



Educational Marketing as a Strategic Imperative for Higher Education Institutions in Resource-Constrained Settings

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Abstract

This paper reconceptualises educational marketing as a dynamic organisational capability essential for institutional resilience in resource-constrained higher education systems. Focusing on public polytechnics in Northeast Nigeria, it integrates marketing orientation theory with the dynamic capabilities and resilience frameworks to explain how HEIs can strategically respond to demographic pressure, infrastructural deficits, and performance-based funding constraints. The proposed model identifies five domains—environmental drivers, institutional capabilities, strategic marketing activities, mediating mechanisms, and outcomes—and outlines five testable propositions linking marketing strategy to enrolment growth, funding access, and adaptive capacity. By contextualising marketing within fragile educational ecosystems, the paper extends existing theory beyond stable, market-driven contexts and addresses recent calls for multi-theoretical approaches in higher education research. It contributes to the literature by (i) framing marketing as a resilience-enabling function, (ii) highlighting context-specific mediators such as cultural norms and stakeholder trust, and (iii) offering a testable framework for empirical validation. The model offers both theoretical and policy relevance, especially for HEI leaders and funders seeking sustainable strategies for institutional survival in the Global South.

Keywords: *Educational Marketing, Institutional Resilience, Dynamic Capabilities, Nigerian Polytechnics, Performance-Based Funding, Higher Education Strategy.*

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in developing countries are navigating an increasingly turbulent operating environment characterised by intensified student demand, performance-based funding regimes, chronic underinvestment, and socio-political volatility. In Nigeria, these dynamics are particularly acute. Each year, over two million candidates compete for approximately 750,000 available spaces in tertiary institutions, producing an unmet demand that theoretically favours institutional growth (Olaleye *et al.*, 2020). Yet, paradoxically, public polytechnics in the country—especially those in Northeast Nigeria—routinely struggle to attract sufficient enrolment, despite the nation's pressing need for vocational and technical skills (Diko, 2024; Olaleye, 2020). This enrolment paradox reveals a deeper institutional shortcoming: the persistent marginalisation of strategic marketing within public tertiary education management.

Traditionally, marketing in HEIs across Nigeria has been regarded with scepticism, often equated with superficial recruitment efforts or viewed as incompatible with public service ethos (Ukpai & Ereh, 2017). In many polytechnics, formal marketing departments are non-existent, and strategic outreach activities are underdeveloped or absent. This underutilisation persists even as mechanisms such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) increasingly condition institutional funding on enrolment performance and academic output (Ozibo, 2025). The Executive Secretary of TETFund recently warned that institutions failing to meet these benchmarks risk being delisted from funding

programmes—an indication that marketing, once seen as optional, now intersects directly with institutional survival (Ozibo, 2025).

The neglect of marketing is especially problematic in regions like Northeast Nigeria, where institutions face additional constraints including insecurity, infrastructural decay, and socio-economic deprivation (Nte, 2023; Sodamade, 2025). Here, the capacity to attract, engage, and retain students is not merely a function of academic offerings but also of institutional visibility, credibility, and adaptability—functions traditionally associated with strategic marketing. Without a proactive marketing orientation that aligns offerings with local realities and stakeholder expectations, polytechnics risk a downward spiral of under-enrolment, reduced funding, and declining institutional relevance (Diko, 2024).

Despite the significance of these challenges, there remains a conceptual void in the literature. Most higher education marketing research is concentrated in high-income or competitive global markets (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Le *et al.*, 2023), with limited theoretical attention to how marketing can function as a strategic enabler in under-resourced contexts. Moreover, few studies have explored how marketing might contribute to *institutional resilience*—defined here as the capacity of an organisation to absorb shocks, adapt to environmental shifts, and sustain core functions over time (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). This theoretical omission is surprising given that marketing, by its nature, is concerned with sensing demand, aligning institutional offerings, and building relational capital—all processes central to resilience (Teece *et al.*, 1997).

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This paper addresses these gaps by conceptualising educational marketing as a dynamic capability that supports institutional resilience in resource-constrained HEIs. Using the case of polytechnics in Northeast Nigeria, it synthesises insights from marketing orientation theory, institutional resilience literature, and contextual adaptation scholarship. The paper develops an integrative conceptual model linking environmental pressures, institutional capabilities, marketing strategies, and resilience outcomes. In doing so, it contributes a theoretically grounded, context-sensitive framework for understanding the strategic role of marketing in the survival and adaptation of HEIs in the Global South.

