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Chapter 2

Public vs Private Universities in Nigeria: Market Dynamics Perspective

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Due to the scarcity of literature in developing countries of Africa, there is a need for a conceptual paper on the market dynamics perspective of the Nigerian public and private universities. The price signal influences the two-tier of universities growth. This signal has a different impact on its stakeholders. This study intends to examine the market dynamics of public and private universities in Nigeria. It aims to ascertain how price signal affects the Nigerian public and private universities market and the distinct factors that differentiate the public from private universities in the Nigerian context. The study conducted a literature review to identify the external and internal influences of public and private universities in Nigeria. The present study contributes to and broadens the knowledge of higher education in the country, explicitly highlighting the market dynamics caused by the demand and supply of higher education. Likewise, it offers practical implications for administrators, managers, and researchers with interest in higher education marketing. The study discussed its limitation and proposed future studies.

Keywords: public university, private university, market dynamics, Nigeria

Introduction

There is a need for a conceptual paper on the market dynamics perspective of the Nigerian public and private universities due to scarce literature in developing countries of Africa. The price signal influences the two-tier of universities growth. This signal has a different impact on its stakeholders.

Education is vital for national development. It is a human right which unlocks individual potential and benefits all of society, powering sustainable development (DFID, 2018). Developing countries are making considerable strides in expanding schooling and developing their educational policy (Mordaunt, 2018). The African Higher Education Summit has put action plans in place to dramatically increase higher education participation across the continent over the next 50 years, and the hopes of having enrolment ratios rise to 50% by 2063. This target calls for a dramatic increase in African investment in higher education, more significant research spending, active links to African scholars in the diaspora, and more effective coordination of planning and delivery of higher education programmes at the institutional, national, and continental levels (ICEF, 2015).

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with over 180 million, is making an effort to improve its educational system, albeit it a challenge. Despite inadequate funding for the existing tertiary institutions, the government has created ten new federal institutions are part of the over 80 that the National Assembly is currently working to establish (Krishi, 2018). The demand for higher education is very high, yet the supply is little. The public universities are not meeting these demands, and this has led to high numbers of private universities aspiring to meet this market's demands. This supply of universities and demand for higher education presents a market dynamic in the higher education system of Nigeria.

This market dynamics influence the supply of universities as Nigeria and highlights the need for more university spaces to meet the need of prospective students. The government universities are not enough; even the available ones are not well funded and equipped to meet the growing needs. The justification for establishing private universities in Nigeria to complement public universities is asymmetrical. The coexistence of public and private universities is moot. The outcome of the long debate on the quality of tertiary education is unjustifiable, as many intending students desire to be educated in the diaspora and are unable to derive any satisfaction in existing universities in Nigeria.

The relationship between supply and demand is also considered a dominant force behind setting prices in the higher education market in Nigeria. This dynamic also impacts price and the expectations of HEI and students. It determines the pricing structure and how students will react to the fees. Some parents prefer to send their children to universities in neighbouring African countries or even to Europe and America. There has been the report of Nigerian students going to Ghana to study, and Nigeria, in turn, loses revenue annually because of the choice of Nigeria students to gain an education in other countries (Hope, 2018). While recognising that a single private university cannot affect the market significantly, corporate marketing is changing and becoming very dynamic. Likewise, market dynamics influence the demand of prospective students, especially those who have not been able to secure admission to government institutions.

Despite the progressive studies on public and private universities in Nigeria, there is a gap in research that explains how the price signals are created when there is a continual change in the

supply and demand of public and private university services in their education market. This study intends to examine the market dynamics of public and private universities in Nigeria and aims to know how to price signal affects the Nigerian public and private universities market and the distinct factors that differentiate the public from private universities in the Nigerian context.

