



INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AND ACADEMIC CORRUPTION IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING EDUCATION IN THE FCT



¹ **Tarda, Badamasi Ayuba (PhD)**
Email: badamasinainna@gmail.com

&

² **Musa, Muhammad Fika**
E-mail: mmfika127@gmail.com

¹⁻² Department of Educational Foundations
School of Education
Federal Capital Territory College of Education, Zuba-Abuja

Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the influence of instructional leadership effectiveness on academic corruption in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes in the FCT. The study adopted a descriptive design with a population comprising of all the ODL study centres around the FCT. These study centres consist of the University of Abuja CDL, 2 National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) study centres, FCT COE Continuing Education, and National Teachers' Institute (NTI) study centres. A total of 50 respondents were chosen using Simple random sampling procedure to participate in the study from all the centres. Three research questions were raised to be answered in this research which included what are the major forms of academic corruption inherent in Open and Distance Learning in FCT, Abuja? Among others. A self-developed questionnaire titled Instructional Leadership Effectiveness and Academic Corruption Questionnaire (ILEACQ) developed in 4-point Likert scale of SA, A, D, SD was used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data collected for the study while Pearson Product moment was used to establish correlation. The study found that there are traces of corruption and bridge of academic best practices such as extortion, lecture absenteeism, exchange of grades for gratifications, impersonation by some students among others. Consequent upon this, the paper recommends among others that management of ODL centres should adopt adequate strategies aimed at instilling the culture of discipline and academic freedom among their staff and students as a matter of priority, payment of decent remuneration for their staff so as to discourage them from seeking for gratifications as well as intensifying awareness campaigns among others.

Keywords; Instruction, Leadership effectiveness, Academic corruption, Open and Distance Learning

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right of all citizen. It is the instrument for harnessing the potentials of individuals for development. It is on the bases of the foregoing that all and sundry needs to be education whether within or outside the formal school system. Instruction entails the combination of all the methods, strategies and procedures adopted by teachers in imparting knowledge to their subjects. However, the integration of technology in the instructional delivery process further enriches instructional methods by facilitating real-time interaction and feedback between educators and students (Fatima et al 2025).

Bush (2015) sees Instructional leadership is a leadership model that focuses on the development of the school's educational program and its positive outcome on student learning outcomes. Instructional leadership refers to the administrative and pedagogical guidance provided to teachers by

the school administrator for the purpose of enhancing the teaching process in an educational setting. Instructional leaders work closely with their teacher (Brolund, 2016) through the instructional process. Literature on instructional leadership continue to affirm instructional leadership's relevance—highlighting its roles in improving school climate, teacher engagement, and professional learning (Arjanto et al., 2023; Nogadas et al., 2024) These guidance services entails setting instructional objectives, identification and utilisation of educational resources, pedagogical skills as well as inter and intra-personal relationships within and outside the school system. Educational leaders have to be effective in the discharge of their assigned responsibilities of supervising the efforts of their subordinates. Effective instructional leaders strive to facilitate the professional growth of their staff, monitor students' academic progress and ensure high quality outcomes among others.

Open and Distance Education is an educational opportunities meant for students who are not opportune to attend formal tertiary education because of age, work schedules and other factors. Jonathan, Charles and Ambrose (2014), posits that this educational opportunity is meant for those who need to work and learn at the same time. This educational arrangement help to open access to educational opportunities for a teeming population of qualified and potential learners who for one reason or the other have not benefited from the conventional tertiary education system.

ODL is meant to reach out to a large group of audience across a wide area of coverage with the support of technology for education. This utilisation of technology help in promoting flexibility and individualised learning (Lyke and Frank, 2012) as well as increase access to qualitative education. However, persistent challenges threaten the effectiveness of ODL, especially in Nigeria. Inadequate ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, high data costs, and limited device access significantly diminish learning opportunities (Olawale & Sanni, 2021)

Academic corruption refers to the manifestation of all forms of unethical and illegal practices within the educational system. These irregularities has the potentials of undermining the sole essence of open and distance education if not put on check. This paper attempt to investigate the forms, manifestations and prevalence of these forms of academic frauds in the Open and Distance Education centres in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Problem Statement