Theoretical Basis and Conceptual Contribution

Clarifying the Theoretical Gap

The extant literature on higher education marketing has largely concentrated on institutions in affluent or globally competitive environments, where strategic marketing is often well resourced and deeply institutionalised (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Le *et al.*, 2023). These frameworks tend to emphasise branding, positioning, and market segmentation in contexts characterised by consumer choice, functional infrastructure, and competitive differentiation. However, such assumptions do not hold in many parts of the Global South, where institutions operate under persistent financial constraints, infrastructural decay, and socio-political instability (Diko, 2024; Obi & Onyewuchi, 2019). As a result, existing models offer limited analytical utility for understanding how marketing might function as a strategic response to survival imperatives in these settings.

Moreover, there is a striking under-theorisation of how marketing intersects with *institutional resilience* in educational contexts. Resilience theory has gained traction in organisational research, particularly as a lens for understanding adaptation in volatile environments (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). Yet, few studies have explored how marketing orientation—defined as the systematic generation, dissemination, and use of market intelligence—can serve as an adaptive capability that enhances institutional viability under resource constraints (Webb & Jagun, 1997; Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2015). The limited scholarship that does exist tends to be descriptive or narrowly focused on branding, without integrating resilience or dynamic capabilities perspectives (de Heer & Tandoh-Offin, 2015; Ivy, 2008).

This paper addresses these theoretical deficiencies through a dual contribution. First, it extends marketing orientation theory by reframing educational marketing as a *dynamic capability* that enables HEIs to sense environmental shifts, reconfigure offerings, and engage stakeholders in ways that support enrolment, legitimacy, and access to performance-based funding (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Second, it integrates resilience theory to conceptualise marketing not as a peripheral function, but as a core mechanism through which institutions anticipate and adapt to adversity. By proposing a context-sensitive conceptual model rooted in the lived realities of polytechnics in Northeast Nigeria, this study bridges two underconnected domains—higher education marketing and institutional resilience—while contributing to theory development in both.

Marketing Orientation Theory in HEIs

Marketing orientation, as a strategic philosophy, involves the generation, dissemination, and responsive use of market intelligence across all organisational units to create superior value for customers and achieve institutional goals (Webb & Jagun,

1997; Ivy, 2008). In the context of higher education institutions (HEIs), a marketing-oriented approach entails much more than conventional student recruitment; it encompasses a broader commitment to stakeholder engagement, service co-creation, brand positioning, and responsiveness to changing environmental demands (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

The literature reveals a gradual evolution in how marketing orientation is applied within the education sector. Early frameworks were often transactional, focusing on promotional materials, open days, and short-term admission campaigns (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). However, more recent scholarship highlights the importance of a **relationship orientation**, which privileges long-term value creation, trust-building, and alignment with student and employer expectations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Nurmmann, 2023). In such frameworks, marketing serves as a coordinating mechanism for institutional strategy—enabling cross-functional collaboration among academic units, administrative services, alumni relations, and external partnerships.

Despite this conceptual progression, marketing practices in many Nigerian HEIs remain underdeveloped and misaligned with these theoretical advances. Particularly within public polytechnics, marketing is often misunderstood as a peripheral or promotional activity, largely limited to producing flyers, organising occasional school visits, or managing admissions booths (Diko, 2024; Ukpai & Ereh, 2017). This reflects a narrow, transactional view of marketing that undermines its strategic potential. In some cases, institutions operate without dedicated marketing units, digital engagement strategies, or stakeholder analysis systems—indicating a lack of embedded marketing capability.

Moreover, the absence of marketing orientation is not simply a technical oversight; it has strategic consequences. Research shows that institutions failing to develop coordinated, insight-driven marketing strategies are less likely to attract and retain students—especially in environments where socio-economic, cultural, and geographic barriers to enrolment exist (Diko, 2024; Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020). This disjunction between theoretical models and institutional practice underscores the need for reconceptualising marketing as an *organisational capability* rather than a communications function. In resource-constrained HEIs, this capability is crucial for ensuring enrolment stability, stakeholder legitimacy, and funding access—functions traditionally overlooked in mainstream marketing theory.

Thus, in this paper, we argue that marketing orientation should be re-envisioned as a strategic imperative—integrated into institutional planning, programme design, and stakeholder engagement—particularly for HEIs in contexts of uncertainty and scarcity. By embedding marketing in the organisational core, institutions can better sense environmental changes, align their offerings with market needs, and enhance institutional resilience.

