

Effect of Integration Communication on Organizational Performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21544>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21544

Published Date: 03 May 2024

Abstract

Integration communication is seamless coordination and alignment of communication efforts across various channels, departments, and levels within an organization. Despite the acknowledgement of the universities in the economy, the public universities experience a lot of challenges. For instance, there was the issue of missing marks by students, lack of adequate funding on their projects and infrastructures, which really affected the operation and financial performance of the institutions. Universities in Kenya had poor integration communication due failed respond to swiftly address problems facing students' academic challenges. The goal of this study was investigate the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya. This study adopted an explanatory design. The target population of this study consisted of 186 employees from the 3 public universities in the Western Region of Kenya. This comprised 36 procurement staff, 72 finance staff, 54 ICT staff, and 24 audit staff. This study adopted census method where all the respondents were included in the study. The questionnaires were used in data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation are all included in descriptive statistics. Regression analysis and inferential correlations were used to determine the change in the dependent variable caused by the independent variables. Tables were used to present the analyzed data. Results showed that Integration Communication has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance ($\beta=0.222$, $p<0.05$). Basing on the results the null hypothesis is rejected suggesting that integration communication had a significant positive effect on organizational performance. In conclusion,

communication integration in supply chain plays a role in the growth and competitiveness of the university. The study recommends that the public universities in the Western Region of Kenya should recognize the critical role of integration communication in organizational performance.

Keywords: Integration Communication, Organizational Performance, Public Universities

Introduction

Background of the Study

Performance can be viewed as the extent to which an entity accomplishes objectives of an organization in order to achieve the overall goal (Forés & Camisón, 2016). Performance of universities can be reflected better by both financial and non-financial measures of performance. This is because universities have multiple, contradictory and complex missions that include teaching, research, service to communities and revenue generation (Eneizan et al., 2016). In support of the varied goals of universities, a variety of measures have been used successfully in assessment of performance of universities in line with their objectives. Some of the measures include education mission that had indicators such as number of programmes, student enrolment, student lecturer ratio, class size, number of graduates and academic pathways (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Higher education has undergone far-reaching changes in most countries in recent years. University systems are in the midst of profound transformation and institutions are under growing competitive pressure to improve their performance (De Boer et al., 2018). This tendency to introduce market mechanisms in education and extend more professional management systems to universities has translated into the appearance on the scene, unprecedented in some countries, of public universities, many as for-profit organizations (McAdam & Scott, 2017). Most of the universities were founded in the 1990s or later in response to a policy geared to enhancing performance in higher education by heightening competition. Public universities, particularly the for-profit kind, conduct research less intensively than public institutions. Their contribution to this, the public good dimension of the university mission, is consequently still scant, for their focus is on teaching (Zhang et al., 2020).

Organizational performance in higher education is not necessarily related to academic standards universities (colleges) must establish procedures to monitor the quality of graduates (Irmayani et al., 2018). This can be done through formal survey processes or informal feedback. For example, the evaluation of the education in different universities and colleges does not clarify the reasons why some companies prefer particular graduates. It may be because certain companies need to hire individuals that have received training in a particular academic field. Improvement in the quality of graduates begins with the recognition of graduates' position in the labour market and also the demands of possible employers (Sparr et al., 2017).

According to Stevens and Johnson (2016) communication integration is a process where all the parties involved with the fulfillment of a product are integrated into a single system. This requires significant coordination and alignment in order to ensure everyone is effectively working toward the same goal at all times. Having the parts required for a product show up where they are needed, when they are needed, helps to not only prevent delays in the manufacturing process, but also eliminates a lot of wasted time, storage space, and more.

The output performance of Malaysian public universities appeared to be incommensurate with the high amount of Malaysian public spending in higher education (Lamba &

Subramanian, 2020). The public universities might be inefficient in utilizing the inputs (including the government funds). The large amount of higher education spends from public funds and the relatively low performance warrant a careful examination on the efficiency of the public universities in Malaysia.

