

Shouldn't The Platform Of The Internet Be Added To The Marketing Mix, As The 9th P? (Working Paper 6) Conceptual and Literature Development Paper

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ABSTRACT:-We invite scholars and practitioners across the globe to join us in this conversation that is mind-blowing. It never goes away. Marketing mix is the fundamentals of marketing, which presently consists of 7P's. Over time, the mix had evolved from the 4P's status(Product, Price, promotion, Place/Physical distribution) suggested around about by Borden(1948/9) in relation to goods marketing but first used or formalised in McCarthy(1964).

Later, three variables emerged (**people/publics**), **process**, **physical evidence**) in the context of services marketing, which were added to the mix to become 7P's in Booms and Bitner(1981).

In fact, the 8th P (which is Partnership) in relation marketing of strategic alliances (collaborations/joint ventures scenario, which has already been propounded in Smith (2012, 2015); Smith and Chaffey,2016,2017), but there is yet a similar theorization with respect to the internet/digital marketing(9th P).

In an increasingly globalised, dynamic, competitive, innovative and technology based 21st century business environment, it has now made it necessary to consider adding the 9th Ps mix elements, which is the Platform of the internet, in the context of global marketing.

As well as reviewing the nascent literature, the **purpose** of this article is to examine if the 9th P should be added to the mix. It also seeks to analyse the inherent implications and highlights the justifications for its inclusion or otherwise.

The article adopted a reviewing of relevant literature approach as a **methodology**. Drawing heavily from literature evidence, this paper uses descriptive analysis to isolate the variable 9th mix elements. This article re-inforces the proposition and argues for Platform be added, as well as suggesting what role the 9thP variable would play in advancing the benefits for marketing, more broadly.

The finding revealed the addition would significantly enhance the chances of facilitating quality of marketing in this 21st century digital age across the world more cost effectively. More importantly, this finding highlights an important shift in paradigm with respect to the 4-9 P's discourse.

Key words: Marketing mix; fundamentals of marketing; 4-7Ps and 4-9Ps; Internet Platform, Digital Marketing; Global marketing; Paradigm shift

I. INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE

To put it in a context, this paper is a case for adding the Platform of the Internet to the marketing mix, whilst also about promoting the benefits of digital up-skilling in globalised business environment. It seeks to conceptualise and sensitize the role of the platform of the internet in a 21st century digitalised modern marketing environment. In the context of marketing, this article highlights the value of the changes, which are long overdue but necessary and relevant to the increasingly advancing competitive digital world. Marketing mix, essentially, is the fundamentals of marketing, which until recently consists only of the 4-7P's. Over time, the mix had evolved significantly in a way unimagined. This was even made more so, with the advent of the platform of the internet. Under the methodology a table has been constructed, which describes the changes in

relation to each mix element. Ultimately, a determination had to be made as to whether the 9th be justifiably added (or not) to the mix elements, as this papers seeks to achieve. In fact, it would be up to the readers to determine whether to join us in this conversation or not.

1.1 Research problem

Research problem is driven by the assumption given the perceived inadequacy in digital skills amongst citizens around the globe, a scholarly discourse and more awareness on the subject of the platform of the internet (digital marketing) would bring and make a meaningful impact in peoples' lives. This would benefit not only people on an individual career advancement need levels. It might also bring about competitiveness more broadly, for organisations and nations. Increase in the knowledge of the digital marketing, the Platform, would lead to more benefit than detriment in terms of competitiveness (Eguruze, Kumari and Nwafor, 2022; Eguruze, et al., 2024). In fact, the lack of digital infrastructure would be more detrimental and may lead to huge gaps in the skill, knowledge and competitiveness. Ultimately, this might result in massive loss in potential revenue and contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment opportunities. On the other hand, an increase in digital skill and knowledge might result in positive benefits in the levels of digital competitiveness and potential revenues in both countries. Certainly, lack of a well groomed digital skills would be more detrimental than not. Against this backdrop, this conceptual paper highlights the case for improving digital marketing infrastructure and capabilities, as it would help generate employment opportunities with consequential impacts on poverty elimination efforts and society marketing in general. To these, we acknowledge contributions by writers /researchers, the likes of (Klimaki, 2019).