Institutional Resilience and Dynamic Capabilities

Institutional resilience refers to the capacity of an organisation to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from external shocks while maintaining core functions and strategic intent (Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2015; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). In the context of higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly those in resource-constrained settings, resilience is reflected not only in their ability to survive disruptions—such as underfunding, conflict, or demographic shifts—but also in their capacity to reconfigure internal operations, maintain enrolment, and secure performance-based funding.

Resilience is increasingly conceptualised as a *meta-capability*, encompassing three key components: (i) adaptive capacity, or the ability to respond flexibly to emerging challenges; (ii) buffering capacity, referring to the ability to absorb resource shocks; and (iii) learning orientation, which enables continuous improvement based on feedback from internal and external environments (Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2015; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). These elements are particularly critical for HEIs operating in volatile contexts such as Northeast Nigeria, where socio-political instability, infrastructural decay, and public funding uncertainty create ongoing institutional vulnerability (Nte, 2023; Obi & Onyewuchi, 2019).

To understand how organisations operationalise resilience, the *dynamic capabilities* framework offers a useful lens. Originating in strategic management literature, this perspective posits that resilient organisations thrive in turbulent environments by developing capabilities to *sense* opportunities and threats, *seize* them through resource mobilisation, and *transform* internal structures to maintain competitiveness (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Applied to HEIs, these capabilities might include the ability to detect shifts in student preferences, repackage academic programmes, forge industry partnerships, or integrate digital platforms to expand reach and flexibility.

Within this adaptive framework, marketing emerges as a critical enabler of resilience. It facilitates *sensing* by collecting intelligence on student needs, competitor actions, and policy changes. It supports *seizing* through value-based communication, stakeholder engagement, and demand generation. It contributes to *transformation* by shaping institutional narratives, aligning offerings with evolving expectations, and fostering trust-based relationships with students, alumni, and external partners. In essence, a well-developed marketing orientation becomes a dynamic capability—allowing institutions to pivot quickly, remain visible and relevant, and navigate performance-based funding ecosystems such as Nigeria’s TETFund (Ozibo, 2025).

However, in many under-resourced HEIs, especially polytechnics in Nigeria, this strategic role of marketing is underdeveloped or altogether absent. Institutions lacking marketing infrastructure and strategic intelligence systems are less equipped to respond to shifting environmental demands and are more likely to experience enrolment declines, funding shortfalls, and reputational erosion (Diko, 2024). By embedding marketing within resilience strategies, institutions can develop the agility and stakeholder responsiveness required to survive and thrive under pressure.

Conceptual Model and Propositions

This paper proposes a context-sensitive conceptual model that theorises educational marketing as a strategic capability enabling higher education institutions (HEIs) to adapt and thrive in resource-constrained environments. Building on marketing orientation theory (Webb & Jagun, 1997), institutional resilience frameworks (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021), and the dynamic capabilities view (Teece *et al.*, 1997), the model posits that HEIs can achieve organisational resilience and improved performance outcomes through deliberate marketing practices aligned with local realities.

Model Structure and Theoretical Logic

The proposed conceptual model (Figure 1) is structured around five interrelated domains that collectively explain how educational marketing functions as a strategic capability within

resource-constrained higher education institutions (HEIs). The first domain—Environmental Drivers—recognises that HEIs in developing regions operate in environments characterised by volatility in funding, demographic pressures, and infrastructural limitations (Obi & Onyewuchi, 2019). In Nigeria, such challenges are intensified by the adoption of performance-based funding mechanisms like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), which condition institutional allocations on metrics such as student enrolment and academic performance (Ozibo, 2025). These environmental dynamics necessitate more than tactical responses; they demand strategic adaptations that draw on internal organisational capacities to remain viable and competitive.

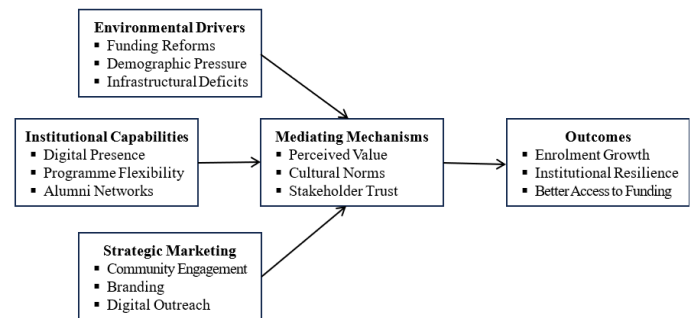


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The second domain of the model—Institutional Capabilities—refers to the internal resources and competencies that enable an institution to execute marketing activities effectively and adaptively. These capabilities include a strong digital presence, which facilitates real-time, low-cost communication with prospective students and stakeholders (Vaave, 2024). Programme flexibility, such as the provision of modular or evening classes, allows institutions to accommodate diverse student needs, particularly in socio-economically constrained contexts. Another key capability is the development of active alumni networks, which serve as sources of reputational capital and legitimacy, providing authentic testimonials and community-rooted endorsements that amplify institutional credibility (Six Degrees Digital Media, 2024). The presence or absence of these capabilities determines how effectively marketing strategies can support institutional resilience.