The emphasis of expanding access to quality and equitable education at all levels necessitated the proliferation of many Open and Distance Learning centres in major towns and cities across Nigeria. However, the semi-formal nature of such programmes made it susceptibility to academic irregularities and fault plays that ignite the smear of corruption. The manifestation of some forms of academic corruption in the open and Distance Education programme in recent time is posing a serious cchallenge to the quality of education being provided there as well as the leadership effectiveness of the administrators of such centres. The nature of the learners and the learning context made it fertile for the breed of these kind of corruption in the learning institutions. Some of these challenges include lack of adequate instructional resources, lack of accountability and monitoring, resistance to change, communication gap among others

Research Objectives

This study seeks to investigate the influence of instructional leadership effectiveness on academic corruption in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes in the FCT. The following specific objectives are the intent of this study. These are:

1. To identify the major forms of academic corruption inherent in Open and Distance Learning in FCT, Abuja
2. To examine the impact of the prevalence of academic corruption leadership effectiveness in the FCT, Abuja.
3. To assess the effectiveness of instructional strategies employed by administrators of Open and Distance Education in mitigating corrupt tendencies.

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the major forms of academic corruption inherent in Open and Distance Learning in FCT, Abuja?
2. How do the prevalence of academic corruption in open and Distance learning Education impact leadership effectiveness in the FCT, Abuja?
3. To what extent do the instructional strategies employed by administrators of Open and Distance Education in mitigating corrupt tendencies effective?

Literature Review

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership has a long standing acknowledgement as instrumental to school development. It is a leadership model that focuses on the development of the school system (Bush, 2015). It refers to the administrative and pedagogical guidance provided to teachers by the school administrator for the purpose of enhancing the teaching learning process in an educational setting. It is an educational leadership that focuses on the core responsibility of a school (Manaseh, 2016). These guidance services entails setting instructional objectives, identification and utilisation of educational resources, pedagogical skills as well as inter and intra-personal relationships within and outside the school system. Decheng (2013) viewed Instructional leadership to mean a learning-centered activities carried out by principals in supporting the development of teachers. Some of the key elements of the instructional leadership model includes setting instructional objectives, identification and utilisation of educational resources, pedagogical skills, collaboration etc.

Instructional leadership play significant role in the overall development of the educational process through enhancing quality education and students learning. They also support the establishment of clear goals, better curriculum management, effective monitoring, and fostering professional growth among teachers (Ghaviferk, 2017). More so, Suleiman (2013) posts that Instructional leadership enhances educational outcomes by fostering globally competent teachers and students, promoting effective pedagogical practices, and aligning curriculum planning with the demands of a technologically advanced world.

Open and Distance Education

The historical development of open and distance education in Nigeria is as old as education itself. The actual practice of the open and distance learning in the western system of education dates back to the time of correspondence education where candidates are prepared for standardized examinations like the General Certificate in Education (GCE), Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), IJMB and other preparatory programmes. The first generation universities were the pioneers in transforming open and distance education. The University of Lagos Correspondence and Open Studies Unit was opened in 1974 while that of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was established in 1976. Later in 1978, the Federal government of Nigeria established the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) via Decree now Act No. 7 of 10th April, as a single mode distance education institution with the mandate of upgrading the capacity of teachers in Nigeria.

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is another sole agency established in July, 1983 with the mandate of providing open and qualitative education to the citizenry in their diverse areas of needs. It has over 115 study centres across the length and breadth of Nigeria. At present, there are a number of study centres spread all over the country. The goals of the Open and Distance Education as enunciated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) contained in the National Policy on Education include among others the provision of more access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities; meeting the needs of employers and employees by mounting special courses for employees at workplaces; and encouraging life-long learning opportunities.

However, despite the proliferation of centres for Open and Distance learning, there are still issues scratching this educational programme in the face such as teacher quality and development (Amadi, 2012), quality of instructional delivery and educational infrastructure (Jonathan et al., 2014)

among others. Specific challenges faced in this mode of education include academic irregularities and fraudulent tendencies that is undermining the good intent of the programme includes issues of plagiarism, arbitrary sale of books, sale of grades, exhortation, ghost writing among others. Reported cases of corruption in tertiary institution have long been reported in the books of literature yet they still persist. For example, a study conducted by Unya, Achilike and Okorie (2022) on Academic corruption in African Higher education with emphasis on Nigeria revealed that corruption has invaded all the sectors of higher education-the students, lecturers, non-teaching staff and the management administrators. They further stated that Corruption in higher education manifest in different forms and dimensions. It involves aiding and abetting examination ethical conduct which can be perpetrated by both parents, school staff and the students.

