



## **EXTENT OF ICT AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT AMONG BURSARY STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE**

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**Abstract:** The study was aimed at examining the extent of information and communication Technology utilization (ICT) and office management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were stated. The study adopted a survey research design. The stratified ad purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The area was stratified into three as found in the state. The University of Calabar, the University of Cross River University and Arthur Jarvis University. In each of the universities, 50% was applied to determine the number of staff that was used for the study. A total of 243 staff in the bursary units were selected from all three universities in the study area. A questionnaire titled ‘Extent of Information and Communication Utilization and Office Management (EICTUOM) scale was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated and the reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha reliability technique that yielded the coefficient of .77 percent. Data collected were analysed using simple regression analysis and the result showed that, there is high extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State and that there is a significant influence of ICT utilization and office management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State. Based on this, it was recommended among others that, ICT facilities that enhance office management should be provided to aid bursary staff management of office effectively.

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**Key words:** *Information, Communication, Technology, Utilization, and office management*

### **Introduction**

The office is described as the nerve centre of the entire organization. The present-day office activities have expanded to a wider extent to keep pace with rapid globalization. Further, the office by itself has become an indispensable part of any business organization. Modern offices are organized on scientific principles and their techno-savvy office managers which have paved way for the sustenance of a business amidst cutthroat competition. In the university system, there are different administrative offices that require effective management. One of such is the Bursary Department. The bursary department is charged with the functional responsibilities of maintaining financial records, rendering financial services and managing the financial resources of the university through

the efficient application of accounting principles as well as best practices and procedures (Atah and Bessong, 2018). It is headed by the University Bursar who is the chief financial officer of the university and is responsible to the vice chancellor for the day-to-day administrator and control of the financial service of the university. Thus, the office of the bursary department must ensure that they manage the financial records of the school, collect, keep and disburse all various funds that belong to the university, prepare budgets and control such budgets as well as put in place adequate internal and external control system that safeguards the assets and liabilities of the universities (Adeshoba, 2010). It is expected therefore that this office will be appropriate management for efficient functioning in the university.

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However, experience and observation have shown that this office in most universities in Cross River State has not been effectively and efficiently managed. This is occasioned by poor records management, delays in clearing files, poor planning and directing, and loss of files among others (Kelvin, 2016). Most researchers have tried to find out what probably would have been the causes of these problems a lot of factors that have been identified include poor allocation of financial and material resources, lack of financial experts employed in the office, unskilled employees, corruption, and capabilities that are deficient or lacking (Chukwurah and Atah, 2018). These weaknesses are capable of preventing the Bursary department, nay the entire University community, from developing or sustaining a competitive advantage. Several efforts to ensure that staff are trained and retrained in order to enhance the management of the office in the bursary but the problem still persists among the staff of the department (Ukak and Atah, 2022).

The purpose of this study is therefore to find out the influence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) utilization on office management among bursary staff in universities in the study area. Information and communication technology (ICT) is known as an extended synonym for information technology (IT) which can be defined as a diverse set of technological tools and resources. These resources are used to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information such as radio, television, computer, internet, mobile phones and fax machine (Tinio, 2003). In the age of booming technology, running an office without or less technology is like trying to breathe without lungs (Christiana, 2008). In a study on efficient use of ICT in administration a case from Mehran University Of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro, Pakistan by Zuhaib and Qazi Abro (2017), the study addresses the factors influencing effectiveness of ICT in administration and suggests the framework for effective utilization of ICT in administration. The study was conducted in the context of administration of Mehran

University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro Pakistan, and the primary data was collected from the employees working in main branch of administration as well as administration offices at different departments and institutions. For this, an exploratory research is adopted and mixed methodology was carried out. The findings shows that ICT was not found as effective as it supposed be in administration. And reasons were exposed as there were lack of appropriate resources available particularly management information system with training and monitoring mechanism (Atah, 2019). Therefore, they are using more manual system and people are less encouraged to use more ICT.

Said (2016) study investigated on the major importance of ICT to staff of EMU and also conducted a test to determine if significant difference exists between items and data variables such as age, gender, years of experience, usage of ICT tools, educational level, etc.. Information was collected from respondents via the use of questionnaire. 72 EMU staff was examined according to the various demographics of the study. Critical examination was made of the total data collected for this study by adopting ANOVA and t-test, frequency and percentages. Findings of this study shows that majority of the EMU staff agreed and strongly agree that ICT can be of pertinent help to them and also that ICT helps their work move smoothly and properly and in a timely manner. The study also goes to prove that male and female of EMU staff have different notions on their opinion on been comfortable when using ICT tools in their daily job. But more than 90% of the staff shows that no significant difference exist between male and female staff of EMU on their various uses of ICT for managing and administering education. Cross tabulations was further done on several significant points of the t-test and ANOVA test of the study, such as on gender and their comfortability when using ICT tools in their daily jobs, results showed that male held the larger percentage as to the agreement to the subject matter than their female counterparts.



