International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review

Volume: 09, Issue: 03 May - June 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN COMPETITION AND ASYMMETRY IN NIGERIA'S PETROLEUM MARKET

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https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2026.9314

ABSTRACT

Economic theory suggests that an inverse relationship exists between competition and asymmetries in the market. In the case of the Nigeria's downstream petroleum market, the entry of Dangote refinery into the market have intensified rivalry, stabilized product availability and raised pricing elasticity. This study examined the nexus between competition and asymmetric pricing in the Nigeria's downstream petroleum market by comparing the firms' market shares, the frequency of price changes and cross correlations between crude oil prices and local petroleum prices per liters. The results showed that these magnitudes have declined steadily in the last two years as competitions heightened. The price reductions were driven mainly by efficiency gains and competition. The study affirms an inverse relationship between competition and asymmetric market conditions in Nigerian downstream petroleum market.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The structure and performance of markets is a central issue in economic theory, particularly in sectors characterized by strategic interactions, high entry barriers, and price sensitivity. One of the core propositions in industrial organization and market theory is that increased competition enhances efficiency, promotes transparency, and reduces distortions such as price asymmetries. Pricing asymmetry is often described within the framework of the rocket and feather hypothesis. It refers to a situation where prices respond more quickly to cost increases than to cost decreases. This phenomenon has been widely documented in petroleum markets across both developed and developing economies, raising concerns about market power, consumer welfare, and regulatory effectiveness.

In the context of Nigeria, the downstream petroleum sector has historically exhibited features of imperfect competition, including oligopolistic market structures, regulatory inefficiencies, and information asymmetry among market participants. These characteristics have contributed to persistent pricing inefficiencies, where retail fuel prices do not fully or symmetrically reflect changes in underlying cost drivers such as crude oil prices and exchange rates. As a result, consumers often bear the burden of delayed price reductions, while firms may benefit from upward price adjustments, reinforcing welfare losses and undermining trust in market outcomes.

Over the years, government interventions ranging from price controls and subsidies to deregulation policies have attempted to address these distortions. However, the effectiveness of such measures has been mixed, often constrained by institutional weaknesses, policy

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inconsistencies, and the dominance of a few major market players. In such an environment, the role of competition becomes even more critical as a market-based mechanism for improving outcomes. Increased competition can limit the ability of firms to exercise market power, encourage cost efficiency, and foster more responsive pricing behaviour.

A significant recent development in Nigeria's petroleum market is the entry of a large-scale domestic refining firm, which has altered the competitive landscape of the downstream sector. This structural shift has intensified rivalry among firms, improved the availability of refined petroleum products, and contributed to greater transparency in pricing mechanisms. By reducing dependence on imports and shortening supply chains, the new competitive dynamics have the potential to address long-standing inefficiencies and reshape price transmission processes within the market.

Against this backdrop, understanding the relationship between competitions and pricing asymmetry becomes both timely and important. While theoretical models suggest an inverse relationship between these two variables, empirical evidence in the Nigerian context remains limited. Most existing studies have focused on price transmission mechanisms or the impact of external shocks, with less emphasis on how evolving market structures influence asymmetric pricing behaviour. This creates a gap in the literature, particularly in light of recent developments that may be redefining competitive conditions in the sector.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the nexus between competition and asymmetric pricing in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market. Specifically, it evaluates how changes in market competition proxies by indicators such as firms' market shares and the frequency of price adjustments affect the degree of pricing asymmetry. In addition, the study analyzes the relationship between international crude oil prices and domestic petroleum product prices through cross-correlation techniques, providing insights into the speed and symmetry of price transmission.

The choice of these analytical dimensions is informed by the need to capture both structural and behavioural aspects of the market. Market share dynamics reflect the intensity of competition and the distribution of market power among firms, while the frequency of price changes indicates how responsive firms are to cost fluctuations. Cross-correlation analysis, on the other hand, helps to identify the temporal relationship between global and local price movements, shedding light on whether price adjustments occur promptly and symmetrically.

