



## The impact of physical evidence in service delivering as marketing tools that foreseen profitability for private Universities in Nigeria

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Received: 09.05.2020

Accepted: 19.05.2020

Published: 25.06.2020

### Abstract

This study took 20 universities as samples with a stratified random sampling. 500 questionnaires were used for the research purpose, where each university was given 25 questionnaires. The results agreed with hypothesis one (H1) variables that said that physical evidence is significantly associated with market share of private university, while it disagreed with the (H0) that said physical evidence is not significantly associated with the market share of the private universities, the research also agreed on the second (H1) physical evidence is significantly associated with profitability of the private universities in Nigeria (H0). This research disagreed with the null hypothesis that physical evidence is not associated with the profitability of the private Universities in Nigeria and the success of every private university is to satisfy the need and want of their student, which is being achieved through service quality that had strong influence on students' satisfaction in Nigerian private Universities. Physical evidence had significant influence in service marketing and service quality had significant influence on student's satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Physical evidence, Service marketing mix, Market share, Profitability, and Satisfaction

### OPEN ACCESS

### INTRODUCTION

Kotler (2003), extends the service marketing mix concept consisting of 4 P; product, price, place / delivery channels) and promotion. Within the marketing objective, the concept of service marketing mix is applicable to all products and services sectors, including educational sectors. Booms and Bitner (1996) recommend three additional P in the marketing of services; people, physical evidence, and process. Educational service is a system part of a system (Lim et al., 2020). Service is a mechanism, and a program, according to Lovelock (1999). Service as a process is generated from three processes of inputs; people (consumer), materials, and knowledge. Service company as a network is a mixture of Service Operating System and Service Delivery System. Service marketing emphasizes service delivery system; how services are provided to customers by a company or organization (Berkowitz et al., 2003). The effectiveness of service marketing depends on a company's strategy that is determined by perceived service quality and assessed by customer perceived service quality, as well as the planned service (Sharma. S. & Sharma. P 2017). The overall quality of service is the totality of every mixed service element. Service marketing mix and quality of service in education sectors can be enhanced by the elements and determinants of service quality. According to Lovelock and Wright (2002), the quality of service is determined by five elements; tangible, empathic, reliable, responsive, and assurance or certainty. Tangible, reflects the physical infrastructure such as lecture hall, offices, lecture rooms, staff clothing and appearance, university location, lecture facilities etc. (McBride et al., 2011). Empathy comprises ease of interaction and comprehension of student needs such as attitude, reasonableness of payments offered, readiness to support students,

willingness to respond to any student request, courtesy of employees, individual attention to students, comprehension employees' interests, attention to student needs and attention to personal needs (Berry & Clark, 1986). Reliability includes trust in institutions, consistency of student records, confidence in staff and lecturers among the students (Bearden & Teel, 1983). Responsiveness requires level of operation and the assistance of faculties and staff institutions. Assurance involves a student pledge agency, scheduling of service delivery, security seminars, assurance of operational scheduling and guarantee of provided services (Ali & Raza, 2017).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Most services are economic activities that generate time, place, form or psychological difference (Murdick et al., 1990). Services include actions, procedures, and output (Berry, 1980 & Bitner, 1990). A service is an intangible entity involving an event, a result, or an initiative which cannot be possessed physically (Barker et al., 1988). Services are economic activities provided by one party to another, with the most frequent use of time-based results to result in recipients themselves or in items or other properties for which transactions are responsible (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007).

### Additional three (3) Ps to service marketing mix

Products are created and consumed concurrently, suggesting that either the customer or a customer's ownership is engaged in the process when providing the service (Dryfoos & Maguire, 1999). Often, services are hard to patent, and fairly easy to copy. In fact, we accept that service delivery is inconsistent. Inconsistency refers to

the question of maintaining the same degree of service quality each time a service is purchased. Since services rely on the expertise and skills of the people who then deliver, their quality varies with the skills and daily performance of each provider (Yeo & Grant, 2018).

