

## **Management Mechanisms and Performance of Nigerian Universities: Insight from Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The major objective of this study was to determine and establish the relationship between management mechanisms and performance of Nigerian universities in south-east, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to ascertain the: effect of funding on growth of Nigerian universities; effect of capacity building on innovation in Nigerian universities; nature of relationship between employee appraisal and quality services delivery in Nigerian universities; effect of ICT availability on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities; nature of relationship between conducive learning environment and quality graduates in Nigerian universities. The survey design was adopted for this work. The primary and secondary sources of data and information were respectively adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised of the management, staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, given as 2,300, from which a sample of 818 respondents were drawn and used for the study. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results of the study showed that, funding has a significant positive effect on growth in Nigerian universities; capacity building has a significant positive effect on innovation in Nigerian university; there is a significant positive relationship between employees' appraisal and quality service delivery. ICT availability has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities; there is a significant positive correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

**Keywords:** Management Mechanism, Performance, Nigerian University System.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Management is a distinct ongoing process of allocating inputs of an organization (human and economic resources) by typical managerial functions (planning, organizing, directing and controlling) for the purpose of achieving stated objectives, viz, output of goods and services desired by its customers (environment). In the process, work is performed with and through personnel of the organization in an ever-changing business environment (Francis, 2015). On the other hand, management mechanisms are techniques or approaches that are used to direct and control an organization to achieve a set of goals. They include strategies for leadership, administration, and business execution (Spacy, 2015). Management mechanisms help people and organizations to improve their own effectiveness and efficiency. The quality of managers and effective management mechanisms can determine the culture of the organization, the productivity of its staff, and, ultimately its success or failure (Spacy, 2015).

Developing effective management mechanisms to deal with specific challenges and problems of each organization is the urgent needs of many businesses and organizations in the global competitive environment that is rapidly changing technologically (Francis, 2015). The new tendency of training and developing of successful organizations over the world today is developing effective mechanisms in dealing with specific challenges of their own organization to reach their own mission and objectives in the organization that is characterized by networked, flat, flexible, divers, global organization (Adam, 2016).

Nigerian corporate environment is constantly undergoing changes and is increasingly becoming complex, the higher education institutions inclusive. It is an established fact now that active participation in knowledge societies is essential to economic growth in the twenty-first century, and higher educational institutions are the potential engines for such growth (Akerle, 2017). The opportunities to access knowledge have increased in recent years and the stakes for success are very high. The condition of higher education in a nation becomes increasingly critical to its success (Akerle, 2017). This has informed the renewed interest government all over the world, and Nigeria in particular, placed on quality of higher education (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, monotechnics).

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building (Enakpoya and Collins, 2012). University education particularly is widely accepted in Nigeria today as a form of investment in human capital development that yields economic benefits and contributes significantly to the nation's future wealth and development by increasing the productive and consumptive capacity of the citizens (Yusuf and Afolabi, 2014). Universities equip individual with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudinal orientation required to progress in one's chosen career in life and contribute meaningfully to the economic growth and security of the nation, through purposeful governance (Yusuf and Afolabi, 2014).

## **1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

However, Nigerian universities just like their counterparts all over the world are grappling with a number of challenges making it difficult to achieve their set objectives while simultaneously maintaining their historical role of contributing effectively to society (Ojo, 2016). Some of these challenges as highlighted by Ojo (2016) include: fiscal constraints and increased calls for accountability, growing demand for enrolment, and challenges from evolving technologies. Akinyemi and Bassey (2012) noted that, despite the increase in the number of universities, there remains a wide gap between the demand and supply of university education. Ezepe (2015) cited some of the challenges to include; lack of skills-focused critical education; grossly inadequate curriculum producing graduates not ready for employment; lack of critical thinking graduates; graduates with low confidence, low esteem, low self-efficacy, among other impediments. Other challenges include; inadequate funding (Famurewa, 2015); uncompetitive institutions, compromised quality of education (Akinrinade, 2013); internal corruption, inefficient bureaucracy, political interference (Ololube, et al, 2013); inadequate knowledge of the use of ICT tools for teaching and learning (Echeng, Usoro, Majeqski, 2013); lack or inadequate capacity building programmes

for staff, little and unattractive incentives to boost staff performance, delayed salaries and allowances, poor and un conducive learning environment, poor appraisal system (Ohiorenoya and Eboreime, 2014).