The third domain—Strategic Marketing Activities—reframes marketing as an organisational process that aligns the institution’s value proposition with stakeholder expectations, rather than as a peripheral communications function. For under-resourced HEIs, strategic marketing involves context-sensitive practices such as community engagement through town hall meetings, radio outreach, and other grassroots methods (Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020). Branding efforts in such institutions often focus on promoting attributes like affordability, vocational relevance, and employability to distinguish themselves from traditional universities (O’Sullivan *et al.*, 2024). Digital marketing also plays a vital role, especially in reaching urban and semi-urban youth via social media and mobile platforms (Alshaketheep *et al.*, 2024). This strategic orientation reflects a shift from transactional models of recruitment to more relational, trust-based engagement strategies (Nurmmann, 2023).

The fourth domain—Mediating Mechanisms—acknowledges that the effectiveness of marketing strategies is not automatic or universal but is filtered through a set of perceptual and cultural variables. Among these are perceived value, which includes affordability and programme relevance; cultural norms, particularly those shaping attitudes toward vocational education and gender roles in learning (Sodamade, 2025); and stakeholder

trust, which significantly affects the reception and legitimacy of institutional messaging (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). These mediators shape whether, and to what extent, marketing inputs translate into desired behavioural outcomes such as student enrolment or alumni advocacy. Therefore, the model posits that strategic marketing must be designed and implemented with these contextual mediators in mind to achieve optimal results.

Finally, the fifth domain—Outcomes—encompasses the institutional results that strategic marketing efforts seek to achieve. These include enrolment growth, which is essential not only for institutional sustainability but also for meeting the enrolment benchmarks that determine public funding eligibility; institutional resilience, defined as the capacity to maintain core functions under adverse conditions (Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2015); and improved access to performance-based funding mechanisms such as TETFund. Collectively, these outcomes align with the dynamic capabilities framework, which views organisational survival and success as dependent on the ability to sense changes in the external environment, seize emerging opportunities, and transform internal processes to remain competitive (Tece *et al.*, 1997). Through this lens, educational marketing is positioned not as a promotional afterthought but as a central mechanism for strategic adaptation in resource-scarce educational contexts.

Theoretical Propositions

Based on the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1, five propositions are advanced for empirical validation. It is noteworthy that Figure 2 synthesises the conceptual pillars underpinning strategic educational marketing as a dynamic capability for higher education institutions (HEIs) in resource-constrained contexts. It visually illustrates how core domains—perceived value and trust, digital and community engagement, alumni engagement, and socio-economic alignment—reinforce and operationalise strategic marketing to support enrolment growth. These domains represent both enablers and mediators that influence how marketing functions contribute to enrolment growth, funding retention, and stakeholder engagement. In particular, the framework captures the need for institutions to align their outreach with local realities, leverage alumni as credibility anchors, and navigate cultural perceptions that shape student decision-making. The diagram thus serves as a conceptual bridge to the propositions advanced below, each of which is grounded in these interlinked domains and intended for empirical validation. Together, they articulate how marketing—when strategically embedded—can enhance institutional adaptability, relevance, and sustainability in performance-based funding regimes and volatile educational environments.

P1: HEIs that embed strategic educational marketing as a dynamic capability are more likely to achieve enrolment growth under performance-based funding regimes.

This proposition reflects the core premise that strategic marketing enables institutions to align with enrolment benchmarks tied to funding (Hinson, 2025; Ivy, 2008).

P2: The effectiveness of marketing strategies in resource-constrained HEIs is mediated by perceived value, cultural attitudes, and stakeholder trust.

This acknowledges that marketing outcomes depend not only on message delivery but also on audience perceptions and socio-cultural framing (Olaleye, 2020; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

P3: Digital and community engagement strategies serve different student segments: digital outreach influences urban and semi-urban youth, while community-based outreach is more effective in rural areas.

Given infrastructural disparities and digital divides, institutions must segment outreach strategies accordingly (Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020; Alshaketheep *et al.*, 2024).

