

Utilisation of Administrative Theories and Effective Institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the utilisation of administrative theories on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). The study used correlational research design to investigate the utilisation of the bureaucratic and systems theories on the administration of FUNAAB. The population of the study was 1929 out of which 120 academic and non-academic staff of the University was sampled randomly. Administrative Theories and Effective Institutional Administration Questionnaire (ATEIAQ) was used to obtain data from respondents. Mean and standard deviations were analysed and used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at $p < 0.05$ significant level. The finding revealed that the level of effective institutional administration of FUNAB is low at 2.23 average mean. The bureaucratic theory and systems theory had significant influence on effective institutional administration in FUNAB. Recommendation was made that the government and other stakeholders of universities should provide adequate resources (human, material, financial) for the administration of universities. Other administrative theories, such as the contingency theory could be applied alongside with the systems theory and the bureaucratic theory, in the institutional administration of higher education, in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. The human relations/behaviourist theory, which emphasises that high institutional administrative productivity, is a result of acceptable staff welfare packages, job security and humane decision making, could be intensified in the administration of universities for improved effectiveness.

Keywords: *Institutional Administration, Utilisation of Resources, Bureaucratic and Systems Theories*

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Background to the Study

Effective Institutional Administration

Efficient and effective utilization of resources are equally important for adequate institutional administration. Nwabueze (2016), defined educational resource as a source from which institutional benefits are produced and they include: instructional materials, energy, services, academic and non-academic staff, knowledge and ideas/skills that are transformed to produce educational benefits in the society. He further classified resources as physical resources (buildings, space), human resources (academic and non-academic staff), material resources (all equipment or teaching aids), time resources and finance resources. Educational resources are scarce and as such the efficient and effective utilization of the available resources are crucial to achieve effective institutional administration of universities. Agabi (2010), observed that, the resources provided by government for execution of education projects in Nigeria are inadequate and irregular as highlighted by the frequency of industrial actions in the education sector. Consequently, the best alternative is prudence in the use of available resources. This is because when a given level of resources is efficiently utilized, more services are provided through balanced usage and adequate maintenance of the available facilities than when inefficiency, under-utilization and over-utilization abounds.

Another measurement of Effective Institutional Administration in Universities is effective channels of communication. This is so because every administrative function involves some form of direct or indirect communication. Whether planning and organising or leading and monitoring, University administrators communicate with and through other people. This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organisational effectiveness (Luneuburg, 2010). Closely knit to channel of communication is the organisational structure. The organisational structure in Nigerian universities could be described as complex due to their fragmentation, participatory decision-making, centralization of authority and high level of formalisation (Widhiastuti, 2012).

An organisation structure influences the communication patterns and provides the channels of communication within the organisation (Widluastati, 2012). It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inability forces to organisational effectiveness is lack of effective channels of communication (Lutgen-Sand, 2010). A recent study by Yate (2009) indicated that school administrators rated communication skills as the most important characteristics of an ideal institution. University administration works best when each department and unit within the institution clearly understands its role and relationship to other departments and units in her administration.

It is important to also note that there are other factors that can influence effective institutional administration of higher education institutions. The administrative theory applied in the university is an important factor to consider in effective institutional administration. There are several administrative theories that could be utilised in the administration of universities. Some of these theories are: The Scientific Management Theory by Fredrick Taylor, Bureaucratic Theory by Max Weber, Administrative Theory by Henry Fayol and Human Relations Theories. However, for the purpose of this study, the utilisation of the Bureaucratic

Theory and the Systems Theory on the effective institutional administration of FUNAAB will be analysed.

Utilisation of the Bureaucratic Theory

The bureaucratic theory was proposed for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness. Max Weber's bureaucratic theory proposes that the best way to run an organization is to structure it into a rigid hierarchy of people governed by strict rules. The term bureaucratic theory, as described by Banton (2020) is a complex organization that has multi-layered systems and processes. The systems and processes that are put in place effectively make decision-making slow. They are designed to maintain uniformity and control within the organization. A bureaucracy describes the methods that are commonly established in governments and large organizations. A bureaucracy is pivotal in the administration of the entity's rules and regulations. Heskett (2017) opined that there is a wide range of thinking about the value of bureaucracies and work done by bureaucrats; it leads some to devote thought to how bureaucracies can be made more effective in what they do. Bureaucracy was introduced into administration by Max Weber. Weber looked for measures and rules to eliminate managerial inconsistencies that contribute to ineffectiveness of institutional administration. He believed in the strict adherence to rules which would make bureaucracy a very efficient form of administrative technic which is based on principles of logic, order and legitimate authority.

Universities are exceptional organisations due to the great influence the academic staff have in governing and managing the institution as academic and administrative staff can substitute for each other to some extent in performing administrative tasks. University administration entails many different types of activities for the academic staff. There is no clear boundary between performing primary duties, such as teaching and research by the academic staff and their administrative assignments in the university. Some of their activities, such as participation in meetings and implementation of decisions taken during meetings, clearly lie within what may be described as internal university administration. These comprise activities relating to teaching and research: such as planning of the curriculum and research projects which contain elements institutional administration.