The method used for this conceptual paper takes a cue from Marek (2015) and divides the methodology into six parts. First, the study conducted a literature review to identify the external and internal influences of public and private universities in Nigeria. Second, it conducted a reflective analysis to add influences not found in the literature. Third, the research critically analysed the identified influences and grouped them into demand and supply attributes. Fourth, the study integrated the market dynamics factors into a conceptual model reflecting the external and internal factors. Fifth, the study analysed the role of price signal in the overall model, and finally, the research proposed some recommendations for public and private universities practice.

The chapter presents an understanding of the higher education market, the Nigeria Higher Education System, followed by an understating of the private and public universities in Nigeria. The demand attributes of the market dynamics are also discussed, specifically, from the standpoints of students and parents making their decision based on the fees, student satisfaction, experience and identity of the providers. Likewise, the supply attributes of the market, and highlighting the role of the universities are presented. Additionally, supply affected by the location, fees, service quality and completion are presented. The chapter concludes with implications on brand identity, marketing communications and improving students' learning experience. The present study contributes to and broadens the knowledge of higher education in Nigeria, explicitly highlighting the market dynamics caused by the demand and supply of higher education. Likewise, it offers practical implications for administrators, managers and researchers with interest in higher education marketing.

Nigeria Higher Education System

Nigeria is a country of rich ethnocultural diversity, with over 350 distinct ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages (NERDC, 2013). It is the most populous country in Africa, and with this, comes the challenges of educating her citizens. There have often been mixed reactions concerning the issue of university education in Nigeria and how this can be compared to what is obtainable in other countries of the world (Iruonagbe, et al., 2015). A status report on Higher education in Nigeria argued that political interventions in the higher education system, under a series of military governments, has distorted and constrained the development of higher education in Nigeria (Saint, et al., 2003).

The National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria provides national guideline for the effective administration, management, and implementation of education at all tiers of government (NERDC, 2013). The policy acknowledges the advantage of ample conditional provision and legislative support for stakeholders to participate in the delivery of education at all levels, allowing private sector, individuals, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and Non-Governmental Organisation to be very active in the sector (NERDC, 2013). The education system is structured into:
- Early Child development aged 0-4.

- Basic Education aged 5 -15 years, which includes one year of pre-primary, six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education.
- Post -Basic Education of 3 years in secondary schools, technical colleges and
- Tertiary Education provided in colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics, and the universities.

Nigeria's university education system includes both public and private universities. Public Universities are run by both federal and state Governments. There are currently 170 approved universities in Nigeria, comprising 43 federal universities, 48 state universities, and 79 private universities (NUC, 2019). Up until1999, the establishment, ownership, management and funding of universities and all tertiary educational institutions remained the exclusive reserve of federal, regional and state governments (Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009).

The National Universities Commission of Nigeria is a government agency saddled with the responsibility of promoting quality higher education in Nigeria. The Commission is also responsible for approving all academic programs run in Nigerian universities and approving the establishment of all higher educational institutions offering degree programs. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is the Nigerian central admissions agency. They conduct the entrance examination - Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) for prospective undergraduates into Nigerian universities.

As education has become an essential factor for economic development in the 21st century (Saint, et al., 2003), an instrument for national development, and social change, vital for the promotion of a progressive country (NERDC, 2013), challenges have arisen. Nigeria is struggling with meeting the needs of prospective students craving for education, especially at tertiary level. Admission into universities in Nigeria is critical as there is an ever-increasing demand for university space (Adeyemi, 2001). Over 2 million prospective students registered for UTME in an academic year, all competing for 750,000 places, potentially leaving over a million qualified college-age Nigerians without a post-secondary place (Parr, 2018).

Despite this massive deficit, it was reported that Registrar/Chief Executive of JAMB, Professor Is'haq Oloyede said the available space in universities across the country is big enough to accommodate the highest percentage of admission seekers. The Registrar further suggests that establishing more universities, especially by the states, will, in the long run, suffer perennial under-funding (Olanrewaju, 2018). This, however, seems not to hinder the growth of private universities in the country which allows for competition between the public and the private universities (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008).

