

MARKETING OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND SCHOOL IMAGE OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of marketing of educational services on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, five specific objectives, five research questions and five null hypotheses were formed for this study. The study adopted the correlational research design and the population was all 495 principals in the 495 private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. However, a sample size of 221 principals drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure was used as participants. A self-developed questionnaire named "Marketing of Educational Services and School Image Questionnaire" with reliability of 0.74 was used for data collection. Out of the 221 participants sampled, 213 principals participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested using linear regressions at 0.05 alpha level. The findings indicated that product (people, process and physical evidence), price (fees charged), place (location) and promotion have significant impact on school image of private secondary schools. Based on the findings, conclusion was made that marketing of educational services significantly impact school image of private secondary schools. It was recommended among others that owners of private secondary schools should adopt product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion in marketing their schools because these marketing elements would make their schools to have good image and make prospective customers to be aware of them.

Keywords: Marketing, educational services, school image, private schools, and Akwa Ibom State.

Introduction

Private secondary schools are getting serious attention in Akwa Ibom State. Private schools is not anymore the exclusive domain of the wealthy in many nations, as is increasingly acknowledged. Various schools have emerged to cater to almost every income bracket, though the associated expenses continue to be a hindrance for a sizable segment of the impoverished. In a number of sectors of their everyday lives, people from all walks of life are turning away from government services in favor of supporting the private sector's productivity. The decision to become private is not based on ideology; rather, it is a frequently grudging recognition that in Nigeria, obtaining a dependable service requires paying for it privately. One of the most notable examples of individuals growing dependence on non-governmental services is private schooling. Although Akwa Ibom State is home to private schools of all kinds, Adelabu and Rose (2022)

highlight that inexpensive schools are of particular significance when it comes to the Education for All aims, and that circumstances have not changed significantly over the past ten years.

Private schools' reputation could be influenced by the quality schooling they offer. People's collective, personal perceptions of the standard of society and educational setting derive from how they perceive the educational system (Uchendu et al., 2019). The image of any business or an organization, is characterized by the way others perceive it and is made up of its brand and its distinctive personality (Ukeme, Uford & Etuk, 2024). The brand is the collection of resources and activities that make up an organization's productivity, whereas business identity is the ethos that individuals inside an organization have created. Thus, institutional culture (the values, norms, and beliefs that define by some groups of members), corporate identity (the school organization's philosophy, their own perception of the school), corporate communication (as the primary task of public relations), and design (building architecture, classroom furnishings, logo, advertising materials, school brochure) can all It is more difficult and unique to create a positive school image while working as a business enterprise (Basumatary, 2022).

Learning institutions have a more complex image than other types of businesses for a number of explanations. First, the settings in which they function and execute their image depend heavily on nationwide factors than on local ones; second, educational institutions in a given location are likely to portray a shared image; and third, there is an abroad image concerning learning that leads individuals to evaluate schools generally (Cherkunova, 2019). As a result, individuals' relative perceptions of an institution often hold true for extended durations of time. To alter such a viewpoint, sustained work is required. As a result, a school that has a bad name for relationships with the community can find it difficult to erase the negative image.

In contrast to a school that functions with poor reputation, Donkor and Dei (2021) contend that a school with a good reputation is more likely to have successful outputs. As a result, creating a well-planned and managed image is crucial. A healthy school image increases the likelihood that the school will be successful in attracting and retaining society patronage, gain personal fulfillment and group engagement, accomplish achievements over time, leave lasting memories that can serve as an avenue of motivation for employees, and have an excellent opportunity of increasing mutual respect, clear expectations, and an advantageous self-image between students and employees. Additionally, it might have a basis to create a fewer difficult assessment and oversight process for instructors and other personnel, have healthy and ongoing relationships with their former students who can spread the institution's favorable image, provide prospects to support employees' independence, innovation, and career advancement while avoiding exclusivity and beliefs, and give school growth the most consideration possible (Ejinkonye et al., 2024).

By fostering favorable goals, image may contribute to the creation of a fulfilling atmosphere that could result in a high-quality learning experiences in terms of content and implementation (Tukur, 2019). Students thus stand to gain the most from the school's favorable institutional reputation. Since the parent's opinion of the school directly affects the student, image could exert a significant influence on the way the youngster learns and develops. The degree of public support that private secondary schools receive primarily depends on how

successfully they advertise their schools, which includes adopting tactics to raise awareness and portray their institutions as the best, providing justifications for guardians and parents to select them for their children.

