

# ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to investigate which the organizational culture could exert influence on the academic performance of undergraduate business education students in Rivers State, Nigeria with emphasis on caring, apathetic, exacting, integrative culture. This study adopted the co-relational research design, because the study attempted to establish relationship between the perceived organizational culture and students' academic performance. The study was carried out in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology and Rivers State University of Education Eight hundred and sixty two (862) undergraduate business education students which was a representation of 30% of the target population participated in this study as respondents. Four rating scales in addition to students' cumulative result scores were for data collection for this study. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the four (4) research questions while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to test the four (4) hypotheses. The results of the study revealed high level of caring and integrative culture existing in the two universities with high level of academic performance and that significant relationship existed between the caring and integrative culture as aspects of the universities' culture and their students' academic performance. It was further revealed that no significant relationship existed between apathetic and exacting culture as aspects of the universities and their students' academic performance. It was recommended that the universities authorities should ensure that conducive organizational culture be maintained within the university communities and also care for others, integrate and work together with the aim of achieving the objectives of the universities.*

**Keywords:** Caring Culture, Apathetic Culture, Exacting Culture, Integrative Culture, Academic Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

In every organization, different types of culture exist; even in universities. In organizations, culture is cultivated based on the existed different areas of comparative advantage and strength and universities are not excluded. In universities, a strong academic culture could be built upon the goal for the students and the high expectations of achievement and frequent monitoring of students' progress are pervaded with values of performance and productivity (Ukpong, 2006). Organizations refer to association of persons grouped together for the pursuit of specific goals. An organization develops its unique culture, which may be expressed in form of beliefs, norms and values among its members. Organizational culture is therefore the informal values and norms that control the interaction of individuals and groups within and outside an organization. Universities have peculiar organizational culture. A prevalent cultural element in such institutions of learning is the academic culture.

A university is an organization, which function is to provide education of specialized nature in subject areas and professions, and to encourage the discovery of new knowledge and skills through research (Ukeje, 1979). One of such specialized subject areas or professions is business education. Since business education programme was introduced in Nigeria, there seems to be no one standard definition of what this subject is. Hence, Nwosu (2003) observed that it is often described as education for and about business. However, Clark (2002:103) defined business education as "an all-

encompassing programme, which equips its recipient with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable him succeed in whatever business endeavour he may engage in". In the view of Nwosu (2003), business education at the university level is concerned mainly with the development of skills and knowledge needed to enable an individual function well. Isu (2004:13) defined business education as "that type of education that deals with the acquisition of practical skills, knowledge and values that enables one function effectively in the society". The American Vocational Association (AVA, 1980) described business education as a broad and comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme encompasses:

- a. The knowledge, attitude and skills needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic system
- b. The vocational knowledge and skills needed for entry-level employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers.

It is a collaborative programme in which educational and industrial sectors of any economy form partnership thereby preparing the individual to adequately fit into both industry and classroom as a professional. Consequently, business education can simply be defined as that aspect of educational programme designed to provide an individual with the needed business and vocational attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills. It is concerned with the acquisition of pedagogical and professional competencies in industry and education necessary for personal use, for entry into the business world as an employer or employee or self-employed and for effective participation in the educational industry as a professional business teacher.

In the school system as an organization, academic culture imbibes learned complex of knowledge, beliefs, and art, moral; it is the totality of learned socially transmitted behaviour (Ukpong, 2006) in different fields of study, and business education is not excluded. The dangers of deviating from academic culture, according to him, resulted from the promotion of chaotic tendencies exhibited by students as they involve in riots and cult activities on tertiary institutions' campuses, which is enormous.

Handy (1981) stated that organization's culture includes deep-set belief about how work should be organized, workers' remuneration and control, the degrees of required formalization, what amount of planning is required and how far ahead, what combination of obedience and initiative is looked for in subordinates, whether work hours, dress or personnel eccentricities matter and whether there are rules and procedures to follow or just to concentrate on achieving set objectives.

