

Influence of Transparency Practices in Admission Processes on Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities

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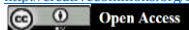
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ABSTRACT

This study examined influence of transparency practices in admission processes on quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities. Three objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The total population of the study was 40,840 undergraduate students comprising 20,939 undergraduate students from Rivers State University and 19,901 undergraduate students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size of the study was 396 undergraduate students comprising 200 undergraduate students from Rivers State University and 196 undergraduate students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education derived through Taro Yamane's formula and simple random sampling technique. The data collecting instrument for the study was a self-developed questionnaire titled: "Influence of Transparency Practices in Admission Processes on Quality of Students' Intake Questionnaire". The instrument was face and content validated by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and the field of Measurement and Evaluation respectively in Rivers State University and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded cumulative reliability index of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that clear communication of admission requirements, timely publication of admission procedures and accessible complaint system as transparency practices in admission processes influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that the management of Rivers State-owned universities should ensure the timely publication of admission procedures, schedules and guidelines to enable candidates to prepare adequately and complete their applications within the stipulated period.

Introduction

University education occupies a central place in national development. It is charged with the obligation of producing the human capital and knowledge required for individual, social and economic advancement. According to National Planning Commission in Osuji, et al. (2023), university education is an instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills which provide them access to productive employment. In corroboration, Ogunleye in Osuji and Bakpo (2022), stated that university education equips individuals with specialized knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for professional and personal development. University education does not only benefit individuals, but it is essential for the overall well-being and progress of society, fostering innovation, equity and informed decision-making. These characteristics of university education have kept it at the very heart of the knowledge acquisition and dissemination. There is no gainsaying that the university education of any nation is vital because it prepares individuals for careers, research and personal development and plays a crucial role in economic growth and social development.

The admission processes in universities plays an important role in determining access, equity and the overall credibility of the educational system. In essence, admission opportunities function as a strategic instrument through which universities operationalize the enunciated goals of tertiary education in Nigeria. The number of people who seek for admission into the Nigerian university has grown immensely. It can affect salary, job security and has power to influence society. The Federal Republic

of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in her National Policy on Education emphasized the need for provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at tertiary and other levels both inside and outside the formal school system. When admission processes are properly regulated and effectively implemented, they enhance the likelihood that universities will produce graduates who are intellectually sound, ethically grounded and socially responsible, thereby fulfilling the broad aspirations of the National Policy on Education.

Equitable access to university education suggests that admission opportunities should be inclusive and available to all individuals who have successfully completed secondary education or its equivalent or possess the required entry qualifications without being subjected to any form(s) of discrimination (Okpa, et al., 2017). But the problem of access in the Nigerian universities is currently so severe that sometimes less than one third of the applicants gain access into the university (Lawal & Nife, 2018). Yearly, out of the huge number of candidates who apply for admission into universities, only a small percentage is given admission. For instance, only about 30 per cent out of the 1.7 million candidates who wrote the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) were admitted in 2020 (Lawal in Okpa, et al., 2020). In giving credence, Uduak and Ovat (2018), buttressed that stakeholders of university education have expressed deep dissatisfaction on admission processes in universities. They alleged that admission procedures in Nigerian universities are unconventional, unethical and unfavourable to meritorious candidates. Rules and regulations are compromised, and certain mischievous behaviours seem to be condoned. In the context of Rivers State universities, concerns surrounding transparency practices in admission processes have become increasingly significant, especially as institutions strive to uphold standards of quality of students' intake.

Quality of students' intake refers to the extent admitted students meet academic, cognitive and programme-related requirements of the university. Okpa (2019), defined quality of students' intake as the academic and personal attributes that students possess at the point of entry into a higher education institution, which indicate their readiness and capacity to cope with university-level academic demands. Similarly, Kpolovie (2018), conceptualize quality of students' intake primarily in terms of academic preparedness, which is reflected in measurable indicators such as secondary school grades, standardized examination scores and performance in entrance examinations. Beyond academic credentials, quality of student intake also encompasses programme–student fit, which refers to the alignment between students' prior knowledge, interests and abilities and the requirements of their chosen courses of study (Obi & Osinem, 2021). These indicators are used by universities to predict students' likelihood of academic success and their ability to engage meaningfully with course content. Students admitted with strong academic foundations are generally better positioned to adapt to the rigors of university education, participate actively in learning activities and complete their programmes within the stipulated time.