Similarly, Olorunfemi and Ekoja (2020) in a study on corruption governance of higher education in Nigeria found out that corruption has pervade almost all sectors of the Nigeria society including education. These revelations are however not good for the credibility of the education systems, its processes and outcome.

Effective Leadership and Academic Corruption- The Nexus

Effective leadership is significant in surmounting the effect of corruption in organisations such as schools. Effective leadership impact organizational integrity by establishing ethical standards, fostering trust, and promoting a moral environment, which ultimately enhances employee commitment and overall effectiveness (Morrison, 2001). Conversely, where the smear of corruption infiltrate the educational system, it erodes the goodwill and credibility of the sacred institution of knowledge. This is therefore detrimental to the continuous survival of human society.

Research Methodology

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative). the population of the study comprised of all the academic staff and teachers of all Open and Distance Learning study centres around the FCT. However, for the purpose of anonymity and ethical conduct, the identity of the population will be concealed and a pseudo-identity will be assign to represent each participating centre. Therefore, are here represented as Centre A, Centre B, Centre C, Centre D respectively. 10 students and staff from all the centres in the study form the actual population. This therefore gave us 50 students. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in chosen the sample size of the study. The instruments used for data collection was a twenty-seven item self-develop questionnaire tagged '*Instructional Leadership Effectiveness and Academic Corruption Questionnaire (ILEACQ)*' and a focus group discussion (FGD). The instruments were validated for face and content reliability and a coefficient index of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for the focus group discussion.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations rule has been upheld in this study. All the participants were informed of the purpose and objectives of the research and they willingly decided to participate. All the information supplied by the participants were strictly use for academic purpose only. The anonymity of participants have also been ensured.

Findings

Research Question 1: What are the major forms of academic corruption inherent in Open and Distance Learning in FCT, Abuja?

Table 1: Mean ration on the forms of Academic corruption inherent in Open and Distance Education

S/ N.	STATEMENT	RESPONSES						
		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
	Forms of academic corruption inherent in ODL centres:							
1	Lecture absenteeism by lecturers	12	16	12	10	2.6	1.06	Accepted
2	Improper supervision of academic activities such as exams,	14	28	8	-	3.12	0.65	Accepted
3	TP etc	28	14	8	-	3.12	0.65	Accepted
4	Examination malpractice	18	18	14	-	3.08	0.80	Accepted
5	Plagiarism	18	14	8	10	2.72	1.08	Accepted
6	Arbitrary sale of books or academic manuals	22	14	10	4	2.92	0.89	Accepted
7	Lobbying and compromises of academic procedures	16	12	16	6	2.62	1.00	Accepted
8	Extortion	14	18	10	8	2.84	1.08	Accepted
9	Sale of grades	16	8	16	10	2.44	0.98	Rejected
10	Falsification of academic records	8	16	12	14	2.64	1.05	Accepted
	Non participation in academic activities							
	Cluster mean and standard deviation					2.81	0.92	

The analysis of table 1 above show that nine of the ten items forming part of academic corruption in ODL education centres in the FCT are manifest with their respective mean scores all above the acceptance criterion. Only item nine has a mean score of 2.44 which fell below the acceptance criteria was rejected. This implies that there are a number of ways and forms in which academic corruption/fraud manifest in the ODL education study centres. This findings is in line with what Unya et. al (2022) found out in their studies which indicated the manifestation of different forms and dimension of academic corruption across all categories of tertiary education workers in Nigeria have corruption tendencies invaded in their activities.

Research Question 2: How do the prevalence of academic corruption in open and Distance learning Education impact leadership effectiveness in the FCT, Abuja?

