

Marketing Strategies for Increasing Students' Enrolment in Abia State College of Education, Arochukwu

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Abstract- Presently, Students enrolment in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu is so low in that it cannot justify the huge financial, material and human resource investment in the College by the state government and the threat by the Tetfund(Tertiary Education Trust Fund) to withhold its intervention to any Nigerian public tertiary education institution with students' enrolment of less than 1,000 students. To address these challenges, the paper adopted four marketing strategies used in business world and descriptive survey research design. Accordingly, four research questions reflecting the four popular marketing strategies were formulated. A survey research questionnaire also reflecting the four marketing strategies was designed and constructed. The questionnaire was validated and its reliability was found to be 0.98 using Cronbac alpha statistic. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 41 staff of the College. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed. The results of the analysis revealed the marketing strategies to be adopted by the College to improve students' enrolment in the College. Based on the findings of the study, the paper recommended among other things that the College should use inventions/innovations made by the staff or students of the College as part of admission advert, present affordable tuition fee as part of admission advert, make admission campaigns in senior secondary schools, collaborate with JAMB during admission exercise, collaborate with village heads, religious and political leaders during admission exercise, use social media such as WhatsApp, facebook, twitter(now X), as part of admission advert and use College admission portal as part of admission advert

Index Terms- Strategies, Marketing, Marketing Strategies, students' enrolment, Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu

I. INTRODUCTION

Education remains an effective instrument that countries all over the world use to attain greatness. Education provides platform for social, political, economic and technological development. Education can be informal, non-formal and formal as well. Formal education take place in educational institutions such as School, Colleges and Universities saddled with responsibilities of moulding individuals to become active citizens and contribute for the wellbeing of any society they find themselves. Educational institutions therefore, provide social services to the general public. In other words, the main aim of establishing educational institutions is to provide social service aim at bring about development in all ramifications. In the past, governments at federal and state levels shoulder almost all the financial burden of educating citizens, bearing in mind that the return in investment in education is far more than what spent in it.

However, with the passage of time, some governments began to shift ground in such a way that the founding of education at tertiary level should be a share between government and parents with former providing the largest share. The shift may not be unconnected with increasing governments responsibilities and economic recession. Governments must therefore, explore more ways of generating more funds to fund education more especially at the tertiary level of education. In Abia state for example, tertiary institutions fall under

parasatal . By implication, Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu and other tertiary institutions in Abia State are expected to generate money to run their programmes. Government can only augment what the College needed for proper functioning. But the low enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) caused by stiff competition as result of proliferation of private and public institutions providing NCE programmes couple with disdain for NCE programme among youth does not permit the College to generating enough money to run her various programmes. This situation led to the nonpayment of staff salaries for almost two years. To manage the College effectively, the College management in the past reduced the workforce and threatens to do more if the enrolment of students in the College is not increased. Although the present government has no intention of doing so but, the issue of low students' enrolment is still worrisome to them.

One of the effective ways often adopted by some tertiary institutions in the area of increasing student's enrolment is the use of marketing strategy. Marketing strategy according to Rotich (2016) has the fundamental goal of increasing sales and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Marketing strategy includes all basic short-term, and long-term activities in the field of marketing that deal with the analysis of the strategic initial situation of a company and the formulation, evaluation and selection of market-oriented strategies and therefore contributing to the goal of the company and its market objectives (Kasiso,2017). The goal of marketing strategy is achieved through the application of marketing principles with elements such as product, price, promotion and place. In practice marketing elements are applied simultaneously to achieve marketing objectives. In other words, marketing strategy is achieved through marketing mix. Marketing mix according to Riaz (2011) is defined as set of controllable marketing tools that a company uses to create a desired response in the targeted market. Such tools are Product, Price, Promotion and Place. The tools are usually referred to as 4Ps as each tool begin with letter P. Product is physical goods or intangible goods that can be sold, complex set of benefits that can be used to meet customer needs (Bahador,2019). Price is the amount of money that intended customers

willing to pay to get a product or a kind of service (Al Badi, 2015). Promotion is basically the signal or information that the firm provides about itself and its products to different parties or target customer (Hawkins,2010). Place, the distribution channels used to get product to the customers (Ehmke,Fulton & Lusk, 2005).

