

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH WEST ZONE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study examined instructional leadership practices and administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 7,118 participants (6,912 lecturers and 206 administrators). 365 participants were proportionately selected across five sampled federal universities. Data were collected through two researcher-developed instruments named: Instructional Leadership Rating Scale (ILRS) and Administrative Effectiveness Rating Scale (AERS). The instruments were validated, with content validity indexes of 0.94 for ILRS and 0.79 for AERS. Reliability was established using test-retest method at two-weeks interval, yielding coefficients of 0.88 and 0.89 for ILRS and AERS respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and regression analysis. Findings revealed low level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities within the North West Zone. Findings also showed that instructional leadership made a statistically significant relative contribution to administrative effectiveness. Precisely, management of instructional programme emerged as the strongest contributor to administrative effectiveness, followed by

supportive teaching climate, while institutional mission was the least contributor. Part of the recommendations stated the need for strengthening instructional leadership practices through capacity-building programmes for university administrators and promoting supportive teaching climate and institutional mission orientation to enhance administrative effectiveness in federal universities.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership Practices, Administrative Effectiveness, Federal Universities.

Introduction

Administrative effectiveness in universities is critical for achieving institutional goals, and it encompasses a variety of interconnected functions such as efficient resource management, robust policy implementation, staff supervision and development, continuous monitoring and evaluation, clear strategic planning and goal setting, high-quality decision-making, effective communication and coordination, and proactive problem-solving and conflict resolution. For instance, resource allocation must be optimized to support both academic and administrative activities, while policies need to be implemented in ways that align with institutional strategy and are regularly assessed for impact (Egwuragwu & Onyekwu, 2023). Leaders also need to supervise and develop staff to ensure they remain capable of delivering on the university's mission, and the supervision must be reinforced by monitoring systems that evaluate performance regularly. Strategic planning provides the roadmap for future growth, but its success depends on good decision-making and coordination among diverse university stakeholders (Habeeb & Eyüpoglu, 2024).

Universities globally face increasing pressure to deliver high-quality education and research outcomes despite limited resources. Administrative effectiveness, particularly efficient resource management, is therefore critical. Inefficient management of finances, facilities, and human resources can erode institutional performance and compromise student experience (Álvarez-Sáñez, Martínez López, & Rodríguez, 2023). As universities grow and diversify, their administrative processes become more complex, so optimizing resource allocation and streamlining operations has become a priority.

Instructional leadership refers to the systematic actions taken by educational leaders to enhance teaching and learning with the ultimate goal of improving students' academic outcomes. It involves setting clear expectations, supporting teachers, monitoring instruction, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Contemporary scholars emphasize that instructional leadership moves beyond administrative routines to focus deliberately on core instructional practices (Hallinger, 2022). Administrators are positioned as instructional guides who influence the direction, quality, and effectiveness of academic programmes. Instructional leadership embodies; defining institutional mission, managing instructional programme and promoting supportive teaching.

As noted by Kazemi (2023), mission statements in universities provide the basis for strategic plans and are instrumental in establishing good governance indicators such as effectiveness, accountability, and transparency. In the context of higher education, mission and vision statements are not mere formalities but essential tools for shaping organizational culture,

aligning stakeholders around common goals, and providing clarity on institutional priorities (Pikl & Dreven, 2024). Recent studies emphasize that effective management of instructional programmes enhances teaching quality, promotes accountability, and improves learners' outcomes. According to Hallinger, Philip, et al. (2025), instructional leadership remains central to school effectiveness because principals who actively supervise instruction, monitor curriculum delivery, and support teachers create positive academic environments that improve students' performance. Also Abubakar and Danladi (2021) for organizational climate to positively influence quality management practices, university leadership needs to deliberately create and sustain an enabling environment (communication, participatory governance, decentralization).

Mohammed and Yusuf (2020) examined institutional vision, mission, and administrative effectiveness in federal universities in Northern Nigeria. Findings revealed a strong positive relationship between the provision of institutional mission and administrative effectiveness, especially in strategic planning, performance monitoring, and policy implementation. Mission clarity significantly influenced key administrative functions, including strategic planning, performance monitoring, and policy implementation. Staff who understood and aligned with the institutional mission demonstrated higher commitment and efficiency, which contributed to more coherent decision-making and streamlined administrative processes.

