PRICING AS A RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN ATTRACTING STUDENTS INTO POLYTECHNICS IN THE NORTH CENTRAL STATES OF NIGERIA

KOCE, Henry Diko¹, ALIU, Azeez Adekunle²

1. Department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State, Nigeria
2. Department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria,
Emails: henkoce@yahoo.com¹, azeez.aliu@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng²

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Abstract

Pricing as a resource management strategy of educational services is considered as one of the important strategies for attracting students into the Polytechnics in Nigeria, both private and public, are applying various means of attracting more students into their institutions, with special focus on Price (PP). This study examined the relationship between price (school fees) and students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria. This study adopted survey research design, and the target population comprised 40,778 students of the entire polytechnics in the North Central States of Nigeria. A sample of 396 students was selected using stratified sampling method. A validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.78 to 0.91. The response rate was 86.2%. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (Pearson Product Moment correlation and regression) statistics. Findings revealed that Price had significant effect on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria. The management of the Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria should offer various programmes to match the needs of the potential students and school fees increase as a strategy should be used carefully. Price (school fees) is an effective marketing strategy that attracts students into the Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria. Therefore, students should give appropriate information that could encourage patronage.

Keywords: Pricing strategies, Students’ attraction, price, educational services, Nigeria.

Introduction

The demand for higher education worldwide continues to increase and competition for access rises each year as new set of candidates complete their secondary or equivalent levels of education. Higher institutions most especially polytechnics all over the world continue to face very serious issues such as the struggle to grapple with issues of admission, accommodation, education policies, student unionism, funding and the likes, all these have profound implications for educational management, especially in the developing countries and Africa in particular (Okoli, 2015; Bennett, 2017). The global ability of polytechnics to achieve their goals of sustainability and quality service delivery is highly dependent on how they convert their plans to action, in acquiring good number of students to enrol with them which will bring about increase in the school income to carter for sustainability of the institution (Uchendu, Nwafor & Nwaneri, 2015).
Polytechnics in Nigeria are facing challenges of struggle to grapple with issues of admission, accommodation, physical facilities, education policies, student unionism, funding (Okoli, 2015). Currently most Polytechnics in Nigeria face challenges of practicability of science and technology related courses, poor on-line registration (internet services), persistent increase in school fees versus quality learning experiences, deregulation of education, certificate racketeering and marketability of polytechnic products and demand and supply of polytechnic education and most of these serious challenges have turned out to constitute outright crises considering their timing, intensity, and consequences (Ukpai & Ereh, 2017). In the field of educational services marketing it helps to predicts the changes of the market and adapt students to the needs of buyers (proprietor).

Edoimiyoa (2015) asserted that most secondary school leavers seeking admission into higher institutions in Nigeria hardly choose polytechnics as their preferred institution. Some of these students have further vowed not to go to polytechnics for any reason. The statistics from JAMB revealed that candidates enrolment for universities total 4,618,911 between 2007 and 2010 while combined figure for polytechnics and colleges of education totals 865,906. Nwali (2013) added that only very few candidates seeking admission into the university would want to go to the Polytechnic and this is only after such candidates have tried unsuccessfully in gaining admission into the university or when the parents are not financially buoyant. Fabian (2016) as reported by the guardian newspaper observed that there has been negative preference by most Nigerian candidates for universities over polytechnics and colleges of education in Nigeria. He further reported that this negative preference by most Nigerian candidates over these institutions of higher learning necessitated the need by the board to introduce a unified examination that is, Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in order to improve the enrolment for colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics and innovative enterprise institutions in Nigeria.

Fabian, (2016) also stated that when over a million candidates sit for the UTME, less than 200,000 applied for the Monotechnics, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education Examination (MPCE).