As stated earlier, mix marketing strategy is being applied in educational institutions for the purpose of increasing student's enrolment. However, the 4Ps of marketing are defined in educational context whenever they are to be used in connection to increasing of students' enrolment. Accordingly, product is an educational programme offered by educational institution. Price is the amount a prospective student is willing to pay for an academic programme. Promotion consists of various aspects of communication that generate educational programme awareness. Place on the other hand refers to the location of the educational institution.

Research suggests that application of the above marketing elements to educational institutions result to increase in student's enrolment. For instance, Murtala, Lawal, Omosidi , Abdulrahman and Ogbudinkpa (2019) carried out a study on marketing mix and students' enrolment in private Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that marketing mix can increase student enrolment. In another related study, Uchendu, Nwafor and Nwaneri (2015) conducted a study which investigated marketing strategies and students' enrolment in private secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. One of the findings of the study showed that there is significant relationship between marketing strategies adoption and student enrolment. In the same vein, Bamfo and Atara (2013) investigated the role of marketing communications in attracting students to enrol in private universities in Ghana. The study among other things revealed that advertising was the most important tool in attracting students to enroll in private universities in Ghana.

In view of the above overwhelming evidences of the effectiveness of marketing elements in increasing students' enrolment that the researcher se to find out whether application of marketing elements will that will help to increase the enrolment of students in

Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.

Problem Statement/Justification

Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu is a teacher training institution with original mandate of producing NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education) competent teachers that will teach in junior secondary schools. However, to provide platform for her NCE graduates to further their studies as well as increasing student's enrolment, Abia state College of went into affiliation with Abia State University, Uturu and Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Unfortunately, such affiliation does not resulted to the desired number of students that the College desired. More so, the student's enrolment keeps on deceasing on yearly basis. This led to the observation by the College management that the number of staff is more than the number of students. Such situation in the past resulted to the downsizing the workforce that left more than 145 staff having their appointments terminated. There is tendency that more staff will go as at present not more than 56 year one NCE students were admitted for 2023/2024 academic session. It is obvious to every staff of the College that the enrolment of students must be increased to avert the ultimate closing down of the college and the threat by the tetfund that any Nigerian public tertiary educational institution with student enrolment of less than 1,000 will not receive its intervention in 2026.. Worried by this ugly situation, the researchers set out to determine the marketing strategies that will lead to increase student's enrolment in Abia state College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify the marketing strategies that will help to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. Specifically, the study will identify:

1. the product strategy to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.
2. the price strategy to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.

3. the promotion strategy to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.
4. the place strategy to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu.

Research Questions

The following research questions were articulated to guide the study.

1. What are the product strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?
2. What are the price strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?
3. What are the promotion strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?
4. What are the place strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of studies that documented the effectiveness of marketing strategies in increasing student's enrolment in educational institutions. This section presents a body of literature concerning the efficacy of marketing strategies in the area of increasing student's enrolment.

Arante, Adalia, Autor, Cuya, Hernandez and Panganiban (2016) conducted a study aimed to determine the factors that encourage the students to enroll in LPU; and to propose a plan of action to address the problems encountered by the high school students. The researchers came up with the idea of studying this in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of LPU-High School marketing strategies. As marketing students, the researchers would like to apply the learning and knowledge on how it can help improve the marketing strategies of LPU-High School. This study also greatly benefited the researchers and the Strategic Communications and Alumni Affairs Office with the information on how to make effective marketing strategies effective. This study is descriptive in nature. It made use of a

self-made questionnaire as its primary data gathering instrument which was validated by an expert in the field. The said instrument is divided into three parts which asked the participants to indicate their assessment regarding the marketing strategies of LPU High School and the factors that encouraged them to enroll in the aforementioned school, and the problems encountered by them. This was participated by 205 high school students of LPU-High School. The results were tallied, encoded, and interpreted using frequency distribution and weighted mean. The obtained data were treated using PASW Version 18 for further analysis. As a result, the marketing strategies are generally effective. The researchers recommend that the school may be more vigilant on the satisfaction of its students and consider improving its less effective marketing strategies; and the school may consider making speedy construction of rooms and facilities to facilitate its growing population.