The Higher Education (HE) system in South Africa has been going through an exercise of transformation in order to redress the educational imbalances of the past. The funding of HE institutions (HEIs) was one of the changes used to transform the HE system in South Africa (Fomunyan, 2017). The transformation agenda of HE led to the expansion of HE which put serious constraints on state funding of HEIs and those from poor backgrounds accessing HE. The post-apartheid government established a mechanism of increasing access to HE by providing the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to poor deserving students through integration communication. This massification triggered a funding crisis, highlighting the need for improved methods of assessing and analysing efficiencies, as well as a clearer understanding of HE funding (Vincent & Chiwandire, 2019).

Kenyan Universities, both Public, have embarked on a rapid expansion of their programmes and decentralization of campuses leading to rising enrolment rates despite diminishing financial resources (Bisaso, 2017). Public universities are also referred to as state universities since they are funded by the exchequer (O'Connor, 2018). Over the years, the government has placed great emphasis on education whose role in promoting socio-economic and political development cannot be gainsaid whatsoever. Indeed, that is why the government has been keen to rapidly expand university which as in the recent past posed serious challenges to the leaders and managers of the universities.

Statement of the Problem

Universities are essential in the economy of the country as they are the link between the problems that the country is facing and provides the way out in order for the economy to be stable. Despite the acknowledgement of the universities in the economy, the public universities experience a lot of challenges. For instance, there was the issue of missing marks by students, lack of adequate funding on their projects and infrastructures, which really affected the operation and financial performance of the institutions. Universities in Kenya had poor integration communication due failed respond to swiftly address problems facing students' academic challenges.

As a result of the poor communication, public university supply chain methods result in late delivery, as well as large stock outs, resulting in inventory waste. This was primarily due to public colleges' incapacity to forecast item, material, and equipment capacity requirements. While many studies had been conducted on the impacts of supply chain integration, agility, and external learning on a firm's organizational performance (for example Fomunyan (2017); Stevens & Johnson (2016); Sparr et al (2017), there was still a problem on the organizational performance of public universities in terms of communication integration in the Western Region of Kenya. Therefore, the current study sought to fill the gap by investigating the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya.

Research Objective

Investigate the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya

Research Questions of the Study

What is the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya?

Literature Review

Effect of Integration Communication on Organizational Performance

Public universities needed to transform themselves in order to meet the challenges posed by the unfavorable perception by realigning their institutions with the environment, redesigning themselves to achieve new goals, redefining roles and responsibilities, and reengineering their marketing processes and strategies (Masete & Mafini, 2018). The negative perception as a result of the university ranking system played a significant role in negatively affecting the performance of several public universities. Adetunji (2015) expressed that there was a decline in quality and performance of higher institutions brought about by a number of factors, which included demography, poor states of the economy, weak internal capacity, poor governance, poor research activities, brain drain, political interference, incessant industrial actions, unruly and destructive conduct of undergraduates, poor preparation of entering students, an unsuitable policy environment, poor funding, shortages in instructional materials, laboratory equipment, and poor library facilities.

The lack of a marketing communication focus tended to be the result of how IHEs had evolved over time, which hindered the optimal performance of several higher institutions (Yilmaz, 2017). As institutions grew their enrollment and program offerings, they also became increasingly fragmented internally. Typically, this resulted in functions becoming compartmentalized and departments operating without any knowledge of the other parts of the institution, thereby resulting in poor institutional performance. Individuals within IHEs tended to view themselves as part of a distinct department competing for limited organizational resources rather than as part of a comprehensive system working toward common objectives, thereby contributing to the sub-optimal level of performance witnessed in some of the institutions (Jackson & Deeg, 2018).

According to Haroon and Malik (2018), communication was mandatory to improve the performance of a team. Communication had a similar status in an organization as that of blood flow in the human body. Therefore, an organization that understood the importance of communication used it in its organizational environment. It made sure of the collaboration of material and human factors and helped an organization evolve an efficacious network of transformation and progress. Effective organizational communication worked only when barriers of communication were managed in a dexterous manner. The following were the barriers that obstructed the smooth flow of effective organizational communication: filtration, elective perception, information overload, emotions, language, silence, communication apprehension, gender difference, and politically correct communication (Suen & Suen, 2019).

