

***Internet and Audiovisual Communication Facilities: A Viable Tool for Administrative Effectiveness among Heads of Academic Departments in Universities in Cross River State***

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**Abstract**

*The study sought to investigate the relationship between internet and audiovisual communication facilities utilization and administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in universities in Cross River State. Two null hypotheses guided the study, which adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprises 300 heads of departments from the three universities in Cross River State. The sample of the study is made up of 300 heads of departments in the sampled institutions. Two self-structured questionnaires titled “Communication Facility Utilization Questionnaire (CFUQ)” and “Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire” (AEQ) were used for data collection. Pearson’s product moment correlation analyses (r) technique was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between internet and audiovisual communication facilities utilization and administrative effectiveness in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, accountability and information dissemination. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that the Nigerian government should increase its budgetary allocation for provision of internet facilities in universities and the heads of departments should encourage members of staff and students to effectively utilize communication facilities such as audiovisual facilities at their disposal.*

**Keywords:** internet, audiovisual, communication, administrative, effectiveness

## **Introduction**

For the head of department to attain administrative effectiveness in the execution of his functions, communication becomes central in all his activities. Inyang (2006) defined communication as a process of transmitting information between a sender and the receiver and a perception of meaning between the individuals involved. Okon (2009) emphasized that communication is the vehicle through which basic administrative functions are carried out. As the basic ingredients of effective administration, the head of an academic department directs through communication, coordinates through communication, staff, plans, controls, initiates policies, assesses teaching and learning, monitors students' performance through communication. In fact, hardly an action is taken in the department without communication leading to it. Betts (2009) is also of the view that communication in an organization embraces all the activities that take place in an organization today such as sending mails, writing memos, talking on phone, having meetings, teleconferences, video conferences, speeches, internet, among others. These ranges of activities underpin the use of communication facilities to attain administrative effectiveness of an organization.

There is much evidence in literature emphasizing the central role of education in nation building (Jaja, 2005; Berezi, 2011). It is argued that the extent to which there is technological breakthrough results from effective management of the educational system. However, the Nigerian educational sector has suffered tremendous setback across all levels. The most affected is the university level; to the extent that Aginam (2006), observed that in Nigeria with 170 universities, the level of ICT application is less than five percent (5%) with little or no provision for communication infrastructure such as cyber centres, computer equipped classrooms or high-speed internet.

Rapid development in Nigerian university administration has made administration and management of academic departments a very complex and challenging task. Basseyy et al. (2007) observed that effective management of university depends to a large extent on how university administrators utilize the available human and material resources, and as such underscores the use of communication infrastructure to enhance effective administration of universities and the work performance of the staff. For the head of an academic department to function effectively, he must therefore embrace the challenges of utilization of modern communication facilities in the management of the department. This involves the use of information and communication-based facilities in facilitating and accelerating administrative effectiveness in universities. These include internet, audiovisual, telephone, computer and print communication facilities.

Until recently, not much emphasis was placed on the utilization of high-speed, cost-effective communication facilities such as internet, e-mail, telephone, computer print, and websites, to improve administrative effectiveness of universities. The utilization of communication facilities in service delivery among heads of academic departments

before 1999 featured the use of manual, low speed typewriters, land line telephones, cyclostyling machines and most of the times, hand-written letters. Telephones and intercom services could only be found in few offices. Computer technology materials were not common (Awe, 2000). The use of compact disc started in 2003 (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2007). This explains why administrative processes, especially in the areas of result processing, were fraught with monumental problems.

Even with the incursion of ICT based communication facilities in Nigerian universities in 2002, it was the lowest aspects such as print, audio/video tapes and digital radio that were available (Akuegwu et al., 2011). By 2004, the University of Calabar and many universities in Nigeria entered into partnership with AfriHUB and later Socket Works to process students' records in the areas of registration and school charges only. The low status of communication infrastructure informed government to introduce the Universal Mandatory Information Technology Training (UMITT) capacity building programme. Subsequently, the National Universities Commission (NUC) also floated the National Universities Network project (NUNET) to provide a backbone for networking the campuses to have a dial-up access to the National Universities Commission server for uploading and downloading e-mail messages (Nwamarah in Basse et al., 2007). However, the project could not provide for system administration and enhance work performance because many universities were able to use only one dial-up system to have this dial-up connection to the NUC, but others could not due to lack of reliable telephone lines and other factors.