**Table 1: UME and MPCE Enrolment Figures by JAMB 2007-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>UME</th>
<th>MPCE</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% UME</th>
<th>%MPCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>911,679</td>
<td>167,836</td>
<td>1,079,515</td>
<td>84.45</td>
<td>15.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,192,050</td>
<td>310,022</td>
<td>1,502,072</td>
<td>79.36</td>
<td>20.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,184,651</td>
<td>342,908</td>
<td>1,527,559</td>
<td>77.55</td>
<td>22.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,330,531</td>
<td>45,140</td>
<td>1,375,671</td>
<td>96.72</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,596,637</td>
<td>42,883</td>
<td>1,639,520</td>
<td>97.38</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,915,965</td>
<td>38,595</td>
<td>1,954,700</td>
<td>98.02</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,299,158</td>
<td>34,735</td>
<td>2,333,893</td>
<td>98.51</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,758,989</td>
<td>31,261</td>
<td>2,790,250</td>
<td>98.88</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3,310,787</td>
<td>28,135</td>
<td>3,338,922</td>
<td>99.16</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,972,944</td>
<td>25,322</td>
<td>3,998,266</td>
<td>99.37</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,473,391</td>
<td>1,066,837</td>
<td>21,540,228</td>
<td>95.05</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the foregoing, marketing of Polytechnics in Nigeria is very poor even as the institutions face the challenges of certificate racketeering and marketability of their products and demand and supply of polytechnic education. This can be depicted in Table 1.0 which shows that the level of enrolment into universities is far more than enrolment into polytechnics. To fulfil the goal of achieving higher students’ enrolment into Polytechnics, Polytechnics have to implement marketing on both strategic and operational levels in order to create a stable, flexible structure and system. Thus, identified gaps would be filled to find out and understand how well marketing strategies are implemented in Polytechnics. It is against this background that this study examined the relationship between Price (School Fees) and students’ attraction into polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria.

In Nigeria, there has been steady increase in school fees of Polytechnic education since the 1990s. For instance, the Federal Polytechnic Bida’s school fee of N38,500 naira in 2013-2016 sessions increased to N52,700 naira in 2017/2018 session; Federal Polytechnic, Offa also experienced school fee increase from N14,650 naira in 2013-2016 sessions to N19,850 naira in 2017/2018 session. Likewise State polytechnics also experienced an increased their school fees such increase saw Benue State polytechnic moving from N53,400 naira in 2013-2015 sessions to N84,250 in 2017/018 session. Also, Kogi State polytechnic increased their school fees from N58,500 naira in 2013-2015 sessions to N75,000 naira in 2017/2018 session. Fees increase in Nigeria tertiary institutions (Polytechnics in the North Central States in Nigeria inclusive) has been the most common approach to internally generated funds to cushion some of the inadequacies in the system. Fees increase and its attendant consequence have serious implication for students’ attraction. The increase has had a toll on many prospective students seeking admissions into polytechnics in Nigeria. Similarly, it created a lot of burden on the existing students as many could not continue their programmes (Okoli, 2015). Obanya (2014) and Ukpai and Ereh (2017) noted that fees increase also led to increased drop-outs and loss of opportunity for education. For instance, many students whose parents cannot afford the increase or self-sponsored ones who could not afford the fees dropped-out of the programmes. Prospective students’ loss hopes on education and may not even apply at all. Irregular attendance to school and absenteeism by students became regular features because of increased fees (Marwan, 2011). Many students are unable to buy text books because of fees increase. Some student’s combine schooling and doing menial jobs and so maximum attention was no longer paid to lectures (Jekayinfa, 2013). Poor academic performance sets in. Is it then possible to conclude that price (tuition) affects students’ attraction into Polytechnics?

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of price on students’ attraction to Polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis below was formulated for the purpose of this study:

H0: Price has no significant influence on students’ attraction to Polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria.
This paper is divided into five sections. The first is the introduction; the second examines the literatures such as conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the paper; the third section elucidates the research methods used; the fourth section presents the results and discussion while the fifth section is the conclusion and recommendations.