Public Universities in Nigeria
Public universities in Nigeria were established and managed by the government. The federal government owns some of these public universities, while the state governments own some others. The public universities have continually dominated the higher education landscape in Nigeria for several decades. The government traditionally categorises its federal universities into groups, based on their dates of establishment, as follows (Saint, et al., 2003): 1st Generation (Benin, Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Lagos, Nsukka, Zaria), 2nd Generation (Calabar, Ilorin, Jos,

Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, Sokoto), and 3rd Generation (Abeokuta, Abuja, Akure, Akwa, Bauchi, Makurdi, Minna, Owerri, Umudike, Uyo, Yola).

Unlike private universities, public universities are well located across the country; each state in the country can boast of a university. Public universities are cheaper, affordable for students across the country, and have different courses which may not be available in private universities. There is often a sense of pride in attending a public university, as students feel they are matured to deal with the challenges that come their way, unlike those in private schools. The social life at the public universities, unlike the strict in private universities, has often attracted prospective students to the public universities.

However, these market dynamics have also hurt public universities. There are numerous challenges with the public /universities which have affected their capabilities to meet the growing demands of students. Enrolments at public universities have increased more quickly than government's capacity to finance these institutions (Iruonagbe, et al., 2015). The lack of funds has contributed to inadequacy of infrastructural facilities in Nigeria universities. The universities in Nigeria operate in adverse conditions: overcrowding and deteriorating physical facilities such as laboratories, lecture theatres and student accommodation (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008; Saint, et al., 2003). Besides this, lack of funding has led to lowering of recruitment, conditions of staff, lack of research grants, poor remuneration and general welfare for lecturers, and brain drain (Idogho, 2011). This long term brain drain is also affecting the staffing level (Saint, et al., 2003), putting pressure on present staff that needs to do much more and not having time for effective teaching and learning, which is having adverse effect on the quality of education received by students in the public universities(Akindele, 2013).

Complains about funding and inadequacy of infrastructural facilities has often led to disruption of the system and academic calendars due to strikes and riots. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Nigerian Union of university academic staff, has often embark on strike due to issues such as poor welfares, inability to implement past agreements, poor conditions of service, disparity in salaries and allowances, and the need for academic freedom among (Akindele, 2013). This disruption makes many students in these public universities stay longer in their courses than expected.

Despite its affordability and location around the country, the challenges being faced by public universities have made prospective students and their parents look for alternatives. Some have decided to travel to Europe and America, while some go out to Ghana and some choose to enrol with private universities. Though the demands are still high for public universities, private universities have concretised themselves in the Nigeria education system and are becoming more attractive to students.

Private Universities in Nigeria
Many issues with the education system in Nigeria have called for the establishment of private universities (Iruonagbe, et al., 2015). High among which is the quality and quantity of available university spaces in the country, especially as the government universities are losing their value. Following this ongoing shortage of places in the public universities and the need to increase the number of enrolments, private universities are filling the gap in meeting the

demands of prospective students seeking higher education in Nigeria and are responding to the failings of the public school system (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008; Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009). These private universities are licensed to address the problem of excessive demand oversupply (Oyebade, 2005).

Private universities are described as non-public or independent universities, solely owned, financed and managed by private individuals, denominational or secular boards. Often they are operated for profit (Mogaji 2019). While there has been a global trend in private proprietorship of educational institutions over the years (Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009), Nigeria is not an exception. This aligns with practices in other parts of the world where both private, and public sectors of the economy are involved in the provision and management of university education (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008; Marginson, 2007).