1.2 Research Gap

Although the 4-7th Ps of the elements of the marketing mix have long evolved (Borden,1948, 1949; McCarthy,1964, Bitner, 1981), however, their adaptability, usefulness and relevance have been seriously challenged in the 21st century environment. In the case of the 8th (Partnership), its recent inclusion has been relatively unnoticed in literature and its location deemed misplaced(Smith, 2012, 2015; Chaffey and Smith, 2016, 2017). While the case of the 9th (Platform of the Internet) has not yet been made. If it has, then, its inclusion is relatively unnoticed or under-publicised. Thus, this paper is imperative; suggesting strategic shift(Grönroos,1994; Kotler, 2000). Hence, addition of the 9th P(Platform of the internet) is being advocated.

II. METHODOLOGY

Below there we constructed a table constructed, purposely for this paper. This is for ease in comprehension and for analytical purposes. The paper adopted a reviewing of relevant literature approach; while drawing heavily from same (literature evidence). We used descriptive analysis to isolate the variables with respect to the 4-9 P mix elements, as seen in the table (1) below.

Table 1: A table highlighting contrasts among the 4-9's by description of the key marketing mix elements and their characterisations

4-9Ps Marketing Mix Elements	Description of key elements & characterizations
1st P Product	In fact, a product may take the several forms and shapes and colours. All inclusive phenomenon, which encompasses whatever businesses/you offer to the whole wide world for sale: represented by several elements:design, quality of technology, branding, good or services, availability, features, colour, package, warranties, guarantees, investments, tangible and/or intangible, PLC,ROI, Borden,1949;McCarthy,1964; Kotler, 2000)
2nd P Price	Going price, discounts, debts/bad debts, write off, mark-up, loss, profit, gross profit, net profit, differentiation, cyber frauds/scams, fraudulent payments, list price, discounts, allowances, payment method, credit terms(30 days trial), payments(trial and returns), with service (attendants costs/tips) labour costs, overheads, raw material costs, warranties, guarantees, cannot be patented, Borden(1949); McCarthy(1964); Kotler (2000).
3rd P Place	Locations (situation), ease of access, delivery modes (intermediaries, channels of trade eg road(motorways, railways, waterways, airways, sub-marines, pipelines(oil/gas,water); coverage, assortments, locations, transportation, logistics, digital marketing(e-commerce/online marketing or internet business), geographic, territorial, specific locations - street