P4: Alumni engagement moderates the effect of marketing on institutional resilience by enhancing institutional credibility and generating word-of-mouth referrals.

Alumni function as legitimacy anchors and peer validators in collectivist contexts, amplifying the credibility of institutional messaging (Six Degrees Digital Media, 2024; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

P5: Institutions that align marketing strategies with socio-economic realities and programme offerings experience higher retention of performance-based funding.

Context-appropriate messaging and accessible programme design increase student uptake and graduation rates, improving funding retention (Distance Learning Institute, 2025; Ozibo, 2025).

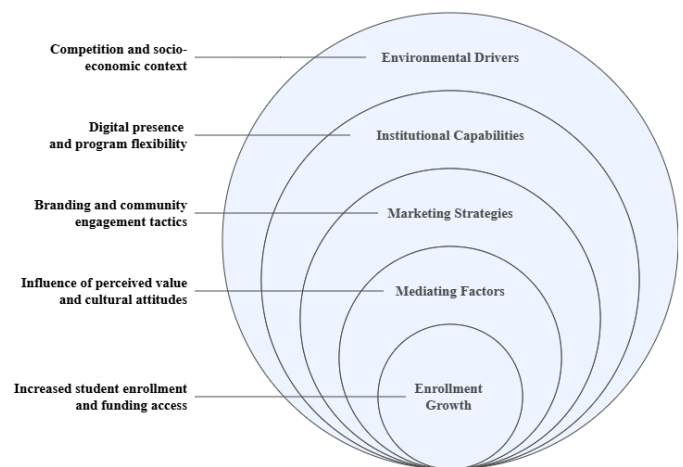


Figure 2. Educational Marketing in HEIs

Theoretical Implications

This paper offers three primary theoretical contributions by recontextualising and extending existing frameworks within the specific institutional realities of resource-constrained higher education systems, such as those in Nigeria. Firstly, it advances marketing orientation theory by embedding it within structurally underfunded and institutionally fragile contexts. Traditional models of marketing orientation—centred on information flow, customer responsiveness, and interfunctional coordination (Webb & Jagun, 1997)—have predominantly been developed and tested in relatively stable, resource-rich environments. By contrast, this paper situates marketing orientation as an institutional survival mechanism within volatile educational markets characterised by funding unpredictability, enrolment pressure, and public distrust. In doing so, it provides a theoretical adaptation that more accurately reflects the operational realities of Global South institutions, where marketing decisions are often shaped not only by market demand but also by socio-political disruption and reputational volatility (Obi & Onyewuchi, 2019; Ozibo, 2025).

Secondly, the model enriches the literature on institutional resilience by positioning educational marketing as a dynamic capability that enables HEIs to navigate turbulence. While resilience has been theorised as an organisation's ability to withstand, absorb, and adapt to disruption (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021), it is rarely operationalised through concrete functional strategies in the higher education literature. This paper addresses

that gap by illustrating how strategic marketing practices—such as community engagement, value-based branding, and digital outreach—serve as vehicles for sensing stakeholder expectations, seizing enrolment opportunities, and transforming internal practices. These adaptive functions align closely with the dynamic capabilities framework (Teece *et al.*, 1997) and broaden the scope of resilience theory to include communicative and relational competencies that are often marginalised in resilience discourse.

Thirdly, the study contributes to emerging calls for integrative, multi-theoretical frameworks in higher education management research. Rather than treating marketing, resilience, and institutional capability as discrete domains, this paper synthesises them into a unified conceptual architecture. This approach responds to Hillmann and Guenther's (2021) critique of overly fragmented theorising and demonstrates the value of combining perspectives to reflect the systemic interdependence of higher education challenges in low-capacity settings. The model not only enriches theoretical understanding of how HEIs can adapt but also provides an empirically testable scaffold for future research across contexts experiencing institutional fragility, demographic shifts, or policy-induced competition.

Collectively, these theoretical implications position strategic educational marketing as a pivotal—yet under-theorised—lever in resilience-building and institutional transformation within higher education. In doing so, the paper helps reframe marketing not as an auxiliary promotional tool but as a core component of strategic and theoretical inquiry into how HEIs survive and thrive under constraint.