**Literature Review**

**Price Concept**

Price means different things to different people; it is interest to lenders, COT or service charged by the banker (lenders), premium to the insurer, fare to the transporter, honorarium to the guest lecturer etc, (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). According to Anas (2010), price is the second element of the marketing mix. According to Ogunnaike, Borishade, Adeniyi, and Odubela, (2014), price is the value or amount of money that a buyer exchanges for a product or service, provided by the organization. Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, and Terbalancle, (2009) defined price as the amount of money (or some other item that is exchanged or bartered) that the buyer exchanges for a service provided by the seller. According to Kotler and Fox (1995) price for students, consists of a monetary cost as well as other costs such as effort cost, psychological cost and time cost.

Maniu and Maniu (2014) define price as fees charged such as tuition fees, family budget and value of rent. In higher education, price usually is related to tuition fees offered, and any monetary related issues. Pricing has major influence on marketing strategy as most students and their parents are concerned about the financial implication of attending University. Its importance to an institution stems from the fact that it reflects on revenues.

Among the strategies used in pricing, Kotler and Armstrong (2008) believe that people pay more for skilled and well-regarded doctors or consultants. It is a pricing strategy in which whoever has a better offering and/or position can request a higher price. Hence, in the context of education, a student would pay a higher price for a more prestigious and well-known Polytechnic. Another technique that an institution could use would be to separate or include the total cost of the package. In other words, some Polytechnics set the cost to be without any hidden extra payments or ‘indirect associated cost’ (Foskett, 2009), such as transportation or sports facilities fees, and here the customer can select.

Gajic (2012) states that price can be viewed as an economic and psychological factor. From an economic point of view, the price determines income and profit, and psychologically, the price determines values that a product or a service has. It is a quality indicator and equally affects the image and the other elements as well. Due to the specificity of the very service, intangibility of price determination requires a special approach, since the price is considered an important strategic element in an attempt of service organization to achieve competitive advantage in the market. The price of a service influences users and informs them not only about the quality they can expect from the service, but also about its costs.

As stated above, the price needs to be considered both from the economic and psychological point of view. The price for users has multiple meanings – it influences their perception and it informs them on what they can expect from the services in terms of quality and costs as well. Administrators-in-charge for price formation in Polytechnic education institutions are not often
aware of the significance the price has for a user. For instance, the price, formed by some educational institution, does not represent the only cost for the user. The following diagram shows some costs and benefits for the users.

![Figure 1: Consumers costs and benefits source](image)


In addition to the monetary price, users face other costs, such as costs for effort, physical costs and time costs. Regardless of the Polytechnic tuition fee (the official tuition and fees printed in the catalogue), prospective students and their families – and reimbursing companies – are interested in the effective price (the amount they will actually pay for the educational benefit) and the value received. The effective price is the net amount actually paid after financial assistance and other discounts are subtracted (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

**Student attraction into Polytechnics**

According to Anticil (2014), the institution should consider the effects of a given pricing policy on the nature and mission of the institution, effect of a given pricing policy on enrollment, and the degree to which a particular pricing policy may encourage acceleration. In addition, the institution must weigh prices charged by comparable competing institutions, and the effects of its own price level and price changes on the actions of such competitors. These considerations provide a basis for setting prices. Pricing decisions should reflect the institution’s mission, goals, and priorities (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

Education represents experience that cannot be evaluated before it has been experienced, and the results of attending educational institution can be evident only after employment and starting a professional carrier. Also, one should bear in mind that the price represents only one marketing mix component, through which user choice is influenced. Potential students, in addition to the tuition fee, will also be interested in educational institution program, educational service quality, location, way of communication and other characteristics. Many students, faculty students and their families are ready to pay a higher price in order to get quality education. When deciding on the educational institution choice, location of the institution and/or its academic prestige can be crucial in making that decision, regardless of tuition fee price. Consideration and use of the price
as a marketing instrument cannot be observed separately, rather only as a part of overall marketing strategy.