Sebolao and Mburu (2017) conducted a study with the aim of exploring the types of marketing approaches adopted by private secondary schools and the impact they had in these schools as well as the private school education sector in Botswana. Descriptive research using qualitative and quantitative data was used. The research targeted principles of eight randomly selected schools and 260 parents as respondents from Gaborone since it had the highest concentration of private schools. The results indicated acknowledgment of marketing need by private schools, a high use of resource-based marketing approach, with minimum use of competitive approach. The marketing approach denoted a product orientation rather than marketing orientation in most private schools.

Murtala, Lawal, Omosede, Abdulrahman and Ogbudinkpa (2019) carried out a study on marketing mix and students' enrolment in Private Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research method and used a research questionnaire titled "marketing mix services and students' enrolment". The data collected were analysed using means, t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation statistic. The findings revealed that marketing mix can increase student enrolment and that the application of marketing mix is still low for private universities in the state. It was therefore

concluded that marketing mix adoption would significantly boost students' enrolment for these universities. Hence, the study recommended that the universities identify the marketing mix that suits their situation. The universities are also urged to use price and promotion to enhance their student population and, by so doing, enhance their income base.

Uchendu, Nwafor and Nwaneri (2015) conducted a study which investigated marketing strategies and students' enrolment in private secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. One research question was raised and two null hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Thirty two (32) school administrators in 32 private secondary schools in the study area constitute the study population and were used intact as the study subjects. Data were collected using a 30-item research questionnaire titled "Marketing Strategies and Students' Enrolment Questionnaire (MSSEQ). The obtained data were analyzed using Mean, Population t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed some marketing strategies that can be used in private secondary schools to boost students' enrolment in their order of perceived effectiveness. It also indicated that the extent private secondary school administrators adopt marketing strategies in enhancing students' enrolment is significantly low in most of the studied school. The results further showed that there is significant relationship between marketing strategies adoption and student enrolment. Based on the findings, it was concluded that adopting effective marketing strategies in private secondary schools can enhance increase enrolment which will expand school income opportunity for sustainability and quality service delivery of the organization. It is therefore recommended that marketing strategies such as school website/social media, quality school programmes, infrastructural development, media adverts should be used to boost enrolment since it is a modern means of awareness creation and communicating values of the institution to the prospects. This will serve to increase enrolment rate, thereby increasing literate populace in the country for social and economic well-being.

Bamfo and Atara (2013) investigated the role of marketing communications in attracting students to enroll in private universities in Ghana. The study

employed questionnaire and interviews in collecting data from current students and officials of selected private universities in Ghana. A sample of 126 respondents was selected for the study; comprising students and admission/marketing officers from the selected private universities. Convenience sampling technique was adopted. The statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for the analysis. The study among other things revealed that advertising was the most important tool in attracting students to enrol in private universities in Ghana. It is thus recommended that private universities rely heavily on advertising as a marketing communication tool in attracting prospective students into their institutions. However, considering the importance of the other elements of marketing communications, there is the need for integration. It can therefore be concluded that, for effective positioning and/or sustainable competitive advantage, private universities in Ghana will be better off if they invest more in advertising.

III. METHOD AND MATERIALS

This research was carried out under the following headings: design of the study, area of the study, population for the study, sample and sampling technique instrument for data collection and method of data analysis.

Design of the study

Descriptive survey research design was adopted to collect data on marketing strategies for increasing student's enrolment in Abia State Colleges of education (Technical) Arochukwu.

Area and Population of the Study

The study was carried out in all the six schools in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. These schools are school of Arts and

social sciences education, school of general education, school of science education, school of technical and vocational education, school of languages and school of early child education and primary education respectively. The population of the study consisted of 72 staff.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Proportionate sampling technique was used for the study. A sample size of 41 staff was drawn from the population of 72 staff from various schools and units using proportionate sampling technique.