The image of private schools may be affected by their educational services. Classrooms, programs, activities, and other services aimed at giving a student who has been identified as needing specialized training or a learner who has not been identified as needing exceptional instruction an adequate schooling are referred to as educational services (Sharma & Nandi, 2022). These are services that the school provides in order to support the learning and development of the students. Offering teaching resources and activities that help students acquire the experiences and capabilities necessary to learn, participate in civic-minded life, and enjoy fulfilling lives is known as educational services. The term "educational services" refers to the privileges and benefits that a school offers students in exchange for their tuition payments. Educational services provide training or instruction-based learning on any subject to students or other individuals requiring it (Kwang, 2019).

From 1990s to date, there has been a rapid increase in the establishment of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state. Continuous emergence of these categories of schools therefore implies that proprietors of these private secondary schools need to aggressively in publicize their schools' prospects. The survival of many private schools depend on the capacity of the owners or managers of these schools to keep present learners and admit fresh students, ability to mobilize resources, achievement of students, and the success in making their schools programmes attractive to the public (Scot, 2019). Marketing strategies which are embedded in the seven "Ps" may be indispensable managerial function if private secondary schools are to create good image for themselves and survive in a competitive environment (Udo, Akpan & Uford, 2024). It is on this background therefore, that this research is carried out to examine the impact of marketing of educational services on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The increase in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State has led to strong competition and thus, the survival of some of these private schools seems to be shaky and at risk. For instance, the Akwa Ibom State Government through the Ministry of Education in 2019 closed down 1,140 private nursery, primary and secondary schools for lack of necessary educational facilities and infrastructure (Premium Time Newspaper August 22, 2019). Most private schools even find it difficult to increase their students' enrolment, and this is a result of the high number of choices available to students. The programmes they offer, the members of staff, and school tuition are all dependent on the number of students that enroll in a school. The researcher has observed that some private secondary schools, which had existed, are no longer operational and have folded. The folding up of these private secondary schools and others could be caused by poor educational services such as poor teaching techniques, poor monitoring/supervision of teaching/learning, poor implementation of curriculums, lack of provision of learning materials/facilities and poor staffing. This poor educational services may

affect the school image, which may consequently affect students' enrolment, students' performance, parents' satisfaction, return on investment, and finally, folding up of private secondary schools.

The researcher has also observed that some of these private secondary schools that were closed by the Akwa Ibom State Government and those that folded were product oriented and neglected the marketing orientation aspect. They consider themselves as manufacturers of certain educational programmes, rather than as satisfiers of certain learning needs. This non-marketing orientation hinders the proprietors of the private secondary schools from realizing and exploiting the role that marketing of educational services may play in the performance of their schools, and thereby faced with some set back in terms of school image, students' enrolment, students' performance, parents' satisfaction and return on investment that lead to fold up. In order to solve this problem of school closure and fold up, one may ask, what may be responsible for the poor educational services that made the private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to close down or fold up? Could it be that the proprietors do not market their educational services? To answer these questions, this study examined the impact of marketing of educational services on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of marketing of educational services on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine:

- i. The impact of product (people, process and physical evidence) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. The impact of price (fees charged) on school image of private secondary schools of Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. The impact of place (school location) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. The impact of promotion (internal and external communication) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- v. The joint impact of product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant impact of product (people, process and physical evidence) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. There is no significant impact of price (fees charged) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. There is no significant impact of place (school location) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. There is no significant impact of promotion (internal and external communication) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

- v. There is no significant joint impact of product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion on school image private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review: Educational Services Marketing

Services and products are the primary targets of marketing educational services, while schools and individuals may also be involved. It should be mentioned that any item that is put up for sale is typically the target of marketing campaigns for educational services. The products of educational service marketing engage in active communication with one another. Since the place of residence of the school and the prospects it offers for their livelihood are significant to learners, marketing educational services has received particular emphasis in this context. The goal of marketing educational services, according to Inyang and Etuk (2019), is to establish the circumstances necessary for the growth of the school, which might guarantee the fulfillment of the learning requirements of both individuals and the community at large, while taking into consideration the demands of the labor market and the safeguarding and advancement of learning institutions under market requirements.

By using techniques, governance, and advertising approaches in the field of education, the phrase "educational" and the term "marketing" are combined to create a specific field. Educational marketing is a component of service marketing and charitable institutions because of the cultural, social, and complicated role that education plays (Sebolao & Mburu, 2017). Service marketing is a niche area of marketing that focuses on selling and promoting services as opposed to physical goods. It entails tactics to generate demand, explain advantages, and provide outstanding consumer service. In order to promote trust and customer loyalty, service marketing places a major emphasis on developing strong client connections through recognizing their requirements, providing specialized services, guaranteeing their happiness, and keeping them engaged.