Hoy & Miskel (1987) identified two dimensions of organizational culture as the human resource orientation and the nature of transaction. The human resource orientation has four elements of culture; namely, caring culture, integrative culture, apathetic culture and exacting culture. The nature of transaction is comprised of four types of culture; namely, rational culture, developmental culture, consensual culture and hierarchical culture. Out of the two dimensions of organizational culture, this study therefore investigated the four elements of the human resource orientation culture. In Rivers State, two colleges of education exist and they are located in the urban and sub-urban areas of the State. These tertiary institutions could have built their own culture around their areas of comparative advantage and strength owing to those differences. They could also have established academic culture, which could be identifiable with a particular university, which would be guarded vehemently and sustained for a long period of time.

Goals attainment/achievement in educational organizations is tie to academic performance of students, resource acquisition or development, the quality of students and services rendered. The academic performance includes the role of the institution in developing motivation, creativity, self-confidence and aspirations needed for success in life. Excellent academic performance emanates as a result of strong academic culture. This means that good academic culture results in good academic performance.

Culture in a particular discipline or course of study in academic profession exists, which involves attributes and beliefs of the profession. There is also the culture in the national systems of education. It is assumed that these cultures exert one influence or the other on the academic performance of

universities' undergraduate business education students' academic performance. This underscores the need to ascertain empirically such influence through the perception of the students themselves.

Universities are typical organizations that have developed a culture. In Rivers State and they have their unique organizational cultures of which universities in Rivers State are not an exception. The organizational culture components (caring, apathetic, exacting and integrative culture) seem to influence the universities' organizational culture, which could also influence undergraduate business education students' academic performance either negatively or positively. The question now is; could the differences in the students' academic performance be attributed to the differences in organizational cultures? Again, has the culture of a university any influence on the students' academic performance? Proffering solutions to these questions has been an issue of great concern to universities' administrators, researchers and scholars. However, the available literature seems to show that research evidences exist on the influence of universities' organizational culture (caring culture, apathetic culture, exacting culture and integrative culture) on workers' performance but little or no empirical evidence has been found to establish relationship existing between universities; organizational culture (caring culture, apathetic culture, exacting culture and integrative culture) and students' academic performance particularly in Rivers State. Therefore, based on this premise, there is a research-based knowledge gap existing about the extent to which the universities' organizational culture (caring culture, apathetic culture, exacting culture and integrative culture) could influence the universities' undergraduate business education students' academic performance either negatively or positively. This study was undertaken to fill the research-based knowledge gap that exists in this area. The purpose of this study was to find out what influence organizational culture (caring, apathetic, exacting and integrative culture) exerts on undergraduate business education students' academic performance in universities in Rivers State.

## METHOD

This study adopted co-relational research design. This is so because the study established relationship between the perceived organizational culture prevalent in the universities (independent variables) and undergraduate business education students' academic performance (dependent variables). The perceived organizational culture was classified in this study to include caring, apathetic, exacting and integrative culture. The target population used for this study consisted of all undergraduate business education students of 100, 200 and 300 levels students of Department of Business Education, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and the Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt. The justification to choose this group of respondents is informed by the fact that they are matured enough to respond to research instruments administered to them. As at the time of this study, the total population consists of 2868 students. The sample size of 862 was used in this study as respondents. This represents 30% of each of the population group used for this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the students from the Department of Business Education of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt that constituted the sample size.

Four rating scales and a teacher-made test were used for collecting data for this study. The rating scales are Caring Culture Rating Scale (CCRS), Apathetic Culture Rating Scale (ACRS), Exacting Culture Rating Scale (ECRS) and Integrative Culture Rating Scale (ICRS). The CCRS, ACRS, ECRS and ICRS are rating scales designed by the researchers for the purpose of gathering data from respondents for this study in the areas of Caring Culture, Apathetic Culture, Exacting Culture and Integrative Culture of the universities as organizations. Each of the rating scales is comprised of 10 items with four-point response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), which have corresponding scores of 4, 3, 2 points and 1 point respectively.

The teacher-made test is made up of the students' cumulative result scores extracted from the students' examination records folder of the two universities investigated. For weighting or grading the undergraduate business education students' examination result scores, the five-point rated format as presented below was used.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{High performance} \quad A \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} = 70 - 100 = 5 \text{ points} \\ B = 60 - 69 = 4 \text{ points} \\ \hline 50 - 59 = 3 \text{ points} \end{array} \right. \\
 \text{Average performance } C = \\
 \\
 \text{Low performance} \quad D \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} = 45 - 49 = 2 \text{ points} \\ E = 40 - 44 = 1 \text{ point} \\ \hline F = 0 - 39 = 0 \text{ point} \end{array} \right.
 \end{array}$$

In order to determine the range of test scores for high level of academic performance, scores above the average performance score of 3 points was used. Also, to determine the range of test scores for low level of academic performance scores below the average performance score of 3 points was used.