Admissions into the university vary according to the programme of study, and this includes admission into the regular, part-time and sandwich programmes for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The prospective students are usually selected, screened and placed by Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) which is the coordinating body for undergraduate programmes in Nigeria. Furthermore, Odigwe and Tefa (2016), noted that the guidelines for admission to the Nigerian universities (federal, state and private) are also based on the quota system: 45% merit, 35% catchment and 20% educationally disadvantaged states and 10% to the discretion of the individual vice-chancellor. However, universities retain a significant degree of autonomy in conducting post-Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination screening, setting cut-off points and final selection. The absence of consistent transparency practices during these processes has led to allegations of favoritism, nepotism and backdoor admissions, which compromise the principle of meritocracy and quality of students' intake (Adewale & Musa, 2019). As Nwachukwu and Ogbonda (2022), noted, institutions that uphold transparency practices in admission processes are more likely to attract high-performing candidates, maintain stakeholder trust and sustain internal efficiency. As such, ensuring transparency practices in admission processes is critical to quality of students' intake.

Transparency practices in admission processes play a critical role in shaping the quality of student intake in universities by ensuring that admission decisions are guided by clearly defined, openly communicated and consistently applied criteria. According to Okonkwo and Eze (2021), transparency practices in admission processes refer to the structured policies, open procedures, use of merit-based

criteria and technological systems that ensure fairness, objectivity and accountability in the selection of candidates for admission into academic programmes. Similarly, Altbach, et al. (2019), defined transparency practices in admission processes as the extent to which admission policies, requirements, procedures, and outcomes are made accessible and understandable to prospective applicants and other stakeholders. These practices aim to eliminate bias, favoritism and corruption by making each step of the admission process clear and accessible to all stakeholders. Hakimov (2022), describe transparency practices in admission process as a combination of mechanisms through which universities disclose admission requirements, publish cut-off scores, explain how different criteria are weighted and provide applicants with timely updates on their status in ways that are understandable, verifiable and accessible. These practices help ensure that every applicant is treated fairly and that the admission process reflects the principles of meritocracy and equal opportunity. When properly implemented, transparency practices serve as safeguards against irregularities and create a more accountable higher education system. Udo and Onwe (2020), assert that transparency practices in admission processes include clear communication of admission requirements, timely publication of admission procedures, accessible compliant system, use of merit-based selection criteria and prompt processing of application forms. These practices are fundamental to ensuring the admission of high-quality students, as they enhance public confidence, minimize corrupt tendencies and guarantee that admission opportunities are granted to qualified and deserving candidates.

Clear communication of admission requirements refers to the extent to which universities explicitly state and disseminate all conditions, qualifications and standards required for entry into academic programmes in a manner that is understandable to prospective applicants. It ensures that prospective students understand what is expected and how selections are made, reducing information irregularity and perceived unfairness. According to Hang (2018), admissions communication activities include advertising on media and the school's website, sending admission invitations to potential candidates to promote admissions information, etc. In the admissions process at universities, communication activities are the process of providing and exchanging information between the school and candidates about admission content, such as registration time to receive applications, testing or screening methods, admission results and even counselling and orientation activities for choosing majors or careers in the future (Hung, 2019). Perkins and Neumayer (2024), stated that when students understand the admission requirements, they are better positioned to prepare and strategize their efforts, which not only heightens their motivation but also subsequently impacts the quality of their application. Jibril, et al. (2020), stated that clarity in admission communication reduces ambiguity, limits misinformation and enables applicants to make informed decisions about their eligibility. Effective communication reduces information asymmetry, where prospective applicants might otherwise rely on hearsay or informal networks, which can lead to confusion and misinformed decisions (Stiglitz, 2020). Clear communication of admission requirements can guide individuals throughout the admissions process, ensuring they are on the right track. A comparative study of admission communication practices in European higher education by Teixeira, et al. (2020), revealed that institutions with clearly articulated criteria and structured application guidelines had higher enrolment of applicants who subsequently demonstrated satisfactory academic performance in their first year. Espenshade and Radford (2019), opined that clear and consistent messaging helps in nurturing a merit-based admission environment, where admission decisions reflect academic aptitude rather than chance or misinterpretation.