	markets, stock markets, fruit markets, bargain markets, boutiques, fried-plantain market, restaurants, retail shops, offices(Borden(1949); McCarthy(1964); Kotler (2000).
4th P Promotion	Advertising, personnel selling (face-to-face), sales promotion, public relation, direct marketing (direct mailing), publicity, corporate identity, form of promotion, business-to-business(industrial marketing), consumer marketing(business to consumer), merchandising, exhibitions, demonstrations, window displays, etc, mainly paid-for forms; non-paid for forms, PR, Publicity, PR,offices(Borden(1949); McCarthy(1964); Kotler (2000).. .
5th P Process	The process design, the specific procedures, the unique experience, operationalisation, blueprinting approach, interior design, decorations, reception areas design, customer experiences, customer delight, organizational core service support, standardizations, measurements, CRM systems (Booms and Bitner, 1981; Eguruze, 1996; Kotler,2000).
6th P People	Personality, Business culture, staff recruitment, staff training, staff development, assessment, involvement, control support, trust/participation, delivery process, appraisals systems ps, offices(Borden(1949); McCarthy(1964); Kotler (2000).
7th P Physical Evidence	Buildings, proof of purchases (receipts or tickets),appearances/uniforms,the unique experience; elaborateness of interior design; elaborateness of decorations; elaborateness of reception areas design; customer experiences; image; customer delight; organizational core service support; colour decorations & lightings eg, brightness, dark, red, white (ps, offices(Borden(1949); McCarthy(1964); Kotler (2000).
8th P Partnership	Concepts and various marketing relationships (partnership marriages) such as mergers and acquisitions, joint venture, agency, franchising, social networking, collaborating, working together and sharing together, achieving together, co-branding, affiliations, interconnectivity, influencers, gate keepers, subsidiary, strategic alliances (Chaffey and Smith, 2015, 2017;Kotler (2000).
9th P Platform (of the internet)	Variety of concepts from digital marketing: website (Location – as with land – securing prime and/or subprime positions is key to this), digital media(all aps); branding (the phenomena of Virtual Brand (VB) and the Virtual Brand Community (VBC), community; databases, search, conversation, trust/participation; reviews/copy text; content, social media utilizing ads and contents via (pay per click(PPC), display ads, search engine optimizations(SEO), etc; social media marketing, filtering(bias), e-commerce, online marketing, the various forms of electronic payments (EP) – these include electronic funds transfer (EFT); electronic banking; (EB); mobile banking(MB); electronic data interchange (EDI); telephone banking (TB), cyber frauds/scams, (Chaffey and Smith, 2015, 2017)

Source: Eguruze' construction 2019; adapted by the authors for this purpose, 2024

Above in Table 1, the authors constructed table 1 to highlight the key contrasts among the 4-9 Ps by describing the key marketing mix elements and their characterisations for effective comprehension.

III. DISCUSSION

In supporting the co-authors argument for the case: The platforms of the internet to be added to the marketing mix, as the 9th P, below you find our illustration in relation to the epistemological/methodological choices.

In order to support co-authors argument more constructively, the article adopted a reviewing of relevant literature approach as a methodology. This is because there is abundance of secondary data evidence to support the case. More crucially, by drawing heavily from literature evidence, this paper uses descriptive analysis to isolate the variable 9th mix elements, as we have done above. Additionally, by using the data to construct a table, it made it more clearly the distinctive characteristics that constitute the platform of the internet. As seen above in Table 1, the authors constructed table 1 to highlight the key contrasts among the 4-9 Ps by describing the key marketing mix elements and their characterisations for effective comprehension.

By doing so, this article re-in forces the proposition and argues for Platform be added, as well as suggesting what role the 9thP variable would play in advancing the benefits for marketing, more broadly.

IV. CRITICISM AND CAUTION

As with nearly every endeavour within the business environment, the co-authors are cognizant of the fact, nothing is static. The co-authors perspective is open to criticism, if such counter findings are based on data evidence. The co-authors are open to scholarly debates based on data evidence, as the most critical aspect is that research is based on empirical and/or review evidence. So, we rely on our findings based on the insight we unfold through research; the platform of the internet should be deemed playing beyond the role of promotion.

Nevertheless, this research findings are limited by a wide range of the factors: politically (as policy decisions made by policymakers and policy implementers across the globe could affect; business operations either positively or negatively; environmentally (in terms of time factors; change of times, ecological and climate changes), technologically(new ways of doing things could overtake old experiments, new innovations and so ability change and so the ability to quickly and flexibly adapt matters), socially and economically (social values as well as economic conditions are never static), competitively (the actions and activities of other business players or entities may be threatening, so is the need to be adaptable, maximising and updating the need for data for business consumption, which could make a difference), and so forth. We are in a technologically and environmentally evolving world environment and therefore these expectations are inevitable. So, being aware of these issues is fundamental critical and unavoidable.