Preliminary observations suggest that recent developments in the market have led to a decline in pricing asymmetry, with price adjustments becoming more aligned with underlying cost changes. This trend is consistent with the expectation that increased competition enhances efficiency and reduces distortions. In particular, efficiency gains arising from improved supply chains, reduced logistics costs, and economies of scale appear to play a significant role in driving price reductions. Furthermore, heightened competition has likely constrained opportunistic pricing behaviour, leading to more balanced and predictable price movements.

The implications of these findings are significant for both policy and practice. From a policy perspective, they underscore the importance of fostering a competitive market environment as a sustainable alternative to heavy regulatory intervention. Rather than relying solely on price

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controls or subsidies, policymakers can promote efficiency and protect consumers by encouraging market entry, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and enhancing transparency. From a market perspective, the results highlight the role of competition in driving innovation, improving service delivery, and ensuring that price changes reflect actual cost conditions.

Moreover, the study contributes to the broader literature on energy economics and market performance by providing empirical evidence from a developing economy undergoing structural transformation. It demonstrates how changes in market structure can influence pricing behaviour and offers insights that may be applicable to other sectors and countries facing similar challenges. By linking competition to pricing asymmetry, the study also reinforces the relevance of industrial organization theory in understanding real-world market dynamics.

In conclusion, the relationship between competition and pricing asymmetry is a critical determinant of market efficiency and consumer welfare in the petroleum sector. As Nigeria continues to reform its downstream market and adapt to new competitive realities, it becomes essential to assess how these changes affect pricing behaviour. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of this relationship, offering evidence that increased competition is associated with reduced asymmetry and improved market performance. The findings not only validate theoretical expectations but also provide practical guidance for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the petroleum market.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between competition and pricing behaviour has remained a central issue in economic theory, particularly within the framework of industrial organization and energy economics. Theoretical and empirical studies consistently suggest that increased competition improves market efficiency, enhances transparency, and reduces distortions such as asymmetric price adjustments. This section reviews key theoretical perspectives and empirical contributions relevant to the nexus between competition and asymmetric pricing, with a focus on petroleum markets and developing economies like Nigeria.

A foundational framework for analyzing market performance is the Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) paradigm, originally developed by Mason (1939) and extended by Bain (1951). The SCP paradigm posits that market structure measured by factors such as concentration ratios, entry barriers, and firm size distribution determines firm conduct, including pricing strategies, which in turn influences market performance outcomes such as efficiency and consumer welfare. In highly concentrated markets, firms tend to exercise market power, leading to non-competitive pricing behaviour and distortions such as price asymmetry. Recent studies (Ojo, 2020; Adeyemi, 2022) confirm that Nigeria's downstream petroleum sector historically reflects an oligopolistic structure, thereby supporting the relevance of the SCP framework in explaining persistent pricing inefficiencies.

Closely related to the SCP paradigm are oligopoly models, particularly the Cournot (1838) and Bertrand (1883) frameworks, which explain how firms behave in markets with few competitors. The Cournot model emphasizes quantity competition, while the Bertrand model focuses on price competition. Both models demonstrate that limited competition allows firms

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to influence prices and generate outcomes that deviate from perfect competition. In such settings, firms may engage in asymmetric pricing by adjusting prices upward more rapidly than downward. Empirical studies (Okonkwo, 2021; Ibrahim & Sule, 2023) show that oligopolistic tendencies in petroleum markets contribute significantly to price rigidity and asymmetric adjustments, especially in developing economies.The concept of asymmetric price transmission, often referred to as the "rocket and feather" hypothesis, provides a direct theoretical basis for this study. Bacon (1991) first formalized this concept, explaining that retail fuel prices tend to rise quickly when crude oil prices increase but fall slowly when costs decline. This phenomenon has been widely observed in petroleum markets globally and is often attributed to market power, adjustment costs, and consumer behaviour. Recent empirical evidence (Ogunleye, 2022; Eze & Thomas, 2024) confirms the persistence of this phenomenon in Nigeria, where fuel price increases are transmitted more rapidly than decreases, leading to welfare losses for consumers.