Related to the above is the pricing policy of Polytechnic education that deals with setting the prices for the educational services, it has a number of peculiarities in the Polytechnic education sector. Adegbite (2007) believes that “first of all until about three decade ago, in Nigeria Polytechnic education was totally State budgeted that meant from the student’s point of view that it was partially free of charge. Since tuition fees were introduced, they encountered different forms in different States (as full costs, as partial contribution to the educational costs) but the State still plays a major role in setting tuition fees”.

In Nigeria partial tuition fees for new students have established upper limits by government, with the consequence that most Polytechnic education institutions have almost the same tuition fees. This illustrates how the application of this marketing concept has limitations in Polytechnic education, as the sector does not have always the freedom to set its own prices fully except private Polytechnics. This does not mean that the importance of price related aspects should be ignored. Price related information (tuition fees, cost of living, scholarships) is given equal importance as the programmes characteristics in the potential students’ choice, given the recent increased consumerism in Polytechnic education choice (Mbogo, 2013).

De-Toni, Milan, Saciloto and Larentis (2017) examined pricing strategies and levels and their impact on corporate profitability. The results indicate that the profitability of the surveyed companies is positively affected by value-based pricing strategy and high price levels while it is negatively affected by low price levels. Such findings indicate that pricing policies influence the profitability of organizations. This finding is related to Gorondutse and Gawuna (2017) that price leadership strategy have direct significant positive relationship with hotels performance, increase organization patronage, enhance customer attraction and increase revenue growth.

Agnes (2014) carried a study on factors influencing students’ enrolment in social studies education at the post-secondary school level in Nigeria. The study used primary data and chi Square. The study revealed job prospects or employment opportunities, gender and environmental factors have significant influence on students’ enrollment in social studies programme whereas socio-economic, teacher-related, and parental factors do not influence students’ enrollment in social studies. In related to this finding, Asava (2016) established that Polytechnic institutions employed differentiation price and product strategies in order to increase student enrolment and counter competition from other institutions like, different admission criteria, different requirements for credit transfers, academic staff mobility and application of market driven strategies.

Kimando, Njogu and Sakwa (2016) did a study on competitive strategies employed by private Polytechnics. The study revealed that Polytechnics have embraced different price strategies to counter competition. Some have embraced technology, web marketing strategy where many institutions now offer online classes, use e-learning modules, distant learning and selling courses electronically, which has made learning easier and efficient thus increasing their enrollment. As supported by Hua (2017) that different price strategy is deemed appropriate for the education industry in a competitive environment. He further added that price differentiation by adding value to the products and services and determined institutional performance.
Abdullahi, Muhammad Khalilur and Robel (2014) critically reviewed of consumers’ sensitivity to price using employed regression method of analysis. The study revealed that consumer’s sensitivity to price has a significant impact on product innovativeness as most of the product/services purchase decisions are being made based on price rather than the brand or accessibility of the products or services. This is supported in the study of Hua (2017) examining factors that affect pricing decisions for export markets. The study revealed that pricing is one of the most vital factors of marketing product mix, generate cash/revenue and determine firm survival in the industry. The study further established that price is significantly determined profitability of an organization.

Hossinpour, Hasanzade and Feizi (2014) examined conceptualization of perceived value pricing in strategic marketing. The study used primary data and regression method of analysis was employed. The study shown that pricing is one of the most important elements of marketing mix, generate cash/revenue and determine firm survival. The finding is related to Hussain, Bhatti and Jilani (2011) on penetration pricing strategy and performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Kenya. The study revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between penetration pricing strategy and SMEs performance in Kenya. In related to this finding, Ijeoma (2013) revealed that marketing mix related to price significantly influence firm profit performance and competitive level among the firms in the industry. As also empirically supported by Lipovetsky, Magnan and Zanetti-Polzi (2011) and Ngugi and Kising’u (2017) established that there is significant effect of pricing in marketing product and organizational profitability. The study revealed that price significantly determines financial performance of an organization.