The CCRS, ACRS, ECRS and ICRS were content validated and pre-tested by two (2) specialists in business education and two (2) measurement and evaluation experts from the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt. The experts were selected based on the fact that they acquired the expert knowledge and experience in test construction and have been using similar research instrument in eliciting information for the purpose of research study.

To establish reliability of the CCRS, ACRS, ECRS and ICRS, test re-test method was employed. The instruments were pre-tested through test re-test method, using fifty (50) management students (25 from University of Port Harcourt and 25 from Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. Copies of the research instruments were administered to this group of students and after two (2) weeks interval, copies of the same research instruments were re-administered to the same group of students, retrieved and analyzed. The internal consistency of the CCRS, ACRS, ECRS and ICRS were determined to be 0.78, 0.74, 0.77 and 0.72 respectively, thus showing that the instruments were reliable. The coefficients of the responses were computed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Statistics, which is suitable for determining the reliability coefficient of nominal data. The researchers personally visited the tertiary institutions studied to administer copies of the research instruments to business education students used as respondents in this study. The researchers ensured that all the copies of the research instruments administered to the respondents were completely retrieved on the spot.

The data gathered for this study was analyzed with the used of frequencies count, mean and standard deviation scores, which were extracted and presented in appropriate tables to answer the four (4) research questions. To determine the extent of significant relationship existing between each of the independent variables and the dependent variables at 0.05 alpha level, the researchers employed Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Statistics in order to test the four (4) hypotheses and t-transformation was computed to establish the strength of the calculated r.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

To what extent does caring culture as an aspect of university's organizational culture influence undergraduate business education students' academic performance?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Computation of the Influence of caring culture on students' academic performance N = 862**

Variable	Response	Mean	St. Deviation	Remarks
Caring Culture	2884.25	3.346	0.3326	High Level
Students' Academic performance	2797.19	3.245	0.3235	High Level

Table 1 shows that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the caring culture are 3.346 and 0.3326 respectively. This indicates high level of caring culture existing in the universities since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5. Also, the table shows that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the level of academic performance found among the students are 3.245 and 0.3235 respectively. This reveals high level of undergraduate business education students' academic performance since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5. In conclusion, the researchers noted that the high level of caring culture as an aspect of the organizational culture that existed in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt influenced undergraduate business education students' high level of academic performance scores.

### Research Question 2

To what extent does apathetic culture as an aspect of university's organizational culture influence undergraduate business education students' academic performance?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Computation of the Influence of apathetic culture on students' academic performance N = 862**

Variable	Response	Mean	St. Deviation	Remarks
Apathetic Culture	1993.81	2.313	0.2312	Low Level
Students' Academic Performance	2797.19	3.245	0.3235	High Level

Table 2 reveals that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the apathetic culture are 2.313 and 0.2312 respectively. This shows low level of apathetic culture existing in the universities since the mean score is less than the average point of 2.5. Also, the table shows that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the level of academic performance found among the undergraduate business education students are 3.245 and 0.3235 respectively. This indicates high level of academic performance recorded by the students since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5. In conclusion, the researchers observed that the low level of apathetic culture as an aspect of the organizational culture had no influence on undergraduate business education students' high level of academic performance scores in Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt.

### Research Question 3

To what extent does exacting culture as an aspect of university's organizational culture influence undergraduate business education students' academic performance in Rivers State?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Computation of the Influence of Exacting culture on undergraduate business education students' academic performance in Rivers State N = 862**

Variable	Response	Mean	St. Deviation	Remarks
Exacting Culture	2131.73	2.473	0.2437	Low Level
Students' Academic Performance	2797.19	3.245	0.3235	High Level

Table 3 reveals that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the apathetic culture are 2.473 and 0.2437 respectively. This shows low level of exacting culture existing in the universities since the mean score is smaller than the average point of 2.5. Also, the table shows that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the level of academic performance found among the students are 3.245 and 0.3235 respectively. This indicates high level of level of academic performance recorded by the students since the mean score is higher than the average point of 2.5. In conclusion, the researchers observed that the low level of exacting culture as an aspect of the organizational culture that exists in Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, St. John's Campus, Port Harcourt. has no influence on the students' high level of academic performance scores.