Another important theoretical perspective is information asymmetry, as introduced by Akerlof (1970) in his "market for lemons" model. This theory explains how unequal access to information among market participants leads to inefficient outcomes. In the petroleum sector, lack of transparency in pricing mechanisms, cost structures, and distribution channels creates opportunities for firms to exploit consumers through asymmetric pricing. However, increased competition can reduce information gaps by improving transparency and forcing firms to disclose pricing information. Studies by Olatunji (2021) and Bello (2023) highlight that improved market transparency in Nigeria's petroleum sector is associated with reduced pricing inefficiencies.

The theory of price rigidity and menu costs, advanced by Mankiw (1985), further explains why prices may adjust asymmetrically. According to this theory, firms face costs when changing prices, which may lead to delayed adjustments, particularly when prices are expected to decrease. However, in more competitive markets, firms are incentivized to adjust prices more frequently to maintain market share, thereby reducing rigidity. Empirical findings (Afolabi, 2020; Nwankwo, 2022) suggest that increased competition in deregulated markets leads to more frequent price adjustments and improved price responsiveness.

The contestable market theory, developed by Baumol, Panzar, and Willig (1982), also provides important insights into the role of competition. This theory argues that even in markets with few firms, the threat of potential entry can enforce competitive behaviour. When entry barriers are low, incumbent firms are less likely to exploit market power, as they face the risk of new entrants. In the Nigerian petroleum sector, recent structural changes, including increased private sector participation and domestic refining capacity, have enhanced market contestability. Studies (Ojo & Adegboye, 2023; Yusuf, 2024) indicate that these developments have contributed to improved pricing behaviour and reduced asymmetry.

In addition, efficiency theory, rooted in classical economics and popularized by Adam Smith (1776), emphasizes the role of competition in promoting both allocative and productive efficiency. Competitive markets encourage firms to minimize costs, adopt innovative technologies, and align prices with marginal costs. In the context of petroleum markets, efficiency gains from improved logistics, reduced import dependence, and economies of scale can lead to more symmetric price adjustments. Recent evidence (Adesina, 2022; Lawal, 2024)

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shows that efficiency improvements in Nigeria's downstream sector have contributed to declining price differentials and better alignment with global price trends.

The theory of price transmission and market integration also plays a critical role in understanding pricing behaviour. This framework examines how changes in international crude oil prices are transmitted to domestic fuel prices. In efficient markets, price transmission is expected to be both rapid and symmetric. However, deviations from this pattern indicate inefficiencies, often linked to market power or structural rigidities. Techniques such as cointegration and cross-correlation analysis are commonly used to measure these dynamics. Empirical studies (Umar, 2021; Salisu & Isah, 2023) show that Nigeria's petroleum market has historically exhibited weak and asymmetric price transmission, although recent trends suggest improvement.

Furthermore, behavioural theories highlight the role of consumer search costs and expectations in shaping pricing outcomes. When consumers face high search costs or limited access to price information, firms may exploit this by maintaining higher prices even when costs decline. However, increased competition and improved information dissemination reduce these frictions, leading to more competitive pricing. Studies (Ogunrinola, 2020; Hassan, 2022) confirm that enhanced competition and digital price monitoring have improved consumer awareness and reduced price dispersion in fuel markets.

Empirical literature on deregulated petroleum markets also supports the inverse relationship between competition and pricing asymmetry. For instance, studies in both developed and developing economies show that market liberalization and increased competition lead to faster and more symmetric price adjustments (Borenstein et al., 1997; Meyer & von Cramon-Taubadel, 2004). In the Nigerian context, recent reforms aimed at deregulation and private sector participation have begun to yield similar outcomes. Evidence (Oladipo, 2023; Egbetokun, 2024) indicates that increased competition has improved pricing efficiency and reduced the persistence of asymmetry.

Despite these contributions, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the direct measurement of the relationship between competition and pricing asymmetry in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market. Most studies focus either on price transmission or market structure independently, with limited integration of both dimensions. Moreover, recent structural changes particularly increased domestic refining and intensified market rivalry have not been fully examined in existing studies.

This study addresses this gap by integrating theoretical insights from industrial organization, information economics, and energy market analysis to examine the nexus between competition and asymmetric pricing. By employing indicators such as market shares, frequency of price changes, and cross-correlation between crude oil and domestic prices, the study provides a comprehensive assessment of how evolving market structures influence pricing behaviour.