Enache (2014) researched on marketing Polytechnics using the 7ps framework. This research looked at how to develop the use of 7Ps frameworks in the educational marketing field. By presenting several important educational market forces the context of the discussion is revealed. Then the 7Ps framework was used to gather information. One by one the product, price, placement, promotion, people, process and physical evidence strategies are presented. It is shown that each has a particular role when it comes to educational market and the synergy effects are important. The advantages of the 7Ps approach where underlined. The researcher found out that originally developed for the services market, the 7Ps frameworks can be applied in educational marketing as well. It offers strong add-ons able to respond to the special characteristics of the educational environment. The product strategy is strongly influenced by the service characteristics. On the contrary, Okoli (2015) examined the impact of fees increase on University students’ education in Nigeria. The study revealed that removal of scholarships, subsidies and grants, and globalization forces, triggered negative consequences such as violent demonstrations, open and close syndrome, decrease in enrolment, increase in drop-out rate, students’ exposure to off-campus residence and attendant unsettling non-conducive environment for effective and serious academic activities that could have launched Nigeria into the 21st Century global knowledge economy.

Okoroma (2008) examined a study on admission policies and the quality of University Education in Nigeria. Primary data were used and Chi-Square method of analysis was employed, the finding showed that all the parameters of interest have contributed to the reduction of the quality of University education in Nigeria. Ekanem and Ekpiken (2013) examined how unit cost of
education serves as a determinant of students’ learning achievement in Universities in cross river state of Nigeria. Data was collected using researcher designed checklist titled “Unit Cost and University Students ‘Learning Achievement Checklist (UCUSLAC)’”. Multiple regression analysis was applied to statistically analyze data collected. Results obtained revealed that unit cost of both academic and non-academic staff could not determine the magnitude of students’ academic achievement in the Universities studied.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980)**

Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) was propounded by Oliver (1980). This theory is a customer behaviour model commonly used to define and predict satisfaction and repurchase intention. This theory posits that expectation, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post purchase satisfaction. This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectation and performance. Post purchase satisfaction will result if a product or service falls short of expectation (negative disconfirmation) the customer is likely to be dissatisfied (Oliver, 1980).

The four primary constructs assumption such as expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs, and satisfaction are explained hereunder.

*Expectations* refer to the attributes or characteristics that a person anticipates or predicts will be associated with an entity such as a product, service, or technology artifact. Expectations are posited to directly influence both perceptions of performance and disconfirmation of beliefs, and are posited to indirectly influence post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction by way of a meditational relationship through the disconfirmation construct. Pre-purchase or pre-adoption expectations form the basis of comparison against which the product, service, or technology artifact is ultimately judged.

*Perceived performance* refers to a person’s perceptions of the actual performance of a product, service, or technology artifact. According to expectation confirmation theory, perceptions of performance are directly influenced by pre-purchase or pre-adoption expectations, and in turn directly influence disconfirmation of beliefs and post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction. Perceived performance is also posited to indirectly influence post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction by way of mediational relationship through the disconfirmation construct.

*Disconfirmation of beliefs* refers to the judgments or evaluations that a person makes with respect to a product, service, or technology artifact. These evaluations or judgments are made in comparison to the person’s original expectations. When a product, service, or technology artifact outperforms the person’s original expectations, the disconfirmation is positive, which is posited to increase post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction. When a product, service, or technology artifact underperforms the person’s original expectations, the disconfirmation is negative, which is posited to decrease post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction (i.e., to increase dissatisfaction).

*Post-purchase or post-adoptionsatisfaction* refers to the extent to which a person is pleased or contented with a product, service, or technology artifact after having gained direct experience
with the product, service, or artifact. Expectation confirmation theory posits that satisfaction is directly influenced by disconfirmation of beliefs and perceived performance, and is indirectly influenced by both expectations and perceived performance by means of a mediational relationship which passes through the disconfirmation construct.

