

## THE INFLUENCE OF FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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### *Abstract*

*The paper examined the influence of functional integration on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria. It specifically examined effective integration of departmental functional plans that was aligned with the overall goal and objective of these universities that could reshape and improve employee performance. The study population one thousand nine hundred and thirty two (1,932). All private universities in Ogun State were used as a case study. The sample for the study were 331 using Yamane (1967) formula. The study employed multi-stage sampling technique. Logistic regression model was used to analyse. Questionnaire was used as a method of data collection. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study shows that this assertion was premised on the fact that the regression coefficient computed for this variable of 0.39 was positive with p-value of 0.0000 that was less than the critical value of 5%. The study recommends that functional integration that could not be effectively measurable and linked to performance should be discarded for better and flexible plans. Functional integration enhances strategic objectives of an organization in that all plans needed to achieve these objectives are measurable. Therefore, any non-functional integration among departments of these universities needs to be removed for a better one that can be quantitatively resulting in measurable goal and objective.*

**Keywords:** Functional integration, Knowledge sharing, employee performance

### **Introduction**

With the rapid expansion in the activities of private universities as a result of growth being witnessed by private universities, functional integration is essential for smooth running of day-to-day functions in order to strategize towards the achievements of private universities. Functional integration refers to the adoption of effective approach to accomplish corporate and business unit objectives with the goal of maximizing resources productively. No unit or functional area of the private university is operating as close entity, all areas must function together in order to achieve stated aims and goals of the private university. Now that private universities are experiencing increase in the number of courses, functional integration is important so that employee

performance would be enhanced. However, wastage would be avoided among employees when carrying out duties as those who are competent would be assisting and complementing those who are new or not too familiar with the work. No functional area is function in isolation there must be integration for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency.

Over time, tertiary institutions such as universities have developed strategies on how to organize resources, activities and people into processes to meet the demands of the market (Eider, Marccio, Per, and David, 2016). According to Daugherty et al., (2009) and Pimenta (2011), the notion of functional integration has emanated from the necessity to foster coordination between departments within an organization. Pimenta et al. (2015) advocated five forms of factors relevant in the cross-functional integration procedure, namely- points of contact, integration factors, formality/informality, integration level, and integration impacts. The “integration factors” integrate a variety of management techniques or interpersonal collaboration, which inspire the existence of cross-functional integration. One of the features in this grouping is the cross-functional team (CFT). Although there are copious research attempts on CFTs, the service industry recorded scant attention. A CFT is a cluster of individuals who possess diverse form of abilities from dissimilar functional disciplines, occupations, or roles that aims to accomplish a given task (Daspit et al., 2013). Whenever members of a CFT try to accomplish joint activities, it is not unmanageable that conflicts arise (Moses and Ahlstrom, 2008). This may be attributed to functional interdependence, ill-defined or misunderstood functional tactics, and/or uneven functional objectives. However, improve understanding on how to cheer such favourable environments could help to advance operations, and while this understanding is remarkably growing, there are still dark spots that require attention. Many researchers have worked on different dimensions in functional integration on organizational performance, but only few on employees performance in universities especially private universities. The little that are available on the topic were done outside the shore of Nigeria. This paper is intended to link that gap by examining the influence of functional integration on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria.

### **Objective of the Study**

Examine the influence of functional integration on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria.

### **Research Question**

To what extent does functional integration influence on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria?

### **Significance of the study**

The study investigated functional integration on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria. The research on functional integration on private universities is timely when some functional areas and units intend to be operating in isolation. The study would benefit the government, stakeholders, employees, employers and management, Nigerian citizens and researchers.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Functional Integration: Definition and Meaning**

Functional integration denotes the way employees in diverse sectors and functions in the organization work in coordination as they create a synergy in order to accomplish organizational goals (De Oliveira, 2016). Integration can take place at either the team (project) level or the organizational (functional) level. Irrespective of level, integration has been examined in terms of cross-functional communication or interaction frequency, extent and form of information disseminated, mutually agreed-on methods, goal similarity, trust and relationships, physical procedures in place, intensities of conflict resolution, and coordination and collaboration (Agwata & Kariuki, 2018). Functional integration signifies the class of the mutual situation that exists between departments and units, which is mandatory to meet up with the demands of the company (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Functional integration encompasses official procedures, such as formal communication, meetings and functional teams, as well as informal practices founded on trust, mutual respect, and team spirit (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Bai et al., 2017; Kahn and Mentzer, 1998; Ellinger, 2000).