Timely publication of admission procedures refers to the prompt release of information relating to admission guidelines, application timelines, selection processes and admission lists before and during the admission cycle. This transparency practice ensures that applicants are adequately informed within appropriate timeframes to prepare, submit and track their applications. Altbach, et al. (2019), argue that delays in the release of admission procedures often create opportunities for confusion and manipulation, thereby undermining the integrity of the admission process. In contrast, timely publication enhances institutional accountability and contributes to orderly and predictable admission processes, which support the admission of qualified candidates. Timely publication of admission procedures prevents confusion and last-minute manipulation, allowing qualified applicants to prepare and compete fairly. Timeliness, therefore, is not merely about early announcement; it reflects institutional commitment to fairness and accountability in the admission process. It is anchored in the belief that prospective students

should have equitable access to essential information that enables them to meet eligibility requirements and compete effectively for placement opportunities. When institutions delay the release of admission procedures, candidates may resort to guesswork, misinformation or last-minute rushes, which could disadvantage certain groups and compromise the meritocratic ideals of higher education systems. A study by Aboma (2023), examining admission practices and student academic performance, found a significant relationship between timely publication of admission procedures and students' academic achievement. Essien (2024), suggested that early publication facilitated better pre-admission guidance and counselling, enabling prospective candidates to make informed decisions about their readiness and choice of discipline. Within an institution admission process, the timing of information dissemination is treated as a strategic variable that can be manipulated to influence both the size and the quality of the applicant pool. Bontrager (2024), argues that institutions with proactive and early-release information strategies consistently outperform comparable institutions in attracting academically strong applicants, particularly in competitive recruitment environments where students simultaneously consider multiple institutions. Noel-Levitz (2022), whose national survey of higher education enrolment managers found that institutions reporting the earliest publication timelines for admission procedures also reported the highest average academic qualification scores among admitted students, suggesting a robust empirical link between publication timing and intake quality.

Accessible complaint systems in admission processes refer to formal structures and channels established by universities to allow applicants to seek clarification, lodge complaints or challenge perceived irregularities in admission decisions. Such systems may include help desks, online grievance portals or designated admission officers responsible for addressing applicants' concerns. It provides applicants with opportunities for redress and reinforcing institutional responsiveness. Kpolovie (2018), notes that accessible complaint mechanisms strengthen transparency by providing applicants with opportunities for redress and reinforcing institutional responsiveness. He further stated that the availability of effective complaint systems deters unethical practices and enhances trust in admission outcomes, thereby supporting merit-based admissions. Accessible complaint systems discourage unfair practices and enable correction of admission errors, strengthening merit-based outcomes. Kimani and Ogutu (2024), suggested that when complaint data is used constructively to refine admission processes, the quality of student intake can progressively improve, as policies evolve to address recurring concerns. A study by Adegoke and Bamgboye (2022), found that institutions with well-publicized and functional complaint channels reported fewer contested admissions decisions, fewer incidences of irregularities and a higher perception of fairness among applicants. Participants indicated that accessible complaint channels even if rarely used served as deterrents against administrative lapses, thereby indirectly enhancing the credibility of the selection process. Hossain and Al Mamun (2021), argue that when prospective students trust that an institution will hear and fairly adjudicate complaints, they are more likely to engage with the process and feel assured that merit, not arbitrary factors, will determine outcomes. This assurance is critical in shaping the quality of the student intake, because a fair and accessible system attracts a diverse and academically competent applicant pool who feel secure in the integrity of evaluation mechanisms. In the same vein, Bennett and Sargeant (2018), asserted that accessible complaint systems act as corrective feedback loops that discourage manipulation of admissions criteria and ensure fidelity to stated procedures. When institutions are accountable to formal complaint mechanisms, admission officers are compelled to adhere strictly to admission standards, minimizing errors that might admit underqualified candidates or unfairly exclude qualified ones.

Statement of the Problem

Quality of students' intake in universities depends significantly on the integrity, fairness and efficiency of their administrative processes, particularly admission processes. In Nigerian universities, student admissions follow standardized guidelines set by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), including the use of Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS) to promote transparency and accountability. Despite these regulatory frameworks, persistent reports of admission racketeering and the manipulation of admission lists continue to emerge across various universities including those in Rivers State, thereby raising concerns about the extent to which transparency practices are effectively applied within university admission processes.