As indicated by Olaleye, Ukpabi, and Mogaji (2020), communication strategies had a significant impact on enhancing enrollment among public universities. It was believed that print media (newspapers) was the main channel of communication used by the university to disseminate messages. The major challenge faced in the implementation of the

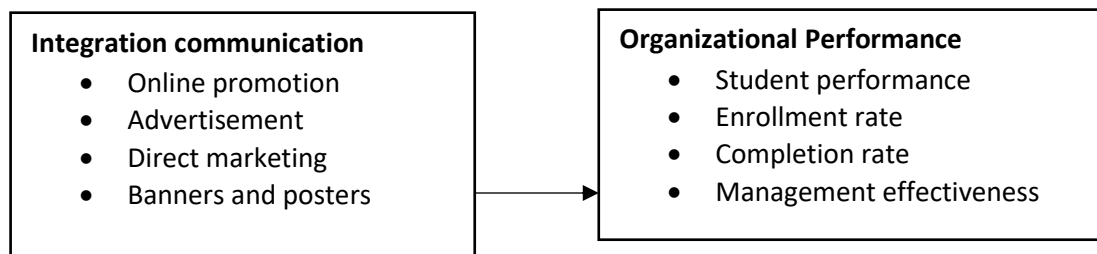
communication strategies was a lack of enough finance. Public universities should move from focusing so much on advertising in newspapers and embrace technological advances that the university students identified with, such as social media platforms like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and mobile phones, which had become popular among their target audience. Amollo (2016) indicated that all four supply chain integration practices had been implemented in public universities in Kenya, with lean practices sharing implemented to a large extent, while outsourcing of non-core services and strategic supplier partnerships to a moderate extent. On individual supply chain integration practices, the involvement of suppliers in planning for the procurement of new items was the least practiced variable. The study, however, focused on general supply chain practices, unlike the current study, which focused on integrated communication and organizational performance.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework for this study. The independent variable is Integration communication while Organizational Performance is the dependent variable.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



(Source: Researcher, 2024)

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study adopted an explanatory design. The main goal was to detect cause and effect relationships between the variables (Khalid, Abdullah, & Kumar 2012). This design was chosen because it was relatively quick and easy to conduct; data on all variables was only collected once. It was also good for descriptive analysis.

Target Population

The target population of this study consisted of 186 employees from the 3 public universities in the Western Region of Kenya. This comprised 36 procurement staff, 72 finance staff, 54 ICT staff, and 24 audit staff.

Target Population

This study adopted census method where all the respondents were included in the study since the target population was small and manageable while carrying out the study. Census was used because each member of the target population has an opportunity to provide the required integration communication hence giving the study an elevated degree of statistical confidence in the study outcome. This implies all the 186 respondents were used in this study.

Research Instruments

This study basically used primary sources of data to carry out the analysis. A primary source gave the researcher direct evidence about the effect of integration communication on

organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya. The data was collected from the selected university departments. The questionnaires were used in data collection.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is the actions and methods performed on data that helped the researcher to describe facts, detect patterns, develop explanations and test hypotheses (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2018). Data analysis involved cleaning, sorting, and coding relevant data from the respondents. Data analysis was carried out with both descriptive and inferential statistics using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

The inferential statistics used in this study were correlation and regression models. The correlation helped the researcher to describe the linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. It showed the direction and strength of the relationship between study variables. Regression analysis examined the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, which best predicted the value of the dependent variable. This analysis estimated the coefficients of the predictive linear equation involving more than one of the dependent variables.