The various components of services marketing that businesses employ to convey their operational and corporate identity to clients are combined to form the service marketing mix. The seven Ps, product, pricing, venue, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence make up the mix. The last three Ps primarily concentrate on service delivery and raising customer happiness, and the first four Ps are concerned in product promotion. Armstrong and Kotler (2021) define a product as anything that can be made available to the public in order to meet a need or want. The term "product" does not refer only to tangible items; it can refer to anything that can meet a demand. Additionally, according to the authors, products include services, which are activities or advantages that are provided for sale but are fundamentally intangible and do not lead to the ownership of anything, in addition to tangible items (Yakubu & Afolabi, 2020). Based on these ideas, one could contend that a college course of study is a task that is immaterial but individuals can gain from. This indicates that the subject matter constitutes one of the products of an institution of learning. In fact, according to Wearne (2020), a school's products include learning materials or programs it creates.

Olajide and Olajide (2016) define price as the sum of money that the consumer pays the provider to obtain a good or service; it is the worth of the good or service stated in money value; and pricing is establishing the cost of a product. The firm's pricing goal and service costs are examples of internal variables, while the state of the economy, the degree of rivalry, the strength of suppliers and customers, and government policies are examples of external factors. Agbonifoh et al. (2017) define place as the place where the products are delivered to the customers. Another name for promotion is marketing communications. This phrase, which is commonly used in marketing, refers to the communication strategies utilized by a company or marketer to disseminate details regarding its goods or services.

Information may be verbal and visual, personal and non-personal. Promotion, according to Nyarko (2021), is a marketing technique used to convey promotional statements to the public in order to sway purchasing judgments and provide rewards to increase sale of a business's goods or services. According to Ordinario *et al.* (2018), people includes the organization's employees (internal customers), purchasers (external customers), and other clients who impact consumers' perceptions about their options in the service space by participating in the provision of services. In service marketing, service organizations such as educational institutions involved in training of their staff in interpersonal skills and customer service with a focus towards customer's satisfaction. As a result, employees have a significant impact on how consumers view the standard of the services they receive. Establishing guidelines to raise the caliber of services rendered by staff members and keeping an eye on their efficiency is a crucial marketing duty (Shah *et al.*, 2021).

Methodology

The correlational research design was used in this study. This is a type of non-experimental research design that seeks to find relationship between independent and dependent variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. The population of this study consisted of 495 principals in the 495 private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The choice of the population was based on the fact that they are in the best position to give their response on service marketing mix and school image of private secondary schools. A sample size of 221 principals were used for this study, and it was selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher with a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was used for data collection from the primary sources. The questionnaire was titled "Marketing of Educational Services and School Image Questionnaire". Thus, first-hand data were gathered in real time, directly from principals of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

The questionnaire had 35 items, which elicited information on seven educational marketing services used in this study (product, people, process, physical evidence, place, price and promotion, as well as school image. The items were declarative statements structured on a 4-point response scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Out of the 221 principals sampled, 213 agreed to participate in the study. These 213 principals responded to the questionnaire and returned to the researcher, making 96 percent return rate. Simple and multiple

regressions were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The coefficient of correlation provided by Udoh (2019) was used to describe the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, which are .00 to .20 (very low relationship), .21 to .40 (low relationship), .41 to .60 (moderate relationship), .61 to .80 (high relationship) and .81 to 0.99 (very high relationship). The analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science.

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant effect of product (people, process and physical evidence) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Summary of simple regression analysis of effect of product on school image in private secondary schools

Variables	R	β	R^2	Error		
Product (X)	.698	.664	.443	.365		
School image (Y)						
Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	29.653	1	29.653	142.234	.000	
Residual	40.332	211	.284			Significant
Total	78.864	212				

*Significant at $P < .05$, $n = 213$

The result in Table 1 shows if there is no significant effect of product (people, process and physical evidence) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of correlation (R) of .698 indicates a high relationship between product and school image. The beta weight of .664 shows that for every unit increase in product, school image increases by .664. Also, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .443 indicates that product predicts up to 44.3 percent in school image. The small error value of .365 shows that product predicts school image with high accuracy. The result indicates that the p-value of .000 is lower than the alpha value of .05 at F-value of 142.234 with 1 and 212 degrees of freedom. The regression model is shown as school image = 1.764 + .664product + .365. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is significant effect of product (people, process and physical evidence) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant effect of price (fees charged) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Summary of simple regression analysis of effect of price (fee charged) on school image of private secondary schools

