Best Practices in Public Administration and Implementation: Auchi Polytechnic in Focus

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Abstract- This study explores the application of best practices in public administration and their implementation at Auchi Polytechnic, Edo State, Nigeria. Public administration in higher educational institutions often faces challenges related to inefficiency, inadequate resource management, and lack of transparency. By adopting best practices such as accountability, transparency, participatory governance, and effective performance management, public institutions can enhance their operational efficiency and service delivery. The primary aim of this research is to assess the extent to which these best practices are implemented at Auchi Polytechnic and to identify the barriers hindering their full application. Using a descriptive research design, the study collected both quantitative and qualitative data from administrative staff, faculty, and students at Auchi Polytechnic. A combination of surveys, interviews, and document analysis was employed to gather insights into the current administrative processes and their challenges. The findings reveal that while there is some adherence to best practices, significant gaps remain in areas like transparency in budgeting, performance management, and ICT integration. Challenges such as bureaucratic bottlenecks, limited funding, and political interference were found to hinder the effective implementation of these practices. The study concludes that the adoption of global best practices in public administration can significantly improve the administrative efficiency and governance at Auchi Polytechnic. The research recommends increased investment in ICT infrastructure, regular staff training, and the establishment of more transparent financial and procurement processes. It also calls for enhanced communication and participatory decision-making processes to ensure all stakeholders are actively engaged in the governance of the institution. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on improving public administration in Nigerian higher education institutions and provides a model for other polytechnics facing similar administrative challenges.

Index Terms- Public Administration, Best Practices, Policy Implementation, Auchi Polytechnic, Institutional Governance, Performance Management, Transparency, Accountability, Participatory Governance, Higher Education, ICT Integration, Resource Management, Nigeria, Public Sector Management, Bureaucracy, Institutional Development, Administrative Efficiency.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study
Public administration is the management of public policies, governance, and institutions. It involves ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to achieve the broader goals of a government or educational institution. At the heart of public administration lies effective implementation, which is key to achieving organizational success.

Auchi Polytechnic, located in Auchi, Edo State, is a prominent polytechnic in Nigeria. Like other public institutions, it faces challenges in aligning policy formulation with efficient execution. However, by adopting best practices in public administration and implementation, it is possible to significantly enhance the institution's operational effectiveness.
This research seeks to explore the best practices in public administration and how they can be applied to improve institutional performance at Auchi Polytechnic.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
Despite various reforms and administrative initiatives, many public institutions in Nigeria, including Auchi Polytechnic, struggle with inefficiencies in governance, resource management, and service delivery. These issues are often due to inadequate policy implementation, lack of transparency, poor performance monitoring, and outdated administrative structures.

The problem, therefore, is that there is insufficient application of best practices in public administration, which hinders the full potential of Auchi Polytechnic to achieve its goals.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To identify best practices in public administration relevant to higher education institutions.
2. To assess how these practices are currently being implemented at Auchi Polytechnic.
3. To evaluate the challenges faced in implementing these best practices.
4. To recommend strategies for improving public administration and implementation at Auchi Polytechnic.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the best practices in public administration that can be applied in Nigerian polytechnics?
2. To what extent are these practices being implemented at Auchi Polytechnic?
3. What challenges hinder the effective implementation of public administration practices at Auchi Polytechnic?
4. How can these challenges be overcome to enhance public administration at Auchi Polytechnic?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

1. The implementation of best practices in public administration improves institutional effectiveness at Auchi Polytechnic.
2. There are significant barriers to the effective application of these best practices in Auchi Polytechnic.

1.6   Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides insights into how public administration best practices can be adapted to the higher education sector in Nigeria, particularly at Auchi Polytechnic. The findings is targeted to help policymakers, administrators, and staff members at the institution understand how to enhance governance, improve service delivery, and contribute to the development of the polytechnic.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Auchi Polytechnic, exploring administrative practices, implementation strategies, challenges, and solutions within the institution. It covers various aspects of public administration, including governance, financial management, human resources, communication, and evaluation.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to Auchi Polytechnic and may not be directly applicable to all public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Access to sensitive data, such as financial records or internal policy documents, may also present challenges in conducting a comprehensive analysis.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Public Administration

Public administration refers to the complex processes and organizational structures involved in managing and executing government affairs and public policies. It encompasses all activities related to the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies designed to serve the public interest. In essence, public administration is the mechanism through which government decisions are put into action, ensuring that public services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

Public administration is a broad field that covers every aspect of government, from running public institutions to managing social programs and regulating services that affect the lives of citizens. At its core, it aims to achieve goals such as public accountability, transparency, service delivery, and the efficient use of resources.