Decision-making processes in universities are often highly bureaucratic, especially when routine decisions are at stake. Any observer of decision-making processes on the campus cannot escape seeing that most decisions are routinely made by officials who have been given the responsibility by the formal administrative structure. The Dean of Admissions has been formally delegated the task of handling admissions and routinely does exactly that; the procedures and requirements for graduation are routinely administered by officials who have been assigned to do that task; the research policies of the university are routinely supervised by officials specified by the rules of the university; financial matters are usually handled by the financial officer of the university. In short, the vast majority of daily decisions in a university are routinely handled in a very bureaucratic fashion.

Utilisation of the Systems Theory

Systems theory is an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society and in many scientific domains as well as a framework with which we can investigate a phenomena

from a holistic approach (Capra, 1997). A system can be defined as an entity, which is a coherent whole (Ng, Maull and Yip, 2009) such that a boundary is perceived around it in order to distinguish internal and external elements and to identify input and output relating to and merging from the entity. A systems theory is hence a theoretical perspective that analyses a phenomenon seen as a whole and not as simply the sum of elementary parts. The focus is on the interactions and on the relationships between parts in order to understand an entity's organization, functioning and outcomes.

To understand the systems theory, it is important to examine a system. A system is composed of a whole made up of interacting parts. Arnold and Wade (2015, p.7) defined a system as, "groups or combinations of interrelated, interdependent, or interacting elements forming collective entities". A system therefore denotes a set of parts that are interrelated so as to function as a whole in order to achieve a common purpose. For example; school organizations with all their institutional components that make them function as a whole (Bozkus, 2014). All organizations are open systems in that they interact with their environment to survive (Daft, 2010). The basic system theory of organizations is made up of five major components: inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback, and the environment (Daft, 2010). In this theory, inputs encompass the material, human, financial, or information resources required to produce goods and services of varied quantities and qualities. The transformation process involves the application of production technology by management to change the inputs into outputs. The outputs are the tangible products and services of the organization that possess a market value or user utility.

The systems theory is analogous to education production function. According to John (2010), education has a high-priority function in the production of human resources, and that the production functions is a relationship between the amount of input and intervening factors to produce a certain good, with consideration to its quality. An education production function therefore represents a functional relationship between school and students' inputs to an associated measure of school outputs. To ensure the production function adequately addresses the demands of society, education policy makers and managers must determine clear and precise objectives; and select the inputs and strategies that will be transformed through the productive process into a qualified product; possessing certain competences in form of skills, abilities, and knowledge that can be transferred to the productive sector of the economy with efficiency and effectiveness (John, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

Sequel to the fore going, purpose of the study is to examine the Utilization of Administrative Theories on Effective Institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta. The specific purposes of this study are to:

- i. Find out the level of effectiveness of institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta,
- ii. Examine the influence of Bureaucratic Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, and
- iii. Investigate the influence of Systems Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Statement of the Problem

The institutional administration of FUNAAB appears to be inadequate due to lack of clarity of communication of job schedules between the principal officers and their support staff. The applications of the bureaucratic and systems theories seem not to really have positive effect on the effective administration of FUNAAB. This can negatively affect the demand of student for university education in FUNAAB. The researcher has also observed a systemic inadequacies, nepotism and slow decision making, as a result of clumsy channel of communication at FUNAAB. However, the implications of these problems also have an adverse effect on the government funding of FUNAAB as well as enrolment of student into the university.

Research Questions

- i. What is the level of effectiveness of institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?
- ii. What is the influence of Bureaucratic Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?
- iii. What is the influence of Systems Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?

Hypotheses

- Ho1:** Bureaucratic Theory has no significant influence on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.
- Ho2:** Systems Theory has no significant influence on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta

Methodology

The correlational survey research design was adopted for this study because the study assessed the relationship between Administrative Theories and Effective Institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The population for this study consists of all the 1929 staff members of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. This comprises 695 academic staff and 1,234 administrative non-teaching staff members. The staff members were divided into academic staff and administrative staff, out of which 60 respondents were randomly selected from each category to make a total of 120 staff. A structured questionnaire titled “Administrative Theories and Effective Institutional Administration Questionnaire (ATEIAQ)” was developed. It consists of twelve (12) items which elicited responses from the respondents. The instrument was structured in line with the modified likert scale type, and was rated as follows: SA - Strong Agree (4), A - Agree (3), D - Disagree (2) and SD - Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The face validity was done by a group of Educational Management experts at the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. A trial of the test was conducted on ATEIAQ using 20 respondents (10 academic Staff and 10 non-academic staff) at Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta, Ogun state. The instrument was administered by the researcher with assistance of two research assistants. The data collected through questionnaire were analysed and interpreted using frequency tables, percentages, mean and

standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at $p < 0.05$ significant level.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What is the level of effectiveness of institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?