The admission procedures in universities in Rivers State have increasingly attracted criticism due to concerns about fairness, transparency and adherence to merit-based standards (Ekpoh, 2020). The researchers observed that admission procedures are often perceived to be influenced by favouritism, nepotism and backdoor entries, resulting in inconsistent application of merit criteria. Such practices raise serious questions about the credibility and integrity of the admission process. Furthermore, these challenges are exacerbated by non-transparent administrative practices, including delays in the release of admission lists, ineffective communication channels, weak complaint and redress systems and persistent bureaucratic bottlenecks. These issues not only undermine public confidence in the system but also create significant frustration and uncertainty for applicants and their families. This situation, no doubt is perceived to affect quality of students' intake, as the admission of inadequately prepared or unqualified candidates may affect teaching effectiveness, student engagement, academic performance and the overall responsiveness of university services. The question now is, does transparency practices in admission processes influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities? Providing answers to this question is the problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine influence of transparency practices in admission processes on quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. find out the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.
2. determine the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.
3. ascertain the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?
2. To what extent does timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?
3. To what extent does accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?

Hypotheses

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 40,840 undergraduate students comprising 20,939 undergraduate students from Rivers State University and 19,901 undergraduate students from Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education as at 2024/2025 academic session. The sample size of the study was 396 undergraduate students comprising 200 undergraduate students from Rivers State University and 196 undergraduate students from Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education as at 2024/2025 academic session derived using Taro Yamane's formula and simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled: "Influence of Transparency Practices in Admission Processes on Quality of Students' Intake Questionnaire (ITPAPQSIQ)" which was face and content validated by 3 experts, 1 from the Department of Educational Management and 2 from Measurement and Evaluation respectively in Rivers State

University. The response scale was structured on a 4-point modified rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to test for reliability which yielded a cumulative reliability index of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions with a criterion mean of 2.50. Questionnaire items with ratings below 2.50 denoted 'Low Extent' while 2.50 and above signified 'High Extent'. The hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance with a critical z-value of ± 1.96 . Analysed data therefore with calculated z-value above the z-critical value of ± 1.96 was rejected and below was accepted.

Analyses of Data and Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Clear Communication of Admission Requirements Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Item	RSU N=200			IAUE N=196		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Clearly communicating admission requirements enables students to be able to assess their eligibility	3.05	0.77	HE	3.09	0.72	HE
2	Clear dissemination of information about eligibility criteria strengthens competition and raises the overall quality of admitted students	3.26	0.84	HE	3.20	0.97	HE
3	Articulating criteria clearly by institutions fosters alignment between applicant preparedness and academic expectations	3.13	0.63	HE	2.96	0.85	HE
4	Communicating admission requirements transparently helps universities filter applicants more effectively and enhance academic quality of incoming students	2.73	0.71	HE	2.83	0.69	HE
5	When students understand the admission requirements clearly, they are better positioned to prepare and strategize their efforts	3.52	0.72	VHE	3.58	0.73	VHE
Grand Mean/SD		3.14	0.73		3.13	0.79	

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Data in Table 1 above for research question 1, revealed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 had mean scores 3.05, 3.26, 3.13 and 2.73 with standard deviation 0.77, 0.84, 0.63 and 0.71 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.09, 3.20, 2.96 and 2.83 with standard deviation 0.72, 0.97, 0.85 and 0.69 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated high extent; while item 5 had mean scores 3.52 with standard deviation 0.72 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.58 with standard deviation 0.73 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated very high extent. In summary with grand mean scores of 3.14 and 3.13 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, this indicated that clear communication of admission requirements influences quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Timely Publication of Admission Procedures Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Item	RSU N=200			IAUE N=196		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
6	Timely publication of admission procedures affords students adequate opportunity to prepare, respond and make informed decisions	3.53	0.84	VHE	3.53	1.04	VHE



7	When admission procedures are published early, institutions maximize their visibility to qualified applicants	3.13	0.58	HE	3.09	0.51	HE
8	Earliest publication timelines for admission procedures enhance students' retention and progression rate	2.08	0.60	LE	2.02	0.73	LE
9	Early publication facilitates better pre-admission guidance and counselling which enables students to make informed decisions about their readiness and choice of discipline	3.00	0.61	HE	3.15	0.58	HE
10	Timely publication of admission criteria reduces ambiguity and ensures that only candidates who genuinely meet academic benchmarks are admitted	3.52	0.77	VHE	3.50	1.01	VHE
Grand Mean/SD		3.05	0.65		3.06	0.74	

