Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies (SFJESGS), Vol.8 No.3 September, 2026; pg. 21 – 28
ISSN: 2734-2522 (Print); ISSN: 2734-2514 (Online)

SCHOOL HEADS' CREATIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ACADEMIC STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH –WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated of school heads' creative leadership practices and academic staff productivity in public Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population comprised 2,182 academic staff and 24,316 students from eight public Colleges of Education, from which 881 academic staff and 1,958 students were selected using Taro Yamane's formula and a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using validated Creative Leadership Practices Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.88$) and Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.78$). Data were analysed using simple and multiple regression analyses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that technology integration, reward management, and professional development practices each had a positive and statistically significant influence on academic staff productivity ($p < .001$). The study concluded that creative leadership practices are important for enhancing academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education. It recommended that school heads prioritise fair and performance-oriented reward practices, strengthen technology integration, and ensure that professional development programmes are relevant, needs-based, and aligned with the professional responsibilities of academic staff.

Keywords: Academic Staff Productivity, Creative Leadership Practices, Professional Development, Reward Management, Technology Integration.

Introduction

Higher institutions play a critical role in national development through teaching, research, and community engagement. The extent to which these core mandates are effectively achieved largely depends on the productivity of academic staff. In colleges of education in particular, academic staff productivity remains central to institution success, as lecturers constitute the primary drivers of instructional delivery, knowledge production, and community service. Onyeka, Asiyai, and Anho (2025) emphasized that the success of any educational institution is closely tied to the productivity of its academic workforce. Thus, when lecturers perform effectively, institutions tend to thrive; while, weak performance can undermine the stability and effectiveness of the education system.

Academic staff in tertiary institutions are therefore expected to maintain high levels of job performance, a concern that consistently attracts the attention of stakeholders in higher education. However, academic staff productivity may be influenced by school heads' leadership practices. School heads' creative leadership practices refer to innovative strategies adopted by institutional leaders to guide, motivate, and inspire staff toward the achievement of educational goals. These practices include technology integration, reward management, professional development, participatory decision making, and performance appraisal, among others. However, this study focuses specifically on technology integration practices, reward management practices, and professional development practices.

Technology integration practices involve the incorporation of digital tools such as computers, mobile devices, internet resources, and educational software into teaching, research, and administrative processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Dexter, 2023). Empirical studies suggest that effective technology integration can improve instructional delivery and research productivity. However, its effectiveness is often influenced by infrastructural adequacy, digital competence, and institutional support systems (Ilabor et al., 2023).

Reward management practices represent another key dimension of creative leadership. These involve financial and non-financial incentives such as promotions, salary increments, recognition, awards, and welfare packages aimed at motivating staff and enhancing performance (Armstrong, 2006). Although reward systems are widely acknowledged as strong motivators of productivity, their effectiveness depends on fairness, consistency, and proper implementation.

Professional development practices focus on structured training and capacity building programmes designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies of academic staff. These include workshops, seminars, conferences, mentorship programmes, study leave, and continuous training opportunities (Ezeugbor, 2015). Empirical evidence generally indicates that professional development improves teaching effectiveness and staff productivity. Despite the recognised importance of these leadership practices, there remains a paucity of empirical studies examining their joint influence on academic staff productivity, particularly within Nigerian Colleges of Education. Most existing studies have focused on universities and secondary schools, leaving a significant contextual gap. This study therefore investigated of school heads' creative leadership practices and on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South -West, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff play an important role in the growth of an institution and the success of its educational programmes. Lecturers provide teaching, conduct research, perform community service, and engage in various other scientific activities. They are expected to render a very high job performance. However, it seems that most academic staff are not effective in the discharge of their duties, especially, in teaching, carrying out research and community service. This has become a great concern to tertiary institutions' stakeholders as it may bring about low productivity and low quality of outputs from such institutions. (Okocha-Ojeah, Anyikwa & Ojo 2025). The government of Nigeria has made several attempts, to enhance the productivity of academic staff. For instance, Federal government established TETFund Intervention on Staff Training and Development which enable staff to learn and update their skills for the enhancement of academic staff productivity. Despite the intervention by the government, academic staff productivity has not yielded any positive results. Therefore, it is pertinent to suggest that there are other factors that need to be addressed to curb the declining trend of academic staff productivity. A closer examination suggests that one of the contributors to academic staff productivity challenges could be lack of school heads creative leadership practices specifically the integration of technology practices, reward management practices and professional development practices. All these may have a negative consequence on academic staff productivity. The negative threats are seen as posing a threat to the quality of education offered by the schools, undermine institution reputation, resulting in the production of poorly prepared graduates, low morale, and weak commitment among

academic staff, thereby reducing their willingness to remain in the institution. If this situation is allowed to continue, it may frustrate the objectives and goals for which Colleges of Education were established. It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The study investigated school heads' creative leadership practices academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South –West, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the influence of technology integration practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education;
2. ascertain the influence of school heads' reward management practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education; and
3. examine the influence of school heads' professional development practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education.