2.2   Key Functions of Public Administration

Public administration plays a crucial role in:

1. Policy Formulation: Developing the framework and guidelines for government action, often in response to social, economic, or political needs.
2. Policy Implementation: Translating policy decisions into action, ensuring that programs are executed effectively at the ground level.
3. Service Delivery: Ensuring that government services reach citizens in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner.
4. Regulation and Oversight: Enforcing laws, regulations, and standards to maintain order and protect public interests.

2.3   Theoretical Framework

Various theories have emerged to understand and guide the functioning of public administration. Some of the most influential theories in this regard include:

1. Classical Theory (Scientific Management Theory): Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, and Max Weber focus is on efficiency, structure, and hierarchy in administrative processes. Their principle was based on Classical theory which emphasizes the division of labour, standardization, and formalized procedures to increase productivity and reduce waste. It calls for a centralized administrative structure, clear rules, and a strict chain of command.

In the context of Auchi Polytechnic, classical principles may apply to the formal structure of the institution, where hierarchy and clear roles are necessary for smooth operation.

2. Human Relations Theory: Elton Mayo and Mary Parker Follett focus is on 'The Role of Human Behaviour and Motivation in Administration. their principle of 'Human Relations Theory' emphasizes the importance of worker motivation, communication, and leadership in achieving organizational goals. It argues that employees should be treated as individuals with social and psychological needs, not just as tools to increase efficiency.

For Auchi Polytechnic, this theory suggests that administrative leaders should consider the welfare and motivation of both staff and students, ensuring a supportive working environment that promotes collaboration and innovation.

3. Systems Theory: Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn focus is on' Interconnectedness of Organizational Components. Their principle of 'Systems Theory' views organizations as complex systems composed of interrelated parts. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamic relationships between different elements of an organization (e.g., students, staff, curriculum, administration) and the external environment.

This theory can be applied at *Auchi Polytechnic* to understand how changes in one area (e.g., policy reform, infrastructure upgrade) can affect the entire institution. It advocates for a holistic approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

4. New Public Management (NPM): Focus is on efficiency, accountability, and customer-oriented service delivery. The principle of NPM introduces private-sector management techniques into public administration, focusing on decentralization, performance measurement, and market-driven solutions. The goal is to improve government service delivery by making public institutions more efficient, responsive, and accountable to the public.

At Auchi Polytechnic, NPM principles could guide reforms aimed at streamlining administrative processes, improving financial management, and enhancing student and staff satisfaction through better services.

2.4 Public Administration in Practice

In practice, public administration aims to translate broad political and policy goals into tangible services and outcomes. It involves both policy makers (legislators, executives) and public servants (bureaucrats, managers, administrators) working together to ensure that government services are delivered effectively and fairly.

Theories like Classical Theory provide a structural foundation for organizing institutions, while Human Relations Theory and Systems Theory highlight the importance of motivation, communication, and understanding interdependencies in achieving optimal performance.

For institutions like *Auchi Polytechnic,* Public Administration principles are not only applicable to the administrative framework but also extend to the academic and student services domains, ensuring the overall success of both students and faculty.

2.5 Empirical Review

The empirical review section of this study provides an overview of existing research and literature related to public administration, implementation of best practices, and challenges faced by higher education institutions, particularly in the Nigerian context. This section synthesizes findings from previous studies to

highlight the gaps in the literature, demonstrate what has been done, and justify the need for your current study.

1. Public Administration in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

A significant body of research has been conducted on the challenges and successes of public administration within Nigeria's higher education sector. Several studies have highlighted that Nigerian polytechnics, including *Auchi Polytechnic*, face difficulties in the effective application of public administration best practices due to poor infrastructure, lack of accountability, and insufficient funding. For instance, Ogunyomi and Adebayo (2020) argue that many Nigerian higher education institutions suffer from administrative inefficiencies caused by outdated management practices, lack of transparency in decision-making and weak performance management systems.

In a similar vein, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2021) explored the relationship between public administration practices and institutional performance in Nigerian polytechnics. Their findings suggest that inefficiencies in resource allocation, coupled with poor governance and leadership practices, hinder the realization of institutional goals. They emphasize the need for the adoption of transparent and participatory administrative models to improve service delivery at Nigerian tertiary institutions.

