

# IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMISSION AND EXAMINATION POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated implementation of admission and examination policies as correlates of management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 439 management staff in four public universities in Benue State. All the 439 staff were used (census). Implementation of Admission and Examination Policies Questionnaire (IAEPQ) and Management Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ) were used for data collection. The two questionnaires contained 20 items, which were structured on 4-point rating scale. It was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain internal consistency on 30 staff. The result yielded reliability coefficients of 0.87 for IAEPQ and 0.83 for MEQ. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was a very strong significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.86$  and  $r = 0.95$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) of implementation of admission and examination policies with management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. The study concluded that implementation of admission and examination policies have a very strong significant positive association with management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. It was recommended that the management of public universities should ensure strict adherence to admission policies; and examination officers of public universities should strengthen implementation of examination policies.

**Keywords:** admission policy, examination policy, policy implementation, management effectiveness, public universities.

## Introduction

The increasing quest for sustainable national development has compelled both developed and developing countries to place greater emphasis on management effectiveness in universities, despite growing challenges such as insufficient funding, substandard facilities and poor resource management. Public universities, which are largely government-funded, are under increasing pressure to deliver high-quality education while grappling with financial limitations, changing student enrolment patterns and the need to respond to rapid technological advancements. These pressures require universities to strengthen financial sustainability, improve resource allocation, enhance institutional governance and adopt strategic approaches to management (Arnhold & Bassett, 2021; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2023). Furthermore, digital transformation is increasingly important for improving teaching, research, administrative efficiency and institutional resilience (Hawkins et al., 2020). Consequently, countries across Asia, Europe and North America have continued to explore reforms aimed at making higher education systems more efficient, equitable, responsive and resilient (Arnhold & Bassett, 2021). Similarly, in Africa, nations such as South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria have invested substantial resources to improve public university management (Altbach, 2016). Nevertheless, despite these initiatives, the management of public universities continues to be suboptimal, as many institutions in Nigeria particularly in Benue State are said to record low productivity (Afolabi & Ogunode, 2021; Ochai, 2025).

Management effectiveness refers to a vital process concerned with the coordination and control of resources in order to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. It involves the deliberate and systematic organization and utilization of resources like human, material, time and financial to attain the stated objectives of a public university (Adzongo, 2022). Management effectiveness in public universities entails decision-making processes, policy implementation and the organization of resources to support teaching, research and community service functions (Bua, 2020). Core management functions include academic planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and the effective deployment of human and material resources. Despite these functions, Nigerian public universities, especially those in Benue State, continue to experience many challenges and one of them is the implementation of educational policies.

Educational policies are formal guidelines and decisions established by governments or educational authorities to regulate, direct and improve the organization, delivery and outcomes of education systems (Adzongo, 2022). Implementation of educational policies refers to the process of putting officially formulated educational policies, decisions, plans and guidelines into practical action in schools and other educational institutions in order to achieve their intended objectives (Morenike, 2026). Educational policies determine the structure of the education system, the content of curricula, the modalities for teacher training and deployment and the strategies for funding, evaluation and regulation (Ajayi et al., 2020). The success of educational policies globally depends on effective implementation, adequate funding, and continuous evaluation (Adebayo & Omolade, 2020). Without effective implementation, even well-designed policies will yield little impact.

In Nigeria, educational policies issued by the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and state governments including Benue State are designed to align higher education with national development goals, enhance access and ensure equity and excellence (Okebukola, 2018). Despite the existence of well-articulated policy frameworks, public universities frequently face implementation difficulties, including insufficient funding, bureaucratic constraints and weak accountability systems, which undermine managerial efficiency (Adesina, 2018). Although numerous educational policies

operate within public universities, this study examines selected policies such as admission and examination policies among educational policies identified by Ivagher and Gire (2021).