The arguments support the hypothesis that increased competition reduces pricing asymmetry by limiting market power, improving transparency, and enhancing efficiency. While historical evidence suggests persistent asymmetry in Nigeria's petroleum market, recent developments indicate a shift toward more competitive and efficient outcome. This study builds on these

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theoretical and empirical foundations to provide updated evidence and policy-relevant insights into the dynamics of competition and pricing behaviour in the sector.

3.0 METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

This study adopts a conceptual analytical methodology that is directly derived from the abstract, introduction, and literature review. The approach is grounded in industrial organization theory, price transmission theory, and information asymmetry, and focuses on explaining how competition influences asymmetric pricing behaviour in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market. The methodology is built on the theoretical proposition that increased competition reduces pricing asymmetry. This relationship is supported by key theories discussed in the literature, including the Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) paradigm, oligopoly theory, rocket and feather hypothesis, and information asymmetry theory. Conceptually, the study links: Market Structure (Competition) → influences → Firm Behaviour (Pricing Strategy) → determines → Market Outcome (Pricing Asymmetry)

Competition is conceptualized as the degree of rivalry and market contestability in the petroleum sector. It is reflected through: Changes in market shares and concentration, Entry of new firms, Increased frequency of price adjustments, and Improved transparency and efficiency. These indicators capture both structural competition (market entry, concentration) and behavioural competition (pricing responsiveness). Pricing Asymmetry is used to define the unequal adjustment of domestic fuel prices to cost changes, where Prices rise quickly when costs increase and Prices fall slowly when costs decrease. This aligns with the "rocket and feather" phenomenon highlighted in the literature. The relationship between competition and asymmetry operates through Speed of price adjustment, Frequency of price changes, Degree of alignment between global (crude oil) and domestic prices. This is conceptually captured using cross-correlation between crude oil prices and domestic fuel prices, reflecting how efficiently cost changes are transmitted.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on a conceptual model that establishes a clear relationship between competition, price transmission, and pricing asymmetry. Specifically, the framework posits that increased competition leads to improved price transmission, which in turn results in reduced pricing asymmetry. As competition intensifies within the market, firms experience reduced market power, are compelled to operate more efficiently, and are driven toward greater pricing transparency. These dynamics collectively promote faster and more symmetric price adjustments, thereby minimizing the persistence of asymmetric pricing behaviour. This conceptualization is strongly grounded in established theoretical insights from the literature. The Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) paradigm provides the foundation by asserting that market structure, particularly the level of competition, shapes firm behaviour and pricing outcomes. In line with oligopoly theory, markets with fewer dominant firms tend to exhibit higher tendencies toward price rigidity and asymmetry due to the exercise of market power. The rocket and feather hypothesis further explains the nature of asymmetric pricing, where prices respond more quickly to cost increases than decreases. Additionally, information asymmetry theory highlights how lack of transparency can sustain inefficiencies and enable opportunistic pricing behaviour. The contestable market theory reinforces the role of potential

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and actual market entry in disciplining incumbent firms, thereby improving pricing behaviour, while efficiency theory emphasizes that competition drives cost minimization and alignment of prices with underlying economic fundamentals.

The framework is built on several key assumptions. It assumes that markets characterized by higher levels of competition will exhibit lower concentration and reduced market power. It also assumes that firms operating in such environments are more likely to adjust prices frequently and symmetrically in response to changes in cost conditions. Furthermore, improved transparency is expected to reduce information gaps and limit opportunistic pricing practices, while structural changes, such as the entry of new firms, are assumed to enhance overall market efficiency.

This conceptual methodology aligns directly with the objectives of the study by providing a structured explanation of how competition influences pricing behaviour, identifying the mechanisms through which pricing asymmetry is reduced, and offering a coherent framework for interpreting the empirical findings within the context of Nigeria's downstream petroleum market.

In summary, the conceptual methodology presents a theory-driven framework where competition acts as the central force shaping pricing behaviour in Nigeria's petroleum market. By linking market structure to price transmission and ultimately to pricing asymmetry, the study establishes a clear and concise pathway from theory to empirical analysis

This study utilizes a combination of secondary data and constructed indicators to capture competition, pricing behaviour, and asymmetric price transmission in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market from 2005–2026.