2. Challenges in Policy Implementation in Nigerian Universities

Many studies have identified significant barriers to effective policy implementation in Nigerian universities and polytechnics. Ololube (2021) examines the barriers to policy implementation in Nigerian public universities, arguing that inadequate training for administrators, lack of political will, and political interference in educational management are key factors that undermine the successful execution of policies. This perspective is echoed by Bamidele and Adekunle (2020), who highlighted that political and bureaucratic interference are the primary obstacles to institutional autonomy and the proper implementation of public policies. tn the same vein, Akinyemi and Ogunyemi (2021), in their study on

Nigerian public universities, pointed out that although policies are often well-designed, their implementation frequently fails due to poor communication between stakeholders, insufficient resources, and resistance from staff members who are resistant to change.

3. Best Practices in Public Administration

The concept of "best practices" in Public Administration has been widely discussed in recent literature, particularly in relation to performance management, accountability, and transparency. Nwachukwu and Ijeoma (2020), in their study on best practices in public administration in Nigerian tertiary institutions, underscore the importance of integrating the New Public Management (NPM) principles into the administrative structures of Nigerian universities and polytechnics. They argue that adopting a performance-based approach to governance can significantly improve the operational efficiency of these institutions. Similarly, Ogunbiyi and Akinlolu (2021) found that Nigerian universities that embraced transparency and accountability frameworks, such as regular performance reviews and digital platforms for stakeholder engagement, saw improvements in academic outcomes and resource management. These best practices align with the Human Relations Theory of public administration, which emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive working environment where all stakeholders—administrators, faculty, and students—are treated with fairness and respect.

4. Case Studies of Public Administration Practices in Higher Education Institutions

Several case studies have examined how best practices in Public Administration have been implemented in higher education institutions outside Nigeria. Kettunen (2021) conducted a study on Finnish universities, where the integration of performance management systems and the decentralization of administrative functions were found to enhance operational efficiency. Similarly, Dill (2020) explored the impact of performance-based funding models in U.S. public universities, concluding that aligning financial incentives with institutional outcomes improved accountability and student success.

Although these international examples provide valuable insights into the successful implementation of best practices, studies by Igbokwe and Odukoya (2020) suggest that the Nigerian context differs significantly due to cultural, political, and socio-economic factors. Therefore, applying these practices to Nigerian polytechnics like Auchi Polytechnic requires careful adaptation to local realities.

5. The Role of Technology in Public Administration and Governance

In the age of digital transformation, the role of technology in improving Public Administration practices has gained significant attention. Studies by Afolabi and Okunade (2020) and Ogunjimi (2018) emphasize the importance of ICT in public sector governance, particularly in improving transparency, communication, and service delivery. In Nigerian polytechnics, the adoption of e-governance platforms, online admissions, digital financial management systems, and student management software can streamline administrative processes and enhance accountability.

For example, Adewale and Adeyemi (2020) found that Nigerian universities that integrated digital systems for student admissions, academic record-keeping and financial transactions saw significant reductions in administrative costs and processing time. Furthermore, students reported higher levels of satisfaction due to improved access to services and better communication with the administration.

6. The Impact of Leadership on Public Administration in Higher Education

Leadership in public administration is crucial to the effective implementation of policies and practices. Shittu and Olayiwola (2021) argue that effective leadership in Nigerian polytechnics is a key determinant of success in public administration. Their study found that institutions led by transformational leaders who prioritized transparency, communication, and stakeholder engagement were more successful in implementing policies and achieving academic and administrative goals.

On the contrary, Aluko (2021) highlighted the detrimental impact of poor leadership and political interference on the performance of Nigerian polytechnics. He found that weak leadership structures often lead to delays in policy implementation, mismanagement of resources, and low staff morale, thereby undermining institutional effectiveness.

2.6   Gaps in Literature

While much has been written on the challenges and successes of public administration in Nigerian higher education institutions, there are still significant gaps in the literature, particularly concerning:

1. Institution-specific Studies: Much of the existing research is generalized or focuses on universities, rather than polytechnics like Auchi Polytechnic. There is a need for more case studies examining specific polytechnics to understand the unique administrative challenges they face.
2. Comprehensive Application of Best Practices: While some studies highlight individual best practices, there is limited research on the holistic integration of these practices into public administration within Nigerian polytechnics.
3. Technology Integration: Though ICT is increasingly seen as a tool for improving public administration, few studies have focused on the adoption of e-governance and digital systems within Nigerian polytechnics, which are essential for modernizing administrative practices.

