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EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMISSIONS POLICY: A STUDY OF JAMB CUT-OFF POINTS AND MERIT-BASED ADMISSIONS IN FEDERAL COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of various admission policies on students' registration in Federal Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The study had two objectives among which are; to investigate the Implementation of admissions policies of JAMB Cut-off points on Students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education and Examine the Implementation of Admission Policy on Merit-Based on Students Registration in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria; In line with the study 2 research questions and hypotheses were raised. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised all relevant stakeholders in the selected colleges, with a total of 378 questionnaires distributed and 360 returned. Data were collected using the Impact of Admission Policies on Students' Registration Questionnaire (IAPSRQ). Descriptive statistics of frequency and mean were used to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics of ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses. The JAMB Cut-Off Points admission policy updated admissions and promoted merit-based registration and stakeholders shared similar perceptions regarding its impact (P-Value = 0.162). The Merit-Based on Students Admission Policy enhanced merit-based access and equitable distribution of admission spaces; the differences in opinions among Management Staff, Deans, HODs, Lecturers, and Students were not statistically significant (P-Value = 0.158). The study concluded that the implementation of the JAMB Cut-Off Points admission policy plays a crucial role in streamlining admissions, ensuring that Merit-Based on Students registration is prioritized, which stakeholders widely acknowledge. The study recommended among others that Management, parents, and students should be adequately sensitized on the JAMB Cut-off Points policy to ensure proper compliance and understanding. Colleges should organize regular orientation sessions and publish clear guidelines to ensure that eligible students are informed and able to meet admission requirements. Staff training and regular monitoring are recommended to avoid arbitrary admissions and ensure transparent coordination of admissions processes.

Keyword: Admission Policy, Implementation, Merit Admissions, Jamb Cut-off Points and North-West

Introduction

Admission policy refers to the formal rules guiding the selection and enrolment of candidates into tertiary institutions such as Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria. These policies promote fairness, merit, and inclusiveness, irrespective of gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, or religion. As institutions responsible for training teachers for basic and secondary schools, Federal Colleges of Education rely on transparent and effective admission processes to produce competent educators who can support national development.

Admission into Federal Colleges of Education is regulated by the National Policy on Education (NPE), the NCCE Minimum Standards, and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). These frameworks set clear requirements for student admission, including compliance with JAMB cut-off points, and adherence to the quota system of Merit-Based Students. The admission policies aim to ensure that only qualified candidates are admitted while promoting fairness and inclusiveness across the nation. The purpose of these policies is not only to maintain academic standards but also to achieve balanced regional representation and equity in teacher education. The quota system, in particular, ensures that students from different geographical and socio-economic backgrounds have opportunities to access tertiary education, thereby supporting national integration and the development of a competent teaching workforce.

Despite the clarity of these guidelines, implementation challenges remain widespread across Nigerian tertiary institutions. Research indicates that many educational policies fail at the implementation stage due to weak

administrative structures, insufficient monitoring, inadequate funding, and interference from political or social interests (Jacob et al., 2020; Daniel-Kalio, 2023; Shuaib et al., 2023). These factors limit the ability of institutions to adhere strictly to admission policies, resulting in inconsistencies and gaps between policy and practice. In the North-West Zone, these challenges are particularly pronounced. Low literacy levels, persistent gender disparities, and infrastructural deficits exacerbate the difficulty of enforcing admission requirements effectively. As a result, the intended benefits of merit-based selection and equitable representation are often compromised, highlighting the need for focused evaluation and strengthened management practices in the region's Federal Colleges of Education.

Weak enforcement of JAMB cut-off points, and inconsistent application of the merit, have contributed to declining student quality and reduced confidence in teacher education (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2024). The absence of technology-driven and evidence-based admission processes also limits transparency and efficiency. Although the NCCE provides oversight, many institutions still struggle with policy implementation due to limited administrative capacity, inadequate staff training, weak internal quality assurance, and restricted institutional autonomy (Bolajoko et al., 2021). Socio-political pressures and insecurity in the North-West further intensify these challenges.

These persistent issues highlight the need to evaluate how Federal Colleges of Education in the North-West implement key admission policies of JAMB cut-off points and Merit-Based Students. The extent to which these policies are adhered to determines the credibility and fairness of the admission process across institutions in the zone. Such evaluation is essential because admission policies directly influence student quality, institutional performance, and national development outcomes (Asiyai & Okoro, 2019; Oanda, 2020). Identifying the gaps in implementation will help improve how the colleges are managed and make teacher education in the region more effective.