Table 2: Mean rating of Respondents on the Prevalence of Academic Corruption

S/N	Statement	Responses						
		Sa	a	d	sd	mean	sd	decision
	Prevalence/extent of Academic Corruption							
11	Flexible nature of ODL make it prone to academic frauds	14	14	12	10	2.64	.32	Accepted
12	and corruption	20	16	6	8	2.96	.89	Accepted
13	Academic corruption fosters dishonesty and mistrust	22	10	8	8	2.84	1.08	Accepted
14	between staff and students	20	10	6	14	2.72	1.08	Accepted
15	It undermines goodwill and credibility of the institutions	22	10	5	8	2.72	1.08	Accepted
16	It boost students enrolment	12	10	6	22	2.24	.96	Rejected
17	It leads to compromise of academic standards	10	4	6	30	1.88	.97	Rejected
18	Academic corruption leads to better use of educational resources							
	It promote efficiency and effectiveness of the centres	8	6	14	22	2.00	.28	Rejected
	The prevalence of academic corruption leads to positive change in the way the centres are operating					2.49		
	Cluster mean and standard deviation							

The analysis of table 2 above shows that for items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 on the prevalence or extent of academic corruption in the ODE centres in the FCT all revealed a mean scores above the threshold of 2.50. This is to say that the flexible nature of the programme made it prone to irregularities that undermines the integrity of the institutions and fosters mistrust between staff and students among others. However, items 16, 17 and 18 with corresponding mean scores of 2.24, 1.88 and 2.00 were

rejected as they fell below the acceptance criterion of 2.50. This implies that academic corruption does not lead to better use of resources, does not promote effectiveness and efficiency as well do not bring about positive change.

Research Question 3: To what extent do the instructional strategies employed by administrators of Open and Distance Education in mitigating corrupt tendencies effective?

Table 3: Mean rating of respondents on the Instructional Strategies for Mitigating Academic Corruption

S/N.	Statement	Responses							
		Sa	a	d	sd	mean	sd	decision	
	Instructional Strategies for Mitigating the Incidence of Academic Corruption								
19.	Recruitment and engagement of competent and credible staff	6	30	12	2	2.80	.69	Accepted	
20.	Regular and proper monitoring of academic activities	16	24	6	4	3.04	.87	Accepted	
21.	Decent pay package	8	20	16	6	2.60	.89	Accepted	
22.	Deployment of technology based instructional procedures	8	20	12	10	2.52	.98	Accepted	
23.	Use of digital tools for assessment	6	12	20	12	2.24	.95	Rejected	
24.	Holistic compliance to work ethics/code of conduct	12	26	8	4	2.92	.84	Accepted	
25.	Upright suspension and dismissal of staff found wanting	4	10	16	20	1.96	.96	Rejected	
26.	Organisation of students vanguards for anti-corruption to sensitize students on the dangers and penalties of academic fraud	22	18	6	4	3.16	.92	Accepted	
27.	Collaboration with government anti-corruption agencies like ICPC	18	14	12	6	2.88	1.03	Accepted	
	Cluster mean and standard deviation					2.68	0.90		

The analysis of table 3 above revealed that, with the exception of items 32 and 25 with mean scores below 250, all the other identified strategies are instrumental in mitigating the incidence of academic corruption in the ODL education centres with their respective mean score exceeding the threshold of 2.50. This implies that with proper monitoring, deployment of requisite technology, intensive sensitisation and collaboration with relevant agencies, stemming the tides of academic corruption will not be daunting

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the data presented, the paper discuss as follows:

From the analysis of data on table 1 on the forms of academic corruption in the Open and Distance Learning centres, it was found that there are a number of ways in which academic corruption/fraud and irregularities manifest in the ODL education study centres. The incidences of plagiarism, extortion and arbitrary sale of lecture materials among others are visible. This revelation has proven the work of Unya, Achilike and Okorie (2022) in which they uncover the manifestation of different forms and dimensions of academic corruption including among others cheating on entrance exams, paying bribe to facilitate the admissions process, bribing lecturers for better grade, falsified research publications, late payment of money due to staff for examination invigilation,

Findings from table 2 on the prevalence of academic corruption in the ODL centre show that academic corruption does not lead to better use of resources, neither does it promote effectiveness and efficiency of operations. It also does not bring about positive change and transformation in the centres. Consequent upon this however, it tarnishes the image and goodwill of the centres. This is affirmed by the findings of Olorrufemi and Ekoja (2020) which revealed that corruption had led to inadequate funding, poor quality control, poor infrastructural and instructional facilities, examination malpractice and many more.