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Data in Table 2 above for research question 2, revealed that items 6 and 10 had mean scores 3.35 and 3.52 with standard deviation 0.84 and 0.77 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.53 and 3.50 with standard deviation 1.04 and 1.01 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated very high extent. Item 8 had mean scores 2.08 with standard deviation 0.60 for undergraduate students from RSU and 2.02 with standard deviation 0.73 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated low extent; while items 7 and 9 had mean scores 3.13 and 3.00 with standard deviation 0.58 and 0.61 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.09 and 3.15 with standard deviation 0.51 and 0.58 were rated high extent. In summary with grand mean scores of 3.05 and 3.06 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, this indicated that timely publication of admission procedures influences quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Accessible Complaint System Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Item	RSU N=200			IAUE N=196		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
11	Accessible complaint systems discourage unfair practices and enable correction of admission errors, strengthening merit-based outcomes	3.53	0.69	VHE	3.50	0.64	VHE
12	Help desks to address students' concerns supports merit-based admissions	3.20	0.61	HE	3.15	0.51	HE
13	Fair and accessible compliant system enable students feel secure in the integrity of evaluation mechanisms and promote quality of students' intake	3.08	0.58	HE	2.93	0.65	HE
14	When institutions are accountable to formal complaint mechanisms, errors that might admit underqualified candidates are minimized	3.11	0.77	HE	3.09	0.76	HE
15	Timely and fair response to an admission grievance increases the chance that academically qualified candidates will apply and complete the admission process	3.13	0.79	HE	3.05	0.73	HE
Grand Mean/SD		3.21	0.69		3.14	0.66	

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Data in Table 3 above for research question 3, revealed that all the item11 had mean scores 3.53 with standard deviation 0.69 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.50 with standard deviation 0.64 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated very high extent; while items (12-15) had mean scores 3.20, 3.08, 3.11 and 3.13 with standard deviation 0.61, 0.58, 0.77 and 0.79 for undergraduate students from RSU and 3.15, 2.93, 3.09 and 3.05 with standard deviation 0.51, 0.65, 0.76 and 0.73 for undergraduate students from IAUE were rated high extent. In summary with grand mean scores of 3.21



and 3.14 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, this indicated that accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Responses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Clear Communication of Admission Requirements Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

Respondents	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	d	sl	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	200	3.14	0.73					
				394	0.05	0.13	± 1.96	Failed to Reject No Significant Difference
IAUE	196	3.13	0.79					

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Table 4 shows a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities. The z-calculated was 0.13 while the z-critical value was ± 1.96 , using 394 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the z-calculated was less than the z-critical, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 5: z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Responses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Timely Publication of Admission Procedures Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

Respondents	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	d	sl	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	200	3.05	0.65					
				394	0.05	-0.14	± 1.96	Failed to Reject No Significant Difference
IAUE	196	3.06	0.74					

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Table 5 shows a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities. The z-calculated was -0.14 while the z-critical value was ± 1.96 , using 394 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the z-calculated was less than the z-critical, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 6: z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Reponses of Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Accessible Complaint System Influence Quality of Students' Intake in Rivers State Owned Universities.

Respondents	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	d	sl	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	200	3.21	0.69					Failed to Reject
				394	0.05	1.00	± 1.96	No Significant Difference
IAUE	196	3.14	0.66					

Source: Researcher's Field Study (2026)

Table 6 shows a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities. The z-calculated was 1.00 while the z-critical value was ± 1.96 , using 394 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the z-calculated was less than the z-critical, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question 1 on Table 1 revealed that clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with grand mean scores of 3.14 and 3.13. Hypothesis 1 on Table 4 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent clear communication of admission requirements influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities with z-calculated value of 0.13 which was less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 . The finding is in line with Perkins and Neumayer (2024), who stated that when students understand the admission requirements, they are better positioned to prepare and strategize their efforts, which not only heightens their motivation but also subsequently impacts the quality of their application. Also in support, Jibril, et al. (2020), stated that clarity in admission communication reduces ambiguity, limits misinformation and enables applicants to make informed decisions about their eligibility. Clear communication also carries a question of fairness, since applicants without access to informal channels depend entirely on what the institution states openly, and arrangements that advance social justice have been held to be what prepares people to take an active part in the life of their society (Alikor & Okachiku-Agbaraeke, 2025). Practices of this kind sit within the wider management of the institution, and the study of institutional management practices for administrative effectiveness in public universities in Rivers State found that the routine systems an institution operates are what carry its stated standards into practice (Yellowe & Nwuke, 2024).

