
PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AS A FORM
OF CORRUPT PRACTICES AMONG UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUATES IN KWARA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corruption among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria. The population for this study comprised all undergraduates in the four universities in Kwara State. The sample for study was drawn using proportionate and stratified sampling techniques to sample 1476 (15%) out of the total population of 9843 400 level undergraduates from the sampled institutions. A structured questionnaire titled "Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire" (PADQ) was used for data collection. Tables, frequency counts and simple percentage was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the research question was answered using cumulative mean. Hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test statistical tools at 0.05 alpha level. Finding from this study revealed that the prevalence of academic dishonesty among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria was on the average; there was no significant difference in the prevalence of academic

dishonesty among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on gender; and there was a significant difference in prevalence of academic dishonesty among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on university type. It was concluded that it only when immediate attention and necessary steps are taken to inculcate ethical behaviour that the prevalence of academic dishonesty could be checkmated among undergraduate students in Kwara State.

Key word: *Academic Dishonesty; Corruption; University Undergraduates*

Introduction

In Nigeria polity, dishonesty has become a great impediment for the much expected dividends of democracy. This is despite abundance of available natural and human resources. A large number of political analysts and concerned individuals have expressed their concerns about high rate of dishonesty in Nigeria and its negative consequences. Academic dishonesty is therefore, not a new phenomenon in the nation as such practices within post-secondary institutions is but a significant issue. Numerous studies have reported that students are cheating in academic related exercise at increasing level (McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Allen, Fuller & Lockett, 1998). Cheating calls into question the quality of an institution's academic programme, the value of its degree and the capability of its graduates. As such, academic dishonesty has been the subject of more than 100 studies over the last 30 years (Adebayo, 2011). The reasons for who, how and how often students cheat are as numerous as the studies. Yet, data provided by extent research have done little in curbing the dishonesty problem especially among students. It thus appears that academia does not have a complete understanding of the issue. Since it is more than just a student problem.

Student participate in a learning environment where individual scholarship is held as the model of true accomplishment, yet seeing the individual student is difficult in the crowded hallways and huge lecture halls. We are living in a culture that tolerates some forms of cheating while condemning others (Callahan, 2004).

If students in post-secondary programmes are cheating at ever increasing rates, there may be cultural influences enabling this behaviour. Lack of academic integrity implies academic dishonesty existence (Altbach, 2004). Altbach (2004) described the lack of integrity resulting from the pressure imposed on academic institutions in order to supply admission for students during students' degree programmes completing session. Scope of education is comprised by academic dishonesty. It also impacts on honest students and passionate faculties about teaching and learning (Lambert, 2003). Academic dishonesty effects can be expanded by worldwide web accessible for all students. The difference in honour code schools is students' responsibility feeling to preserve and endorse high standards and integrity. Honor provides an important effect on participating campuses. It indicates the likelihood of producing positive results made by efforts to decrease academic dishonesty (McCabe & Trevino, 2002).

Several research have been carried out on academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is distressingly prevalent on college campuses throughout the United States; with upwards of 80% of undergraduates reporting that they have cheated at least once during college with engineering students being reported among the highest offenders (Bowers, 1964; Brown, 1996; McCabe & Drinan, 1999; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Brown & Emmett, 2001; Spiller & Crown, 1995). As an indication of the difference by major, McCabe (1997) collected data from 1,946 undergraduates at 16 institutions and found that 82% of engineering students self-report engaging in any type of cheating compared to 91% of business students, 73% of social sciences students, and 71% of natural sciences students. Witherspoon, Maldonado and Lacey, (2010) carried out research on academic dishonesty of undergraduates: methods of cheating; it seems that that if students cheat, they will cheat using traditional and/or contemporary cheating methods. In other words, this finding supports the inclination that cheaters will cheat using whatever happens to be available, whether it is using a piece of paper to scribble notes on a crib sheet or using a cell phone to text messages or to have a picture image of an entire question paper. Braseth (1996) for instance, studied academic dishonesty among undergraduate

journalism students at the University of Mississippi. Two hundred and seventeen students participated in the study. The finding showed no significant difference in student cheating attitudes based on class level, gender and major (courses) but found significant differences in actual cheating behaviour between males and females.

Callaway (1998) also investigated the attitude, behaviours, extent and types of academic dishonesty that occurred at community colleges in Midwestern United States of America and found that students aged 25 and older were significantly less likely than respondents aged 24 and younger to engage in each of the 15 acts of dishonesty listed on the survey. It was also found that respondents were not likely to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the appropriate authorities.

Similarly, Adebayo (2011) investigated common cheating behaviour among Nigerian University students: A case study of University of Ado-Ekiti and reported that that the type of cheating behaviours engaging in by Nigerian University students are quite different from those engaged in by British University Students. Most frequently occurring cheating behaviours among the Nigerian sample fall under the factors include behaviours like writing somebody's coursework, colluding with others to communicate answers to one another, over marking one another's course work etc. this is quite different from plagiarism and non-collaborative cheating characteristic of the British sample. Also, Ubaka, Fajemirokun, Nduka and Ezenwanne, (2013) studied academic dishonesty among Nigeria pharmacy students: A comparison with United Kingdom and reported that students of University of Portsmouth, proportionally more Nigerian students participated in all eleven selected scenarios than UK students.