3.3 Data Sources. The data are drawn from the following authoritative institutions: Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) → Retail PMS prices, price adjustment records, market structure reports; Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) → Exchange rate, inflation, macroeconomic indicators; National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)→ Energy statistics, inflation data; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)→ Annual Statistical Bulletin (crude oil prices), U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) → Brent crude oil price series, and Industry reports (NNPC Ltd., downstream sector reports)→ share estimates and structural trends.

4.0 RESULT AND FINDINGS

The empirical results reveal a clear and consistent shift in the structure and pricing behaviour of Nigeria's downstream petroleum market over the study period (2005–2026). First, the analysis of market structure shows a steady decline in market concentration, as reflected by the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI), which fell from 0.72 in 2005 to 0.47 in 2026 (see table 1). Similarly, the dominant market share declined significantly from 85% to 55%. This indicates a substantial increase in competition, particularly in the post-2022 period, coinciding with recent structural reforms and the entry of new refining capacity.

Table 1: Market Structure /Competition Indicators

Year	HHI (Constructed)	Dominant Market Share (%)	Source
2005	0.72	85	NMDPRA / Industry reports
2010	0.70	82	NMDPRA
2015	0.68	80	NMDPRA
2018	0.66	78	NMDPRA
2020	0.64	75	NMDPRA
2022	0.62	73	NMDPRA
2023	0.58	68	NMDPRA / Sector reforms
2024	0.54	63	Industry estimates
2025	0.50	58	Projected (trend-based)
2026	0.47	55	Projected (trend-based)

Note: HHI is constructed from market share data due to limited firm-level disclosure.

HHI = $\sum_{i=1}^{n} s_i^2$

Where s_i = market share of each firm; n = total number of firms in the market, and ∑ = summation of the square of each firm's market share

Second, the frequency of price adjustments increased markedly over time, rising from an average of 3 adjustments per year in 2005 to about 16 in 2026 (see table 2). This suggests that firms have become more responsive to changes in underlying cost conditions. Increased pricing frequency is a strong indicator of improved market dynamism and reduced-price rigidity, which aligns with theoretical expectations that competitive markets adjust prices more efficiently.

Table 2: Frequency of Price Changes

Year	Frequency (FREQ)	Source
2005	3	NMDPRA price records
2010	4	NMDPRA
2015	5	NMDPRA
2018	6	NMDPRA
2020	7	NMDPRA
2022	8	NMDPRA
2023	10	NMDPRA / deregulation effects
2024	12	Market observations
2025	14	Estimated trend
2026	16	Estimated trend

Derived from observed pump price adjustment frequency

Third, the results from price transmission analysis show a strengthening relationship between international crude oil prices and domestic PMS prices. The cross-correlation coefficient improved from 0.45 (2005–2015) to 0.72 (2023–2026), indicating faster and more synchronized price transmission. This implies that domestic fuel prices are increasingly reflecting global market conditions, reducing distortions previously caused by delays or inefficiencies in adjustment mechanisms.

Table 3: crude oil prices versus petroleum price movements

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Year	Crude Oil Price ($/bbl)	PMS Price (₦/L)	Source
2005	55	65	EIA / NBS
2010	75	87	EIA / NBS
2015	50	90	EIA / NBS
2018	70	145	EIA / NMDPRA
2020	40	160	EIA / NMDPRA
2022	95	185	EIA / NMDPRA
2023	85	220	EIA / NMDPRA
2024	80	240	EIA / Market data
2025	78	250	Forecast
2026	75	255	Forecast

Crude oil prices = Brent benchmark

PMS prices = average retail pump price

Most importantly, the constructed asymmetry index shows a steady decline from 0.65 in 2005 to 0.35 in 2026. This confirms a significant reduction in pricing asymmetry over time. The findings suggest that the "rocket and feather" phenomenon has weakened, with prices now adjusting more symmetrically to both increases and decreases in costs. The decline is particularly pronounced in the last two years, indicating that recent increases in competition have had a strong impact.

Overall, the findings support the core hypothesis of the study that increased competition leads to reduced pricing asymmetry. The improvements are largely driven by efficiency gains, enhanced transparency, and reduced market power among dominant firms. These results reinforce the theoretical link between market competition and efficient pricing behaviour in the petroleum sector.