Results and Discussion

Effect of Integration Communication on Organizational Performance

The study sought to establish the effect of integration communication on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya Responses were elicited on a 5-point Likert scale of 1-5 where: 1–strongly disagree; 2–disagree; 3-neutral; 4-agree; 5-strongly agree. Analysis of the response mean scores was conducted on the continuous scale <1.5 represents strongly disagree; with 1.5-2.4 disagree; while 2.5-3.4 given moderately agree; with 3.5- 4.5 being agree and finally >4.5 represented strongly agree. The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Effect of Integration Communication on Organizational Performance

Statements		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Sd
The successful integration of supplier's businesses to the university's transactions are integrations utilized in supply chain integration.	F	56	73	7	22	14	3.78	1.25
	%	32.6	42.4	4.1	12.8	8.1		
Integration of information among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers has improved organizational performance of public universities.	F	45	68	10	26	23	3.50	1.37
	%	26.2	39.5	5.8	15.1	13.4		
	F	43	60	10	37	22	3.38	1.39

University has the ability to integrate its processes internally and externally with its supply chain partners aids its ability to respond to the changing demands of the customer.	%	25	34.9	5.8	21.5	12.8		
Systematic integration among internal functions has improved organizational performance of public universities.	F	54	63	10	29	16	3.64	1.33
	%	31.4	36.6	5.8	16.9	9.3		

Sources: Research Data (2024)

According to the information on Table 1, the descriptive statistics findings on integration communication showed that 129(75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the successful integration of supplier’s businesses to the university’s transactions are integrations utilized in supply chain integration while 36(20.9%) of the respondents disagreed that the successful integration of supplier’s businesses to the university’s transactions are integrations utilized in supply chain integration. The study findings father revealed the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the successful integration of supplier’s businesses to the university’s transactions are integrations utilized in supply chain integration mean rating of 3.78 and standard deviation of 1.25. These findings agree with Alshurideh et al (2022) who examines the influence of supply chain partners' integration on organizational performance. The authors investigate how the level of integration among supply chain partners affects the performance of organizations, and how trust moderates this relationship.

Furthermore, 113(57%) of the respondents agreed and 49(28.5%) of the respondents disagreed that integration of information among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers has improved organizational performance of public universities. However, respondents agreed that Integration of information among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers has improved organizational performance of public universities with mean rating of 3.50 and Standard deviation of 1.37. This suggest that they strongly agree on the statement that Integration of information among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers has improved organizational performance of public universities. However, according to Sundram et al (2018) suggest effective management of supply chain information and the infrastructure of information systems influence manufacturing performance. They may explore how these factors affect the integration of the supply chain, and subsequently, how supply chain integration impacts the overall manufacturing performance of organizations in Malaysia.

Further, 103(59.9%) of the respondents agreed that University has the ability to integrate its processes internally and externally with its supply chain partners aids its ability to respond to the changing demands of the customer and those who disagreed are 59(34.3%). The study findings revealed that participants agreed with the statement that University has the ability to integrate its processes internally and externally with its supply chain partners aids its ability to respond to the changing demands of the customer with mean rating of 3.38 and the Standard deviation of 1.39. This finding agrees with Alzoubi et al (2022) who suggested that both SCI and agile practices have a positive impact on lead time reduction. SCI was found to have a stronger impact on lead time reduction than agile practices. The study also found that the combination of SCI and agile practices had a synergistic effect on lead time reduction,

meaning that the impact of the two factors was greater than the sum of their individual effects.

Finally, 117(68%) of the participants agreed that Systematic integration among internal functions has improved organizational performance of public universities. However, 45(26.2%) of the respondents disagreed that Systematic integration among internal functions has improved organizational performance of public universities. Further, the study findings revealed that participants strongly agreed towards the statement that Systematic integration among internal functions has improved organizational performance of public universities with mean rating of 3.64 and the standard deviation of 1.33. Furthermore, these findings agree with Zhou, Zhou, Feng & Jiang (2019) who examines the relationship between dynamic capabilities, innovation, and organizational performance. Dynamic capabilities refer to an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to address rapidly changing environments. They also propose that dynamic capabilities positively impact organizational performance and that this relationship is mediated by innovation.