Instrument for data collection

Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. It consists of five sections; A, B, C, D and F. Section A elicited information on respondent's personal data while the remaining four sections solicited data on strategies for increasing students' enrolment in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. This followed by computation of the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.98 using Cronbach alpha statistic.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaire.

IV. RESULTS

Research Question One

What are the product strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of staff responses on Product Strategies to be adopted to increase students' enrolment in ASCETA
N=41

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Using high placed graduated persons from the College as part of admission advert	3.41	0.73	Agree
2.	Using results of some students that graduated from the College as part of	3.02	0.94	Agree

	admission advert			
3.	Using inventions made by the staff or students of the College as part of admission advert	3.29	0.59	Agree
4.	Using innovations made by the staff or students of the College as part of admission advert	3.02	0.72	Agree
5.	Using entrepreneurial activities in the College as part of admission advert	3.41	0.71	Agree

N=Number of respondent SD=Standard Deviation \bar{X} =Mean

Data from table 1 above shows the responses of staff concerning product strategy to be adopted by the College to improve students' enrolment. From the table, one can see that all the items had means of more than the cutoff point of 2.50. This implies that all the items are strategies for improving students' enrolment. Table 1 also shows that all the items in the table have standard deviations with lower values.

This suggests that respondents are close in their opinions over the items.

Research Question Two

What are the price strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of staff responses on Price Strategies to be adopted to increase students' enrolment in ASCETA

N=41

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
6	Affordable tuition fee for new students	3.83	0.38	Agree
7	Affordable accommodation fee for new students	3.71	0.51	Agree
8	Affordable examination fee for new students	3.54	0.64	Agree
9	Affordable medical fee for new students	3.51	0.59	Agree
10	Affordable acceptance fee for new students	3.56	0.63	Agree
11	Affordable textbooks prices for students	3.61	0.49	Agree
12	Regulating the sale of handouts in the College	3.51	0.57	Agree
13	Executing appropriate sanction to staff for extorting money from students	3.61	0.63	Agree

N=Number of respondent SD=Standard Deviation \bar{X} =Mean

Concerning table 2 above, all the items had mean values of more than 2.50 implying that the items stand for price strategy to be adopted by the College to improve students' enrolment. All the items in table 2 have small values of standard deviations. This implies that respondent's responses vary very little concerning all the items.

Research Question Three

What are the promotion strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of staff responses on Promotion Strategies to be adopted to increase students' enrolment in ASCETA

N=41

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
14	Including all the names of departments in the College in admission advert	3.24	0.77	Agree
15	Including all the names of the courses offered by the College in admission advert	3.63	0.49	Agree
16	Including the pictures of some buildings that shows the aesthetic nature of the College in the admission advert	3.37	0.70	Agree

17	Including the positive image of the host community in the admission advert	2.90	0.83	Agree
18	Including the pictures of some laboratories with students performing experiments in the admission advert	3.59	0.55	Agree
19	Including the pictures of some workshops with students performing practical work in the admission advert	3.65	0.53	Agree
20	Including pictures of some sporting facilities of the College in the admission advert	3.21	0.69	Agree
21	Including pictures of some recreation facilities of the College in the admission advert	3.22	0.61	Agree
22	Including news about employment of more qualified and competent lecturers in all academic departments	3.24	0.80	Agree
23	Including news about renovation and equipping of all academic departments in the College	3.24	0.92	Agree

N=Number of respondent SD=Standard Deviation \bar{X} =Mean

All the items in table 3 had mean values of more than 2.50. This implies that all the items serve as promotion strategies for increasing students' enrolment. Furthermore, all the items in the table had smaller values of standard deviations. This shows that the respondents' opinions vary slightly across all the items.

Research Question Four

What are the place strategies to be adopted to increase the enrolment of students in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu?