Practical and Policy Implications

The conceptual model proposed in this paper has significant implications for institutional leaders, higher education policymakers, and researchers working in the domain of education management in resource-constrained contexts. For institutional leaders, the model calls for a paradigmatic shift from viewing marketing as a peripheral, tactical activity to embracing it as a strategic, resilience-enhancing function. HEI leaders—particularly in polytechnics and regional institutions—must adopt marketing practices that are not merely promotional but structurally embedded in institutional planning and performance systems. Community engagement initiatives, for instance, should move beyond ad hoc activities to become part of strategic stakeholder relationship frameworks that build trust, visibility, and relevance at the grassroots level (Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020). Similarly, alumni networks should be institutionalised through digital platforms and ambassador programmes that enhance credibility, generate word-of-mouth referrals, and reinforce the institution's public legitimacy (Six Degrees Digital Media, 2024; Vaave, 2024). Leadership training, including emotional intelligence (Salisu & Awang, 2018), for rectors, deans, and registrars must therefore include modules on strategic marketing as a driver of enrolment, programme positioning, and resilience.

For policymakers and regulatory bodies, the implications are twofold. First, performance-based funding mechanisms—such as those implemented by Nigeria's TETFund—should be restructured to formally recognise marketing capability as a determinant of enrolment and public engagement outcomes (Ozibo, 2025). Marketing performance metrics, including digital presence, community penetration, and alumni engagement, could be integrated into quality assurance audits and funding formulas to incentivise strategic communication efforts. Second, national education policy should incorporate marketing competence

development into institutional capacity-building frameworks. Just as academic planning, financial management, and ICT infrastructure are regularly assessed, marketing strategy formulation and implementation should be regarded as core pillars of institutional sustainability in underserved regions (Distance Learning Institute, 2025).

For researchers, this paper offers a theoretically grounded model that can serve as a basis for empirical validation. Future studies could use Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesised relationships among environmental drivers, institutional capabilities, marketing activities, mediators, and outcomes. Alternatively, comparative case studies and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) can help identify the specific mechanisms by which marketing orientation influences resilience in different institutional typologies—such as polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities—across diverse Nigerian states or broader Sub-Saharan African contexts. These approaches would offer much-needed empirical depth to what is currently a conceptually rich but under-examined area of inquiry in African higher education research (Hinson, 2025; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2024).

In the final analysis, these practical and policy implications converge on a common insight: in resource-scarce educational systems, institutional survival and strategic differentiation depend not only on academic quality or infrastructural development but also on the institution's ability to meaningfully communicate value, engage trust networks, and adapt its offerings to rapidly evolving socio-economic realities. Marketing, when understood and deployed strategically, becomes a lever for both transformation and resilience in the Global South's higher education milieu.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

This paper has advanced the theoretical conversation on educational marketing by positioning it as a strategic organisational capability—rather than a mere promotional tool—especially within the institutional realities of resource-constrained higher education systems. Integrating marketing orientation theory with resilience and dynamic capabilities perspectives yields a conceptual model that illuminates how HEIs can harness strategic marketing to navigate environmental volatility, sustain enrolment, and improve institutional responsiveness.

In reframing educational marketing as an enabler of institutional resilience, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how HEIs, particularly in the Global South, can develop adaptive strategies aligned with socio-economic constraints, demographic shifts, and policy-induced pressures. It challenges prevailing assumptions that marketing is a secondary concern in low-resource contexts, instead proposing that marketing—when structurally embedded—can act as a fulcrum for value creation, stakeholder trust-building, and funding retention. This theoretical repositioning addresses recent calls for integrative frameworks that move beyond siloed theorising in higher education management research (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021).

Crucially, the model put forth here provides a foundation for empirical research. Future studies should seek to validate the proposed relationships between environmental pressures, institutional capabilities, mediating mechanisms, and strategic outcomes. Quantitative approaches such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) could test the directional pathways and mediating effects outlined in the model. Meanwhile, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and case-based inquiry could explore how different institutional contexts shape the configurations of

marketing strategy and resilience in practice—especially across different institutional types such as polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries.

Furthermore, longitudinal research could provide insight into how marketing capabilities evolve over time and contribute to institutional transformation, particularly in response to external shocks such as funding policy changes, regional insecurity, or shifts in student demographics. Such studies would also help determine the extent to which marketing-led adaptations translate into measurable gains in performance-based funding, graduate employability, and institutional reputation.

In sum, this study contributes both a theoretical scaffold and a practical lens through which educational marketing can be re-envisioned as a strategic imperative for institutional resilience in underdeveloped educational systems. It invites scholars, policymakers, and institutional leaders to recognise marketing not as a peripheral function but as a central mechanism for sustainable differentiation and adaptive capacity in an increasingly competitive and uncertain higher education landscape.

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