclayton, 2006). In the operational perspective, product quality and marketing effectiveness are considered; the market perspective considers sales growth and market share, while stock price, dividend pay-out and earnings per share are considered in the financial perspective (Fauzi et al, 2010).

Thus, different aspects of organizational wellness hold varying degrees of importance in management, marketing and accounting research (fauzi et al, 2010); and has bearing on such other constructs as organizational structure, control system, business environment and strategy (fauzi

et al, 2010; Langfield-Smith, 1997). A balanced assessment of organizational wellness will therefore look at business performance in relation to financial, market and operational business goals (Venktrakaman & Ramanugan, 1986). The balance scorecard is an extended measurement of corporate performance coined by Kaplan and Norton (1992); whose core idea is to strike a balance between financial and non-financial measures of organizational wellbeing. Organizational wellbeing is evidently a multidimensional construct, and is used by profit and non-profit oriented organizations. This paper views organizational wellbeing from the operational, financial and market perspectives. Therefore, product quality, marketing effectiveness, stock price, dividend pay-out, earnings per share among other operational and financial indices of organizational wellbeing are thus the focus.

### **The Concept of Development**

Development is the process of improving the quality of life and making sure that everyone has access to the basic necessities of life; and also have the opportunity to make choices. It is a growth process that employs systematic and technical knowledge to meet specific economic growth and human development requirements, including health, education, and clean environment (Nwulu & Ateke, 2014). It is a process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions; and also, a process of physical and chemical transformation that results to a positive shift from simple to complex states. The concept of development is inherently complex and ambiguous; and is contested theoretically and politically (Thomas, 2000). One of the common arguments in development literature is between development as immanent and unintentional process and development as an intentional activity (Cowen & Shenton, 1998). If development means good change, questions arise about what is good and what sort of change matter. Every developmental agenda is value-laden hence not to consider good things to do is a tacit surrender to fatalism (Chambers, 2004); and since development

depends on values and on alternative conceptions of the “good life”, arriving at a universal definition of the term will remain a phantasm.

The dimensions of development are extremely diverse. Nevertheless, three discernible perspectives to the discourse of development exist in literature (Hickey & Mohan, 2003) cited in Nwulu and Ateke (2014). They are, development as a process of transformation of societal structures; development as short-to-medium term outcome of desirable targets and development as a post-colonial position.

Development as a process of transformation of societal structures according to Thomas (2000) refers to the conception of development as a process of historical change. This definition of development is emphasized mostly by the academic and research part of the development community but is less emphasized by the practitioners in the development community (Nwulu & Ateke, 2014). The main features of this perspective are that it is focused on the processes of transformation of societal structures; it is historical and has a long-term outlook.

Development as short-to-medium term outcome of desirable targets is the perspective of development derived from some of the criticisms identified in the above perspective. This perspective of development is measure of progressive change (Thomas, 2000) and relates to performance assessment (Gore, 2000). This view is narrower in definition and is technocratic. At its most basic level it is simply concerned with development in terms of a set of short and medium-term performance indicators which can be measured and compared with targets. It therefore has a more instrumental element, and is favoured by practitioners within the development community notably in international development agencies (Thomas, 2000).

Development as a post-colonial position, the third conceptualization of development, takes a radically different approach, so that direct comparison with the other two discussed above is difficult. This perspective is based on the view that development is consisted of bad change and bad outcomes

through the imposition of western ethnocentric notions of development upon the Third World. This is the post-modern conceptualization of development (Thomas, 2000). This perspective emerged as a reaction to the deliberate efforts at progress made in the name of development since World War II and was triggered in particular by the 1949 declaration by the US President Truman that: “We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped area”. The post-modern approach is not so much a conceptualization of development as a frontal onslaught on the development industry (Foucault, 1969). The key element of this approach is that, for post-modernists, development is a social construct that do not exist in an objective sense outside of the discourse and that one can only know reality through discourse.

#### **Customer Citizenship Behaviour and Organizational Wellbeing**

The concept of CCB has received increased attention in marketing praxis because of its many benefits, especially, in service research. The constructive behaviours and actions demonstrated by customers in CCB are valued, though they are not directly enforceable (Gruen, 1995). Bove, Pervan, Beatty and Shiu, (2009) states that these actions and behaviours comprise positive, voluntary, helpful, and constructive behaviour directed at the firm, its employees or other customers. The performance of these behaviours are instances where customers share their positive experience with other customers, treat employees in a pleasant manner, report service problems to employees (Bettencourt, 1997), recommend the firm to others, provide suggestions for service improvement, help service providers, and assist other customers during service delivery, all of which are favourable to the wellbeing of the firm.