Findings on research question 2 on Table 2 revealed that timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with grand mean scores of 3.05 and 3.06. Hypothesis 2 on Table 5 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent timely publication of admission procedures influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities with t-calculated value of -0.14 which was less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 . This finding agrees with Altbach, et al. (2019), who noted that timely publication of admission procedures functions as a preventive mechanism against misinformation, speculation and informal practices that may compromise quality of students' intake. When admission

procedures are announced well in advance, prospective applicants are given sufficient opportunity to assess their eligibility, prepare required documentation, register for entrance examinations and improve academic readiness. This finding corroborates with Essien (2024), who suggested that early publication facilitated better pre-admission guidance and counselling, enabling prospective candidates to make informed decisions about their readiness and choice of discipline. Whether procedures are in fact published on time depends on the working capacity of the offices responsible, and the assessment of awareness and adoption of digital tools among educators in these same two universities found both to be uneven, which bears on how quickly information can be prepared and released (Taylor et al., 2025). The wider difficulty is a familiar one in Nigerian education, where stated provisions have repeatedly outrun the arrangements made for carrying them out, so that a published timetable holds only where something obliges the institution to keep to it (Alikor & Orlunga, 2023).

Findings on research question 3 on Table 3 revealed that accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with grand mean scores of 3.21 and 3.14. Hypothesis 3 on Table 6 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of undergraduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatuis Ajuru University of Education on the extent accessible complaint system influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities with z-calculated value of 1.00 which was less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 . This finding is in consonance with a study by Adegoke and Bamgboye (2022), who found that institutions with well-publicized and functional complaint channels reported fewer contested admissions decisions, fewer incidences of irregularities and a higher perception of fairness among applicants. Participants indicated that accessible complaint channels even if rarely used served as deterrents against administrative lapses, thereby indirectly enhancing the credibility of the selection process. Also in support, Hossain and Al Mamun (2021), argue that when prospective students trust that an institution will hear and fairly adjudicate complaints, they are more likely to engage with the process and feel assured that merit, not arbitrary factors, will determine outcomes. This assurance is critical in shaping the quality of the students' intake, because a fair and accessible system attracts a diverse and academically competent applicant pool who feel secure in the integrity of evaluation mechanisms. The value of such a channel rests on whether the people it exists for actually use it, a point borne out in Rivers State where the participation of intended beneficiaries determined whether community initiatives survived beyond their launch, which suggests that a complaint system must be actively taken up rather than merely provided (Dokubo et al., 2020). Handling the grievances that reach it is itself an administrative task, and the study of administrative strategies for managing social problems in public universities in Rivers State pointed to the deliberate arrangements institutions need if such matters are to be settled within the system rather than outside it (Nwuoke, 2025).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that clear communication of admission requirements, timely publication of admission procedures and accessible complaint system as transparency practices in admission processes influence quality of students' intake in Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent. Rivers State universities operate within the same national policy framework but also face local pressures from political actors, applicants and intermediaries that may create opportunities for non-transparent practices. By ensuring that admission decisions are open, fair and consistent, universities enhance the academic readiness and suitability of admitted students, thereby laying a strong foundation for positive academic outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Recommendations

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

1. University management should ensure that admission requirements are clearly communicated through official websites, admission brochures, social media platforms and public announcements so that prospective applicants can fully understand the qualifications, documents and procedures needed for admission.
2. The management of Rivers State-owned universities should ensure the timely publication of admission procedures, schedules and guidelines to enable candidates to prepare adequately and complete their applications within the stipulated period.

3. University management should provide multiple channels such as online portals, help desks and dedicated hotlines through which applicants can report issues relating to admission irregularities, technical problems or unfair treatment.

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