This study aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the application of best practices in public administration at Auchi Polytechnic, exploring both the successes and challenges faced by the institution in implementing these practices.

III.   METHODOLOGY

The research methodology outlines the approach, methods, and techniques used to collect and analyze data for this study. This section describes the design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis processes employed to examine the implementation of best practices in public administration at Auchi Polytechnic.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a Descriptive Research Design, which is commonly used to explore and describe the current state of phenomena and relationships among variables. A descriptive design allows for an in-depth understanding of the administrative practices, challenges, and outcomes at Auchi Polytechnic. The study also employs a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative and qualitative research methods—so as to provide a comprehensive analysis of both the measurable and subjective aspects of Public Administration practices.

The quantitative component focused on gathering numerical data to assess the extent of the implementation of best practices in areas like governance, transparency, and performance management. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews and document analysis to understand the lived experiences of administrators, staff, and students and to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population for this study includes individuals who are directly involved in or impacted by public administration practices at Auchi Polytechnic. These include:

1. Administrative Staff: Including senior management, department heads, and other staff involved in policy formulation, resource management, and the daily operations of the institution.
2. Academic Staff: Lecturers and professors who are stakeholders in administrative decisions that affect academic performance, governance, and policy implementation.
3. Students: As the primary beneficiaries of the administrative structure, students' perceptions and experiences provide important insights into the effectiveness of service delivery and governance.
4. Other Stakeholders: Key stakeholders like alumni, student union representatives, and external partners who interact with the institution.

The total population size is difficult to determine precisely, as the institution's size fluctuates, but for this study, it is estimated to consist of 250 staff to include administrative staff, academic staff, and students.

3.3 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that all key stakeholder groups (administrators, academic staff, and students) are adequately represented in the sample. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups (or strata) based on certain characteristics, and then selecting a random sample from each group.

1. For Administrative Staff: The sample includes department heads, senior administrators, and other staff members involved in policy implementation. These individuals were chosen based on their role in the institution's governance.
2. For Academic Staff: Lecturers from different faculties (e.g., Engineering, Business, Science, etc.) were selected. Stratification ensures that each faculty is represented proportionally in the sample.
3. For Students: A random sample of students was selected from various departments and academic levels (undergraduate, postgraduate). This ensures a diverse representation of the student body.

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination. Based on the total population and a margin of error of 12%, the sample size was 220 respondents.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods:

1. Primary Data Collection
   1. Surveys/Questionnaires:
   - A structured questionnaire was distributed to the administrative staff, academic staff, and students to collect quantitative data on public administration practices, challenges, and the extent of policy implementation.
   - The questionnaire contained both closed-ended questions (to gather quantitative data) and Likert scale items (to measure attitudes, perceptions, and opinions).

Example questions include:
- "How often do you participate in decision-making processes?" (Frequency scale)
- "How would you rate the transparency of financial management at the institution?" (Likert scale: 1-5, from 'Very Poor' to 'Excellent')

2., Interviews**:** In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected administrators, department heads, and academic staff to gather qualitative insights into their experiences with policy implementation, leadership, and the application of best practices in public administration. Interview questions explored topics such as leadership effectiveness, resource allocation, barriers to implementation, and the role of technology in improving governance.

Focus Groups: Focus group discussions were conducted with students and staff to explore their perceptions of administrative practices at Auchi Polytechnic, including transparency, accountability, and service delivery. Focus groups helped to identify common challenges, areas for improvement, and potential solutions from a stakeholder perspective.

2. Secondary Data Collection
    1. Document Analysis**:** A review of institutional documents such as annual reports, strategic plans, budget reports, policy documents, and performance reviews was conducted. This helped to identify the stated goals and objectives of Auchi Polytechnic's administration, as well as track the institution's progress toward achieving these goals. Documents related to governance, resource management, and student services were specifically analyzed to assess how policies are being implemented in practice

    2. Literature Review:
    Secondary data from existing literature on public administration best practices in Nigerian polytechnics and higher education institutions provided context for the findings and inform the analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques:
To analyze the data collected a combination of statistical and thematic analysis techniques were used:

1. Quantitative Data Analysis**:**
The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, and means) to summarize the responses. Additionally, inferential statistics (such as chi-square tests) will be used to explore relationships between variables (e.g., differences in perceptions of transparency between staff and students).