According to Oliver’s (1980) arguments, repurchase intentions greatly depend on prior satisfaction, while satisfaction is obtained from disconfirmation and expectation for the products or services- of which ‘disconfirmation’ has the strongest direct influence upon satisfaction. Disconfirmation includes: confirmation - actual performance meets the expected standard; negative disconfirmation - actual performance fails to meet the expected standard; and positive disconfirmation - actual performance exceeds the expected standard (Chiu, Hsu, Sun, Lin, & Sun, 2005; Churchill &Surprenant, 1982; Hsu, Chiu, & Ju, 2004). Churchill and Surprenant (1982) added perceived performance into ECT as an antecedent of satisfaction, and further established that both expectations and perceived performance have influence on disconfirmation.

The expectation serves as the comparison standard in what consumers use to evaluate performance and form a disconfirmation judgment (Bennett, 2017). Figure 2 shows that the model was originally intended to probe the motivations for merchandises repurchases. Since then, ECT has been widely employed in many empirical studies and various product/service contexts to measure customer post-purchase satisfaction and to predict their repurchase intention.

**Figure 2: The expectation-confirmation model for students’ attraction**

![Figure 2: The expectation-confirmation model for students’ attraction](source)

**Source: Oliver (1980)**

Among the supporters of Expectancy confirmation theory (ECT) are Churchill and Surprenant (1982) and Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky (1996). In relation to this study, the theory explains that students feel satisfied or dissatisfied with the Polytechnics’ service quality when they meet their expectations. Students’ judgment on service satisfaction is usually measured by rating their satisfaction dimension on given service quality dimensions. This theory holds that higher education performance expectations have impact on post purchase satisfaction.

**Research Methods and Procedures**

The design adopted for the study was survey research design. This study used well-structured questionnaire for obtaining data that were used for analysis in the study. This instrument was designed to collect information on marketing (Pricing) strategy. The questions in the
questionnaire were based on six point Scale, which ranged from extremely low to extremely high in terms of influence (1=Extremely low, 2=Very low, 3= Moderately low, 4 = Moderately high, 5= Very High and 6=Extremely High). To ascertain the validity of this questionnaire, content validity was adopted, in which the researcher subjected the instrument to face validity by giving it to two scholars in marketing and one in vocational education. The reliability of instrument was determined through the use of pilot study and internal consistency measure using Cronbach’s Alpha which the general reliability is 0.899. With the Cronbach Alpha for all the items of the variables above 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978), the overall reliability of the whole scale was guaranteed.

The population of study included all students of the entire polytechnics in the North Central State of Nigeria. The schools include four federal polytechnics, six states polytechnic and two private polytechnics, with a total student population of over 40,000. The sampling unit for this study consisted of the entire students of all the polytechnics (Federal, State and Private Polytechnics) in the North Central Areas of Nigeria. In the determination of the sample size of the study, the researcher adopted the Taro Yamani variance formula cited by (Kahane, 2011) that provides a simplified formula to calculate a sample size and 95% of confidence level and e = 0.05.

The data for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to examine the demographic factors such as gender, marital status, and age of the respondents, through frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations of the descriptive statistics.

\[
n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}
\]

**Where:**

n = Sample size  
N = Population size  
e = Level of precision or significance  
1 = constant figure

\[
n = \frac{40778}{1 + 40778(0.05)^2}
\]

n = 396

**Results and Discussion**

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of price on students’ attraction to Polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria. The results as presented in Table 2 below shows that combining responses under moderately high, very high, and extremely high, 76% (25.2% + 20.4% + 30.5%) of the respondents indicated that the school fees charged is high while 24% disagreed, which means that on the average the respondents agreed that polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria is very high (Mean = 4.38, Standard Deviation =
Those who agreed that extra school fees charged is high accounted for 64.9% while 35.1% disagreed, implying that on the average the respondents agreed that extra school fees charged is moderately high (Mean = 4.06, Standard Deviation = 1.623).

A majority of 67% of the respondents indicated that cost of accommodation in polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria is high while 33% of the respondents disagreed which implies that on the average the respondent agreed that cost of accommodation in polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria is very high (Mean = 4.52, Standard Deviation = 1.457). Those who agreed that cost of feeding in polytechnics in North Central States of Nigeria are high are 75.5% while 24.5% of the respondents disagreed, which implies that on the average the respondents assert that cost of feeding in polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria are moderately high (Mean = 4.30, Standard Deviation = 1.516).