Admission policies are educational policies that dictate the processes, standards and criteria by which prospective students gain entry into school programmes, ensuring transparency, equity and academic quality. Globally, universities employ structured admission frameworks that balance merit, affirmative action and diversity goals (Rosinger et al., 2021; Ojetunde et al., 2026). In Nigeria, admission policies formulated by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and higher education institutions are intended to standardize entry requirements and reduce malpractices (Iorfa, 2017). However, inconsistencies in policy interpretation and enforcement may lead to over-enrolment and mismatches between students' preparedness and programme requirements. In Benue State's public universities, implementation challenges such as logistical lapses during screening and political interference can undermine the credibility of admission processes. These may negatively affect institutional reputation and management effectiveness. A study by Igbudu and Chuku-Akwu (2024) revealed that there is a high extent of correlation between universities' management implementation of favourable admission policies to host communities and harmonious town and gown relationships in Rivers State. Omeje et al. (2016) also reported that quota system and catchment area policies had a significant impact on students' admission. Thus, the degree to which admission policies are executed affects institutional capacity to attract competent students and allocate resources efficiently, which in turn affects overall management effectiveness including the implementation of examination policy.

Examination policies are policies that outline the standards, schedules, assessment modes, and integrity measures that underpin academic evaluation. Robust examination policies are critical globally to uphold academic standards and to validate learning outcomes. In Nigeria, universities are required to adopt policies that regulate examinations, including continuous assessment, examination security and grading systems as stipulated by the NUC (NUC, 2019). Despite these frameworks, examination malpractice remains a persistent concern in many institutions, compromising the credibility of academic certification and undermining managerial efforts to ensure quality assurance. For example, research by Pwajok (2025) shows that there is no significant correlation of implementation of examination policies and management of tertiary institutions in Plateau State. However, Barasa and Wekesa (2019) found that effective implementation of examination policies such as timely distribution of examination materials and regular invigilation of examinations have significant effect on school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. This suggests that effective implementation of examination policy may strengthen academic quality, promote stakeholder confidence and enhance administrative credibility and effectiveness. Based on the above background, this study investigated implementation of admission and examination policies as correlates of management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Management effectiveness in public universities is central to the successful achievement of university objectives, the maintenance of academic standards and the delivery of quality education. However, in Benue State, Nigeria, the management of public universities may be undermined by challenges associated with implementing educational policies, particularly admission and examination policies (Zaki & Ayangealu, 2026). Although these policies are designed to promote fairness, transparency, quality assurance and academic standards, inconsistent implementation may contribute to irregular admission practices, delays in admission processing, examination malpractice, weak monitoring, inadequate coordination among management units and poor enforcement of established

procedures (Orngu, 2025). The relevance of these concerns is reflected in the regulatory responsibilities of the National Universities Commission (NUC) for university quality assurance and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) for regulating admissions through the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS).

For instance, JAMB (2021) reported substantial discrepancies between initially disclosed admission figures and subsequently identified admissions that were condoned or regularised, including a 90.75% increase for the 2014 admission year, while the Board later reiterated concerns about illegal and irregular admissions in its 2024 bulletin (Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board Bulletin, 2021; 2024). Similarly, NUC accreditation reports from 2024 identified cases of students admitted without meeting admission requirements and inadequate communication of examination-malpractice regulations in some universities (National Universities Commission, 2024). These reports provide evidence of broader implementation and compliance concerns in Nigerian universities, although they do not establish the extent of these problems in Benue State specifically. The research gap is that existing regulatory reports and related studies have not sufficiently established how the implementation of admission and examination policies relates to management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State. It is based on this problem that this study investigated implementation of admission and examination policies as correlates of management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate implementation of admission and examination policies as correlates of management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the correlation of implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the correlation of implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation of implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the correlation of implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