2. Qualitative Data Analysis**:**
The interview and focus group transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and categories related to public administration practices, barriers to implementation, and recommendations for improvement**.**

NVivo software or manual coding techniques was employed to categorize the qualitative data and identify key themes.

3.6 Ethical Considerations
Ethical considerations are crucial in conducting research involving human participants. The following ethical guidelines were adhered to:

- Informed Consent: All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the data collection process, and their right to withdraw at any time. Written consent was obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality: Participants' identities and responses were kept confidential. Data was anonymized during analysis to protect privacy.
- Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and no participant faced negative consequences for choosing not to participate.
- Data Integrity: All data collected were used solely for the purpose of this research, and the results were reported honestly and accurately.

3.7 Limitations of the Methodology
This study faced the following limitations:

- Access to Sensitive Data: Obtaining detailed financial or internal governance documents were challenging due to institutional privacy concerns.
- Response Bias: Participants provided socially desirable answers, especially when evaluating leadership and transparency.
- Time Constraints: Due to the large sample size and multiple data collection methods, data collection took longer than anticipated.

This chapter has outlined the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis processes for this study. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this study provided a comprehensive assessment of best practices in public administration and their implementation at Auchi Polytechnic, identifying both successes and challenges, as well as offering recommendations for improvement.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for this study and the subsequent findings. The data analysis section covers the techniques used to analyze both the quantitative and qualitative data. The findings provide a detailed account of how best practices in public administration are implemented at Auchi Polytechnic, the challenges faced, and the perceptions of various stakeholders.

4.1 Overview of Data Collection
The study collected data from three main groups of respondents: administrative staff, academic staff, and students. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed across these groups, with 220 valid responses received, resulting in an 88% response rate. In addition, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrators and academic staff, and 3 focus group discussions were held with students.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis
The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) and inferential statistics (chi-square tests) to examine relationships between variables. The analysis focused on areas such as governance practices, transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of administrative structures.

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents
The demographic characteristics of the respondents were as follows:

- Administrative Staff: 50 (22.7%)
- Academic Staff: 80 (36.4%)
- Students: 90 (40.9%)
- Gender Distribution: Male: 120 (54.5%), Female: 100 (45.5%)
- Age Distribution: Below 30: 50 (22.7%), 31-40: 75 (34.1%), 41-50: 60 (27.3%), Above 50: 35 (15.9%)

4.2.2 Key Findings from the Survey
1. Governance and Decision-Making:
When asked about participation in decision-making processes, the majority of administrative staff (65%) reported that they were actively involved in decisions regarding policy formulation and budget allocation. However, only 40% of academic staff and 30% of students felt that their opinions were considered in governance decisions.

2. Perception of transparency in decision-making:
- 50% of administrative staff rated transparency in decision-making as "good" to "very good."
- Only 25% of students rated the transparency of administrative decisions positively.
- Academic staff was divided, with 45% rating transparency as "fair," 30% as "poor," and 25% as "good."

3. Performance Management and Accountability:
A key measure of best practices in public administration is performance management. When asked about how performance is evaluated:
- 60% of administrators stated that performance evaluations were conducted regularly, but only 40% of academic staff confirmed this practice.
- Students were less confident in performance evaluations, with 70% expressing dissatisfaction with the performance management systems in place.

4. Accountability mechanisms:
- 55% of respondents believed that there were adequate accountability measures in place, especially in financial management.
- However, 45% of students and 35% of academic staff felt that accountability mechanisms were either weak or ineffective.

5. Use of Technology in Administration:
In terms of technological integration:
- 70% of administrative staff confirmed the use of digital systems (such as financial software and student information systems) to enhance administrative efficiency.
- 60% of academic staff and 50% of students reported that the use of technology in academic and administrative services (e.g., online registration, e-learning) had improved their overall experience at the institution.

6. Resource Allocation and Service Delivery
- Resource management:
  60% of administrative staff believed that resources were allocated fairly, while only 45% of academic staff and 35% of students shared this view.
- Student services:
  55% of students rated student services (such as counselling, library access, and career services) as "fair," with significant room for improvement.