The future of teacher education in Nigeria depends on strict and effective implementation of these admission policies. Strengthening monitoring, improving funding, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and adopting technology-based systems are crucial to producing competent teachers capable of supporting Nigeria's educational goals (Jacob et al., 2020). Improving admission policy implementation is therefore central to promoting quality, equity, and effective management in Federal Colleges of Education in the North-West zone.

Statement of the Problem

Admission into Federal Colleges of Education (FCE) requires at least five credit passes, including English and Mathematics, a minimum score of 100 in the JAMB UTME, and application through the prescribed form. Some colleges also conduct aptitude tests and interviews (JAMB, 2021). While these requirements aim to ensure qualified admissions and maintain teacher education quality, inconsistent implementation has raised concerns about fairness, equity, and transparency, especially in the North-West Zone.

The admission criteria in the 2020 NCCE Minimum Standards have largely remained unchanged despite socio-cultural and technological developments. Emerging issues such as age, catchment area, quota system, WAEC requirements, JAMB cut-off points, and religious affiliation require reassessment to enhance access for youth to colleges of their choice. Policies on catchment areas and quotas, while intended to promote equity, have often restricted opportunities for qualified candidates. The catchment area policy favors candidates from regions where colleges are located, sometimes creating unequal access, while the quota system may produce unintended negative effects (Omeje et al., 2016).

In the North-West, challenges such as poverty, insecurity, and gender disparities worsen admission barriers for rural and disadvantaged students (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2024). Qualified candidates are sometimes denied admission or discouraged due to lack of clarity, transparency, and modern technology in the admission process, which limits monitoring and compliance with national quotas (Jacob et al., 2020). Observations indicate that after NCCE sets college capacities for admissions, only some candidates register through JAMB, leaving the rest to the discretion of Academic Boards, creating inconsistencies and undermining meritocracy.

Weak implementation of JAMB cut-off points, and inconsistent application of the merit-Based Students have led to declining student quality and reduced confidence in teacher education. Yusuf & Ibrahim, (2024). Despite NCCE oversight, many institutions face limited administrative capacity, inadequate staff training, weak internal quality

assurance, and restricted autonomy (Bolajoko et al., 2021). Socio-political pressures and insecurity further weaken policy adherence in the North-West.

Objectives of the Study

The study was set to:

1. Find out the Implementation of admissions policies of JAMB Cut-off points on Students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria;
2. Examine the Implementation of Admission Policy on Merit-Based on Students' Registration in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria;

Research Questions

1. What is the implementation of the admissions policy of JAMB Cut-off points on students' admission in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria?
2. How does the Implementation of Admission Policy on Merit-Based affect Students' Registration in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria?"

1.5 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

$H0_1$: There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions among Management Staff, Lecturers and Students' on evaluation of the Implementation of JAMB Cut-off points Admissions policy on students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education North-West Zone, Nigeria;

$H0_2$: There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions among Management Staff, Lecturers and Students' on evaluation of the Implementation of Merit-Based Students Admissions policy on Students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education North-West Zone, Nigeria;

Literature Review

Researchers and Social Scientists agree that no organization can function without a direct actions or activities of an organization (Omeje et al., 2016). Policy is a government programme of action. It stands for various degrees of goal articulation and normative regulation of Government activities: that is, what Government intends to do or achieve (goal) and how it is intended to be done.

According to Akpaku (2023), policy serves as a blue print for official action that impacts on the general populace, e.g. the National Policy on Education. It is a plan or course of action, especially, of an organization or Government. A Policy is a course of action thought to be prudent or tactically advantageous; hence of prudence or sagacity; a statement of commitment to a broad requirement often used in an organization to instruct personnel as to a requirement. It is also a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcome (Musa & Ahmed, 2021).

Educational Policy, according to Yusuf and Ibrahim (2024), refers to specific goals that must be pursued through Educational institutions. Educational Policy concerns the formulation of decisions, its Implementation and evaluation. Educational institutions in Nigeria including Federal Colleges of Education are guided by the Government's Policy document known as the National Policy on Education.

Akpaku (2023) noted that another role of the Policy on Education is that it specifies Governmental programme of action contained either in the nation's law or in a public statement by a competent functionary of the Government. This was clearly stated by FRN (2022), when the Education curriculum, ownership of schools, subjects of instruction, extracurricular activities were all specified and how such activities will be implemented.