Adeyemi and Okafor (2022), examined "instructional programme management and administrative effectiveness in federal universities in south-west Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives, three research questions, and two null hypotheses. Findings indicated a significant positive relationship between effective management of instructional programmes and administrative effectiveness in planning, coordination, and supervision. Analysis revealed that well-structured and efficiently coordinated instructional programmes positively influenced key administrative functions, including planning, coordination, and supervision of academic activities. Statistical results from Pearson correlation and multiple regressions showed a strong positive relationship between instructional programme management and administrative performance, indicating that administrators who effectively manage instructional processes contribute to smoother operations, higher productivity, and better alignment with institutional objectives. The study also revealed that inadequate programme management could lead to inefficiencies, misaligned activities, and reduced institutional effectiveness.

Oladipo and Suleiman (2022), examined supportive teaching climate and administrative outcomes in federal universities in Nigeria. Findings revealed that a supportive teaching climate positively impacts administrative outcomes, especially in planning, resource management, and supervision. Analysis revealed that when the teaching environment is conducive characterized by availability of adequate teaching resources, effective communication, mentorship opportunities, and collaborative practices administrative activities such as planning, supervision, and resource management are notably enhanced. Respondents reported that supportive climates encourage staff engagement, reduce operational bottlenecks, and foster teamwork across academic and administrative units. Regression results further confirmed that the supportive teaching climate was a major predictor of administrative effectiveness, demonstrating that investments in teaching environment and resources directly

translate into more efficient coordination, policy implementation, and overall administrative performance.

Universities in Nigeria including those in the North-West Zone are expected to play pivotal roles in human capital development, research, and national transformation, yet persistent challenges have compromised administrative effectiveness across the system. A report presented by the National Universities Commission indicated that federal universities in the North West Zone, experienced serious administrative challenges associated with poor resource management, inadequate manpower, weak strategic planning, and insufficient budgetary allocations. This situation negatively affected policy implementation, supervision of academic activities, and attainment of university goals ([National Universities Commission, 2021](#)). Instructional leadership emerges as a critical but under-explored factor in university administration. Addressing this research gap will provide evidence-based insight into leadership that can strengthen administrative performance in federal universities.

The purpose of this study is to examine instructional leadership practices and administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to find out;

1. The level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria.
2. The relative contributions of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria.

The following research questions were answered in order to guide the study

1. What is the level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria?
2. What is the relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria?

Method

This study employed a quantitative research of descriptive survey design with questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The population of this study comprised of all the lecturers and administrators of federal universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. Total population for this study comprised 7,118 participants (Lecturers=6912 and Administrators=206) across the identified seven federal universities in North West, Zone in Nigeria, these includes, Jigawa state, Kebbi state, Katsina state, Kano state, Kadua state, Sokoto state and Zamfara state. Administrators comprised of Vice-chancellors, Deputy Vice-chancellors, Dean and Heads of Departments in the Universities. Precisely proportionate sampling technique was used to select 365 participants (Lecturers and Administrators) across the five sampled Federal Universities. Researchers Advisor (2006) was used as guide to determine the sample size for the study. Two researcher developed instruments were used for data collection. The instruments are closed ended questionnaire whereby respondents are restricted to tick one response from opinions proposed. The instruments are four-point rating scale. The scale were ranked Strongly Agree(SA)=4; Agree (A)=3; Disagree(D)=2; Strongly

Disagree(SD)=1. The instruments are captioned as follows; (i) Instructional Leadership Rating Scale (ILRS), with three indicators as follows; defining institutional mission, managing institutional programme, and promoting supportive teaching climate. The instrument comprised of 18 items on instructional leadership. Lecturers and administrators are the respondents. (ii) Administrative Effectiveness Rating Scale (AERS), with indicators such as, resource management, policy implementation, staff supervision and development, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, decision-making, communication, coordination, and conflict resolution. The instrument comprised of 15 items on administrative effectiveness. Lecturers and administrators are the respondents. Instruments were given to experts in the Department of Educational Management and other experts in the Faculty of Education in Sokoto State University for validation. Experts moderated the instruments in terms of their relevance, clarity and coverage of the subject matter based on the expert's, observations, suggestions and moderation the researcher effected the corrections. Thereafter the instruments were found usable. Content validity index of Instructional Leadership Rating Scale (ILRS) is 0.94 and Administrative Effectiveness Rating Scale Scale (AERS) is 0.79 respectively. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability indexes of the instrument. The instruments were administered on thirty (30) respondents (20 lecturers and 10 administrators) at federal university, Birnin-Kebbi which is not part of the sample but within the population. The same instruments were re-administered at exactly two weeks on the respondents at the same venue. Thereafter, the two separate scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). Precisely, reliability indexes of 0.88 and 0.89 were established for ILRS and AERS respectively. This implied that the instruments are found suitable for the study. Data collections was carried out by the researcher with the help of ten research assistants. Direct method of questionnaire administration was employed. The researcher and the assistants visited the sampled federal universities to administer the instruments directly on the participants. The participants were thoroughly guided on how to complete the instruments accurately. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to analyze research question one while regression analysis was used to analyze research question two. Decision rule: In this analysis the criterion mean is 2.50 by this definition any descriptor statement for which a mean score is less than 2.50 is observed to be at lower level while any descriptor statement for which a mean is equal to or higher than 2.50 is observed to be at higher level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria?