The spread of private universities is recognised in Nigeria (Mogaji 2019), and it is a recent development as compared to the public universities owned by the government (Ajadi, 2009). Private University evolved during two crucial phases: the first during the second republic under President Shehu Shagari administration 1979 – 1983. They were abolished in 1983 by the Federal Military Government and prohibited the establishment of new ones, through Decree 19 of 1984 (Akindele, 2013). The second phase was during the fourth republic when a new democratically elected government came into power in 1999. New sets of private universities were approved as the 1999 Constitution approved their establishment to cater for the training of the urgent needed human resources requirement of the country (Adeyemi, 2009). This led to the establishment of first three private universities. They could be referred to as the pioneer of private universities in Nigeria (Ademola, et al., 2014). These Universities are Babcock at Ilishan Remo in Ogun State(owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church) Madonna in Okija, Anambra State(owned by the Catholic Church in Nigeria Catholic), and Igbinedion in Okada, Edo (founded by Sir Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, a prominent Benin Chief). Since then, private universities have continued to grow in quantity. As of August 2019, there were seventy-nine (79) approved private universities in Nigeria (NUC, 2019, Mogaji, 2019).

Unlike public universities, private universities take pride in ensuring that their students finish their degree at the stipulated time; there is no disruption to their studies. Also, these universities are better funded, because the students pay a considerably large amount of money and the infrastructure are present, though the quantity is often debated as the universities are just developing. They may not have many facilities, but apparently, the available ones are very conducive.

Despite these positive features shaping the dynamics of the private education market in Nigeria, there are some concerns with the private universities. Akindele (2013) suggested that there is disparity in the location of public and private universities in Nigeria, being skewed towards the Southern part. This was also confirmed by the study of Mogaji (2019) which plotted the locations of the universities in Nigeria. The private universities are predominantly based in the southern part of the country. Ogun State, Southwest of Nigeria, has a higher number of private universities which is 12. The educational imbalance between the Northern and Southern parts

of the country is acknowledged, and likely to imply the availability (and location) of future universities.

The proliferation of private universities in Nigeria as a business enterprise in Nigeria is seen as an emerging phenomenon (Ajadi, 2010), even though ownership of universities as an investment has come to be universally accepted (Akpotu & Akpochafo, 2009). Private universities are often founded by the two main religion in the country and wealthy individuals. The possibilities of other denominations and individuals entering this higher education market to meet the growing demands of students cannot be ignored, with the additional supply, the dynamics of the market is bound to change.

Also, the fees being charged is always a concern for prospective students. Akindele (2013) argued that private universities have the goal of making a profit from their investment, and called for government to regulate the fees being charged, suggesting there should be benchmark that should be approved for all private universities in Nigeria. Private universities have been criticised on the basis that they are profit-making ventures. Acknowledging the economic situation and the cost of education in Nigeria, not many people can afford private education, and this is suggested to be widening the social gap, bringing about greater inequality and widening the existing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). Akindele (2013) further noted that children of wealthy individuals are in private universities creating a class for themselves in society.

Concerns have been raised about the criteria for admission into most private universities and quality of training being received by students. Ademola et al. (2014) noted that private universities offered courses which depend on the basic orientation of private universities, those who are self-financing and profit-generating such as Information Communication Technology (ICT) Management, Business Administration, Accountancy, Banking & Finance, and more. Admission requirements have been lowered than that of the public universities to attract more students. Akindele (2013) argued that private universities are for those who were left out by the public Universities and those who could not make JAMB cut off mark for the selected university. It must be noted that there is no credible empirically research to verify these claims, suggesting the need for further research, as these contribute to the dynamics of the market. There will be students choosing private universities because of the lack of facilities, support and strikes experience by students of public universities.

Market dynamics
Market dynamics implies the effect of demand and supply in a given market or product. The patronage of a given product is hinged on demand-based and supply-based attributes (Hultman, Yeboah-Banin & Formaniuk, 2016). The classical theory of demand and supply highlight that at higher prices, consumers will demand less of the product while suppliers would supply more in the event of an increase in price (Lee, 2010). The different reactions to demand and supply are settled by market-clearing price (Maillé, 2007). Maillé (2007, p.466) defines market-clearing price "as the unit price for which the aggregated demand equals the total available resource." This is the price the consumer will be willing to pay, and the supplier is willing to supply at(Behrangrad, 2015; Aalami and Khatibzadeh, 2016). However, several factors underpin the supply and demand for goods and services. These factors are product and service-specific. However, in the context of higher educational institutions (HEIs), the university

ranking or its image, students satisfaction and tuition impact the selection of an HEI (Budd, 2017).