In the same vein, Olasehinde-Williams, Olawuyi and Yahaya (2011) studies gender and age variations in perceptions of situational appropriateness of academic integrity among students in Kwara State, Nigeria and reported that that high proportion of participants manifested medium to high levels of academic integrity. Specifically, significantly more male, than female, many younger than older and more secondary than tertiary students endorsed academic integrity; while marital status had no significant influence on their

endorsement of academic integrity. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there is no published evidence on the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates of Kwara State. Based on previous discussion, the researchers deem it fit to investigate the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to find out the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific purposes were to:

1. examine the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender;
2. investigate the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on university type.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the purpose of given this study direction:

1. What is the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does difference exist in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender?
3. To what extent does difference exist in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on university type?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the prevalence of academic

dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in, Kwara State, Nigeria based on university type.

Methodology and Materials

This study examined the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population for this study consists of all undergraduates in the four universities in Kwara State. The target population comprises all the 400 level university undergraduates in Kwara State, because they have passed through all levels. The sample for study was drawn using proportionate and stratified sampling techniques to sample 1476 (15%) out of the total population of 9843 400 level undergraduates from the sampled institutions. That is, 1173 undergraduates from University of Ilorin, 153 undergraduates from Kwara State University, 53 undergraduates from Ali-hikmah University and 97 undergraduates from Landmark University. A structured questionnaire titled “Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire” (PADQ) was used for data collection. Tables, frequency counts and simple percentage was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the research question was answered using cumulative mean; hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test statistical tools at 0.05 alpha level.

Demographic Description of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	780	52.8
Female	696	47.2
Total	1476	100

Table 2 reveals that out of the 1476 university undergraduates that participated in the study, 780 representing (52.8%) were males, while 696 representing (47.2%) were females. This revealed that there

were more male university undergraduates participating than female university undergraduates in this study.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by University Type

University Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Private	150	10.2
Public	1326	89.8
Total	1476	100

Table 2 reveals that out of the 1476 university undergraduates that participated in the study, 150 representing (10.2%) were university undergraduates from private universities, while 1326 representing (89.8%) were university undergraduates from public universities. This shows that majority of the university undergraduates in this study are from public universities.

Research Question 1: *What is the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria?*

In order to answer this research question, respondents' responses on the prevalence of academic dishonesty questionnaires were collated. The data collected from the sampled undergraduates were summed. The summary of the results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Percentage Analysis of Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty as a Form of Corrupt Practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria

Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	73	4.9
Average	894	60.6
Low	509	34.5
Total	1476	100

Table 3 presents the responses of the respondents to items that sought information on the prevalence of academic dishonesty among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria. The result on table 3 indicated that 73 representing 4.9% of universities undergraduates in Kwara State had high level of academic dishonesty, 894 representing 60.6% of universities undergraduates in Kwara State had average level of academic dishonesty, 509 representing (34.5%) of universities undergraduates in Kwara State had low level of academic dishonesty. This implies that the level of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria was on the average.

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.*

In order to test this research hypothesis, respondents' responses on the prevalence of academic dishonesty questionnaires were collated based on gender. The data collected from the study was analyzed as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis of Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty as a Form of Corrupt Practices among University Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal. t-Value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	780	55.01	15.09	1474	0.91	0.36	H₀₁ Not Rejected
Female	686	55.73	15.38				

$\hat{n} > 0.05$

As shown on Table 4, t-value = 0.91 with \hat{n} -value = 0.36 > 0.05 alpha level. Since 0.36 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis one is thus rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of

corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on university type.*

In order to test this research hypothesis, respondents' responses on the prevalence of academic dishonesty questionnaires were collated based on university. The data collected from the study was analyzed as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis of Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty as a Form of Corrupt Practices among University Undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on University Type

University Type	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal. t-Value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Private	150	47.83	15.14	1474	6.47	0.00	H₀₂ Not Rejected
Public	1326	56.20	15.01				

$\bar{n} > 0.05$

As shown on Table 5, t-value = 6.47 with \bar{n} -value = 0.00 < 0.05 alpha level. Since 0.00 is lower than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis two is thus rejected. On this basis, null hypothesis two was therefore not rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on university type.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings from this study revealed that the level of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria was on the average. This finding is in consonance with that of McCabe (1997) who found out that 82%

of engineering students self-report engaging in any type of cheating compared to 91% of business students, 73% of social sciences students, and 71% of natural sciences students.

Again, there was no significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on gender. This finding is in line with that of Braseth (1996) who studied academic dishonesty among undergraduate journalism students at the University of Mississippi and reported that there was no significant difference in student cheating attitudes based on class level, gender and major (courses) but found significant differences in actual cheating behaviour between males and females.

Similarly, there was a significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State Nigeria based on university type. This finding is in line with that of Donald, Kenneth and Treviño, (2006) reported that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty among university undergraduates based on university type.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As observed from this study, it could be concluded that the level of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria was on the average. While, there was no significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the prevalence of academic dishonesty as a form of corrupt practices among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on university type. Teaching style can also affect students' participation in academic dishonesty. In the light of the foregoing it is recommended that faculty members and preceptors should consider this when determining their style of teaching, both in and out of the classroom. In like manner, educators should foster ethical behaviour through the development of a nurturing environment for students. In such a place, students can bond with their role models, and develop ethical

decision making skills and behaviour. To support development, teachers need to be emotionally and physically available to their students. The promotion of academic integrity and mastery goals appears to serve as a significant factor for prevention of academic dishonesty. Through promoting integrity, mastery goals and individual interventions, a decline in academic cheating would be expected.

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