What makes individuals working in a company to share personal knowledge with others willingly is a continuous line of systematic enquiry that has created a plethora of studies in the field of information systems (e.g., Wasko and Faraj, 2005), organizational behavior (e.g., Bordia et al., 2006), strategic management (e.g., Reagans and McEvily, 2003), and psychology (e.g., Lin, 2007). Knowledge sharing behavior, particularly in heterogeneous teams such as functional teams in IPPD projects, is difficult and remains challenging for management (Hinds and Pfeffer, 2003; Bai et al., 2017; etc.).

Kahn (1996) suggested an approach for functional integration founded on formal (interaction) and informal (collaboration) initiatives to generate collaboration between areas.

Interaction narrates to processes that have formal mechanisms to assimilate functions, such as: meetings, the exchange of documents, and memos.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Competence-based competition Theory**

The first scholar to mention “distinctive competence” was Selznick (1957) – though understood more in the sense of a bond than a variable on which to act

– and the notion was examined the same years by the “Austrian economic school”. Nonetheless, the strategic method founded on the competence-based competition is much more current (Snow and Hrebiniak, 1980) and has been delineated with strategic valences by Prahalad and Hamel (1990) in a well-known article in the *Harvard Business Review*. They proposed that “core competencies” of a firm refers to influences that determine its success or otherwise of a company (Lenz (1980). While resource-based view individuates practically *expost* the resources that regulate a competitive advantage, competence-based competition tries to comprehend a priori which are these resources/ competencies. According to competence-based, a solid competitive advantage is founded on the capability to generate and reinforce.

### **Methods and Materials**

The study used a descriptive survey research design to explore the influence of Functional Integration on employee performance using all private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria as case study. This is because descriptive survey research enables the researcher to collect firsthand information from respondents. It is a fact-finding enquiry which allows the researcher to give a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Primary data used for the study were gathered through a well-structured questionnaire administered on 331 respondents selected through probability sampling techniques out of total population of one thousand nine hundred and thirty two (1932).

### **Research Instrument**

Primary data was used for the study. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire administered on the respondents with a view to collecting relevant first-hand information needed for the study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A deals with respondents demographic variables; section B This deals with functional integration scale. This section was measured by 5 items adapted from the work of Agwata and Kariuki (2018); while this section C elicits information on employee performance and was adapted from the work of Dhammika (2013). All items included in the research instrument were restructured to meet the needs and objectives of the study.

Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data

- (i) **Descriptive Statistics:** The descriptive statistics that was used for this study include percentages, tables and frequency distribution. These were used to describe the demographic variables of the respondents and response to each item on the research instrument.
- (ii) **Inferential Tools:** Inferential tools established relationship between two or more variables. The analytical model that was employed to

achieve the objective of this study was Logit otherwise called Logistic regression model.

**Table 1: Summary of sample size selected through proportionate sampling technique**

S/N	University	Proportion	Sample size
1	Babcock University	$\frac{(331)(592)}{1932}$	101
2	Bells University of Technology, Ota	$\frac{(331)(245)}{1932}$	42
3	Covenant University, Ota	$\frac{(331)(597)}{1932}$	102
4	Christland University, Abeokuta	$\frac{(331)(23)}{1932}$	4
5	Crawford University, Igbesa	$\frac{(331)(179)}{1932}$	31
6	Crescent University, Abeokuta	$\frac{(331)(106)}{1932}$	18
7	Christopher University,	$\frac{(331)(61)}{1932}$	11
8	Hallmark University, Ijebu-Itele	$\frac{(331)(55)}{1932}$	9
9	Mountain Top University, Mowe	$\frac{(331)(74)}{1932}$	13
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>331</b>

Source; Author's Computation (2019)