Anyira (2010) stated that there is a significant relationship between internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness in a university organization. Their study confirms that internet is the best communication medium to pass on information in an educational institution. In other words, utilization of internet resources promotes administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in universities. To buttress this fact, many universities management have intensified efforts to make internet utilization an integral part of the university administration. Some universities now have a high reputation than others for increased utilization of email services, online services, web boards, cyber cafes to enhance administrative effectiveness of departments and faculties vis-à-vis catching up with the prevailing globalization of ICT.

Further reasons for this result are probably because internet solves the challenge of time and distance by enabling students and lecturers to communicate with their heads of academic departments whenever it is suitable. With internet facilities, there is no need for students and lecturers to make appointments to queue between lecture halls and the head of department's office to obtain information, take directives and lay complaints. Thus, a simple message from the head of department can be sent through e-mail to the students or the lecturers. This type of communication helps to enhance the head of department's effectiveness. This is perhaps the reason why many universities are now

connected to the internet and even adopting e-governance administration and online courses to expand their curricular.

As at 2012, many universities in the South-south region initiated an enduring communication infrastructure through MTN and other service providers to enhance administrative effectiveness. The University of Calabar, for instance, through its Directorate of Information and Communication Technology installed and maintained a robust Wi-Fi infrastructure in the entire university thus making the university a world class institution for global ranking (Okoro, 2014). He further asserted that the provision has made it possible for staff and students to have 24 hours internet service as well as trained staff in the use of the infrastructure followed by the provision of computer systems to faculties and departments for academic and administrative activities.

Olubodun (2007) stated that the radio as a channel is a strong medium of communication among the general public and the specialized audiences such as the university community, but this is not efficiently used in most universities in Nigeria, maybe due to lack of those facilities, underutilization or lack of maintenance. The findings suggests that radio programmes are means of enhancing administrative effectiveness and mobilizing adults for organizational activities. Thus, the use of radio programmes by a head of an academic department to disseminate information to the public, advertise activities of the department, communicate public paid announcements, listen to local and international news, goes a long way in keeping him well informed of the developments around the state, country and world. Notwithstanding the results of the findings, it is also on record that video cameras can be used in the departments to record activities, programmes, meetings, conferences and events undertaken by the Heads of departments. Such recorded events, meeting, conferences are stored for future use. They become reference points that guide administrative actions.

Fadipe (2006) and Adetunji (2006) equally reveal that people who watch television regularly are highly informative. This means that heads of academic departments who use and watch television are regularly informed of the developments around their environment and of course used the television interviews to advertise their academic programmes. This is perhaps why people generally derive developmental benefits from information received. This kind of benefit enhances students', lecturers' and heads of academic departments' awareness and knowledge necessary for their daily activities. Television viewers acquire social changes in their attitudes to life due to their exposure to television broadcast. Television enlightenment programmes results in a higher level of information awareness and knowledge development.

Other notable audiovisual communication facilities utilization which featured in the study such as, amplifiers, megaphones, microphones were distinguished as effective management tools in organizational communication but were not available in many

HOD's offices or department; and when barely available, they were underutilized or misused. The use of these tools enabled the head of department to reach out to large audience during meeting, conferences and workshops. The use of microphone, for instance, suggests that they can be best used for an interview or discussion involving many people especially in a round table.

Although the result showed that audiovisual communication facilities utilization is not significantly related with most administrative effectiveness however, the findings indicated that the more the utilization of audiovisual communication facilities in the university, the better the administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments. To support this position, many universities management have stepped up efforts to make audiovisual facility utilization a component of not only teaching and learning but an integral part of university administration.

Underutilization of these facilities has led to heads of academic departments' inability to complete administrative tasks within defined scope, quality and time in the areas of planning, decision making, monitoring, evaluation of academic standards, student and staff personnel management, public relations and records management. The situation has led to general frustration of staff and students with regard to personnel matters and delays in computing examination grading, reporting and accessibility of examination results at the end of the session and ultimately students' graduation.

The study is motivated by the need to redress the issue of administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments. Given this background, this study is poised to examine the extent to which heads of academic departments' utilization of internet and audiovisual communication facilities utilization relates with administrative effectiveness among heads of academic department in universities in Cross River State.

This study was anchored on Henri Fayol's administrative management theory (1949). This theory was an offshoot of classical scientific management theory. It emphasizes efficiency and productivity in running organizations. It describes efforts in showing the universal functions that managers in organizations perform. It also outlines certain principles that constitute good management as well as good administration. The theory deals on matters such as formal structural principles, measurable objectives and grouping of activities. Other areas that this theory deals with include delegation of authority and explanation of individual responsibility in an organization.