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of staff responses on Place Strategies to be adopted to increase students' enrolment in ASCETA

N=41

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
24	Using non stationary print media such as pamphlets, handbills, magazines, newspapers, etc as part of admission advert	3.56	0.59	Agree
25	Using stationary print media such as banners, flexes, billboards at strategic places, as part of admission advert	3.49	0.55	Agree
26	Using electronic media such as television and radio(eg jingles, short video clip), as part of admission advert	3.76	0.62	Agree
27	Using College admission portal as part of admission advert	3.46	0.59	Agree
28	Using social media such as Whatsapp, facebook, Twitter (now X), as part of admission advert	3.54	0.67	Agree
29	Using popular Bloggers/content creators to disseminate admission advert	3.12	0.87	Agree
30	Using public gathering in Churches, Mosques, Conferences, Workshops, cultural festivals, Village meetings, Town hall meetings etc as part of admission advert	3.63	0.49	Agree
31	Spreading news that the College is free from antisocial activities like raping, cultism and sexual harassment	3.17	0.89	Agree
32	Making admission campaigns in senior secondary Schools	3.68	0.47	Agree
33	Collaborating with JAMB as part of admission advert	3.73	0.45	Agree
34	Collaborating with village heads, religious leaders and political leaders as part of admission advert	3.56	0.61	Agree
35	Using individual face-to- face admission campaign	3.32	0.69	Agree
36	Using door-to-door admission campaign	3.00	0.87	Agree

N=Number of respondent SD=Standard Deviation \bar{X} =Mean

Data from table 4 above shows the responses of staff concerning place strategies to be adopted in order to increase students' enrolment. From the table, one can see that all the items had mean values of more than the cutoff point of 2.50. This implies that the items are place strategies to be adopted to increase students' enrolment. Table 4 also shows that all the items in the table had standard deviations with lower values. This implies that respondents are close in their opinions over the items.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study through data analysis found many strategies to be adopted in order to increase students' enrolment. Such strategies among others includes the use of inventions/innovations made by the staff or students of the College as part of admission advert, use of high placed graduated persons from the College as part of admission advert, making tuition fee for new students affordable, executing appropriate sanction to staff for extorting money from students, including the pictures of some workshops with students performing practical work in the admission advert, making admission campaigns in senior secondary schools, collaborating with JAMB during admission exercise, collaborating with village heads, religious leaders and political leaders as part of admission advert, using social media such as Whatsapp, facebook, Twitter (now X) as part of admission advert and using College admission portal as part of admission advert. these findings are in line with the part of the findings of the earlier works on marketing strategies carried out by Murtala, Lawal, Omosidi, Abdulrahman and Ogbudinkpa (2019) carried out a study on, Uchendu, Nwafor and Nwaneri (2015) and, Bamfo and Atara (2013) respectively.

VI. CONCLUSION

The issue of low students' enrolment appeared to be the biggest problem in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. Biggest in the sense that the low enrolment figure of less than four hundred students cannot justify both human and material resources being invested in the College. Furthermore, the low enrolment in the College is capable of causing the suspension of all TETFund

interventions in the College. To improve students' enrolment, the researchers used four marketing strategies used in business world to find the strategies for improving students' enrolment in the College. A 36-item questionnaire was then constructed and validated. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 34 staff of the College. The data collected from the questionnaire were then analyzed. The result of the analysis revealed the strategies for improving students' enrolment in the College. With such strategies in place in the College, students' enrolment will likely be improved.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Use of inventions/innovations made by the staff or students of the College as part of admission advert
2. Use of high placed graduated persons from the College as part of admission advert
3. Tuition fee for new students should be affordable
4. Executing appropriate sanction to staff for extorting money from students
5. Inclusion of the pictures of some workshops with students performing practical work in the admission advert
6. Making admission campaigns in senior secondary schools
7. Collaborating with JAMB as part of admission advert
8. Collaborating with village heads, religious leaders and political leaders as part of admission advert
9. Using social media such as Whatsapp, facebook, Twitter (now X) as part of admission advert
10. Using College admission portal as part of admission advert

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