### Research Question 4

To what extent does integrative culture as an aspect of organizational culture influence undergraduate business education students' academic performance in Rivers State?

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Computation of the Influence of Integrative culture on students' academic performance N = 862**

Variable	Response	Mean	St. Deviation	Remarks
Integrative Culture	2940.28	3.411	0.3212	High Level
Students' Academic Performance	2797.19	3.245	0.3235	High Level

Table 4 reveals the response scores of students of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, St. John's Campus, Port Harcourt about the extent to which the integrative culture could influence their academic performance in business education. In the table, the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the caring culture are 3.411 and 0.3212 respectively. This provides high level of integrative culture existing in the colleges of education since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5. Also, the table indicates that the computed mean and standard deviation scores about the level of academic performance found among the students are 3.245 and 0.3235 respectively. This reveals high level of level of academic performance recorded by the students in business education since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5. In conclusion, the researcher noted that the high level of integrative culture as an aspect of the organizational culture that exists in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, St. John's Campus, Port Harcourt influences the students' high level of academic performance.

### Hypotheses 1

There is no significant relationship between the caring culture as an aspect of university organizational culture as perceived by undergraduate students and their academic performance.

**Table 5: r Computation and t-transformation of the Relationship between University's Caring Culture and Students' Academic Performance**

Variable	Mean	St. Deviation	Est. Std Error	r-Cal	r-Crit	t-trans Cal
Caring Culture	3.346	0.3326				
Students' Academic Performance	3.245	0.3235	19.756	0.297*	$\pm 0.1946$	10.39*

N = 862 df = 860 P > 0.05 t-ratio Crit =  $\pm 1.960$  \* = Significant

With N = 862, df = 860 and P > 0.05, the calculated r between the caring culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores as presented in table 5 was 0.297 and the critical value of r was  $\pm 0.1946$ . At this juncture therefore, the calculated r is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is thus rejected and the conclusion is that there is significant relationship between the caring culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores. This indicates that significant relationship exists between the caring culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores. Table 5 further shows that the t-transformation was 10.39 while the critical table value of t-ratio was  $\pm 1.960$ . That being so, the t-transformation is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is higher than the given critical value of t-ratio. This provides the adequate strength of the calculated r.

### Hypotheses 2

There is no significant relationship between the apathetic culture as an aspect of university organizational culture as perceived by students and their academic performance.

**Table 6: r Computation and t-transformation of the Relationship between University's Apathetic Culture and Students' Academic Performance**

Variable	Mean	St. Deviation	Est. Std Error	r-Cal	r-Crit	t-trans Cal
Apathetic Culture	2.313	0.2312				
Students' Academic Performance	3.245	0.3235	23.385	0.137+	$\pm 0.1946$	4.32*

N = 862 df = 860 P < 0.05 t-ratio Crit=  $\pm 1.960$  + = Not Significant \* = Significant

With N = 862, df = 860 and P < 0.05, the calculated r between the apathetic culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores in business education as presented in table 6 was 0.137 and the critical value of r was  $\pm 0.1946$ . At this point, the calculated r is not statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is less than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis (HO<sub>2</sub>) is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant relationship between the apathetic culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores. This means that significant relationship does not exist between the apathetic culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores in business education. Table 6 further shows that the t-transformation was 4.32 while the critical table value of t-ratio was  $\pm 1.960$ . Consequently, the t-transformation is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of t-ratio. This indicates that the strength of the calculated r was adequate.

### Hypotheses 3

There is no significant relationship between the exacting culture as an aspect of university organizational culture as perceived by students and their academic performance.