Correlation Analysis

The objective of the study sought to determine the perceptions of teachers towards Organizational performances in ECDE Centres in Uasin-Gishu County. The correlation findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation on Integration communication and Organizational performance

N=186	Organizational performance	Integration communication
Organizational performance	1	
Integration communication	.658**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Survey Data (2019)*

According to Table 2, the research found that integration communication was positively associated with organizational performance ($r=.658$; $p<0.01$). The correlation coefficient (r) of 0.658 suggests a robust relationship between these variables. Furthermore, the statistical significance level ($p<0.01$) underscores the reliability of this association, indicating that the likelihood of obtaining such results due to random chance is extremely low. In practical terms, this suggests that effective integration communication strategies within these institutions positively contribute to their overall performance, encompassing various aspects such as operational efficiency, financial stability, and potentially, academic excellence. This finding underscores the importance of fostering clear and cohesive communication channels within organizational structures to drive success and effectiveness, particularly within the context of public universities facing unique challenges in resource management and service delivery.

Results for Multiple Regression Analysis

The power of a link between the dependent variable and several predictor variables was established with multiple regression analysis, and the relative relevance of each predictor was determined, typically with the effect of other predictors eliminated statistically.

Table 3

Interpretation of Multiple Regression Model

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.804 ^a	.646	.637	.31497

Table 3 displays the regression findings, which showed an R^2 of 0.719 and an R-value of 0.804. The high linear correlation between the dependent and independent variables was indicated by the R-value of 0.804. According to the coefficient of determination (R^2), the independent variables provided 0.646 of the total explanation. The regression model accounted for roughly 64.6% of the observed variation in the independent variable.

Regression Model Fitness Test

The model's fitness was checked to test if it provided the best possible fit for the data. The study results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Regression Model Fitness Test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	69.051	4	17.263	76.120	.000 ^b
Residual	37.873	167	.227		
Total	106.924	171			

The results presented in Table 4 reveal a significant F-statistic of 76.120, indicating that the multiple regression model employed in the study was highly accurate. The statistical significance level of $p=0.000$ further reinforces the reliability of the model, suggesting that the likelihood of obtaining such results by chance alone is extremely low. This indicates that the data were well-suited to the multiple regression framework, supporting the validity of the relationships examined within the study. Consequently, it underscores the importance of carefully considering independent variables during the design of the research system, as they significantly contribute to the model's accuracy and ability to effectively explain the phenomenon under investigation. Overall, these findings validate the robustness of the analytical approach adopted and provide confidence in the interpretation of the results regarding the relationship between integration communication and organizational performance.

Regression Model Coefficients

Running a regression model yielded coefficients for use in the regression equation. Table 5 details the study's findings.

Table 5

Regression Model Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.022	.207		.108	.914
Integration Communication	.222	.069	.209	3.225	.002

Table 5 showed that the integration communication had a positive linear effect on organizational performance ($\beta_1=0.222$, $p=0.002$). This shows that a 0.222-unit improvement in organizational performance can be attained by instituting a more stringent collection approach. The resulting regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 0.022 + 0.222X_1$$

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis H0 stated that integration communication has no significant effect on organizational performance of Public Universities in Western Region Kenya, was formulated for testing. Results showed that Integration Communication has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance ($\beta_1=0.222$, $p<0.05$). Basing on the results the null hypothesis is rejected suggesting that integration communication had a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that integration communication in supply chain plays a role in the growth and competitiveness of the university. They acknowledged the successful integration of communication into the university's transactions. Additionally, they recognized the importance of integrating communication among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and customers in improving organizational performance.

The study recommends that the public universities in the Western Region of Kenya should recognize the critical role of integration communication in supply chain organizational performance. They should prioritize investments in integration communication, IT infrastructure, tools, and systems to enhance data collection, communication, and decision-making processes.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the contribution of all Procurement staff, Finance staff, ICT staff, and Audit staff during data collection.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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