Such specific aspects of the service product allow them to be marketed in a way that is markedly different from that of physical goods. In this regard, Kotler (1997) notes that conventional marketing "4Ps" frequently work well for physical goods, but indicate that additional elements are required for the selling of services. Services marketing scholars also agree (Baron, 1995; Lovelock, 1996) that the conventional marketing combination of "4Ps" should be applied to "7Ps". That is, service products should include the conventional 4Ps attributed to physical product sales, namely product, price, promotion and physical distribution, and additional "3Ps" – people, process, and physical proof.

### **People**

Because of the direct contact between customers and frontline employees in marketing services this is considered an important element in the sale of service products (Fedorko, 2018). The people dimension of service marketing indicates that service personnel selection and training is a sine qua non in service organizations such as airline companies' overall marketing effort. Furthermore, it is equally critical that these service workers are sufficiently encouraged and compensated to provide experiences satisfactory to successful customers (Berry & Lampo, 2004). Customer service staff will demonstrate an enthusiastic, optimistic and customer-care disposition in this regard (Bitner, 1990).

### **Process**

The Keynes Process aspect of the mix should be prepared in service delivery. Again, how the service is distributed is important in Services Marketing. For example, the performance of the service system determines the length of waiting time for the customer. The process dimension of the service marketing mix (Abbas et al., 2018) focuses on inseparability, intangibility and inconsistency. The process aspect concerns procedures at the point of touch for communicating with the customers. Production schedules, ordering facilities and so on are critical factors in developing the process aspect of the services marketing mix to ensure effective preparation, encouragement and compensation for workers (Brassington & Pehitt, 1999). The process aspect may be a major way to differentiate a service provider from the competition. In terms of process dimension, service marketers need to continually search for new business innovations.

### **Physical Evidence**

The intangibility of service products makes it difficult for consumers to evaluate service offerings, particularly quality and value for money, prior to purchase. Also, this intangibility can make it difficult for the marketer to position new service product offerings (Ameur et al., 2015). In view of this, marketers often need to "tangible" the service offering through the way they manage the physical evidence that accompanies the service. Physical evidence includes aspects such as the service provider's building/facilities and staff appearance; other aspects like personal hygiene and uniformity. Additionally, advertising materials and branding campaigns are all items of physical proof that act as measurable or a consumer service sectors (Othman et al., 2019). Such tangible proof metrics are what prospective consumers use to correctly or inaccurately determine such as quality of service.

### **Guidelines for Physical Evidence Strategy**

a. Recognize the strategic impact of physical evidence

- b. Mapping the physical evidence service
- c. Clarify roles of the services cape
- d. Assess and identifying the physical evidence opportunities
- e. Be prepared to update and modernize the evidence

### **Physical Evidence and Marketing Performance**

Physical evidence has been described as the atmosphere in which the service is provided when the organization and the consumer communicate and any observable components that promote service efficiency (Ali & Raza, 2017). Physical environment involves the presence and landscaping and physical structure, cars, interior furnishings, equipment, uniforms, signage, written materials and other noticeable materials. Physical evidence is, therefore, an aspect of a marketing mix of services that enables customers to assess a product (Brown & Swarts, 1989). As far as educational institutions in Nigeria are concerned, we interpret physical evidence in terms of ambience, staff expertise and design of service systems.

### **The Roles of Physical Evidence**

**Package:** The institution's external wrapping is called the packaging as it exposes the institution's identity to the world's eyes, what people would anticipate when they use the services of that giving institution to see as the value of individual drive.

**Facilitator:** This would promote better service to the world's eyes, facilities have a significant role to play in communicating the institution's physical evidence, such as laboratory equipment, lecture theater, etc.

**Socializer:** The socializer is another way of expressing the functions of physical evidence, implying interactions between student to student, and between student to lecturer. Interaction has the greater rate of spreading between the persons positive and negative physical evidence.

**Differentiator:** This is a technique to be applied by an institution in order to allow the target market to differentiate between its service and that of its competitor's example, such as price distinction tags, such as white board institutions and star board institutions.