Similarly, prioritising students' satisfaction in terms of service quality, service personalisation and enhanced experience, significantly impact students patronage of an HEI (Khoo, Ha and McGregor, 2017). Moreover, from the perspective of HEIs, certain factors can make them attractive to students. According to Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap and Axelsson (2015) the image of the university, infrastructure and quality of service to students are critical attractions to students. In the developing countries where the services rendered by public and private, HEIs differ considerably (Wilkinson and Yussof, 2005). The attractiveness of an HEI is likely to depend on how it competitively prioritises student's satisfaction above others. Thus, in this study, we analyse the demand and supply factors in the light of public and private HEIs in the emerging market perspective. Our analysis highlights that HEIs find themselves in the middle between what the students want (demand attributes) and expected services to be provided by the institutions (supply attributes). We further argue that HEIs that provide services that meet customers' demands will likely receive higher patronage.
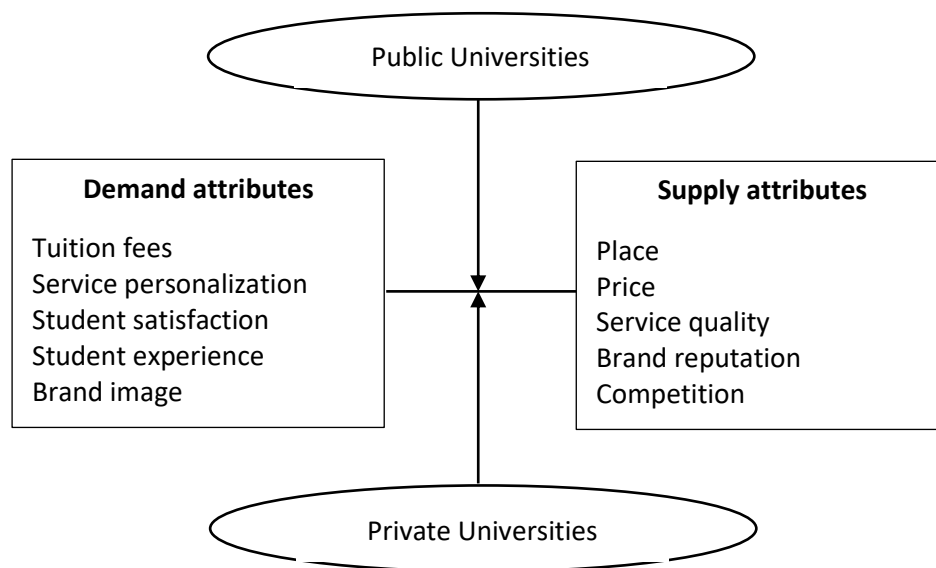
Demand attributes

In choosing a higher educational institution for study, parents and students consider several factors. These factors may vary depending on the economic standard and income of the family, in a different part of the worlds. However, they remain similar across countries, and income divides. Firstly, let us look at the tuition fees (Ajadi, 2010). Tuition fees are a critical determinant of the choice of an HEI, particularly from a developing countries perspective. In developing countries, public universities rely heavily on government subsidies for the running of the universities (Ajadi, 2010). To this end, the tuition fees from students are merely to

augment the subsidies from government. Before this time, some public universities pressure the students to pay fees until when they are ready to collect their certificate.

Interestingly, the picture is radically different from private universities. As private universities do not receive subsidies, they rely on fees, and it affects the number of fees they charge. In most cases, students from poor backgrounds are unable to afford the fees and resort to public universities (Okoli, 2015). Against this backdrop, the patronage of private universities is a status symbol and a demonstration of class (Onuoha, 2013).