The major contributors of this theory were Henri Fayol (1841-1925), Luther Guick, Lyndall Urwick and Mary Parker Follet. Others were Chester Barnard and Max Weber. Henri Fayol proposed that all managers perform five management functions and those functions include planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. Adding to the above list, Fayol (1925) describes the practice of management as

something distinct from accounting, production, distribution and other typical business functions.

He formulated a universal list of good management principles as a guide to management actions. He argued that management is an activity common to all human undertakings anywhere man is found. These include business premises, government establishment and even at home. He then proceeded to state fourteen principles of management that can be applied to university management. These are division of work, parity of authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction and subordination of individual interest to the general interests, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity and esprit de corps.

These principles are the foundation for sound administrative structure (Peretomode, 2006). Gulick and Urwick develop Fayol's element into more articulated principles mnemonically expressed as POSDCORB, an acronym for seven administrative procedures or activities; planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. With the use of communication technology facilities, most administrative problems in a university setting could be solved with ease because, according to Adedoyin (2008), communication is a critical activity in all human activities. Without access to accurate, concise, relevant communication, it is difficult if not impossible to take decisions.

This theory emphasizes the determination of objectives which is recognized as a primary role in organization because such determination will facilitate the consideration of organizational and administration's priorities. These include the size and form of administrative structure that a university should adopt in indicating different sections, departments and activities and bringing human and material resources in line with the consistency of organizations' objectives.

The theory recognizes division of work otherwise known a division of labour (grouping of activities) as the basis of efficiency. The principle of division of labour implies that, where necessary, the whole set of job specifications formulas and the general procedures including the large number of statements that specify the condition under which activity will be performed, have to be issued by university management. This could be well articulated with the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) because any information needed in school administration in this present era could be downloaded from the internet.

In addition to the above, it is said that power and influence flow to those who know and influence flow to those who know more and have access to better information (Longe & Agabi, 1999). Furthermore, in Ekaete (2013), the principle of hierarchy (specifying of responsibilities) was also advocated by this theory. It ensures that every position the

university finds its appropriate place either in the line or staff structure. For example, the work of the school finance officer (accountant) is different from that of the school librarian. They must work cooperatively for the overall success of the organizational goal (effective teaching and learning). Applying the principle of hierarchy to a university, it implies that tasks should be arranged in such a way as to enable good team leadership which makes it possible for a lecturer position to be identified by a distinctive title and incumbent given appropriate authority and responsibility.

This can be possible in this era of information and communication technology (ICT), if it is properly utilized in the school system, since administration revolves around the performance of executive duties, communication of policies or decisions to fulfill a purpose, and the controlling of the day to day running of an organization, promote collaboration and enhance the social integration of university management administration.

The theory is relevant to the study because heads of academic departments use communication in planning, use communication in organization, use communication in commanding, use communication in coordinating and use communication in controlling. The use of communication facilitates administrative processes that lead to tasks accomplishment in a university setting.

### **Hypotheses**

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments in universities in Cross River State.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between audio-visual communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments of universities in Cross River State.

### **Methodology**

The correlational design was used in the study. The design is considered appropriate because it enables a researcher to find out the relationships between study variables (Idaka & Anabogu, 2012). This seeks to establish if the independent variable (communication facility utilization) has any relationship with the dependent variable (administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments).

The population of the study comprises 300 Heads of departments from the three universities in Cross River State and the sample of the study is made up of 300 heads of departments in the institutions. A multi-stage non-probability sampling technique, involving the purposive and accidental sampling, was adopted for this study. According to Isangedighi et al. (2004), purposive sampling technique is a means by which a researcher intentionally decides to use a sample for a study because of certain characteristics or elements. Here, the researchers used only the heads of academic

departments of the three universities in Cross River State because they are directly involved in the day to day administration of the various departments in the universities. The multi-stage/accidental sampling was adopted as the researchers gave the instrument to any two (2) lecturers and two (2) students who have served or studied under the heads of department for one or two years at the time of visiting each department to assess the administrative effectiveness of the heads of department in each of the sampled universities.