The above challenges no doubt have affected the performance of the Nigerian universities. The universities hitherto known to stress on stable, predictable and mechanistic processes, now need to adapt to changes in the present dynamic environment if they must succeed. Some management cultures or practices or mechanisms are good at adapting to changes and preserving performance of organizations while others are not adaptive (Kotter and Heskett, 2017). If universities could isolate mechanisms that determine success they would carry out programmes that could make them more successful than others and maintain very competitive advantage. Some universities may be efficient-minded having their long term orientation as performance with efficient smooth operations (Cameron and Quinu, 2019). Regrettably, from the available literature, studies indicating management mechanisms and performance of universities in Nigeria have been under reported.

It is in the light of the above therefore, that it becomes imperative to determine and establish the management mechanisms that contribute to improved performance in the Nigerian universities. This is with a view to finding out whether there is a link or correlation between this management mechanisms and performance of Nigerian universities.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to determine and establish the relationship between management mechanisms and performance of Nigerian universities in South-east, Nigeria, with interest in Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain the:

1. Effect of funding on growth of Nigerian universities.
2. Effect of capacity building on innovations in Nigerian universities.
3. Nature of relationship between staff appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities.
4. Effect of ICT availability on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities.
5. Nature of relationship between conducive learning environment and quality graduates in Nigeria universities.

### 1.4 Formulation of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. Funding has a significant effect on growth in Nigerian universities.
2. Capacity building has a significant effect on innovation in Nigerian universities.
3. There is a significant relationship between staff appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities.
4. ICT availability has a significant effect on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities.
5. There is a significant correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 Management Mechanisms

Management mechanisms are strategies used to direct and control the achievement of organization's goals and objectives (Spacy, 2015). These involve leadership, administrative and business execution strategies (Spacy, 2015). Francis (2015) reports that many organizations in the global competitive environment and the ever changing technological environment deal with specific organizational challenges and problems through the development of effective management mechanisms, and concludes that management mechanisms improves organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Organizations today, are confronted with a bewildering array of statutory obligations, codes of practice, government guidelines, and new administrative tasks, methods and techniques. In organizations, they have to appraise employees, make presentations, implement health safety regulations, deal with employee grievances, and apply equal opportunities rules (many of them legally binding) when hiring, firing or promoting workers (Benneth, 2014). Other management mechanisms for organizational relevance and sustainability as pointed out by Enakpoya and Collins (2012) include: adequate funding, efficient transportation system, adequate and qualified organizational control system, pragmatic policy on recruitment and development of staff, regular capacity building programmes for staff, provision of right tools, enabling environment and effective legal backing and periodic audit of operational system.

#### 2.1.2 Performance

Performance is seen as the extent to which an organization, as a social system, could consider both its means and ends (Robbins, 2017). Estimating the performance of the organization has always been of interest to management teams and researchers. Organizations perform various activities to accomplish their organizational objectives. It is these repeatable activities that utilize processes for the organization to be successful that must be quantified in order to ascertain the level of performance and for management to make informed decisions on where, if needed, within the processes to initiate actions to improve performance (Friedlander and Pickle, 2018).

According to Sunday (2016), the need for management mechanisms in organizations cannot be overemphasized, and this is in order to ensure optimal performance in organizations. Organizational performance as asserted by Uzoh (2016), involves analyzing a firm's performance against its objectives and goals. In other words, organizational performance comprises real results or outputs compared with intended outputs.

#### 2.1.3 University

Universities have become traditionally the leaders in the field of knowledge production, research, and societal development. They are expected to be drivers of innovation, thereby contributing to the development of a learning society (Ojo, 2016). It may be correct therefore, to posit that a nation's development is dependent on the ability of its universities to produce new knowledge, new technology, and quality graduates. In contributing to national development, Ojo (2016); Ramakrishnan and Yasin (2012), posit that universities have a role

in preparing graduates, not simply for the present time, but also for emerging society which is characterized by technological advancement.

Universities may therefore, be seen as the key drivers in the emerging knowledge economy who are thus required to innovate as well as collaborate with industries for research and development purposes. In the same view, Che, Chen and Padro (2015) assert that universities should be able to meet the well-being of the institution itself. Considering this expectation, the need for a well-thought out management mechanisms by the universities for the actualization of the societal expectations, as well as the realization of the purpose for the establishment of the universities becomes imperative.