CCB is also demonstrated when customers communicate anticipated problems proactively, tolerate service failures, and willingly adapt to situations beyond their control, which keeps the

firm running smoothly (Fowler, 2013). While many services are performed and delivered in social settings, some are not provided and consumed in the presence of other consumers. However, CCB performances cut across both contexts. Lengnick-Hall, Claycomb, and Inks (2000) hold that where CCB creates a positive social context, customers are likely to enjoy and benefit from the service experience, thus CCB performances are more beneficial to the firm in the context of services that are social. Furthermore, by disseminating positive brand-related information, CCB influences firms' revenues and profits by enhancing brand recognition and company reputation; thus, creating a competitive edge for firms.

The import of CCB has driven extensive research of its antecedents and outcomes. Bove et al (2009) aver that CCB is performed by satisfied and loyal customers, who perceive service personnel to be benevolent; while Aherne, Bhattacharya and Gruen (2005) suggests that employee personality and other personal properties of service personnel inform CCB through employee-customer identification. Yi and Gong (2008) states that organizational citizenship behaviours enacted by service employees has indirect effects on CCB through its influence on customer satisfaction and commitment, just as Yi, Gong and Lee (2013) contend that the enactment of CCB by customers trigger similar behaviour in other customers; especially where they see CCB as helpful, kind, considerate and thoughtful acts voluntarily performed by customers (Aggarwal, 2013). CCB is thus essential for organizational wellbeing, considering that through CCB, firms benefit considerably in terms of financial and operational indicators of wellness. In view of the foregoing, the paper proposes that:

P<sub>1</sub>: An organization will achieve improved wellbeing if customers increasingly perform citizenship behaviours towards it.

### **Organizational Wellbeing and Development in Nigeria**

The development of Nigeria has been a discourse of significant concern to successive governments and

the governed. Several disciplines and professional callings have thus expended efforts in proffering ideas in a bid to contribute their quota to the development of the Country. This is in view of the conviction that the development of a society essentially depends on multi-disciplinary collaboration and multi-sectorial coordination (Olowookere, 2012). Indeed, every field of endeavour has something to contribute to the overall development of Nigeria through its stock of knowledge and methodology. Business organizations feature prominently in this programme. The importance of business organizations to the development of any society is embedded in the fact that they constitute the pivot of the wheel of economic progress; every other aspect of development essentially follows from economic development.

Economic growth is the most dominant element of development; however, economic growth relies on physical infrastructure and human capital. It is the human capital that drives the wellbeing of organizations. Human capital is the most important variable to national development. In the view of Obasanjo (2006) as cited in Olowookere, (2012), "social values, individuation, work ethics, educational attainment and motivation are among several other factors which affect organizational wellbeing and by extension, economic development. Organizations through human capital development and the principles of management and marketing provide contexts for improved productivity, the accumulation of which translates to economic, social and infrastructural development. Nations, like organizations, can be managed with principles and theories (Olowookere, 2012). The core of nation-building is the development and management of human capital, which is vital to organizational wellbeing. Some of the areas in which the contribution of organizations to economic development is prominent include, but not limited to gross national product (GNP), per capita income, and improved standard of living. Based on the foregoing, the paper proposes that:

P<sub>2</sub>: The development of Nigeria will be accelerated if more organizations achieve improved wellbeing through customer citizen behaviour.

## Conclusion

The development of Nigeria is a task that must be done, and one that requires the purposeful contribution of everyone, and every discipline. Nations develop along the lines of their most developed and most effectively managed resources and capacities. Human capital is required to grow efficient organizations, but customer equity is crucial to the survival and continuous growth of organizations. Therefore, to build the business organizations that must drive the development of Nigeria, handlers of business organizations must realize the place of customers and strive to exploit or leverage their capacity to make or mar a business organization. After all, the legitimacy of firms derives from their ability to consistently satisfy and command the loyalty of customers.

A nation can develop, but only in direct proportion to the level of development of business firms operating in the nation. The forces of demand and supply, as influenced by business organizations dictate the trajectory and tempo of national development in a market economy. Therefore, development whether viewed as a change in societal structures or short-to-medium term desired targets will be better achieved when business organizations achieve financial and operational wellbeing, which customer citizenship behaviour guarantees.

To become the pivot of development however, business firms, while leveraging customer equity must also be frugal in resource allocation and utilization. Their operational activities must be guided by productivity, employee welfare and corporate social responsibility. They must champion human capacity development, value education and national orientation. The primary focus of business organizations is private profit; however, not much profit can be made in a society that is lacking in basic indicators of development. The more developed a nation, the more profit it offers. Thus, the creation and distribution of wealth that promotes the standard of living, provides basic amenities and improves the nations per capita income should permeate the entire fabrics of

business organizations. Therefore, customer citizen behaviour is advanced as the purveyor of organizational wellness, and by extension, nation development

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