Hence the sample size for the study was calculated thus:

$$n = \frac{N_i n_i}{N}$$

WHERE

$N_i$  = Total sample size

$n_i$  = Population of each stratum

$N$  = Population of the study

$$1 + \frac{1932(0.05)}{1932} = 331$$

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents' perception on functional Integration in Private Universities**

S/N	Test Variables	SA	A	IND	D	SD	Mean	Std	Remark
1	Departmental functional plans are aligned to the University overall strategic plan	150 (48.20)	147 (47.30)	10 (3.20)	2 (0.30)	2 (0.30)	4.42	0.65	Highly Functional

2	the University promotes strong use of technology to integrate key function	136 (43.70)	154 (49.50)	10 (3.20)	11 (3.50)	-	4.33	0.71	Functional
3	Regular exchange of knowledge and experience among different departments within the university is highly supported	126 (40.51)	159 (51.13)	21 (6.75)	6 (1.93)	-	4.30	0.67	Highly Functional
4	plans are always coordinated between departments	104 (33.40)	168 (54.00)	26 (8.40)	10 (3.20)	3 (1.00)	4.16	0.78	Functional
5	Pre-planning activities to aid the strategic planning process are strongly emphasized in the University	121 (38.90)	160 (51.40)	23 (7.40)	6 (1.60)	2 (0.60)	4.26	0.72	Functional

**Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2019**

Functional integration was essential in the process of implementing the right strategic plan in private universities. The implication of this was that all, departments and units in the university must tailor their goals and objectives towards the achievement of the overall goal of their universities. Table 1 presented the distribution of respondents' perception on functional integration. Looking at the results in the table, it was found that 48.20% of the respondents strongly agreed that departmental functional plans were aligned to the university overall strategic plan while 47.30% of the respondents agreed with this test item. Conversely, 3.20%, 0.30% and 0.30% of the respondents were indifferent, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement. This revealed that sufficient numbers of the respondents agreed that departmental functional plans were aligned to the university overall strategic plan. There was need for departmental/ units strategic plan to be in tune with the overall plan of these universities. This was relevant in order not to be running plan different and irrelevant to the overall plan of these universities. It was reasonable for the departments to always consult the management on issues relating to policy, procedures and programme in order not deviate from the overall objective of their universities. Failure of these departments to work in their plans in line with the university plan might spell doom to the university. The mean value obtained for this test item of 4.42 affirmed that the test item was valid and might be one of the functional integration in these universities.

Also, 43.70% of the respondents strongly agreed that the university promoted strong use of technology to integrate key function while 49.50% of the respondents agreed with this test item. Meanwhile, 3.20%, 3.50% of the respondents were indifferent and disagreed respectively with this test variable. This revealed that sufficient numbers of the respondents agreed that the

university promoted strong use of technology to integrate key function. There was need for the university to integrate effective use of technology in performing their key functions. This was essentially important in order to ensure that the right information on strategic and policy were shared to the employees in time. Effective use of IT enhanced not only the implementation of strategic plans but also the flexibility at which departments, units and sub-units aligned their plans with the overall plan of their institutions. Policy, strategic and plans could only be made efficient and effective with the right use of information technology that enhanced strategic plan flexibility and ensure all employees understood their roles in the implementation of these plans. The mean value obtained for this test item of 4.33 affirmed that the test statement was significance and could be a variable that enhanced functional integration in the selected universities.

Also, 40.51% of the respondents strongly agreed that regular exchange of knowledge and experience among different departments within the university was highly supported while 51.31% of the respondents agreed with this test statement. Consequently, 6.75% and 1.93% of the respondents were indifferent and disagreed respectively with this test statement. This indicated that sufficient numbers of the respondents agreed that regular exchange of knowledge and experience among different departments within the university was highly supported. There was need for inter-department exchange of knowledge and experience within an institution. Adequate inter-department knowledge sharing had been found by Aliyu and Sunday (2016) to enhance the achievement of organizational vision and mission. Departmental conflict resolution according to Tunde (2012) could be realized through effective mix of knowledge from different departments and units working towards the achievement of a common goal and objective. The responsibility of each department/unit could be well defined through appropriate department knowledge sharing and experience with peers and colleagues. Dele and Emmanuel (2017) asserted that inter-unit and departmental sharing of knowledge and experience on a definite goal aided the achievement of organization objective in time. This was because each department in relating their experience and knowledge helped to pin point areas where corrective action needed to be taken in order to enhance the achievement of these institutions goals. The mean value computed for this test item of 4.30 affirmed that the test item was significance and could help in facilitating effective functional integration in private universities.