Mashau and Andrisha (2016) carried out a study on the effect of modern office technology on management performance: Durban Westville. It is difficult to think of a situation where businesses can do well without the use of modern office technology, in particular, items like computers and telephones. It is extremely difficult to determine if businesses depend on technology or if technology creates business opportunities. Modern office technology is correlated with positive change in management performance. Using a quantitative approach, 67 questionnaires were sent to middle and upper-level business managers in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Modern office technology makes significant difference in a workplace. Office technologies enhance performance and this can only be seen if the office is equipped with relevant and needed technologies. There is a strong correlation between the right use of office technologies and positive change in management performance. It is recommended that office managers still procure modern office technology to increase performance. The challenge is to harness this newly emerging technology for the benefit of the business. This study concludes that technological advancement has a positive effect on our quality of life and the way we do business, and this trend is expected to keep escalating.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of Information and Communication Utilization (ICT) and Office Management among Bursary Staff in Universities in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

1. The extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State
2. The influence of ICT utilization on office management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State.

#### **Research questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State?
2. What is the influence of ICT utilization on office management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State?

#### **Research Hypothesis**

1. The extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State is not significantly high
2. There is no significant influence of ICT utilization on office management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State

#### **Methodology**

The study adopted a survey research design. The stratified and purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The area was stratified into three as found in the state. The University of Calabar, the University of Cross River University and Arthur Jarvis University. In each of the universities, 50% was applied to determine the number of staff that was used for the study. A total of 243 staff in the bursary units were selected from all three universities in the study area. A questionnaire titled 'Extent of Information and Communication Utilization and Office Management (EICTUOM) scale was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated and the reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha reliability technique that yielded a coefficient of .77 per cent. Data collected were analysed using simple regression analysis *and the result is shown below*

#### **Presentation of result**

##### **Hypothesis one**

The extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State is not significantly high. The variable in this hypothesis is ICT utilization among bursary staff, measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, population t-test was used and the result showed that ( $t=23.09$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is less than



p(.05), this implies that extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State is significantly high. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 1:** Population t-test analysis on the extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State

Variable	N	X	S.D	Df	t-cal	p-val
ICT utilization	243	16.09	5.82	242	23.09	.000

. Hypothesis two

*There is no significant influence of ICT utilization on office automation among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State.*

To test this hypothesis, simple regression was used and the result showed that the adj  $R^2 = .542$  which implies that the variations in the dependent variable can be explained by

54.2% contribution of the utilization of ICT. A further look at the analysis of variance result showed that ( $F=14.65$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is less than  $p(.05)$ , this implies that there is a significant influence of ICT utilization on office automation among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 2:** Simple regression analysis of the influence of ICT utilization on office automation among bursary staff

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-val
Regression	1789.1	1	1789.1		
Residuals	29431.4	241	122.122	14.65	.000
Total	31220.5	242			

### Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one that stated that the extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State is not significantly high was rejected. This implies that extent of ICT utilization among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State is significantly high. This could be due to the fact that ICT as innovative practices in office has aided a lot of administrative work in various bursary units in the university system. Currently, all bursary units are highly automated and this has paved way for efficient and effective administration of financial services in the bursary departments. Pay roll unit as well as voucher preparations are all done using computer facilities and highly sophisticated internet services. The findings of the study were in line with that of Mashau and Andrisha (2016) that carried out a study on the effect of modern office technology on management performance: Durban Westville the findings of the study showed that there is a strong correlation between the right use of office

technologies and positive change in management performance.

Hypothesis two that stated that there is no significant influence of ICT utilization on office automation among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of ICT utilization on office automation among bursary staff in universities. The findings of the study were in line with that of Zuhaib and Qazi Abro (2017) that carried out a study on the efficient use of ICT in administration a case from Mehran University Of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro, Pakistan The findings shows that ICT was not found as effective as it supposed be in administration. However, respondents showed that use of ICT appropriately, influences administrative performance.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the extent of ICT utilization is high and that there is a significant influence of ICT utilization and office



management among bursary staff in universities in Cross River State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

ICT facilities that enhance office management should be provided to aid bursary staff management of office effectively.

The government should train and retrain the ICT personnel for effective usage of ICT technologies

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