Secondly, service personalisation increases customer perception of quality of service (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). The use of customer data has proved an efficient way firms can create a unique experience for the customer. Within the management of HEI, using data to create a unique and personalised student experience is increasingly receiving attention in HEI literature (Gros, 2016). These strands of literature advocate that a personalised student experience incorporates a smart learning environment. These tools not only create individualised attention but also provides solution that the student may encounter in the course of learning without stress. Smart learning according to Hwang, Chu, Yin and Ogata (2015) involves the following:

- Detect and consider the real-world contexts.
- Situate learners in real-world scenarios.
- Adapt learning interfaces for individual learners.
- Provide personalised feedback or guidance.
- Provide learning guidance or support across disciplines.
- Provide learning guidance or support across contexts.
- Recommend learning tools or strategies.
- Consider learners' online learning status.
- Consider learners' real-world learning status.
- Facilitate both formal and informal learning.
- Take multiple personal and environmental factors into account.
- Interact with users via multiple channels.
- Support learners in advance, across real and virtual contexts.

From the marketing point of view, personalisation increases customer satisfaction and deepens customer experience (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). With the rapid diffusion and pervasive adoption of modern technologies, including their deployment in the management of customer experience, HEIs that deploy these tools will receive higher patronage of students. Interestingly, from the developing country perspective, achieving personalisation poses significant challenges to both the government and HEI administrators. The dearth of technical human resources constitutes a significant hindrance to creating a smart learning and personalised student experience. Moreover, the availability of funds is another major setback for deploying technology in HEIs. Unfortunately, where these funds are made available, corrupt administrators and government officials mismanage or divert these funds to private pockets (Chapman & Lindner, 2016). The identification of these challenges and the search for a fulfilling student experience is driving many students from developing countries to Europe, United States of America, and Australia to achieve their aim of quality education. Interestingly though, many private universities in the developing countries have identified these challenges and are delivering quality student experience. Their ability to provide quality learning environment and satisfaction underpins the reason why some students from wealthy families who cannot travel abroad make them their desired destinations.

Finally, another attraction for parents and students is the brand image. Biel (1992, p.8) defines brand image as "a cluster of attributes and associations that consumers connect to the brand name." Across the world, some universities command more attention than others. Many parents and students would struggle to be granted admission to such universities. Similarly, such universities exist at the level of developing countries. In each of these developing countries, some universities are respected than others, and they usually experience admission over-subscription from students. In Nigeria for instance, examples of such universities include University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ahmadu Bello University and University of Lagos (Gbadegesin & Babatunde, 2015).

Interestingly, the efforts of some of the private universities in enhancing their brand image are paying off. For instance, the brand image of Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria, has improved considerably over the years due to its ranking by world-leading ranking bodies. So, while students and parents patronise the above premier universities in Nigeria, Covenant University has positioned itself at a university for the high class among Nigerian elites.

Supplier attributes
Suppliers, in this case, are the universities. To make themselves attractive to students, there are things they must put in place. Firstly, the location of the university. In the marketing literature place signifies the accessibility of the product through the distributional channels (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote & Couwenberg, 2018). The location of a university is essential, particularly from a developing country perspective. A university is likely to be attractive if is sited within significant cities and towns, where students can easily access them. From the viewpoint that most of the developing countries suffer from deficient transportation services (Atuoye, Dixon, Rishworth, Galaa, Boamah & Luginaah, 2015), a university sited where it will be difficult to access may likely suffer from patronage. Importantly, with pervasive security challenges across the world, siting a university in remote villages or bush paths will likely be a haven of banditry, which may put off students from patronising such places. Additionally, telecommunication system from service providers is transmitted via masts which may not be available in the remote villages. This could constitute difficulties to student's ability to communicate regularly with their parents.