Furthermore, 33.40% of the respondents strongly agreed that plans were always coordinated between departments while 54% of the respondents agreed with this test item. Conversely, 8.40%, 3.20% and 1% of the respondents were indifferent, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this test item. This showed that 87.40% of the respondents agreed that

plans were always coordinated between departments. The achievement of a university goal depended upon the ability of management to coordinate accurately plans and work frame between departments and units. Failure to effectively coordinated the work of departmental/ units could lead to a situation whereby each department where work not in tandem with the lay down plans of the university. The right departmental coordination between units in an institution helped in refocusing the institution towards the overall goal of this university. Akindele (2017) affirmed that inter-departmental coordination aided the organization in the achievement of its goal and objective. Appropriately, the mean value computed for this test item of 4.16 confirmed that the test item was significance and could enhance functional integration in the selected private universities if rightly implemented. This assertion was based on the fact that the mean value obtained for the statement of 4.16 was better than the acceptable, earn of 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.78 that showed a slight dispersion from the mean.

The result in the table revealed that 38.90% of the respondents strongly agreed that pre-planning activities to aid the strategic planning process were strongly emphasized in the University while 51.40% of the respondents agreed with this test statement. In continuation, 7.40%, 1.60% and 0.60% of the respondents were indifferent, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this test item. This revealed that sufficient numbers of the respondents agreed that Pre-planning activities to aid the strategic planning process were strongly emphasized in the University. There was need for the selected private universities to carry out the pre-planning activities of policies, procedures and programme in order to verify how reasonable these plans to overall achievement of these institutions goals. Failure had recorded in organizations as a result of refusal of the management to carry out appropriate pre-planning activities. Pre-planning activities according to Smith and Alade (2016) helped in ensuring that the organization did not deviate from its overall goal and objective. Effective pre-planning according to Richard and Adewoye (2016) make organizations goals achievable be detecting the unattainable activities that could derail organizational performance. The mean value obtained for this test item of 4.26 confirmed that the test item was significance and could enhance functional integration in private Universities.

### **Perception of respondents on employee performance in the selected Private Universities**

Effective functional integrations that were strictly monitored through appropriate internal control system might enhance the performance of employees. Employee performance could be direct function of policy, procedure and programme put in place by organizations. This section of the study focused on the assessment of respondents' perception on employee performance in private universities

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents perception on employee performance in private Universities**

S/N	Test Items	Yes	No	Mean	Std	Remark
1	I work to implement new ideas on my job	306 (98.40)	5 (1.60)	1.98	0.13	Effective
2	I work with others to achieve organizational objectives	303 (97.40)	8 (2.60)	1.97	0.16	Effective
3	I complete all duties that are central to my job	277 (89.10)	34 (10.90)	1.89	0.31	Partially Effective
4	I keep cooperating with other co-workers in achieving organizational objective.	307 (98.70)	4 (1.30)	1.99	0.11	Consistently Effective

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2019.

Table 2 presented the distribution of respondents perception on employee performance. From the table, 98.40% of the respondents said yes they worked to implement new ideas on their job while 1.60% said no. this indicated that substantial numbers of the respondents worked to implement new ideas on their job. The implication of this was that the right ideas on strategic plans could enhance the performance of the employees. What this implied was that the management of the private universities must always listen to opinion and suggestion of employee regarding task and job assigned to them. Their ideas in getting worked done in time must be allowed to stay as long as the ideas did deviate from the laid down goal and objective of the university. The mean value obtained for this test item of 1.98 affirmed that the test item was significance and hence, employee performance in this regard was effective.