**Table 7: r Computation and t-transformation of the Relationship between University Exacting Culture and Students' Academic Performance**

Variable	Mean	St. Deviation	Est. Std Error	r-Cal	r-Crit	t-trans Cal
Exacting Culture	2.473	0.2437				
Students' Academic Performance	3.245	0.3235	23.385	0.179+	$\pm 0.1946$	5.79*

N = 862 df = 860 P < 0.05 t-ratio Crit=  $\pm 1.960$  + = Not Significant \* = Significant

With N = 862, df = 860 and P < 0.05, the calculated r between the exacting culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores as presented in table 7 was 0.179 and the critical value of r was  $\pm 0.1946$ . Consequently, the calculated r is not statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis (HO<sub>3</sub>) is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant relationship between the exacting culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores. This reveals that significant relationship does not exist between the exacting culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores. Table 7 further shows that the t-transformation was 5.79 while the critical table value of t-ratio was  $\pm 1.960$ . At this juncture, the t-transformation is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is higher than the given critical value of t-ratio. This shows the adequacy of the strength of the calculated r.

### Hypotheses 4

There is no significant relationship between integrative culture as an aspect of university organizational culture as perceived by students and their academic performance.

**Table 8: r Computation and t-transformation of the Relationship between university Integrative Culture and Students' Academic Performance**

Variable	Mean	St. Deviation	Est. Std Error	r-Cal	r-Crit	t-trans Cal
Integrative Culture	3.411	0.3212				
Students' Academic Performance	3.245	0.3235	23.385	0.315*	$\pm 0.1946$	11.16*

N = 862 df = 860 P > 0.05 t-ratio Crit=  $\pm 1.960$  \*= Significant

With N = 862, df = 860 and P > 0.05, the calculated r between the integrative culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores as presented in table 8 was 0.315 and the critical value of r was  $\pm 0.1946$ . Consequently, the calculated r is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is higher than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis (HO<sub>4</sub>) is thus rejected and the conclusion is that there is significant relationship between the university integrative culture as an aspect of the organizational culture and students' academic performance scores in the universities investigated. This shows that significant relationship exists between the integrative culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance. Table 8 further shows that the t-transformation was 11.16 while the critical table value of t-ratio was  $\pm 1.960$ . At this juncture, the t-transformation is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of t-ratio. This shows that the strength of the calculated r was adequate.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, the researchers discovered high level of caring culture existing in the universities with high level of students' academic performance. It was also found out that high level of caring culture as an aspect of the organizational culture exist in the universities investigated which influenced students' high level of academic performance scores and that there was significant relationship existing between caring culture as an aspect of the universities' organizational culture and students' academic performance scores.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers discovered low level of apathetic culture existing in the universities with high level of students' academic performance. It was also revealed that low level of apathetic culture as an aspect of the organizational culture that existed in the universities investigated had no influence on the students' high level of academic performance scores and that there was no significant relationship existing between the apathetic culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers discovered low level of exacting culture in the university with high level of students' academic performance. It was also found out that low level of exacting culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture that existed in the universities had no influence on the students' high level of academic performance scores and that there was no significant relationship existing between the exacting culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores.

Based on the results of this study, the researchers discovered high level of integrative culture exists in the universities investigated with high level of academic performance recorded by the students. It was also revealed that the high level of integrative culture as an aspect of the organizational culture that exists in the University influences the students' high level of academic performance scores and that there was significant relationship existing between the integrative culture as an aspect of the university organizational culture and students' academic performance scores.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings of the study, the researchers noted that high level of caring and integrative cultures as aspects of the organizational culture exist in the universities investigated. Such existence of high level of caring and integrative cultures as aspects of the organizational culture eventually influence high level of academic performance of students in the universities. The researcher however noted that despite the low level of apathetic and exacting cultures as an aspect of the organizational culture as discovered in this study, the students still recorded high level of academic performance scores in the universities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1 The university authorities should ensure that conducive organizational culture is maintained within the college community so as to assist students improve on their level of academic achievement.
- 2 Efforts should be intensified by all the stakeholders in the college community to ensure that low level of caring, apathetic and exacting as aspects of the organizational culture in the universities is improved upon so as to encourage high level of academic achievement among the students.
- 3 Efforts should be intensified by all the stakeholders in the university community to ensure that high level of integrative aspect of the organizational culture in the universities is maintained. This will assist in improving and maintaining high level of academic achievement among the students.
- 4 In order to ensure that the colleges of education operate in the environment free of culture not influenced by ethnicity, efforts should be intensified by government to ensure that all stakeholders in the university care for each other, integrate and work together, with the aim of achieving the objectives of the universities.

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