Furthermore, many students patronise public universities because they charge low tuition fees. Similarly, among the private universities, their tuition fees vary. To this end, while the natural inclination to patronise public universities because of low tuition fees is high, it is also important to note that private universities with competitive tuition will be highly attractive to students. As much as these fees will vary, it is pertinent to note that HEI providers should prioritise students' satisfaction. Extant studies have established that is positively related to re-patronage and recommendation intention (Altunel & Erkurt, 2015; Atulkar & Kesari, 2017). Accordingly, universities that provide satisfactory services will likely receive positive recommendations.

Finally, competition plays another role in the choice of a university. Usually, competitive marketing contexts place consumers in an advantageous position (Kaenzig, Heinzle & Wüstenhagen, 2013), and their choices will be determined by the service providers' offerings. In the same manner, where many universities exist, parents and students will likely make better choices in terms which university meets their goals. In Nigeria, for instance, the multiplicity of both public and private universities have provided students the opportunity to carefully evaluate the facilities, teaching staff, and other ancillary services.

The Study Implications
The findings of this study led us to conclude that the market dynamics influence on public and private universities in Nigeria, and the effects of demand and supply attributes of market dynamics on Nigeria student's migration for quality education that payback for their investment. It is evident in our study that Nigerian universities, either private or public, are yet to strike an equilibrium between the demand and supply of university education. Reference to the economic principles, the school fees set by the universities should be determined by demand (the number of students that are seeking admission per academic session) and supply (university facilities to accommodate specific numbers of students in a session). The four laws of demand and supply (Kramer, 2019) stated that: "if demand increases and supply remains unchanged, then it leads to the higher equilibrium price and higher quantity", and "if demand decreases and supply remains unchanged, then it leads to lower equilibrium price and lower quantity". Also, "if supply increases and demand remains unchanged, then it leads to lower equilibrium price and higher quantity", and "if supply decreases and demand remains unchanged, then it leads to higher equilibrium price and lower quantity" (Zainal, et al. 2019; Mortazavi, Maleki & Yousefi, 2019; Fitch-Roy, Benson & Woodman, 2019). The application of these laws to both Nigerian public and private universities depends on the geographical distributions of students (Przhedetskaya & Borzenko, 2019) and the status of the students' sponsor (whether they are affluent or indigent sponsors). To date, there are more demands for education in Nigeria than the supply despite the increasing establishment of private universities. To pave the way for competition in Nigeria universities ecosystems, the education policymakers and university stakeholders need to pay attention to brand identity, service quality, facilities, marketing communications, and Open Day/Taster sessions.

Our study shed light on the importance of branding and branding identity. Presently, some of the Nigerian universities did not pay keen attention to their brands, and there is some obsolete branding, which requires rebranding (Greyser & Urde, 2019). The competition between the public and the private universities in Nigeria warrant the intervention of branding and brand identity (Fazli-Salehi, Esfidani, Torres & Zúñiga, 2019). Recently, Sultan & Wong, (2019) mentioned that 'university brand (UniBrand) is a recent concept' and assert that brand is an influencer that can help the student to make the right choice and make the right decision that revolves around pre-admission, admission and post-admission of a university applicant. Our study aligns with the study of Foroudi, Yu, Gupta & Foroudi, (2019) who looked at brand image and reputation in the perspective of students' value co-creation behaviour, the role of university website for students' engagement, and the role of participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour, as types of value co-creation behaviour. Chen (2019) also contributed to the literature of university branding and identified the influencers of brand identity as brand awareness and brand image. According to Chen, the outcome of a strong brand identity is experienced sharing through satisfaction and recommendation of the university brand to others. Nigerian universities need to revisit their mission and vision statement and check if it is realistic or they need to change it to the one that conforms to the fulfilment of the promise they gave to the public. Our study suggests that the combination of an internal brand that centres on the university employees both academic and non-academic, and the external brand that targets the mindset of the university customers, is crucial in Nigeria universities (Zagonel & Baker, 2019).