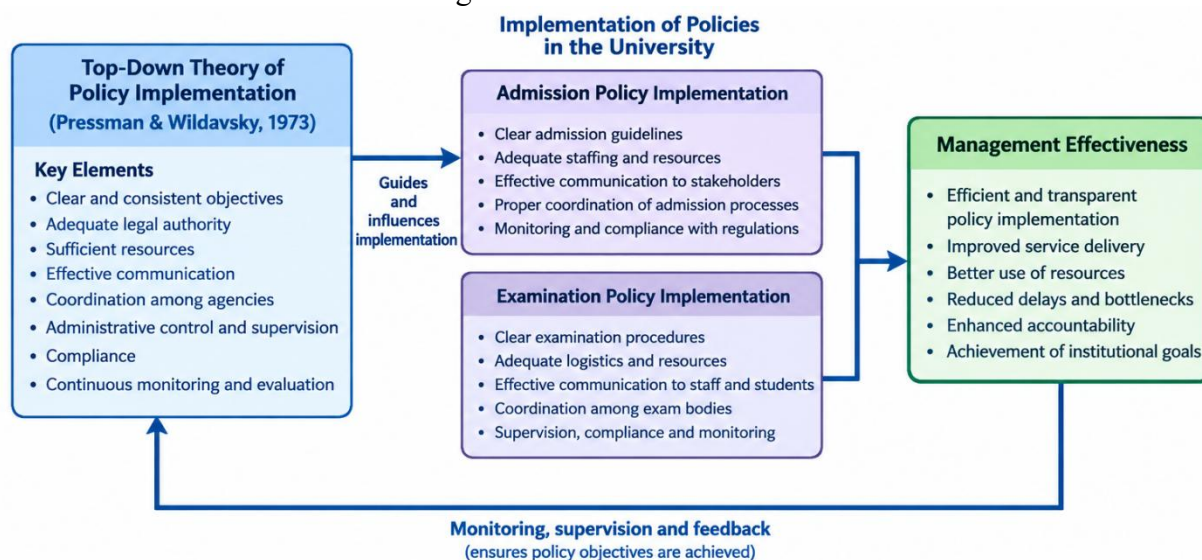
1. There is no significant correlation of implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant correlation of implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on the Top-Down Theory of Policy Implementation, developed by Jeffrey Leon Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky in 1973. The theory holds that successful policy implementation depends on clear and consistent objectives, adequate legal authority, sufficient resources, effective communication and coordination among implementing agencies. The theory views implementation as a chain of decisions and actions, where delays, poor coordination or multiple decision points can weaken or distort the original policy objectives. The theory further emphasizes strong administrative control, supervision, compliance and continuous monitoring to ensure that policies achieve their intended outcomes. In education, policies formulated by government or education authorities can only succeed when administrators, teachers, universities and other implementers clearly

understand the policy requirements and have adequate resources and institutional support to implement them effectively.

**Figure 1:** A Model Linking the Top-Down Theory of Policy Implementation to Admission and Examination Policies and Management Effectiveness.



**Source:** Researchers 2026

Based on the model, Top-Down Theory of Policy Implementation provides the framework (objectives, authority, resources, communication, coordination, control, supervision, compliance and monitoring) through which the implementation of admission and examination policies leads to effective management in public universities particularly in Benue State, Nigeria.

### Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a correlational research design. The population comprised 439 management staff in four public universities in Benue State (Planning and Statistics Directorate, NUC Abuja, 2026). All the 439 management staff were used. This sample size was selected using census approach which requires a researcher to select all members of a population when the population size is manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed Implementation of Admission and Examination Policies Questionnaire (IAEPQ) and Management Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ). The two instruments contained 20 items in all. The IAEPQ contained 10 items while MEQ also contained 10 items. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. It was trial tested on 30 staff using Cronbach Alpha reliability. The result of the trial test yielded reliability coefficient of 0.87 for IAEPQ and 0.83 for MEQ. The instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. According to Dohm (2024), the decision rule for answering the research questions is that an r-value of 0.00–0.19 indicates a very weak relationship, 0.20–0.39 indicates a weak relationship, 0.40–0.59 indicates a moderate relationship, 0.60–0.79 indicates a strong relationship and 0.80–1.00 indicates a very strong relationship. For the test of hypotheses, the null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value was below the predetermined alpha level ( $p < 0.05$ ) and was retained when the p-value was equal to or greater than the alpha level ( $p \geq 0.05$ ).

## Result and Discussion

**Table 1:** *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation of Implementation of Admission and Examination Policies with Management Effectiveness of Public Universities in Benue State, Nigeria*

| Variables                                                         | N   | r    | P-Value     | Decision                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Implementation of Admission Policy and Management Effectiveness   | 439 | 0.86 | $p < 0.001$ | Very strong positive significant correlation |
| Implementation of Examination Policy and Management Effectiveness | 439 | 0.95 | $p < 0.001$ | Very strong positive significant correlation |

The correlation coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

## Discussion of Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** What is the correlation between implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1 indicates a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.86 for implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness, based on 439 respondents. This result reveals a very strong positive correlation between implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. The finding implies that improved implementation of admission policies tends to be associated with improved management effectiveness. This may be reflected in transparent admission procedures, adherence to established admission guidelines, effective student enrolment planning, proper allocation of institutional resources and improved administrative coordination. Therefore, consistent implementation of admission policies may contribute to more effective university management.