### **Specific tactics for creating proper physical evidence atmosphere**

Questions and Answers

1. Who are the Firm's target markets? Student.
2. What does the target market seek from the service experience? The seek service satisfaction from the institution in both physically, mentally, and emotionally.
3. What atmospheric elements can reinforce the beliefs and emotions for buyers seek? Importance, Power, Success, Evidence, Security, Prestige, Stability, Low risk etc.
4. Does this affect the employees too? Yes, it does in terms of attracting competent staff to the institution.
5. Does the suggested services cape match/outmatch the competitors? Yes, the entire suggested service cape must outmatch that of the competitors.

### **Research Purpose**

The main purpose of this research is to enable the institutional authorities to see how people perceived their institutions from the outside for:

1. Does the service perceived by the students affect the image of the institution?
2. Staff appearance and interior furnishings can attract local and foreign student to an institution.
3. Student having confidence in an institution, and their records raises their value in the eyes of the world.

4. The neatness and system design which reduces the students stress and add to their comfort attract for people's attention.
5. The neatness and system design which reduces the students stress and add to their comfort attract for people's attention.
6. Beautification like planting of ornamental crops in the school surrounding increase fresh air and also draws attention.
7. Physical evidence is significantly associated with sales growth in private universities of Nigeria. '

H1: Physical evidence is significantly associated with market share in private universities of Nigeria.

H0: Physical evidence is not associated with market share in private universities of Nigeria

H2: Physical evidence is significantly associated with profitability in private universities of Nigeria.

H0: Physical evidence in not significantly associated with profitability in private universities of Nigeria

## RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

This is a technique to be applied by an institution in order to allow the target market to differentiate between its service and that of its competitor's example, such as price distinction tags, such as white board institutions and star board institutions (Ghuri & Strange, 2020; Yin, 2017). According to Churchill and Peter (1998) Defines a case study as "... essential to both time and definition. This research's case study consists of 20 private Universities in Nigeria. It seeks to document why a decision has been made, how it has been carried out, and what has happened as a result." address research design and define it as a general plan for authors solving a research issue with empirical analysis (Churchill, 1998). The research design may also serve as a study guide, as it could strengthen and streamline the data collection and analysis of the study.

### Sampling Techniques

The target populations of this study were students of each private university together with other people living in that geographical area with the total number 500 respondents. Sample selection used random sampling technique, which gives the result of 500 respondents, determining the samples for 20 private universities where each will be giving 25 questionnaires. Based on this formula, the number of samples in each university was shown in the following table.

**Table 1. Questionnaires Sampled**

S/N	Universities	Date of Establishment	No of questionnaires
1	Achievers University Owo	2007	25
2	Adeleke University Ede	2011	25
3	Efe Babalola Univ. Ado Ekiti	2009	25
4	African Univ. of science and Technology Abuja	2007	25
5	Ajayi Crowther Univ. Ibadan	2005	25
6	Al hikmah Univ. Ilorin	2005	25
7	Al qalam Univ. katsina	2005	25
8	American Univ. of Nig Yola	2003	25
9	Babcock Univ. Ilishan Remo	1999	25
10	Bells Univ of Technology Otta	2005	25
11	Benson Idahosa Univ. Benin City	2002	25
12	Bingham Univ New karu	2005	25
13	Bowen Univ. Iwo	2001	25
14	Caleb Univ. Lagos	2007	25
15	Caritas Univ. Enugu	2005	25
16	Convenant Univ. Ota	2002	25
17	Crawford Univ. Igbesa	2005	25
18	Edwin Clark Univ. kaigbodo	2015	25
19	Elizade Univ. Ilara -Mokin	2012	25
20	Kings Univ. Ode Omu	2015	25