Table 1 below is a Summary table Showing Mean and Standard Deviation Assessing the level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Assessing the level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone.

S/No	Item Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Resources (financial, human, and material) are allocated efficiently to meet institutional goals.	1.82	.788	Low
2	Policies and guidelines are implemented consistently across all departments and units in this university.	1.71	.800	Low
3	Staff are adequately supervised and receive regular performance feedback from supervisors.	1.76	.772	Low
4	Professional development opportunities are provided to enhance staff skills and competencies.	1.85	.862	Low
5	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of academic and administrative activities.	1.77	.817	Low
6	Strategic planning processes are conducted systematically to align with objectives of the institution.	1.83	.873	Low
7	Decisions are made promptly based on accurate and relevant information available.	1.76	.828	Low
8	Communication channels between administrators and staff are clear.	1.81	.868	Low
9	Administrative activities across departments are well-coordinated to avoid duplication and inefficiency.	1.87	.875	Low
10	Conflicts are effectively managed among personnel's.	1.78	.767	Low
11	Staff are adequately involved in decision making process.	1.77	.769	Low
12	The institution has clear procedures in order to ensure the proper utilization of resources.	1.84	.794	Low
13	Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing needs of the institution.	1.73	.745	Low
14	Staff performance is evaluated objectively.	1.79	.807	Low
15	Administrators provide support to ensure smooth implementation of academic programmes.	1.80	.775	Low
Grand mean		1.79	.809	Low

Criterion Mean – 2.50

Table 1 shows level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria. Looking at the results, item 1: was rated at low level that; resources (financial, human, and material) are allocated efficiently to meet institutional goals with a mean score of 1.82 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. In item 2: was rated at low level that; policies and guidelines are implemented consistently across all departments and units in this university with a mean score of 1.71 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 3: was rated at low level that; staff are adequately supervised and receive regular performance feedback from supervisors with a mean score of 1.76 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 4: was rated at low level that; professional development opportunities are provided to enhance staff skills and competencies with a mean score of 1.85 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 5: was rated at low level that; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of academic and administrative activities with a mean score of 1.77 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 6: rated at low level that; strategic planning processes are conducted systematically to align with objectives of the institution with a mean score of 1.83 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. In item 7: was rated at low level that; decisions are made promptly based on accurate and relevant information available with a mean score of 1.76 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 8: was rated at low level that; communication channels between administrators and staff are clear with a mean score of 1.81 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 9: was rated at low level that; administrative activities across departments are well-coordinated to avoid duplication and inefficiency with a mean score of 1.87 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 10: was rated at low level that; conflicts are effectively managed among personnel's with a mean score of 1.78 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 11: was rated at low level that; staff are adequately involved in decision making process with a mean score of 1.77 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 12: was rated at low level that; the institution has clear procedures in order to ensure the proper utilization of resources with a mean score of 1.84 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 13: was rated at low level that; policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing needs of the institution with a mean score of 1.73 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 14: was rated at low level that; staff performance are evaluated objectively with a mean score of 1.79 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 15: was rated at low level that; administrators do provide support to ensure smooth implementation of academic programmes with a mean score of 1.80 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. The above analysis implies that, majority of the respondents were in agreement there is a low level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria with a grand mean of 1.79 against a criterion mean of 2.50 and standard deviation of .809.

Research Question 2: What is the relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria?

Table 2 Shows Coefficient for relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria.