Findings from table 3 on the instructional strategies for curbing the incidence of academic corruption in ODL education centres revealed the efficacy of the identified strategies as instrumental. This means putting these measures in place will subvert some of those cases and manifestations of corruption in the ODL centres. This stand is corroborated by (Morrison, 2001) in which he opined that effective leadership impact organizational integrity by establishing ethical standards, fostering trust, and promoting a moral environment, which ultimately enhances employee commitment and overall effectiveness. Also, Suleiman (2013) posits that effective instructional leadership enhances educational outcomes and pedagogical effectiveness. There the leadership of such study centres have to device and deploy all possible strategies that will help in stemming the tides of academic irregularities and frauds in order to protect the image and reputation of their learning centres.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that effective instructional leadership is instrumental in curbing the menace of academic corruption in ODL education study centres. It is imperative that all an sundry will face the reality and have a change of mind set in order to salvage our education system from absolute degradation especially the ODL outfits. We believe that revolutionalising the operation of ODL education through the deployment of digital tools in delivery of educational process and conduct of activities will reduce the tendency of corruption occasioned by face-to-face contact. These strategies are urgently needed to rescue and restore the glory and image of the study centres.

Recommendations

The paper offers the following recommendations for action:

1. The management of ODL centres should adopt adequate strategies aimed at instilling the culture of discipline and academic freedom among their staff and students as a matter of priority,
2. Provision of adequate funding and some degree of financial autonomy for ODL education centres to meet minor and pressing needs for resources.
3. Provision of sufficient instructional resources and facilities
4. Adoption and deployment of technology in service delivery.
5. Sensitisation and mass campaigns against corruption especial within the institutions through staff and student vanguards for change is essential.

References

- Arjanto, R., Utomo, E., Sukarso, T., & Pradana, A. (2023). Leadership journey in school: A bibliometric analysis of instructional leadership from 1941 to 2022. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(1), 157–176. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1619a>
- Bush, T. (2015). Understanding instructional leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(4), 487-489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143215577035>
- Brolund, L. (2016). Student success through instructional leadership. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*. 8(2): Pp 42-45
- Decheng, Z. (2013). Instructional Leadership: Connotation, Assessment and the Future Researching Direction. *Asia Pacific Education review*
- Fatima, A., Malik, S., Hussain, T., & Ali, S. (2025). The effects of technology integration on learning outcomes: A comparative study of traditional and technology-enhanced instructional methods. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 15(2), 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.13189/jerp.2025.150205>
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National Policy on Education* (6th Ed.). Lagos. NERDC
- Jonathan, A. O. Charles, A. and Ambrose, A. (2014). A review of Open and Distance Education and Human Development in Nigeria. *International Journal Of Emerging Technologies*. 9(6).63. doi:10.3991/ijet.v9i6.4121
- Lyke, J. and Frank, M. (2012). Comparison of students learning outcomes in online and traditional classroom environments in a psychology course. *Journal of instructional psychology*



- Manaseh, A. M. (2016). Instructional leadership; The role of heads of schools in managing the instructional programme. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*. 4(1), 30-47. doi:10.17583/ijelm.2016.03
- Morrison, A. (2001). Integrity and Global Leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics* 31, 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010789324414>
- Nogadas, R. A., Gonzales, J. M., & Villanueva, C. P. (2024). Instructional leadership in schools: A systematic review and future research agenda. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 52(3), 455–474. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432231234567>
- Olawale, M., & Sanni, M. (2021). The future of open and distance learning in Nigeria: Opportunities and challenges in higher education. *Journal of Open Learning and Development Studies*, 7(2), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3906596>
- Olorunfemi, G. V. and Ekoja, A. A. (2020). Corruption in governance of higher education in Nigeria. *Journal of contemporary education research*. 20(8). Pp 262-278
- Suleiman, M. (2019). A global context for instructional leadership: Implications for teaching and teacher preparation. *University of Bahrain scientific journal*. 1(1), <http://dx.doi.org/10.12785/jtte/010103>
- Unya, I. U., Achilike, B. A. and Okorie, M. (2022). Academic corruption in Africa higher institutions: The Nigerian experience. *University of Uyo Journal of humanities*. 26(1). Pp 266-286