## 2.2 **Empirical Review**

### 2.2.1 **Management Mechanisms & Performance**

Research evidence shows that there is a relationship between management mechanisms and performance. Organizations with a record of high performance are associated with strong, well developed mechanisms (Hellriegel Slocum and Woodman 2012). Reasons adduced are (1) strong mechanisms provide for a better fit between strategy and culture (2) strong mechanisms lead to increased commitment by employees. O'Reilly and Chatman (2006) have indicated that strong mechanisms enhance organizational performance. Kotter and Heskett (2017) have shown that firms with strong mechanisms outperform those with weak mechanisms. Sorensen (2002) found that firm with strong mechanisms exhibit superior performance and more reliable performance in stable environments and that even in volatile environments, firms with strong mechanisms enhance performance. Also, firms with strong mechanisms have less variable performance and increased reliability in performance in competitive environments. Firms with participativemechanisms and well organized workplaces have better performance records than those firms that lack these characteristics (Gibson, 2014). A mechanism can be considered strong if those norms and values are widely shared and intensely held throughout the organization and weak if those norms and values are not widely shared and intensely held throughout the organization.(O'Reilly and Chatman 2006)

A comparison of the management mechanisms of 334 institutions of higher education in United States revealed no differences in organizational effectiveness between those with strongmanagement mechanisms and those with weak mechanisms (Cameron and Freeman, 2011). A type of organizational mechanisms that is designed to foster high performance with high levels of employee involvement is called high performance – high commitment mechanisms characterized by teamwork, empowerment, integration of people and technology and shared sense of purpose (Hellriegel et al 2012). Chang and Lee (2007) in a study of the effects of knowledge management mechanisms on organization innovation found that supportive and innovative mechanisms had significant positive effects on administrative and technical innovation.

Balthazard and Cooke (2014);Okafor (2008), also found that shared values have positive relationship with organizational performance implying that value system of an organization

impacts positively on organizational performance. In another study carried out in Nigeria, Prince-Abbi (2012) found that organizational mechanisms influenced organizational effectiveness. Strong mechanism is said to exist where staff respond to stimulus because of alignment to organizational values. In such environments, strong mechanisms help firms operate like well-oiled machines, cruising along with outstanding execution and perhaps minor tweaking of existing procedures here and there. Conversely, where there are weak mechanisms there is little alignment with organizational values, and control must be exercised through extensive procedures and bureaucracy.

Research indicates that organizations may derive the following benefits from developing strong and productive management mechanisms: better aligning the company towards achieving its vision, mission, and goals, high employee motivation and loyalty; increased team cohesiveness among the company various departments and divisions; promoting consistency and encouraging coordination and control within the company; and shaping employee behavior at work, enabling the organization to be more efficient. Wilkins and Oluchi (2013) have found that “particular properties of local organizational mechanisms are more important than others and that local organizational mechanisms will be more critical to performance in one range of organizations than in others”, and argue that they are more adaptive.

Kremp and Mairesse (2013) have identified promoting a culture of information and knowledge sharing as one of the organizational management mechanisms that contributes significantly to the innovative and productive performance of manufacturing firms. Halawi et al (2005) view the development of organizational mechanisms as providing sustainable sources of business advantages. Chang and Lee (2007) contend that if “firm could adequately analyze their own mechanisms to introduce knowledge management modes suitable for operating systems within firms, it would help firms efficiently integrate the competitive advantages in every kind of resource demand, accelerating innovation and improving industry value and survive from the violently competitive market.

### 3.0 **Methodology**

The research design employed in this study is the descriptive survey design. The sources of data for the study were the primary data (questionnaire) and the secondary information (relevant journals, texts, internet materials). The population of the study was made up of both the management and staff, as well as the students of Godfrey Okoye University, given as 2,300. A sample of 818 was drawn from the population using Godden (2004) sample size determination formula. The hypotheses formulated were tested using regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

#### 4.1 **Test of Hypotheses**

Five hypotheses were formulated and were tested using regression analysis and correlation. **SPSS** was used to analyze the various tests.

**Hypothesis One:**

**HO:** Funding has no significant effect on growth in Nigerian universities.

**HA:** Funding has a significant effect on growth in Nigerian universities.

Regression model:  $Y = \alpha + \beta X + \mu \dots$  (For all observations  $i = 1, 2 \dots n$ )

Where Y = funding

X = growth

$\mu$  = error term of random variable

$\alpha$  = a constant amount

$\beta$  = effect of X hypothesized to be positive

Hence, the regression (predict) equation will be  $Y = 99.123 + 1.313X$

**4.3.1a: Model Summary**

	Adjusted R Square	Error of the Estimate
		22

Factors: (Constant), Funding

**4.3.1b: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

	Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	051	051		
Residual	49	35		
Total	200			

Factors: (Constant), Funding

Dependent Variable: Growth

**4.3.1c: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	Beta	Standard Error		
(Constant)				
g				

Dependent Variable: Growth

**Result**

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using regression analysis to ascertain if there is a relationship between funding and growth in Nigeria, the Tables 4.3.1 a, b & c revealed that the regression result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ( $R^2_{calc} = .724, F = 16.122 >$  at  $p < 0.05$ ). The significant level was found to be 0.01, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *funding has significant effect on growth of Nigerian universities.*