Variables	R	β	R^2	Error		
Price (fee charged) (X)	.643	-.688	.513	.541		
School image (Y)						
Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark

Regression	47.192	1	47.192	133.762	.000	
Residual	56.623	211	.873			Significant
Total	452.652	212				

*Significant at $P < .05$, $n = 213$

The result in Table 2 shows if there is no significant effect of price (fee charged) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of correlation (R) of .643 shows a high relationship between price and school image. The beta weight of -.688 shows that for every unit increase in price, school image decreases by -.688. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .513 shows that price predicts up to 51.3 percent in school image. The small error value of .541 shows that price predicts school image with high accuracy. The result indicates that the p-value of .000 is lower than the alpha value of .05 at F-value of 133.762 with 1 and 212 degrees of freedom. The regression model is shown as $\text{school image} = .986 + -.688\text{price} + .541$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is significant effect of price (fee charged) on school image in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant effect of place (location) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Summary of simple regression analysis of effect of place (location) on school image of private secondary schools

Variables	R	β	R^2	Error		
Place (school location) (X)	.628	.671	.506	.511		
School image (Y)						
Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	41.653	1	41.653	139.772	.000	
Residual	69.112	211	.398			Significant
Total	109.868	212				

*Significant at $P < .05$, $n = 213$

The result in Table 2 shows if there is no significant effect of place (location) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of correlation (R) of .628 shows a high relationship between place (school location) and school image. The beta weight of .671 indicates that for every unit improvement in place (school location), school image increases by .671. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .506 indicates that place (school location) predicts up to 50.6 percent in school image. The small error value of .511 shows that place (school location) predicts school image with high accuracy. The result indicates that the p-value of .000 is lower than the alpha value of .05 at F-value of 139.772 with 1 and 212 degrees of freedom. The regression model is shown as $\text{school image} = .883 + .671\text{place} + .511$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is significant effect of place (location) on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant effect of promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Summary of simple regression analysis of effect of promotion on school image of private secondary schools

Variables	R	β	R^2	Error
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Promotion (X)						
		.655	.670	.519	.432	
School image (Y)						
Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	46.342	1	46.342	182.192	.000	
Residual	61.882	211	.399			Significant
Total	121.665	212				

*Significant at $P < .05$, $n = 213$

The result in Table 4 shows if there is no significant effect of promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of correlation (R) of .655 shows a high relationship between promotion and school image. The beta weight of .670 indicates that for every unit increase in promotion, school image increases by .670. Also, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .519 indicates that promotion predicts up to 51.9 percent in school image. The small error value of .432 shows that promotion predicts school image with high accuracy. The result indicates that the p-value of .000 is lower than the alpha value of .05 at F-value of 18.192 with 1 and 212 degrees of freedom. The regression model is shown as school image = .833 + .670promotion + .432. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is significant effect of promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Five

There is no significant joint effect of product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Summary of multiple regression analysis of joint effect of product, price, place and promotion on school image of private secondary schools

Variables	R	R^2	β	Error		
Product (X_1)			.664			
Price (X_2)			-.668	.576		
Place (X_3)	.690	.598	.671			
Promotion (X_4)			.670			
School image (Y)						
Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	46.231	4	18.839	39.732	.000	
Residual	68.413	208	.464			Significant
Total	117.523	212				

*Significant at $P < .05$, $n = 213$

The result in Table 5 shows if there is no significant joint effect of product, price, place and promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The correlation coefficient (R) of .690 indicates a high relationship between joint effect of product, price, place, promotion and school image. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of .598 indicates that product, price, place and promotion jointly contribute 59.8 percent to school image. The beta weight of .664 indicates that for every unit increase in product, there is an increase of .664 in school image when price, place and promotion remain constant. The beta weight of -.668 indicates that for every unit increase in price, there is a decrease of -.668 in school image when product, place and promotion remain constant. The beta weight of .671 indicates that for every unit increase in place, there is an increase of .671 in school image when product, price and promotion remain constant. The beta weight of .670 indicates that for every unit improvement in promotion, there is an increase of .670 in school image when product, price and place remain constant. The small