**Research Question 2:** What is the correlation between implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1 indicates a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.95 for implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness, based on 439 respondents. This result reveals a very strong positive correlation between implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. The finding implies that improved implementation of examination policies tends to be associated with higher management effectiveness. This relationship may be explained by adherence to examination regulations, effective examination scheduling, proper coordination of examination activities, prevention of examination malpractice, timely processing of results, and accountability in academic administration. The correlation coefficient of 0.95 is higher than the coefficient of 0.86 obtained for admission policy, suggesting that examination policy implementation has the stronger observed association with management effectiveness in this study. However, the results do not establish that either policy directly causes improved management effectiveness.

## Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant correlation between implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness is  $r=0.86$ , with  $p<0.001$ . Since the  $p$ -value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a statistically significant, very strong positive correlation between implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Consequently, better implementation of admission policies is associated with higher management effectiveness. The finding underscores the importance of transparent, consistent, and accountable admission procedures in university administration.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant correlation between implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness is  $r=0.95$ , with  $p<0.001$ . Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a statistically significant, very strong positive correlation between implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. The finding suggests that effective implementation of examination policies is associated with improved management effectiveness, particularly in examination administration, academic accountability, and the timely processing of students' results.

### Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that there is a very strong significant positive correlation of implementation of admission policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding implies that effective implementation of admission policies promotes transparency, equity, accountability and smooth administration in the university system. Proper adherence to admission guidelines helps universities to admit qualified candidates based on merit and established criteria, thereby reducing conflicts, favouritism and irregularities associated with admission processes. The finding is in line with Igbudu and Chuku-Akwu (2024) who revealed that there is a high extent of correlation between universities' management implementation of favourable admission policies to host communities and harmonious town and gown relationships in Rivers State. The finding also agrees with Omeje et al. (2016), who reported that quota system and catchment area policies significantly affect students' admission. The authors of this study believe that implementation of admission policy enhances management effectiveness of public universities because it ensures fairness, promotes institutional credibility, minimizes admission-related crises and strengthens public confidence in university administration. Effective admission policy implementation also contributes to proper students' placement and improved coordination of academic activities within the institution. In line with the Top-Down Theory of Policy Implementation, clearly defined objectives, adequate authority and resources, effective communication, coordination, supervision, control, compliance and continuous monitoring facilitate proper policy implementation.

The second finding of the study revealed that there is a very strong significant positive correlation of implementation of examination policy and management effectiveness of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding suggests that effective implementation of examination policies strengthens academic standards, promotes integrity in assessment processes and enhances the overall quality of university administration. Examination policies guide the conduct of examinations, grading systems, invigilation procedures and handling of examination malpractice, thereby ensuring credibility and fairness in students' evaluation. The finding contradicts the finding of Pwajok (2025) which shows no significant correlation of implementation of examination policies and management of tertiary institutions in Plateau State. However, the finding agrees with Barasa and Wekesa (2019) whose finding revealed that effective implementation of examination policies such as timely distribution of examination materials and regular invigilation of examinations have significant effect on school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The authors of this study believe that implementation of examination policy enhances management effectiveness of public universities because it reduces examination malpractice, ensures proper coordination of academic activities, promotes discipline among students and staff, and enhances the credibility of certificates awarded by the universities. In relation to the Top-Down Theory of Policy Implementation, it implies by emphasizing clear objectives, adequate

authority and resources, effective communication, coordination, supervision, control, compliance and monitoring management effectiveness can be achieved in public universities.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a very strong significant positive association between the implementation of admission and examination policies and management effectiveness in public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management and relevant stakeholders of public universities such as NUC, admission committee and registrars should strengthen and ensure strict adherence to admission policies. This could be achieved through transparent and merit-based admission procedures in order to improve fairness, accountability and management effectiveness in public universities.
2. Examination officers of public universities should strengthen implementation of examination policies. This could be achieved by ensuring effective invigilation and proper coordination of examinations in order to enhance academic standards.
3. A further study should be conducted by other researchers on relationship between implementation of educational policies and management of public universities to cover other variables excluded in this study.

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