In order to differentiate between the quantity and quality services, our study suggests that the policymakers that are responsible for HEI in Nigeria should investigate the quality services that are rendering in Nigeria. Sultan & Wong, (2019) linked HEI service quality to their brand performance while Suyanto, Usu & Moodoeto, (2019) examined the effect of service quality

on institution image and student satisfaction. Ensuring the high standard of high-quality service rendered by the academics and non-academic staff to the students, as the quality of the staff will impact the quality of the student's output, our study suggests the introduction of standardised metrics to measure the university service quality through data analytics, machine learning, and present the result in real-time through their website. Nigeria universities, either public or private, are in dire need of service quality performance metrics, and the analytics will ease the affluent and the indigent customers of fear of unknown. Total quality should be the slogan of Nigerian universities. For instance, there is a close link between the quality of service and university facilities, and Napitupulu et al. (2018) discovered that the present-day universities are not measuring up with the expectations of their customers. Our study agreed with the observation of Napitupulu, et al. (2018) as lack of infrastructure facilities in some of the Nigeria universities constitute a significant setback in the demand side for the university education, especially for the affluent customers. According to their study, there was difference between the students perception and expectation regarding classroom facilities and environment facilities, and the users satisfaction level was negative (-0.92) based on the gap analysis on ventilation, furniture, computer and multimedia, laboratory, library, Wi-Fi, sports, vehicle, canteen, learning kiosk, and cleaning facilities.

To some extent, the private universities in Nigeria have more decent facilities than the public universities, and Oladokun & Ajayi, (2019) maintain that facility management is crucial for the long-term survival of facilities in Nigeria public universities. Our study suggests that the university regulatory body in Nigeria should come up with a task force that will ensure standard facilities in Nigerian universities and safety (Tavares, Pacheco & Almeida, 2019). This study recommend that the university planners, administrators, facility professionals and the decision-makers, target different classes of students and the university employee (such as single, married, nursing mothers that need lactation spaces in the public), disabled and other categories, with facilities that meet their demands (Henry-Moss, Lee, Benton & Spatz, 2019).

Marketing communication is a combined market effort to get consumers' attention (Waheed, Yang, Khan, Khan & Farrukh, 2018), and Peruta & Shields, (2018) emphasised the use of social media to market university. The marketing communication effort of public universities, in comparison with private universities, is not at par. In order to penetrate Nigeria education market, the university stakeholders must renew their marketing communication strategy and combine the marketing communication mix of word-of-mouth, personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, interactive marketing, direct marketing, public relations, publicity, events, and experience. The application of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence augmented reality, and the Internet of things (IoT) in Nigeria universities communication mix will transform the visibility and reachability of the universities.

Using Open Day/Taster sessions like a software trial version is standard in some advanced countries like the United Kingdom, but still needs formalisation in Nigeria universities. The universities need to give access to their applicants to have a foretaste of what they will enjoy in the next 4-5-6-7 years of their studies. The Open Day is general, while Taster days are specific. Open Days give a chance to the hopeful students, parents or guardians to visit a proposed university, while the Taster day can host the careers, in addition to the students that need a taste of a specific course or department. Information on Open Day/T sessions is missing on Nigeria university websites, and it is possible to designate a sub-website for Open Day/Taster sessions. This study suggests that an Open Day/Taster session should be introduced in both public and private universities in Nigeria.

This study contributes to the more in-depth understanding of market dynamics in the context of university education in Nigeria and introduces how to strike a balance between the demand and supply of university education, and make a recommendation for the policymakers and university education managers in Nigeria. Despite the findings of this study, the study was limited to both private and public universities and other higher institutions, as Nigerian colleges of education and polytechnics were not included in this study. This study is conceptual, and the future researcher should extend the result of this study to Nigerian colleges of education and polytechnics (Olaleye, Sanusi, Ukpabi & Okunoye, 2018), with a quantitative methodology and application of multi-group data analysis technique. Globally, the circular economy has become a hot topic, and the future researcher should examine the effect of the circular economy on university waste and how to brand Nigerian universities as a green university (Moore & Iyer-Raniga, 2019).

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