error value of .576 shows that product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion jointly predict school image with high accuracy. The result indicates that the p-value of .000 is lower than the alpha value of .05 at F-value of 39.732 with 1 and 212 degrees of freedom. The regression model is shown as $\text{school image} = .867 + .664\text{product} + -.668\text{price} + .671\text{place} + .670\text{promotion} + 576$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is significant joint effect of product, price, place and promotion on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one showed that product (people, process and physical evidence) had great and significant effect on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This finding has shown that product like people, process and physical evidence are necessary in making schools to be popular. When a school is popular, many persons would hear about it and patronize them. This finding agrees with that of Shah *et al.* (2021) who found that head teachers/principals of private secondary schools who used better marketing strategies made them to attract students than public secondary schools. Parents who patronize private secondary schools want products that can offer certain quality standards, which are performing and have great impact on students. For this reason, the private schools should work towards continuous improvement of their product, as this gives them good school image.

The result of hypothesis two indicated that price (fee charged) had great and significant effect on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study implies that both the direct and indirect fees charged such as tuition fees, students' uniforms, books, feeding, accommodation, stationary and transportation determine the image of the school. This finding is in line with that of Yakubu and Afolabi (2020) who found that tuition and examination fees had impact on students' participation in public secondary schools in the study area and impact upon the school image. Fees increase has been a serious hindrance to good student enrolment. Richer parents tend to spend more on their children's fees and are able to enroll their children in schools that are costly than others. As a result, the student enrolment is affected by the image of such private schools.

The result of hypothesis three showed that place (school location) had great and significant effect on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This uneven trend in school image is common in the state, where more quality schools are concentrated in cities while rural areas have few and poorly equipped schools. This gives the impression that schools located in cities and towns have better quality than their counterparts in rural areas who are likely to suffer from limited access and poor quality of teaching and learning. The finding is in agreement with that of Mahamed and Ibrahim (2017) whose findings showed that geographical segmentation strategy is dominantly affects the image of private secondary schools. Colleges with good, fully furnished educational facilities like libraries, labs, and enough teachers are located in cities and other key locations where consumers are highly concentrated and interested in quality education. The majority of remote educational institutions lack contemporary libraries and labs, enough classrooms, seats, enough teachers, and appropriate and suitable buildings. The majority of kids attending schools in the state's rural districts are from low-income parents who are unable to pay for their children to attend reputable urban schools.

The result of hypothesis four indicated that promotion had great and significant effect on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Due to the consequences of creating awareness, private secondary schools need to resort to corporate principles to run their operations and to recruit more customers (students). They can employ all marketing

communication tools most popular among them being advertising to bring to the knowledge of prospective customers (students and their families) about their school image through the products they have to offer. The finding of this study is similar to that of Ordinario *et al.* (2018) who found that advertisement made schools to showcase their image and inform students about the schools and helped to increase the number of students who enroll in the school. Therefore, every school has as purpose, to create, satisfy and retain students, and this can be done through creating and maintaining good school image. Students make choices of private secondary schools because the schools meet certain criteria that they want. Hence, such schools need to make sure they have promotion programmes in place that make prospective students to be aware that such criteria exist.

The result of hypothesis five showed that product, price, place and promotion had great and significant joint effect on school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Effective product, promotion, place and good price can create a prestigious image of private schools in the minds of potential parents and students. For this reason, to convince parents and students that the educational services offered by a private secondary school are of a superior quality than the competitive services others offer, these instruments that ensure effective educational services delivery are important for private school owners to used. This finding further emphasize the need for effective product, promotion, place and affordable price as a holistic marketing strategy for private secondary schools. The justification being that all the four proxies were active predictors of school image.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of marketing of educational services and school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that product (people, process and physical evidence), price, place and promotion as marketing elements have significant impact on school image of private secondary schools. Hence, based on these findings, it was concluded that marketing of educational services contribute greatly to school image of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

- i. Owners of private secondary schools should employ qualified people to manage their schools, adopt process that are result-oriented and provide physical evidence that would make their schools outstanding as this would promote the image of their schools and make prospective customers to be aware of them.
- ii. Owners of private secondary schools should make their fees to be moderate and make very bright students not to pay fees or pay less fees so that their schools would have good image.
- iii. Owners should strategically locate private schools where it can be accessed by parents and students, and provide school buses with low charges so as to give their schools good image.
- iv. Owners of private secondary schools should not relent in promoting their schools in the mass and social media in order to create good school image.
- v. Owners of private secondary schools should use a combination of all the service marketing mix as they can make them to create good school image.

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