Table 1: Institutional Administration Effectiveness scale

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
1	The current ranking of FUNAAB as 27 th is a true reflection of her position among universities in Nigeria.	53 44.2%	38 31.7%	24 20%	6 4.2%	1.97	0.829
2	A well ranked university does not necessarily mean an administratively effective university.	65 54.2%	33 27.5 %	20 16.7%	2 1.7%	1.93	.712
3	The resources (human, material and financial) provided by the government are not enough for my university's daily functioning.	70 58.3%	25 20.8%	17 14.2%	8 6.7%	2.07	.786
4	The resources made available to my university by the government are inadequate for efficiency and effectiveness.	65 54.2%	29 24.2%	16 13.3%	10 8.3%	2.06	.843
5	Information, directives and circular in my university are disseminated properly and timely.	17 14.2%	32 26.7%	44 36.7%	27 22.5	2.33	.980
6	FUNAAB would be a better university if the manner of communication between officers and their support staff is improved upon.	78 65.0%	26 21.7%	8 6.7%	8 6.7%	3.03	.745
	Average Mean					2.23	

Table 1 revealed the level of effective institutional administration of the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta. All items on 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 agreed that the level of effective institutional administration of the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is low. This shows that the level of effective institutional administration of the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is low at 2.23.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of Bureaucratic Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?

Table 2: Influence of Bureaucratic Theory on effective institutional administration

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
1	Bureaucracy is best system of administration for effective running of FUNAAB.	9 7.5%	24 20.0%	35 29.2%	52 43.3%	1.92	0.967
2	The current 27 th ranking of FUNAAB in Nigeria is a result of bureaucratic disadvantages in the system of administration	17 14.2%	76 63.3%	5 4.2%	22 18.3%	2.73	0.923
3	Bureaucracy has role to play in improving the communication structure of FUNAAB.	54 45.0%	55 45.8%	8 6.7%	3 2.5%	3.33	0.714
	Average Mean					2.66	

Table 2 revealed the perception of the utilisation of bureaucratic theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. All the items on 7, 8 and 9 agreed that the utilisation of bureaucratic theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is high. This shows that the utilisation of bureaucratic theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is high at 2.66 average mean.

Research Question 3

What is the influence of Systems Theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta?

Table 3: Influence of Systems Theory on effective institutional administration.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
1	The current ranking of FUNAAB as 27 th in Nigeria may be attributed to a general societal problem.	16 13.3%	50 41.7%	33 27.5%	21 17.5%	2.79	1.036
2	Corruption and Nepotism may have affected the administrative effectiveness of FUNAAB.	48 40.0%	54 45.0%	10 8.3%	8 6.7%	3.18	0.850
3	The Administrative of FUNAAB may have been effective if the larger society is effective.	37 30.8%	78 65.0%	3 2.5%	2 1.7%	3.25	0.583
	Average Mean					3.19	

Table 3 revealed the utilisation of systems theory on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta. All the items on 10, 11, and 12 agreed that the utilisation of systems theory on the effectiveness of institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is high. This shows that the utilisation of systems theory on the effective running of institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is high at 3.19.

Test of Hypotheses

To test the hypothesis, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was applied to test the significance of the Utilisation of Administrative Theories and Effective Institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Hypothesis 1: Bureaucratic theory has no significant influence on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta.

Table 4: Relationship between bureaucratic theory and effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	Sig.	P	Remark
Bureaucratic Theory	120	16.8000	2.43780	0.284	0.002	< 0.05	Significant
Effective Institutional Administration	120	13.3583	3.48296				

Table 4 presented the results of PPMC for the relationship between bureaucratic theory and effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The result revealed a high, positive, linear relationship ($r=0.284$) which is significant at $p<0.05$. This implied that bureaucratic theory in the university does influence the effective institutional administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Hence, null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Systems theory has no significant influence on effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Table 5: Relationship between Systems Theory and effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	Sig.	P	Remark
Systems Theory	120	15.9333	2.60166	0.241	0.008	< 0.05	Significant
Effective Institutional Administration	120	13.3583	3.48296				

Table 5 presented the results of PPMC for the relationship between systems theory and effective institutional administration in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The result revealed a high, positive, linear relationship ($r=0.241$) which is significant at $p<0.05$. This implied that systems theory in the university does influence the effectiveness of institutional administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Hence, null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Effective Institutional Administration is greatly influenced by the application of administrative theories like the Bureaucratic Theory and the Systems Theory. There is implication that the environmental context (social, political, ethnic, economic and

religious situation) of the university as well as the bureaucratic model of administration have adverse effect on effective institutional administration. The study therefore concluded that there is a significant influence of administrative theories such as the Bureaucratic theory and the System theory on effective Institutional Administration in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

Recommendations

- 1 The government, educational funding agencies and other stakeholders in the administration of universities should provide adequate resources (human, material financial) in order to achieve effective institutional administration which would result in quality output.
- 2 The principal officers of the university should ensure that the resources provided by the government and other stakeholders in education are efficiently and effectively utilised in order to reduce wastage of resources. Other administrative theories, such as the contingency theory could be applied alongside with the systems theory and the bureaucratic theory, in the institutional administration of higher education, in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- 3 The human relations/behaviourist theory, which emphasises that high institutional administrative productivity, is a result of acceptable staff welfare packages, job security and humane decision making, could be intensified in the administration of universities for improved effectiveness.

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