Table 2: Coefficients Table Showing Relative Contribution of Instructional Leadership Practices on Administrative Effectiveness in Federal Universities in North West Zone, Nigeria

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized coefficients	Rank	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.624	.294			8.938	.000
Institutional Mission	.022	.070	.017	3 rd	.314	.000
Managing Instructional Programme	.072	.051	.074	1 st	1.403	.000
Supportive Teaching Climate	.027	.071	.020	2 nd	.386	.000

Table 2 revealed the relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria. Analysis of standard coefficients highlights that managing instructional programme is the most significant contributor to administrative effectiveness, with a high beta coefficient ($\beta = .072$) a t-value of 1.403 and a significance level of $p < .05$. This suggests that the extent to which university administrators effectively coordinate curriculum implementation, supervise teaching activities, monitor academic standards, and ensure alignment between instructional practices and institutional goals plays a critical role in determining overall administrative success.

Supportive teaching climate was ranked as the second most influential instructional leadership practice to administrative effectiveness, with a beta value of ($\beta = .027$) a t-value of .386 and a significance level of $p < .05$. This implies that creating an enabling and collegial academic environment plays a meaningful, though comparatively modest, role in enhancing administrative outcomes in federal universities. This suggests that when university administrators foster positive relationships, encourage collaboration among staff, provide professional support, and maintain an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, it contributes to smoother institutional operations and improved staff commitment.

Lastly, institutional mission was ranked as the third most influential instructional leadership to administrative effectiveness, with a beta value of ($\beta = .022$) a t-value of .314 and a significance level of $p < .05$. This implies that clarity, communication, and alignment with the university's mission play a supportive but relatively limited direct role in enhancing administrative outcomes. This suggests that when administrators and staff are guided by the institutional mission, it helps to provide direction, unify efforts, and promote consistency in decision-making and policy implementation. However, the relatively low beta value indicates that, although important, the institutional mission alone is not a strong predictor of administrative effectiveness unless it is actively translated into actionable practices such as instructional supervision and programme management.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are as listed below:

1. There was low level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria.
2. There was statistically significant relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness with management of instructional programme emerged as the most significant potent contributor on administrative effectiveness; followed by supportive teaching climate, and institutional mission as the least contributor.

Discussion of Findings

Finding in Table 1 revealed that there was a low level of administrative effectiveness in federal universities in North West Zone, Nigeria. This finding suggests that university administrators may be experiencing challenges in areas such as decision-making, staff coordination, supervision, communication, policy implementation, and effective management of institutional resources, which could negatively influence the overall attainment of educational goals and organizational productivity. The finding corroborates the submission of Abubakar and Danladi (2021), that many public universities in Nigeria continue to face problems associated with poor administrative practices, inadequate leadership strategies and weak institutional monitoring mechanisms, all of which reduce the effectiveness of university administration.

Finding in Table 2 revealed a statistically significant relative contribution of instructional leadership practices on administrative effectiveness, with management of instructional programme emerging as the most significant potent contributor to administrative effectiveness, followed by supportive teaching climate, while institutional mission appeared as the least contributor. This finding implies that effective supervision of instructional activities, monitoring of teaching and learning processes, curriculum implementation, and evaluation of academic performance play a vital role in enhancing administrative efficiency and institutional productivity in universities. This finding resonates with the submission of Adeyemi and Okafor (2022), that instructional leadership practices significantly influence institutional effectiveness by promoting accountability, staff commitment, quality assurance, and effective coordination of academic activities within higher institutions. Findings further connote the work of Mohammed and Yusuf (2020), that a supportive teaching climate enhances collaboration among lecturers, encourages professional growth, and strengthens administrative effectiveness through improved communication and participatory leadership.

Conclusion

The study established low level administrative effectiveness in federal universities in the North West Zone of Nigeria, indicating systemic weaknesses in key institutional processes that are essential for effective university management. Despite these deficiencies, findings consistently demonstrated that instructional leadership positively contribute to administrative effectiveness, with instructional programme management as the most influential factors followed by supportive climate and lastly institutional mission. The findings therefore emphasize the need for university administrators and policymakers to strengthen instructional leadership practices.

By prioritizing effective management of instructional programmes, enhanced teaching climate and clearly communicated institutional mission of the universities in the North West Zone, consequently this measure can significantly improve their administrative effectiveness and achieve higher standards of academic excellence and institutional efficiency.

Recommendations

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

1. The management of federal universities should intensify regular training and retraining programmes for university administrators to enhance their managerial, supervisory, and decision-making competencies, thereby improving the overall level of administrative effectiveness in the universities.
2. Federal universities should prioritize instructional leadership practices with particular emphasis on the management of instructional programmes, since it emerged as the most potent contributor to administrative effectiveness. In addition, deliberate efforts should be made to enhance a supportive teaching climate by fostering collaboration among academic staff. Universities should still ensure that mission statements are clearly articulated and regularly communicated.

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