The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire titled “Internet and Audiovisual Communication Facilities and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (IACFAEQ)”. Section “A” of the questionnaire was designed to collect the respondents’ personal demographic information such as gender and name of institution. Section B contained 10 items measuring internet communication facility utilization (items 1-5), and audio-visual communication facility utilization (items 6-10), while 10 items measured the dependent variable which is administrative effectiveness. The instrument was constructed on a modified 4-point Likert scale with Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The instrument “Internet and Audiovisual Communication Facilities and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (IACFAEQ)” was given a face and content validation by five experts. Three experts were from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, University of Calabar and two experts from Curriculum and Teaching Department, University of Calabar. The researchers included some important information to aid the experts in validating the instrument. This information includes the title of the study, research questions and the hypotheses. The instrument had 35 items, but at the end of the validation, 15 items were dropped bringing the number of items in the questionnaire to 20.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out using twenty (20) randomly selected Heads of Department from the College of Education, Akamkpa, and School of Health Technology, Calabar, both in Cross River State. Cronbach alpha reliability estimate was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument ranged from 0.78 to 0.86. These values were considered reliable enough for the instrument to be used in the study. The data generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance and 298 degrees of freedom.

### **Presentation of results**

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments in universities in Cross River State.



The independent variable (x) is internet communication facility utilization, while the dependent variable (y) is administrative effectiveness of heads of academic department in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, accountability and information dissemination. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used. The result is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis of internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments (N = 300)

Variable	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Internet communication utilization	3953	64058		
Task accomplishment	12000	290550	189319	0.385*
Organization stability	11657	558769	184022	0.388*
Accountability	11854	575660	187568	0.457*
Information dissemination	11773	586631	1843410	0.434*

\*Significant at .05 level; df = 298; r-crit = 0.093

Based on the result in Table 1, the r-calculated values for task accomplishment (0.385), organizational stability (0.388), accountability (0.475) and information dissemination (0.434) were all higher than r-critical of 0.093 tested at .05 level of significance at 298 degree of freedom. With these results, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis adopted. This means that internet communication utilization by the heads of academic departments of universities could go a long way in enhancing their effectiveness in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, accountability and information dissemination. That is the higher the usage of the internet facilities by the heads of academic departments, the more administratively effective they become.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between audio-visual communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments of universities in Cross River State.

The independent variable (x) is audio-visual communication facility utilization, while the dependent variable (y) is administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, accountability and information dissemination. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used. The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis between audiovisual communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments (N=300)

<b>Variable</b>	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	<b>r-cal</b>
Audiovisual communication utilization	1611	21332		
Task accomplishment	12000	590550	73132	0.083
Organization stability	11657	558769	68915	0.090
Accountability	11854	575660	78111	0.077
Information dissemination	13100	568861	76895	0.231*

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df=298; r-crit = 0.093

Results of analysis recorded in Table 2 indicate that the calculated r-value for task accomplishment (0.083), organizational stability (0.090), and accountability (0.077), were all lower than critical r-value of 0.093 tested at 0.05 level of significance at 298 degree of freedom, while the r-calculated value of information dissemination (0.231) was higher than the critical r-value of 0.093. This means that audio-visual communication facility usage like radio and television sets has no significant relationship with the administrative effectiveness of heads of departments of universities in Cross River State in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, and accountability meaning that the null hypothesis will be upheld in these areas. But the results equally show a significant relationship in terms of information dissemination, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in the area of information dissemination.

### **Discussion of the findings**

The outcome from hypothesis one was significant. The result revealed a significant relationship between internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in universities in terms of tasks accomplishments, organizational stability, accountability and information dissemination. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis retained. The findings suggest that internet communication facility utilization has a great impact on administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in universities. That is to say, the pattern of utilization of internet communication facilities determines to a great extent how departmental tasks are accomplished, how organization stability is maintained, how accountability is achieved and how information dissemination is managed in the university departments.

The reason for the outcome of the study may be as a result of the fact that internet facilities utilization is a modern trend in organizational communication and the way and manner the facilities are managed go a long way to determine how university goals will be attained. In a university organization, internet services serve as one of the most

practical communication medium. For instance, it can be used for all communication within the university if properly employed by heads of departments. The heads of academic departments' role is to facilitate communication and in some cases act as communication conduit.

The significant relationship of internet utilization on administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in the university system corroborates the finding of Anyira (2010) who pointed to the significant relationship of internet communication facility utilization with administrative effectiveness in a university organization. Their studies confirm that internet is the best communication medium to pass on information in an educational institution. In other words, utilization of internet resources promotes administrative effectiveness among heads of academic departments in universities. To buttress this fact, most universities management have intensified efforts to make internet utilization an integral part of the university administration. Some universities now have a high reputation than others for increased utilization of email services, online services, web boards, cyber cafes to enhance administrative effectiveness of departments and faculties vis-à-vis catching up with the prevailing globalization of ICT.