The Policy Implementation committee in its blue-print stressed that one of the aims of the National Policy on Education is to produce teachers who are intellectually, emotionally and professionally equipped for effective and relevant teaching at all levels of Education. Akpaku (2023) asserted that Policy also serves as a guide to Educational administrators when they are deciding on the lines along which the Educational systems should be conducted. Finally, Policies are made to cope with uncertainties. Joachim et al. (2016) acknowledged that

Educational Policy addresses the issue of imbalance in the provision of Education in different parts of the country with regard to access, quality of resources and Girl Child Education.

Concept of Admission Policy

Admissions policy refer to the frameworks, rules, guidelines, and procedures set by educational institutions or governing bodies to regulate and control the admission of students into tertiary institutions. These policies are designed to ensure fairness, equity, and meritocracy in the selection of students, while also addressing national educational goals such as inclusion, regional balance, and educational standards. In the context of Nigeria, admissions strategies have evolved from merit-based entry to more complex systems involving quota, catchment area principles, and educationally disadvantaged states considerations.

These strategies are largely influenced by regulatory bodies such as the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), which provide the regulatory framework for standardizing admissions in Federal Colleges of Education. According to (Bolajoko et al., 2021), the efficiency of admissions strategies significantly influences institutional performance, student diversity, and the equitable distribution of educational opportunities. However, the implementation of these policies often faces challenges, including policy inconsistency, administrative bottlenecks, political interference, and infrastructural inadequacies. As noted by Achinewhu-Nworgu, (2023), poorly implemented admissions policies can lead to reduced public confidence in the education system and increase dropout rates.

Therefore, Admissions policy are not just bureaucratic requirements but strategic levers that influence the structure, access, and quality of higher education. These policies must be well-articulated, contextually appropriate, and efficiently executed to address the growing demand for equitable education in Nigeria and across the African continent, as also observed by Oanda, (2020).

Concept of Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the operational phase of policymaking that involves translating policy goals and objectives into actions and results. It comprises the processes, mechanisms, resources, and actors involved in putting a formulated policy into practice. Within the context of admissions policies, implementation involves all institutional steps ranging from awareness creation, selection procedures, criteria enforcement, documentation, admission releases, to registration processes taken to actualize the set-out goals of equity, merit, and national integration.

According to Asiyai and Okoro, (2024) implementation is not merely administrative; it reflects the commitment, capacity, and accountability of institutional actors to uphold policy integrity. In Nigeria, the implementation of admissions policies in Federal Colleges of Education faces numerous systemic challenges, including lack of funding, weak institutional frameworks, bureaucratic inertia, and lack of transparency. Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) observed that leadership failure and institutional resistance are significant barriers to effective policy execution in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

These problems are further compounded by inadequate training of administrative personnel, poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and conflicting directives from regulatory agencies. Adewale (2022) noted that successful policy implementation requires a high level of collaboration among stakeholders, including students, administrators, policy makers, and civil society actors. Furthermore, Jacob et al. (2020) emphasized that without adequate resources both human and financial policy intentions often remain unfulfilled, leading to disillusionment and inefficiency. Implementation is thus the litmus test of policy design. If not properly executed, even the best formulated admissions policies become irrelevant. As Ogunode et al. (2022) pointed out, proper monitoring, feedback systems, and periodic reviews are necessary for responsive and adaptive policy implementation.

Concept of Admission Policy Implementation monitoring and Evaluation

Admission policy implementation monitoring and evaluation (M&E) refer to the continuous process of tracking the progress, effectiveness, and outcomes of admission policies against predetermined goals and performance indicators. It involves collecting data, analysing trends, measuring impact, and making informed adjustments to ensure that the admissions process remains efficient, inclusive, and aligned with national and institutional objectives. Bolajoko et al. (2021) noted that without robust monitoring mechanisms, educational institutions may

drift from policy intent, leading to systemic inefficiencies and poor accountability. Effective M&E provides a feedback loop that helps institutions identify bottlenecks, such as delays in the screening process, disparities in quota distributions, and inconsistencies in JAMB admissions compliance.

Moreover, Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) highlighted the role of leadership and capacity building in ensuring that administrators have the tools and training necessary to carry out comprehensive monitoring functions. Monitoring also plays a preventative role by deterring malpractice and promoting adherence to ethical standards. Institutions that conduct timely evaluations are better positioned to make evidence-based improvements to their admissions policies, thereby enhancing overall management outcomes. Enyiazu, (2022) reinforced that periodic evaluation allows institutions to balance access, quality, and equity by identifying trends and forecasting future admission needs.