Comparing responses on Tables 2 and 3 presented below, price and students’ attraction have the same pattern of increase. The finding reveals that school fees charged in polytechnic in the North Central States, Nigeria is relatively high, extra school fees charged is moderately high, while costs of accommodation and feedings are moderately low. Findings further revealed that service delivery, school fees, polytechnics location, promotional activities, workers’ relationship, physical evidence of the polytechnic, polytechnics processes, and polytechnics systems are all moderately high and have thus attracted student to the selected polytechnics. The results mean that price has an influence on students’ attraction to Polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria. These results provide answer to the research question two and enables the researcher to achieve objective two.

### Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Responses on Strategy Formulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>VL</th>
<th>ML</th>
<th>MH</th>
<th>VH</th>
<th>EH</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School fees charged</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra school fees charged</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of accommodation</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of feeding</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Researcher’s Field Results (2017)*

Note: SD = Standard Deviation, EL = Extremely Low, VL = Very Low, ML = Moderately Low, MH = Moderately High, VH = Very High, EL = Extremely High.
Hypothesis

H$_0$: Price has no significant influence on students’ attraction to polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria.

To test the hypothesis, linear regression analysis was used. The data for price and students’ attraction were generated by adding scores of responses of all items for each of the variable.

Table 3: Linear Regression Results of the Influence of Price on Students Attraction into Polytechnics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>27.300</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>32.257</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Students Attraction

Source: Researcher’s Data Analysis Results (2017)

Table 3 presents the results of regression analysis of the influence of price on students’ attraction into polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria, reveals that price has significant influence on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in North Central States of Nigeria (β = 0.093, t = 1.960, p<0.05). The t value of 1.960 implies that price significantly influence students’ attraction into Polytechnics. The result further indicates that price and students’ attraction into polytechnics are positively and significantly related (R=0.055, p=0.050). Also, price explains only 0.3 percent of the variations in students’ attraction into polytechnics (R$^2$ = .003, p= 0.050), which is also significant. However, the regression model did not explain 99.7 percent of the variation in students’ attraction into polytechnics, implying that there are other factors associated with students’ attraction into polytechnics, which were not captured in the model. The established linear regression model is:

$$SATT = 27.300 + .093PR$$  

Where:

SATT = Students Attraction

PR = Price

From the regression equation above, taking all factors constant at zero, students’ attraction into Polytechnics was 27.300. The regression coefficient of Price was 0.093, which implies that for every unit change in Price, there is a 0.091 change in students’ attraction into Polytechnics when all other factors are held constant. This implies that students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria change significantly when price is reduced or increased. The level
of confidence for the analysis was set at 95%. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) which states that price has no significant influence on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of price on students’ attraction to Polytechnic education in the North Central States, Nigeria. Results revealed that price has significant influence on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria. This is also supported by majority of the respondents who agreed with most of the statements in the questionnaire.

In this study, 76% of the respondents indicated that the school fees charged is high. 64.9% of the respondents indicated that extra school fees charged is moderately high with a mean of 4.06. A majority of 67% of the respondents indicated that cost of accommodation in Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria is moderately low. Furthermore, 75.5% of the respondents assert that cost of feeding in polytechnics in North Central States of Nigeria are moderately high.