V. INTERPRETATIONS

Perception in marketing is a powerful tool. Perceptions enables various scholars or schools of thoughts, including marketing practitioners or theorists, advocating the case for or against making the platform of the internet as an independent or separate marketing mix element. While some school of thoughts are advocating for platform of the internet to be separate marketing mix element, the other school of thought is arguing for the platform to be part of, or remain part of promotion. The later school of thought, the protagonists believes that promotional mix already combines the activities of the Platform of the internet: website, internet, social media, and so on. Whereas, the former school of thought, those who believe that the Platform of the internet, the opponents, continue to argue that the platform should be separate, given that the Platform is now so huge and massive that it should stand separate from the role of promotion.

To us members of this new research team, as with (Bitner (1991), Booms and Bitner (1981) and Gronroos(1994), this conversation is seen as a shift in paradigm with respect to the digital marketing and marketing mix composition. We, as a team of scholars advocating this change is of the opinion that, the platform of the internet has characteristics that made it so distinctive and standing out that, thus warrant it stand separate.

Hence, are invite scholars and practitioners across the globe to join us in this conversation that is mind-blowing? It never goes away. Marketing mix is the fundamentals of marketing, which presently consists of 7P's. Over time, the mix had evolved from the 4P's status(Product, Price, promotion, Place/Physical distribution) suggested around about by Borden(1948/9) in relation to goods marketing but first used or formalised in McCarthy(1964). In fact, despite the relevance of this topic, in this 21st marketing management environment in particular, but more so in the larger business platform globally, there is yet a similar theorization with respect to the internet/digital marketing (9th P), there is yet a formal or general call for debate by the leading marketing associations such as the American Marketing Association (AMA) and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), UK. We argue, there is need to see more debate on this subject matter.

We of this Research Team, argues that, in an increasingly globalised, dynamic, competitive, innovative and technology based 21st century business environment, it has now made it necessary to consider adding the 9th Ps mix elements, which is the Platform of the internet, in the context of global marketing. There are benefits of adding it: speed with which in reaching out/meeting target markets easily, flexibility, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, capacity to generate revenue exponentially, and therefore.

Thus, as well as reviewing the nascent literature, the **purpose** of this article is to examine if the 9th P should be added to the mix. It also seeks to analyse the inherent implications and highlights the justifications for its inclusion or otherwise.

5.2 Practical implications

The co-authors strongly believe that by advancing this new research insight, we are making positive contribution to practice and theory, as well as concept development, which are usually advanced through taking such challenges by researchers and other career developers. Which means that, crucially, a lack of understanding of the deeper value of the platform language in particular, and digital marketing relevance and in

general, would lead to loss of competitiveness or may exacerbate reductions in competitiveness, for countries that are less digital friendly? We the co-authors strongly believe that Platform of the internet is far deeper than seeing it only as a part of promotion.

5.3 Value and benefits

The co-authors believe that by advocating and advancing knowledge in this fundamentally critical aspect of marketing, in fact, the very foundation principles of marketing as we know it, there is value and benefit to all stakeholders related to this debate. Most importantly, adding the Platform of the Internet to the Marketing mix as an independent variable could even enhance and the capacity and scope of marketing profession even more broadly. By so doing, it should be seen as positive contribution to knowledge and marketing insight and profession.

5.4 Originality

The co-authors are keen on resolving the uncertainty surrounding this debate; for the god of the profession. The co-authors therefore invite other scholars and practitioners, as well as leading marketing organisations including the American Association of Marketing (AMA) and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), UK to join us in advancing the debate on this subject matter that concerns us all marketing professions. This is in addition to our contribution to conceptual and literature development to this subject matter. By so doing, it should be deemed contributing to the evolution of marketing profession.

VI. CONCLUSION

We, the co-authors strongly believe that Platform of the internet is far substantially deeper than seeing it only as a part of promotion, which under estimating the value of the platform as a marketing tool.

The co-authorstherefore argue Platform of the Interner be added to the marketing mix. We invite scholars and practioners and theorists or any readers who is interested, to join us in the conversations; to agree or disagree and justify your perspective. **What are your thoughts?** Yes___ ? No___? Your reason(s), please._____?

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