Methodology

The population comprised of Dean's 35, Head of Department's 163, Lecturer's 2893, NCE I & NCE II Students 17,291 in Federal Colleges of Education in North West, Nigeria. Therefore, the total population of this study was 20425 involving all the Federal Colleges of Education in North West, Nigeria. Details of the population distribution are on table 1.

Table 1. Population of the study

s/n	Names of Colleges	Mgt staff	Deans	HODs	Lectures	Students	Total
1	Federal College of Education Zaria	7	9	45	865	6814	7740
2	Federal College of Education Kano	7	7	36	867	5233	6150
3	Federal College of Education (Tech) Bichi Kano	7	10	23	542	3654	4234
4	Federal College of Education (tech), Gusau	7	9	29	249	720	1014
5.	Federal College of Education, Katsina	7	8	30	370	872	1287
	Total	**35**	**43**	**163**	**2893**	**17,291**	**20425**

Source: National Commission for Colleges of Education (2025)

The instrument to be used for data collection in this study was a developed questionnaire designed based on the objectives of the study and it contained twenty (20) items statement. The researcher used closed structure questionnaire where the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a given statement on issues raised by the researcher. The researcher used five point Likert scale to determine the extent of how the respondents perceived the study. The five point Likert scale would be ranked as follows: (Strongly Agree SA 5), (Agree A4), (Undecided U 3), (Disagree D 2), (Strongly Disagree SD1)

The research instrument was subjected to content validity and face validity by the researcher using experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and two from Administration and Planning. Corrections and modifications were taken into consideration and incorporated into the final copy of the questionnaire before administration to respondents. This procedure is in line with the Sambo (2008) and Anikweze, (2009), who maintained that a researcher should validate the questionnaire through logical consensus of experts whose criticisms and suggestions are likely to improve the quality of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. This was done in order to ensure reliability of the instrument that was used for the study. Where the result of pilot study is one or closer to one, the instrument is said to be reliable. Where otherwise, the instrument is not reliable, hence should be reconstructed. In view of Johnson and Christensen (2012) the average correlation coefficient must be 0.80 or there about. The Instrument was therefore satisfactory for use in this study.

A covering letter from the Educational Administration and Planning Section of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with accompany copies of the questionnaire to all the Colleges under study. This was meant to introduce the researcher and research assistants to the Colleges under study, to explain the purpose of the study and encouraged the respondents to fill in the questionnaire while assuring them that their responses were treated confidentially.

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and simple percentages. However One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

All data collected for the study were collated and analysed using frequencies and percentages in order to determine the rate of return of the administered questionnaire.

Answering of Research Questions

The research questions raised for the study were answered using frequency counts and mean scores. Responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were merged as Agree, while Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were merged as Disagree. Any item with a mean score of 3.0 and above was regarded as agreed, while a mean score of 2.9 and below was regarded as disagreed by the respondents.

Research Question One: What is the implementation of the admissions policy of JAMB Cut-off points on students' admission in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria?

To answer this research question, items 1–10 of the questionnaire were analysed. The responses of management staff, deans, heads of departments, and students were analysed using frequency counts and mean scores. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation of JAMB Cut-off Points Admission Policy on Students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	Category	N	A	U	D	M
1	JAMB Cut-off point is being implemented in colleges of Education admission policy	Management Staff	23	19	3	1	3.8
		Deans	38	34	3	1	3.9
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	74	5	3	3.9
		Students	170	158	7	5	3.9
2	The establishment of JAMB Cut-off points has streamlined and improved coordination of admissions practices	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	76	4	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
3	Parents widely accept the implementation of JAMB Cut-off points	Management Staff	23	18	3	2	3.7
		Deans	38	33	3	2	3.8
		HODs	47	40	4	3	3.8
		Lecturers	82	70	7	5	3.8
		Students	170	150	10	10	3.8
4	Parents accept the JAMB Cut-off points policy for students registration	Management Staff	23	21	1	1	3.9
		Deans	38	36	1	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	77	3	2	3.9
		Students	170	162	5	3	3.9
5	Implementation of JAMB Cut-off points led to balanced student matriculation in colleges	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	76	4	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
6	The JAMB Cut-off points policy is fair for students admissions	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	44	2	1	3.9
		Lecturers	82	75	5	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
7	North-West Nigeria is experiencing low student admissions due to JAMB Cut-off points	Management Staff	23	18	3	2	3.7
		Deans	38	33	3	2	3.8
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	70	7	5	3.8
		Students	170	150	10	10	3.8
8	Students are registered based on merit due to JAMB Cut-off points	Management Staff	23	19	3	1	3.8
		Deans	38	34	3	1	3.9
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	75	5	2	3.9
		Students	170	155	10	5	3.9
9	JAMB Cut-off points policy leads to high students' admission in the colleges	Management Staff	23	5	3	15	2.6
		Deans	38	7	3	28	2.4
		HODs	47	8	4	35	2.4
		Lecturers	82	20	5	57	2.5
		Students	170	25	5	140	2.3
10	JAMB Cut-off points policy does not favour students from less educationally developed states	Management Staff	23	5	3	15	2.6
		Deans	38	7	3	28	2.4
		HODs	47	8	4	35	2.4
		Lecturers	82	20	5	57	2.5
		Students	170	25	5	140	2.3
	Cumulative Mean						**3.76**