4.2.3   Inferential Statistics (Chi-Square Test):
A chi-square test was conducted to examine if there were significant differences in perceptions of administrative practices between different groups (administrators, academic staff, and students). The key results were:

1. Governance and Decision-Making:
There was a significant difference between the perceptions of administrative staff and students regarding participation in governance (χ^2 = 15.73, p < 0.05). Administrative staff report showed active involvement in decision-making processes, whereas students felt excluded.

2. Transparency and Accountability:
A significant difference was found in perceptions of transparency between academic staff and students (χ^2 = 10.21, p < 0.05). Academic staff rate transparency positively than students.

3. Technology Use:
No significant difference was found between administrative staff, academic staff, and students regarding the use of technology (χ^2 = 2.91, p > 0.05), indicating that all groups generally agreed on the positive impact of technology on administrative efficiency.

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis:
The qualitative data from the interviews and focus group discussions provided deeper insights into the challenges and experiences of stakeholders.

4.3.1 Key Themes from Interviews
A. Leadership and Governance:
* Administrative staff emphasized the need for strong, transparent leadership to improve policy implementation and resource management. Several interviewees suggested that more regular communication between administrators and faculty members could bridge the gap in governance.
* A common concern among both academic staff and students was the lack of participation in decision-making processes. Many respondents called for more inclusive governance practices.

B. Challenges in Policy Implementation:
* A recurring theme was the lack of resources for effective policy implementation, especially in areas such as student services, research development, and infrastructure maintenance. Administrative staff noted that while policies are formulated at the top level, limited financial resources and political interference often hinder their execution.

* Resistance to change was also identified as a challenge, particularly among older academic staff, that was more reluctant to adopt new administrative technologies and practices

C. Technological Integration:
Both academic and administrative staff expressed the need for more robust digital training programs to

improve the use of ICT systems. While some systems were in place, staff and students felt that the technology was underutilized due to a lack of training and technical support.

4.3.2   Key Themes from Focus Groups (Students):
1. Student Services:
Students voiced dissatisfaction with the quality and accessibility of administrative services, particularly in areas like admissions, grading, and financial aid. Many students suggested that better communication channels and faster service delivery could enhance their overall academic experience.

2. Perception of Transparency and Accountability:
    *   Transparency and Accountability: There is a significant gap between the perception of administrative staff and students regarding transparency. While administrators generally rate transparency positively, students feel excluded and dissatisfied with decision-making processes.
    *   Governance: There is a clear disconnection between those involved in decision-making and those affected by decisions, especially in terms of student participation in governance.
    *   Resource Allocation: Both academic staff and students feel that resources are not always allocated equitably, especially in relation to student services and infrastructure.

3. Opportunities for Improvement:
    *   Inclusive governance: Enhancing student participation in decision-making processes could improve transparency and foster a more collaborative environment.
    *   Enhanced use of technology: Further investment in ICT infrastructure and training programs for staff and students would enhance administrative efficiency and service delivery.

This chapter has presented the data analysis and key findings from the study on the implementation of best practices in public administration at Auchi Polytechnic. While some progress has been made, there remain significant challenges in areas such as governance, accountability, and transparency. The findings point to the need for more inclusive

decision-making, better resource management, and enhanced technological integration.

V.   SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study's findings, draws conclusions based on the data analysis, and offers practical recommendations for improving public administration practices at Auchi Polytechnic. The study focused on evaluating the implementation of best practices in public administration, exploring challenges, and providing insights into how the institution can enhance its administrative systems for better service delivery and governance.

A. Summary of the Study
The study aimed to assess the implementation of best practices in public administration at Auchi Polytechnic, focusing on the effectiveness of governance structures, transparency, accountability, resource allocation, and the use of technology in administrative processes. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and focus group discussions to gather data from administrative staff, academic staff, and students.
B. Key findings of the study include:
1. Governance and Decision-Making:
    *   Administrative staff reported active involvement in decision-making, while students and academic staff felt excluded.
    *   There was a significant gap in perceptions of transparency, with students rating transparency in decision-making lower than administrators.

2. Performance Management and Accountability:
    *   While performance evaluations were conducted regularly among administrative staff, academic staff and students expressed dissatisfaction with the system's effectiveness.
    *   Accountability mechanisms were considered adequate by administrative staff, but academic staff and students noted weaknesses in this area.

3. Technology and Resource Management:
There was general consensus that technology had improved administrative efficiency, but there were gaps in training and support for staff and students to fully utilize digital systems.
Both academic staff and students felt that resource allocation was not always equitable, particularly regarding student services and infrastructure.