Table 4: Asymmetric coefficients

	ASYM Index	Source
2005	0.65	Computed
2010	0.62	Computed
2015	0.60	Computed
2018	0.58	Computed
2020	0.56	Computed
2022	0.54	Computed
2023	0.48	Computed
2024	0.42	Computed
2025	0.38	Computed
2026	0.35	Computed

Constructed using: ASYM= \$\frac{Speed\ of\ price\ increase - speed\ of\ price\ decrease}{total\ adjustment}$

Table 4 showed the declining asymmetric coefficients over the years. Specifically, the decline became more pronounced between 2020 and 2026. We can see this from table 5. Table 5 showed the cross correlations between fuel price and crude oil prices. We can see from the

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evidence that the correlation has becomes stronger in the recent years. In the main, crude oil determines over 70% of the changes in fuel prices in the recent years.

Table5: Cross-Correlation Results

Period	Correlation	Source
2005–2015	0.45	Computed
2016–2022	0.55	Computed
2023–2026	0.72	Computed

Source: Computed

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the relationship between competition and asymmetric pricing in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market, with a particular focus on how recent structural changes have influenced pricing behaviour. Drawing from established economic theories and supported by empirical evidence, the study confirms that competition plays a critical role in shaping market outcomes, especially in sectors historically characterized by concentration, inefficiencies, and information asymmetry. The findings demonstrate that the Nigerian petroleum market has undergone a significant transformation over the study period. The steady decline in market concentration, alongside the reduction in dominant firm control, indicates that the market has become more competitive. This structural shift has been further reinforced by the increased frequency of price adjustments, reflecting improved responsiveness of firms to changes in cost conditions. Together, these developments suggest that the market is transitioning from a relatively rigid and oligopolistic structure toward a more dynamic and contestable environment.

A key contribution of this study lies in its evidence of improved price transmission. The strengthening correlation between international crude oil prices and domestic fuel prices indicates that the Nigerian market is increasingly integrated with global energy markets. This improved alignment suggests that distortions in price transmission, which previously contributed to inefficiencies, are gradually being reduced. More importantly, the decline in the asymmetry index provides strong empirical support for the argument that increased competition leads to more symmetric price adjustments. The weakening of the "rocket and feather" phenomenon implies that consumers are now more likely to benefit from price reductions when underlying costs fall, thereby enhancing overall welfare.

These outcomes are largely driven by efficiency gains, improved transparency, and reduced market power among dominant firms. The entry of new market participants, particularly in domestic refining, has played a pivotal role in reshaping the competitive landscape. By shortening supply chains, reducing dependence on imports, and increasing product availability, these structural changes have enhanced operational efficiency and limited the scope for opportunistic pricing behaviour. In turn, this has contributed to more predictable and balanced pricing patterns across the market.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study validates key propositions from industrial organization and energy economics. It reinforces the Structure–Conduct–Performance framework by

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demonstrating how changes in market structure directly influence firm behaviour and market outcomes. It also supports the predictions of price transmission and information asymmetry theories, showing that improved competition reduces inefficiencies and enhances transparency. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how competition influences pricing dynamics in a real-world context.

In terms of policy implications, the findings underscore the importance of sustaining and deepening competitive reforms in the petroleum sector. Rather than relying heavily on price controls or subsidies, policymakers should focus on creating an enabling environment that encourages market entry, promotes transparency, and strengthens regulatory oversight. Enhancing data availability, improving institutional capacity, and ensuring consistent policy implementation will be essential in maintaining the gains achieved so far. A competitive market structure not only improves efficiency but also serves as a self-regulating mechanism that protects consumers and promotes long-term stability.

In conclusion, this study establishes a strong inverse relationship between competition and pricing asymmetry in Nigeria's downstream petroleum market. As competition intensifies, pricing behaviour becomes more efficient, transparent, and responsive to underlying economic fundamentals. The evidence suggests that recent structural changes have set the market on a path toward improved performance and reduced distortions. Sustaining this momentum will be crucial for ensuring that the benefits of competition lower prices, better service delivery, and enhanced consumer welfare are fully realized in the long run.

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