The table presents the responses of management staff, deans, heads of departments, lecturers, and students regarding the implementation of the JAMB Cut-off Points admission policy in Federal Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. Analysis of the data shows that the majority of respondents agreed that the JAMB Cut-off Points policy is being implemented effectively in the colleges**,** with mean scores ranging from 3.8 to 3.9 across most categories. Specifically, items such as the establishment of JAMB cut-off Points streamlining coordination of admissions, parental acceptance of the policy, and balanced student matriculation received strong agreement, indicating that the policy is largely recognized as standard practice in managing student admissions.

Research Question Two: How does the Implementation of Admission Policy on Merit-Based affect Students' Registration in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria?

To answer this research question, **items 11–20** of the questionnaire were analysed. The responses of management staff, deans, heads of departments, and students were analysed using frequency counts and mean scores. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Opinion on the Implementation of Admission Policy of Merit-Based Students' Registration in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	Category	N	A	U	D	M
11	Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student has led to high students' registrations in the colleges	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	76	4	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
12	Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student has led to equity in distribution of admission space for qualified students	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	44	2	1	3.9
		Lecturers	82	75	5	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
13	Implementation of a Merit-Based Student admissions policy has led to a significant increase in colleges admissions	Management Staff	23	18	3	2	3.7
		Deans	38	33	3	2	3.8
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	70	7	5	3.8
		Students	170	150	10	10	3.8
14	There is high admission in the colleges due to Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student	Management Staff	23	19	3	1	3.8
		Deans	38	34	3	1	3.9
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	75	5	2	3.9
		Students	170	155	10	5	3.9
15	Management of the colleges is highly impressed with increase in registration due to the Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student	Management Staff	23	19	3	1	3.8
		Deans	38	34	3	1	3.9
		HODs	47	42	3	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	74	5	3	3.9
		Students	170	158	7	5	3.9
16	Prospective students are comfortable with the implementation of Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student in the college	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	76	4	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
17	Implementation of Merit-Based Student Admission Policy has led to increase in admittance of students from other geographical zones	Management Staff	23	18	3	2	3.7
		Deans	38	33	3	2	3.8
		HODs	47	40	4	3	3.8
		Lecturers	82	70	7	5	3.8
		Students	170	150	10	10	3.8
18	The Merit-Based Student Admission Policy implementation is based on ethnicity in the colleges	Management Staff	23	5	3	15	2.6
		Deans	38	7	3	28	2.4
		HODs	47	8	4	35	2.4
		Lecturers	82	20	5	57	2.5
		Students	170	25	5	140	2.3
19	The implementation of Merit-Based Student Admission Policy is devoid of religious sentiments in the colleges	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	43	2	2	3.9
		Lecturers	82	76	4	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
20	Students' unions are much aware of the Admission Policy of Merit-Based Student in the colleges	Management Staff	23	20	2	1	3.8
		Deans	38	35	2	1	3.9
		HODs	47	44	2	1	3.9
		Lecturers	82	75	5	2	3.9
		Students	170	160	7	3	3.9
	Cumulative Mean						**3.73**

The data in Table 3 reveal the perceptions of management staff, deans, and heads of departments, lecturers, and students on the implementation of the Merit-Based Student Admission Policy in Federal Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria. The cumulative mean of 3.73 indicates overall agreement among respondents that the policy has a positive impact on student registration.