4. Challenges:
Key barriers to the effective implementation of best practices included political interference, insufficient funding, resistance to change, and lack of inclusivity in governance processes.

5.2 Conclusion
Based on the findings, it can be concluded that while Auchi Polytechnic has made strides in implementing some aspects of public administration best practices, there are several critical areas that need improvement. These include:

- Governance and Inclusivity: There is a disconnection between decision-makers and those affected by administrative decisions, particularly students and faculty members. The exclusion of students from decision-making processes affects transparency and overall satisfaction.
- Performance Management: While performance evaluations are conducted, there is a need for a more robust and consistent performance management system that includes feedback from all stakeholders—especially students, who are the primary beneficiaries of the institution's services.
- Technology Integration: Despite the use of digital tools, the effective use of technology is hindered by a lack of comprehensive training and support. Both administrative staff and students expressed a need for better ICT systems that are user-friendly and aligned with the institution's needs.
- Resource Allocation: There are perceptions of inequitable resource allocation, especially with regard to student services and infrastructure, which can negatively impact

the quality of education and administrative processes.

In sum, the administrative practices at Auchi Polytechnic show promise but require more attention to areas such as transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and the equitable allocation of resources to improve overall service delivery and governance.

5.3   Recommendations:

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

1. Enhance Inclusivity in Governance:
   - Auchi Polytechnic should establish participatory governance structures that include representatives from the student body, academic staff, and administrative staff in decision-making processes. Regular consultations, town hall meetings, and feedback mechanisms can improve transparency and ensure that all stakeholders are heard.
   - Student involvement in governance can be formalized through the creation of student advisory councils or committees that collaborate with administrators in policy formulation and implementation.

2. Strengthen Performance Management Systems:
   - The polytechnic should implement a more comprehensive and transparent performance evaluation system that involves all stakeholders. This system should include feedback from students regarding teaching quality, administrative services, and overall satisfaction.
   - Performance evaluations should be linked to tangible outcomes, such as professional development programs for staff, and reward systems for outstanding performance in both teaching and administration.

3. Improve Use of Technology:
   - The polytechnic should invest in staff and student training programs to enhance the use of digital tools for administrative functions.

These programs should cover areas such as e-governance, digital learning platforms, and online student services.

- An integrated digital management system should be established to streamline academic and administrative processes, such as course registration, financial management, and communication between staff and students.

4. Ensure Equitable Resource Allocation:
   - A needs-based resource allocation framework should be developed to ensure that resources are distributed equitably among departments and student services. This should include investments in infrastructure development, student welfare services, and research funding.
   - Transparency in resource allocation can be improved by publishing annual budget reports and holding regular discussions on resource usage with stakeholders.

5. Address Political Interference:
   - Efforts should be made to shield administrative processes from undue political influence. This includes creating independent committees that oversee policy implementation and resource allocation, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the institution and not for political gain.

6. Foster a Culture of Accountability:
   - The polytechnic should implement stronger accountability mechanisms that track and report the use of public funds, institutional resources, and student fees. This can include the use of public dashboards or annual transparency reports that outline how resources are spent.
   - The institutional audit process should be strengthened, with regular external audits to ensure that administrative and financial practices adhere to ethical and legal standards.

Promote Professional Development:
   - Regular training and development programs should be instituted for both administrative and academic staff to enhance their skills in

leadership, resource management, and technology integration. These programs can also focus on change management to ease transitions in administrative processes.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge:
   - This study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of public administration and higher education management, especially in Nigerian polytechnics. The research provides valuable insights into the challenges and successes of implementing best practices in public administration, offering a case study of Auchi Polytechnic. Additionally, it highlights the importance of inclusivity, accountability, and technology in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration in higher education institutions.
   - Further studies could explore the impact of external policies, larger-scale interventions, and comparative studies across multiple polytechnics to validate and extend these findings.

5.5 Final Thoughts:
   - In conclusion, Auchi Polytechnic has made progress in adopting best practices in public administration, but there is significant room for improvement. By embracing more inclusive governance, strengthening performance management, improving the use of technology, and ensuring equitable resource allocation, the institution can enhance its administrative effectiveness and provide better services to students and staff. The implementation of these recommendations will not only improve governance at Auchi Polytechnic but could also serve as a model for other institutions in Nigeria and beyond.

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