It was discovered that 97.40% of the respondents said (yes) they completed all duties that were centered to their jobs while 10.90% said (no) they did not. The implication of this was that substantial numbers of the respondents completed all duties that were central to their jobs. The completion of duties assigned to employees was an indication that the employee was effective on his or her jobs. The ability of an employee to get things done within the stipulated time affirmed that such employee knew exactly his jobs and could contribute meaningfully to the goal of the university. University by nature needed employee with minimal supervision that could get job done in time. This was because failure of the employee to get jobs done within a stipulated time might affect the goal and objective of the university. Private universities were set up to satisfy their students and guardians that enrolled wards in their universities, hence, their employees must get things done in time. The mean value obtained for this test item was 1.97 better than the acceptable mean of 1.50. this revealed that the test item was effective.

Moreover, it was discovered that 89.10% of the respondents said yes they completed all duties that were central to their jobs while 10.90% of the respondents said no. this revealed that sufficient numbers of the respondents

indicated that they completed all duties that were central to their jobs. The ability of employees to complete duties central to his/her jobs could facilitate the achievement of goal and objective of university in time. Employee must as a matter important must not exhibited lackadaisical attitudes towards jobs and tasks central to their duties. The mean value obtained for this test item of 1.89 affirmed that the test statement was significance and in effect it was saved to assert that to some extent this was effective in the selected universities.

It was discovered that 98.70% of the respondents said yes they keep cooperating with other co-workers in achieving organizational objective while 1.30% said no. this implied that sufficient numbers of the respondents kept cooperating with other co-workers in achieving organizational objectives. The cooperation of employee with their co-workers could go a long way in influencing the performance of the university and resultantly that of the employee. In a sane organization there was bound to be conflict but the ability of the management to dose this conflict could help in a long way to enhance cooperation among employee in the organization. The selected private universities must determine to achieve among its employees in order to improve their effectiveness. The mean value obtained for this test item of 1.99 confirmed that the test statement was significance and hence, employee performance was consistently effective in this regard.

### Test of Hypothesis

Determine influence of functional integration on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria.

H<sub>0</sub>: Functional integration will have significant effect on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria.

H<sub>1</sub>: Functional integration will have no significant effect on employee performance in private universities in Nigeria.

**Table 3: Logit Regression Computed for the effect of functional Integration on employee performance  
Dependent Variable is EMPER (Employee Performance)**

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	Z-Calculated	P-value
C	0.084101	1.535748	0.054762	0.9563
FIN	0.390511	0.060023	6.506023	0.0000
	<b>OTHER TEST</b>	<b>TATISTICS</b>		
McFadden R-squared	0.984475		Mean dependent var	0.852090
S.D. dependent var	0.075583		S.E. of regression	0.355625
Akaike info criterion	12.847244		Sum squared resid	39.07902
Schwarz criterion	13.871294		Log likelihood	-129.7464
Hannan-Quinn criter.	16.856857		Deviance	259.4929
Restr. deviance	260.6594		Restr. log likelihood	-130.3297
LR statistic	90.166484		Avg. log likelihood	-0.417191
Prob(LR statistic)	0.0000005			

Source: Researcher's computation, 2019

The result in table 3 was quite revealing. Looking critically at the results from the table, it was discovered that the p-value of the z-statistics computed for functional integration of 0.0000 was less than the critical value of 5% with significance z-statistics figure of 6.51. This showed that the null hypothesis which stated that functional integration had no substantial effect on employee performance in the selected private universities was rejected. The implication of this was that functional integration was substantially significance on employee performance. Effective integration of departmental functional plans that was aligned with the overall goal and objective of these universities might reshape and improve employee performance. This was possible due to the fact that all departments and units in these universities would make every possible effort to ensure that their own specific objectives were achieved in order to aid the over goal of the university. The further showed that any employee in a department that was not ready to work in tandem with these functional plans might be asked to leave and some cases sanctioned. Also, the ability of these universities to promote and encourage strong use of technology to integrate key function might improve employee performance. Resultantly, the inter-departmental exchange of knowledge and experience on a regular basis, effective coordination of plans, and adequate pre-planning activities as functional components could all contribute effectively to the performance of employee in these universities. The regression coefficient obtained for this variable of 0.14 was positive. This revealed that there was a positive and significance relationship between functional integration and employee performance. The import of this was that a 1% increase in the right functional integration might effectively improve employee performance by 0.14%. The sign of this variable was in conformity with a priori expectation and hence, functional integration could be a determinant of employee performance in universities.

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