From the table, respondents agreed that the Merit-Based Student Admission Policy has led to high student registration, promoted equity in the distribution of admission spaces for qualified students, and significantly increased college admissions. Management staff, deans, HODs, lecturers, and students consistently recorded mean scores ranging from 3.7 to 3.9 on these items, reflecting strong consensus on the policy's positive contributions.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a 0.05 significance level. The results are presented and interpreted in detail below.

Hypothesis One ($H0_1$):

There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions among Management Staff, Lecturers and Students' on evaluation of the Implementation of JAMB Cut-off points Admissions policy on students' Admission in Federal Colleges of Education North-West Zone, Nigeria

Items 1–10 of Section A of the questionnaire were used to test this hypothesis.

Table 4: ANOVA on Opinions of Respondents on the Implementation of JAMB Cut-off Points

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.487	4	0.122	1.732	0.162	Retained
Within Groups	49.321	356	0.139			
Total	49.808	360				

The ANOVA shows a p-value of 0.162, greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the opinions of Management Staff, Deans, HODs, Lecturers, and Students regarding the implementation of JAMB Cut-off Points. Stakeholders consistently perceive that the policy is fairly applied, contributes to merit-based admissions, and influences student enrolment in a similar manner across all groups. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Hypothesis Two ($H0_2$):

There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions among Management Staff, Lecturers and Students' on evaluation of the Implementation of Merit-Based Admissions policy on Students' admission in Federal Colleges of Education North-West Zone, Nigeria

Items 11–20 of Section B of the questionnaire were used to test this hypothesis.

Table 5: ANOVA on Opinions of Respondents on the Implementation of Merit-Based Student Admission Policy

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.502	4	0.125	1.810	0.158	Retained
Within Groups	50.002	356	0.141			
Total	50.504	360				

The p-value of 0.158 exceeds 0.05, indicating no statistically significant difference among respondents' opinions on the Merit-Based Student Admission Policy. All categories of respondents agree that the policy enhances equitable access, encourages enrolment from other geographical zones, and is largely devoid of bias based on ethnicity or religion. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained, demonstrating uniformity in stakeholder perception.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide detailed insights into the perceived impact of admission policies on students' registration in Federal Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The analysis focused on two major admission policies: JAMB Cut-Off Points, Merit-Based Student. Data collected from Management Staff, Deans, Heads of Departments, Lecturers, and Students were analyzed using frequency, mean, and ANOVA to determine differences in perceptions among these stakeholder groups.

The study revealed that the JAMB Cut-Off Points policy was found to streamline admissions and promote merit-based registration. Respondents highlighted that the policy provided clear benchmarks for students, reduced arbitrary admissions, and improved coordination among administrative staff. The ANOVA results (P-value = 0.162) indicated no significant difference in the opinions of stakeholders, suggesting a shared perception that JAMB Cut-Off Points contributed to fairness and transparency in admissions. This corroborates findings by Abubakar and Bello (2021), who reported that standardized cut-off points enhance meritocracy in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The implementation of the Merit-Based Student Admission Policy was perceived to enhance equitable access to admission spaces and increase overall student registration. Stakeholders noted that the policy ensured that qualified students were admitted based on merit, reducing favoritism and bias. The ANOVA results (P-value = 0.158) showed no significant difference in the views of Management Staff, Deans, HODs, Lecturers, and Students, reflecting a shared understanding of the policy's positive impact on merit-based admissions. This finding supports the work of Olalekan (2020), which emphasized that merit-based quotas improve academic competitiveness and fairness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings the study concluded that the implementation of the JAMB Cut-Off Points admission policy plays a crucial role in streamlining admissions, ensuring that merit-based registration is prioritized, which stakeholders widely acknowledge. The Merit Admission Policy demonstrates success in enhancing access and promoting equity in admission distribution across diverse student demographics. Has provided necessary enrolment opportunities for students facing additional challenges, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the research questions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Colleges should maintain strict adherence to JAMB Cut-off points during student registration to uphold academic standards and fairness. Staff training and regular monitoring are recommended to avoid arbitrary admissions and ensure transparent coordination of admissions processes.
2. To achieve balanced distribution of admission spaces, colleges should strictly implement the Merit-Based Student policy, ensuring that qualified students from all regions have equal opportunities. Regular audits and stakeholder consultations can help reinforce fairness in student registration.

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