Further reasons for this result is probably because internet solves the problems of time and distance by enabling students, lecturers to communicate with their heads of academic departments whenever it is suitable. With internet facilities, there is no need for students and lecturers to make appointments to queue between lecture halls and the head of department's office to obtain information, take directives and lay complaints. Thus a simple message from the head of department can be sent through e-mail to the students or the lecturers. This type of communication helps to enhance the head of department's effectiveness. This is perhaps the reason why most universities are now connected to the internet and even adopting e-governance administration and online courses to expand their curricular.

The result from hypothesis two shows no significant relationship between audiovisual communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of HODs in-terms of tasks accomplishment, organizational stability and accountability, but a significant relationship in terms of information dissemination. With this result, the null hypothesis was upheld in the dimensions of administrative effectiveness in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, and accountability among heads of academic departments, but rejected in terms of information dissemination.

The finding suggests that audio-visual facility utilization in universities in Cross River State does not relate considerably with administrative effectiveness. A possible explanation for this finding is that heads of departments can still attain the goals of their departments without the use of audio-visual facilities (radio, television, video cameras and megaphones) or rather such facilities are not made available by the university management or are underutilized. It would be recalled that the primary essence of the

use of audiovisual facilities provides more concrete references to meaning of communicated messages than words, written or spoken hence, the significant relationship in terms of information dissemination. Thus audiovisuals increase communication effectiveness better than words, but since they are rarely utilized in many Nigerian universities, it may not generally be a prerequisite for total or overall administrative effectiveness as indicated in the result of the analysis.

The finding agrees with the findings of Olubodun (2007) that the radio as a channel is a strong medium of communication among the general public and the specialized audiences such as the university community, but this is not efficiently used in many Nigerian universities, maybe due to lack of those facilities, underutilization or lack of maintenance. The finding suggests that radio programmes are means of enhancing administrative effectiveness and mobilizing adults for organizational activities. Thus the use of radio programmes by a head of an academic department to disseminate information to the public, advertise activities of the department, communicate public paid announcements, listen to local and international news goes a long way in keeping him well informed of the developments around the state, country and world. Notwithstanding the results of the findings, it is also on record that video cameras can be used in the departments to record activities, programmes, meetings, conferences and events undertaken by the heads of departments. Such recorded events, meeting, conferences are stored for future use. They become reference points that guide administrative actions.

The findings further corroborate the result of studies carried out by Fadipe (2006) and Adetunji (2006) which revealed that people who watch television regularly are highly informative. This means that heads of academic departments who use and watch television are regularly informed of the developments around their environment and of course used the television interviews to advertise their academic programmes. This is perhaps why people generally derive developmental benefits from information received. This kind of benefit enhances students', lecturers' and heads of academic departments' awareness and knowledge necessary for their daily activities. Television viewers acquire social changes in their attitudes to life due to their exposure to television broadcast. Television enlightenment programmes result in a higher level of information awareness and knowledge development.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were reached that there is a significant relationship between internet communication facility utilization and administrative effectiveness of heads of academic departments in universities in Cross River State. This means that internet communication utilization by the heads of academic departments of universities could go a long way in enhancing their effectiveness in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, accountability

and information dissemination. That is the higher the usage of the internet facilities by the head of academic departments, the more administratively effective they become. Also, it was discovered from the data analysis that audio-visual communication facility usage like radio and television sets has no significant relationship with the administrative effectiveness of heads of departments of universities in Cross River State in terms of task accomplishment, organizational stability, and accountability. Meaning that the null hypothesis was upheld in these areas. But the results equally show a significant relationship in terms of information dissemination, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in the area of information dissemination.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. There is need for government and school administrators to provide internet facilities and computer laboratories. This will enhance creative learning by encouraging a constructivist problem-based learning where the students are given the opportunity to research and communicate information freely. Also, Heads of Department and other lecturers in universities should be encouraged to make proper use of interest facilities in carrying out administrative work. The lecturers should also enforce the use of internet facilities by students as this will enhance their academic career.
2. HOD's offices or department and indeed the university administration should make available audiovisual communication facilities such as, amplifiers, megaphones, microphones and ensure that these facilities are readily available for use in various areas to enhance effective organizational communication especially when wider audience are involved.

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