The finding of this study also consistent with that of Ogbu (2016) that submitted that marketing strategies such as price and promotional activities have the potential to improve institutional performance. They further revealed that publicity-based marketing strategy is associated with an increase in the odds of belonging to the higher performance. As further established by Al-Hersh, Aburoub and Saaty (2016) that customer satisfaction, loyalty and attractiveness can be said to be influenced by a comparison of what they expect from the price of product or service and what they experience as deriving from the consumption of said product or service. It is also said that in order to get satisfied customers, the firm must first educate the consumer on how to be satisfied by the product delivering of the organization. This is through educating the customer in-depth on the products, how available the product is and what the best customer service looks like (Wang’ondu, 2016). Related to this study finding, Ekanem and Ekpiken (2013) who undertook a research on how unit cost of education serves as a determinant of students’ learning achievement in Universities in Cross River State of Nigeria revealed that unit cost of both academic and non-academic staff could not determine the magnitude of students’ academic achievement in the Universities studied.

This is in line with Abdullahi, Muhammad Khalil and Robel (2014) who carried out a study on “A Critical Review of Consumers’ sensitivity to Price Using Employed Regression Method of Analysis. The study revealed that consumer’s sensitivity to price has a significant impact on product innovativeness as most of the product/services purchase decisions are being made based on price rather than the brand or accessibility of the products or services. Etienne (2013) found that pricing is one of the most vital factors of marketing product mix, generate cash/revenue and determine firm survival in the industry. The study further established that price is significantly determined profitability of an organization.

Also, the study findings is consistent with Sije and Oloko (2013) who carried out a study on penetration pricing strategy and performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Kenya. Stratified random sampling technique was used with questionnaire. The study revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between penetration pricing strategy and SMEs performance in
Kenya Singh (2012) examined a study titled “marketing mix of 4P’s for competitive advantage”. The study revealed that marketing mix related to price significantly influence firm profit performance and competitive level among the firms in the industry. Lipovetsky, Magnan and Zanetti-Polzi (2011) carried out a study titled “pricing models in marketing research”. Their study used primary data in order to establish the significant effect of pricing in marketing product and organizational profitability. The study revealed that price significantly determines financial performance of an organization.

The finding of this is also in line with Gajić (2012) and Mokhtar, & Wan-Ismail (2016) as they examined the importance of marketing mix in higher education institutions of polytechnics institutions combing polytechnic related institutions and few Universities based on the fact that understanding factors and circumstances that create certain market environment conditions is a primary goal of any modern-oriented polytechnics institution that enables harmonizing the supply with current demands as well as defining appropriate marketing strategies. The finding revealed that modern Polytechnic institutions gain competitive advantage primarily through attractive curricula, renowned teaching staff, which applies modern technologies in performing teaching process and through quick adaptation and reaction to changes or new needs of a background. Based on the findings and the extant supporting literature, the study therefore rejects the null hypotheses (H₀) which states that price has no significant influence on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The broad objective of this study was to establish the relationship between Price (school fees) and students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central States, Nigeria.

The finding revealed that price has significant influence on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria (β = 0.093, t = 1.960, p= .050). The coefficient of determination (R² = .003, p= 0.050) indicates that the predictor variable (price) is accounting for 3% variation in the dependent variable. Likewise, the test of the overall model was found to be statistically significant, given F-value of 3.84 and p= 0.050

This research was carried out to ascertain the effect of price, on students’ attraction into Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria. And also to observe whether Price as a marketing strategy is being implemented in the studied Polytechnics and what are the resultant effects and outcomes it has on students’ attraction. The findings showed that marketing strategies (Price) is strong predictor of students’ attraction

The finding of the study shows that price has significant influence on students’ attraction to polytechnic education in the North Central states, Nigeria. Students view cost or price as an important factor in their decision to enrol in Polytechnics. The authorities and administrators of polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria should strategize their marketing efforts to meet the expectation of the students.

The findings of this study have revealed that pricing strategies significantly promotes students’ attraction to Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria. The result of this study to a great extent assisted administrators of Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria to be aware of
the requested students’ needs and students’ selection criteria. The study also avail Polytechnics and administrators of Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria to strive to ensure that students are given a holistic educational experience and not just paper qualification. In doing all these, Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria must deliver quality services that will serve the needs and expectations of prospective students. It provided adequate information to institutions of higher learning and administrators of Polytechnics in the North Central states, Nigeria to revise their strategy in marketing services.

References


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