**Hypothesis Two:**

**HO:** Capacity building has no significant effect on innovation in Nigeria universities.

**HA:** Capacity building has a significant effect on innovation in Nigerian universities.

Regression model:  $Y = \alpha + \beta X + \mu \dots$  (For all observations  $i, = 1, 2 \dots n$ )

Where Y = innovation

X = capacity building

$\mu$  = error term of random variable

$\alpha$  = a constant amount

$\beta$  = effect of X hypothesized to be positive

Hence, the regression (predict) equation will be  $Y = 103.443 + 1.771X$

**4.3.2a: Model Summary**

	Adjusted R Square	Error of the Estimate
		12

Factors: (Constant), capacity building

**4.3.2b: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

	Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	044	044		
Residual	76	39		
Total	12			

Factors: (Constant), capacity building

Dependent Variable: innovation

**4.3.2c: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error		
(Constant)	$\beta$			
Capacity building				

Dependent Variable: innovation

**Result**

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using regression analysis to ascertain if there is a relationship between capacity building and innovation in Nigerian universities. Tables 4.3.2 a, b & c revealed that the regression result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ( $R^2_{calc} = .788, F = 14.177 >$  at  $p < 0.05$ ). The significant level was



found to be 0.04, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *capacity building has significant influence on innovation*.

**Hypothesis Three:**

**HO:** There is no significant relationship between staff appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities.

**HA:** There is a significant relationship between staff appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities.

**4.3.3: Correlation**

	Staff appraisal	Quality service delivery
Correlation Coefficient (two-tailed)		
Correlation Coefficient (two-tailed)		

**Result**

Data for the test of this hypothesis were obtained from responses from the questionnaire. Correlation analysis was used to test the significant relationship between disposal employee appraisal and quality service delivery. **Table 4.3.3** reveals that while the r calculated result shows the existence of significant result on the variables (r = 0.74 at p< 0.05). The significant level is 0.046, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *there is a significant relationship between staff appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities*.

**Hypothesis Four:**

**HO:** ICT availability has no significant effect on competitive advantage.

**HA:** ICT availability has a significant effect on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities.

Regression model:  $Y = \alpha + \beta X + \mu \dots$  (For all observations  $i, = 1, 2 \dots n$ )

Where Y =Competitive advantage

X = ICT availability

$\mu$  = error term of random variable

$\alpha$  = a constant amount

$\beta$  = effect of X hypothesized to be positive

Hence, the regression (predict) equation will be  $Y = 99.331+0.114X$

**4.3.4a: Model Summary**

		re	ed R Square	Error of the Estimate
				19

ictors (Constant): ICT availability

**4.2.4b:ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

	Squares		quare		
sion	221		221		
al	79		54		
	200				

ictors: (Constant), ICT availability

endent Variable: competitive advantage

**4.3.4c: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

	dardized Coefficients		dized Coefficients		
		ror			
ant)					
ailability					

endent Variable: competitive advantage

**Result**

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using regression analysis to ascertain if there is a relationship between ICT availability and competitive advantage in Nigerian universities, the Tables 4.3.4 a, b & c revealed that the regression result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ( $R^2_{calc} = .817$ ,  $F = 15.131 >$  at  $p < 0.05$ ). The significant level was found to be 0.03, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *ICT availability has significant effect on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities.*

**Hypothesis Five:**

**HO:** There is no significant correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

**HA:** There is a significant correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

**4.3.5: Correlation**

	Conducive learning environment	Quality graduates
Correlation Coefficient (one-tailed)		
Correlation Coefficient (two-tailed)		

## Result

Data for the test of this hypothesis were obtained from responses from the questionnaire. Correlation analysis was used to test the significant correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

**Table 4.3.5** reveals that while the  $r$  calculated result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ( $r = 0.81$  at  $p < 0.05$ ). The significant level is 0.033, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *there is a significant correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates*.

## 5.0 Summary of Findings and Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

From the results of the analysis, the study shows the following findings:

1. Funding has a significant positive effect on growth in Nigerian universities ( $R^2_{cal} = 724$ ,  $f = 16.122 > at 0.05$ ).
2. Capacity building has a significant positive effect on innovation in Nigerian universities.
3. There is a significant positive relationship between employee appraisal and quality service delivery in Nigerian universities.
4. ICT availability has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage in Nigerian universities.
5. There is a significant positive correlation between conducive learning environment and quality graduates.

### 5.2 Conclusion

Management mechanisms, which manifest in the areas of funding, capacity building, employee appraisal, ICT availability, and conducive learning environment have significant positive effect on/or relationship with performance of Nigerian universities which manifest in growth, innovation, service quality, competitive advantage, and quality graduates. This can be facilitated through adequate provision of fund, regular capacity building, constant ICT availability, and commitment to conducive learning environment.

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