Source: Questionnaires Sampled 2019

## DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

**Table 2. Questionnaires Distributed**

S/N	Universities	No. of Questionnaire distributed	No. of Questionnaire Returned	No. of Questionnaire lost
1	Achievers University Owo	25	19	6
2	Adeleke university Ede	25	20	5
3	Efe Babalola Univ. Ado Ekiti	25	17	8
4	African Univ of science and Technology Abuja	25	20	5
5	Ajayi Crowther Uni.v Ibadan	25	20	5
6	Al hikmah Univ. Ilorin	25	20	5
7	Al qalam Univ katsina	25	20	5
8	American Univ of Nig Yola	25	23	2
9	Babcock Univ. Ilishan Remo	25	22	3
10	Bells Univ of Technology Otta	25	21	4
11	Benson Idahosa univ Benin City	25	22	3
12	Bingham Univ. New karu	25	15	10
13	Bowen Univ. Iwo	25	20	5
14	Caleb Univ. Lagos	25	17	8
15	Caritas Univ. Enugu	25	19	6
16	Convenant univ. Ota	25	21	4
17	Crawford Univ. Igbesa	25	20	5
18	Edwin Clark Univ. kaigbodo	25	19	6
19	Elizade Univ. Ilara - Mokin	25	18	7
20	Kings Univ. Ode Omu	25	17	8
Total		500	390	110

Source: Questionnaires Distributed 2019

### Gender Response Analysis

**Table 3. Personal Data (Gender Information)**

Gender	No. of questionnaire	Percentage
Male	260	66.6%
Female	130	33.3%
Total	390	100%

Source: Questionnaires Administered 2019

### Age Group Respond Analysis

**Table 4. Personal Data (Age Information)**

Age	No. of questionnaire	Percentage
20 – 30	150	38.5
31 – 40	140	35.9
41 – 50	60	15.4
51 and above	40	10.2
Total	390	100%

### Research Questions (Section B)

**Table 5. Research Questions Analysis**

S/N	Research questions	Yes	No	Yes%	No%
1	Does the service perceived by the students affect the image of the institution	351	39	90%	10%
2	The physical facilities such as lecture hall, buildings and offices affect the growth of an institution.	273	117	70%	30%
3	Staff appearance and interior furnishings can attract local and foreign student to an institution.	351	39	90%	10%
4	The confidence students have In an institution and accuracy in records raises their value in the eyes of the world.	312	78	80%	20%

Source: Questionnaires Administered 2019

The table above reveals the analysis of section b in the questionnaire administered in 2019.

**Table 6. Research Questions Analysis (Continued)**

S/N	Research questions	Strongly agreed (5)	Agreed (4)	Disagreed (3)	Strongly Disagreed (2)	Neutral (1)
5	The neatness and system design which reduces the students stress and add to their comfort attract the people's attention.	150 38.5%	150 38.5%	70 17.9%	15 3.8%	5 1.2%
6	Beautification like planting of ornamental crops in the school surrounding increase fresh air and also draws attention.	190 48.7%	120 30.8%	70 18%	10 2.5%	0
7	Physical evidence is significantly associated with sales growth of private universities in Nigeria.	200 51.3%	110 28.2%	60 15.3%	10 2.6%	10 2.6%
8	Physical evidence is significantly associated with market share of private universities in Nigeria.	180 46.2%	140 35.9%	30 7.7%	20 5.1%	20 5.1%
9	Physical evidence is significantly associated with profitability of private universities in Nigeria.	190 48.7%	150 38.5%	20 5.1%	10 2.6%	20 5.1%

Source: Questionnaires Distributed 2019

This part reveals the analysis of the second part of section b in the questionnaire administered 2019.

**Summary of Findings**

The summary of the finding below shows the correlation between market share and profitability as indicate that the two variables are associated with each other.

**Correlations**

		Market Share	Profitability
Market Share	Pearson Correlation	1	.999**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	5	5
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.999**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	5	5

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Profitability * Market Share	5	100.0%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%

It is also found that the correlation coefficient values for market share is associated with the profitability of the Universities which is significant (where P<0.05). As all the nine questions score an average of more than 0.7 which suggesting that the research has a significant and positive relationship.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research concludes that physical evidence is significantly associated with market share of private universities which reveals the service quality of that university and these have strong influence on student satisfaction in Nigerian private Universities. This research also concluded physical evidence is significantly associated with profitability of the private universities.

Based on empirical findings, it is suggested that leaders of private Universities in Nigeria should take improvement steps to the service marketing mix and service quality in order to improve the physical evidence and student's satisfaction. This study focuses only on one of the variables of service marketing mix which is the physical evidence in other to measure how the people outside perceive the service quality of the private universities, this can be measured by the market share and profitability of the university. For the purpose of further research examining of other variables in service management is recommended.

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