Research Questions

These questions guided this study:

1. What is the influence of technology integration practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education?
2. What influence do school heads' reward management practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education?
3. What is the influence of school heads' professional development practices on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. School heads' technology integration practices do not significantly influence the productivity of academic staff in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.
2. School heads' reward management practices do not have significant influence on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South–West, Nigeria.
3. Professional development practices of school heads do not significantly influence academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South –West, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 2,182 academic staff and 24,316 students. Out of these figures, only 881 academic staff and 1,958 students were selected using Taro Yamane's formula. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. Institutions were first stratified into federal and state Colleges of Education, after which simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Data were collected using two validated researcher designed instruments namely; "Creative Leadership Practices Questionnaire (CLPQ) and the Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire (ASPQ)", both structured on a 4-point Likert scale. The instruments yielded Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of 0.88 and 0.78, respectively. Data collected were analysed using simple regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The three (3) research questions raised in this paper were transformed to hypotheses and tested in this section.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: School heads' technology integration practices do not significantly influence the productivity of academic staff in Colleges of Education in South –West, Nigeria.

Table 1:
Influence of School Heads' Technology Integration Practices on Academic Staff Productivity

Predictor Variable	β	t	R^2	p-value	Decision
School heads Technology Integration Practices	.370	11.327	**.137**	**.000**	**Significant**

Note. β = Standardised regression coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination; p < .05.

The result presented in Table 1 shows that school heads' technology integration practices significantly influenced academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. The predictor variable, technology integration practices, recorded a positive standardised regression coefficient (β = .370), indicating that improved technology integration practices by school heads were associated with increased academic staff productivity. The result was statistically significant (t = 11.327, p < .05), indicating that technology integration practices made a significant contribution to the prediction of academic staff productivity. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .137) indicates that school heads' technology integration practices accounted for 13.7% of the variance in academic staff productivity, while the remaining 86.3% could be attributed to other factors not included in the model. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis, which states that school heads' technology integration practices do not significantly influence the productivity of academic staff in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria, was rejected. This finding implies that school heads' effective technology integration practices significantly and positively contribute to academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis 2: School heads' reward management practices have no significant influence on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 2:
Influence of School Heads Reward Management Practices on Academic Staff Productivity

Predictor Variable	β	t	R^2	p-value	Decision
School heads' reward management practices	.479	15.531	.229	.000	Significant

Note. β = Standardised regression coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination; p < .05.

The result presented in Table 2 shows that school heads' reward management practices significantly influenced academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West,

Nigeria. The predictor variable, reward management practices, recorded a positive standardised regression coefficient (β = .479), indicating that improved reward management practices by school heads were associated with increased academic staff productivity. The result was statistically significant (t = 15.531, p < .05), showing that reward management practices significantly influenced academic staff productivity. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .229) indicates that school heads' reward management practices accounted for 22.9% of the variance in academic staff productivity, while the remaining 77.1% could be attributed to other factors not included in the model. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis, which states that school heads' reward management practices have no significant influence on academic staff productivity, was rejected. This finding implies that effective reward management practices by school heads significantly and positively contributed to academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis 4: Professional development practices facilitated by school heads do not significantly influence academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South- West, Nigeria.

Table 3:
Influence of School Heads Professional Development Practices on Academic Staff Productivity

Predictor Variable	β	t	R^2	p-value	Decision
School heads Professional development practices	.222	6.483	.049	.000	Significant

Note. β = Standardised regression coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination; p < .05.

The result presented in Table 3 indicates that school heads' professional development practices significantly influenced academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The predictor variable, professional development practices, recorded a positive standardised regression coefficient (β = .222), indicating that improved professional development practices facilitated by school heads were associated with increased academic staff productivity. The result was statistically significant (t = 6.483, p < .05), indicating that professional development practices significantly influenced academic staff productivity. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .049) indicates that school heads' professional development practices accounted for 4.9% of the variance in academic staff productivity, while the remaining 95.1% could be attributed to other factors not included in the model. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis, which states that professional development practices facilitated by school heads do not significantly influence academic staff productivity, was rejected. This finding implies that school heads' professional development activities significantly and positively contributed to academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The findings from hypothesis one showed that school heads' technology integration practices have a positive and statistically significant influence on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South–West, Nigeria. This implies that effective integration of

technology by school heads contributes significantly to enhancing the productivity of academic staff in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The finding suggests that when school heads provide access to relevant technological resources, promote the use of digital platforms, and encourage academic staff to adopt technology in their professional activities, staff are better positioned to perform their responsibilities effectively. The finding corroborates Hero (2019) who found that technology integration significantly influenced teaching performance. The finding is also consistent with Dalap, Dangs and Goji (2023) who reported a positive effect of ICT adoption on staff productivity at the Federal University of Kashere. Similarly, Awudu and Attah (2025) reported that the integration of ICT into teaching, research, and student assessment enhances teachers' productivity. The consistency of these findings across different higher institutions provides strong empirical support for the argument that technology integration is an important determinant of academic staff productivity.

The finding from hypothesis two showed that school heads' reward management practices have a positive and statistically significant influence on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. This finding indicates that effective reward management plays an important role in enhancing the productivity of academic staff. It suggests that school heads who implement transparent, equitable, and performance-based reward systems are more likely to motivate academic staff and improve their productivity. The finding is consistent with Nwaozor and Thompson (2019) who established that proper application of reward practices strategies, enhances staff performance and that inappropriate and inadequate application of relevant reward management will hamper staff performance. The finding is also consistent with Idika, Edoho, and Orji (2023) who found that reward systems, including special recognition, responsibility incentives, training, and promotion, significantly influenced lecturers' productivity. The finding equally aligns with that of Ugwechi-Ishiaya (2025) who found that reward management strategies significantly enhance teachers' productivity in public secondary schools in Rivers State. These findings collectively support the present study's conclusion that reward management is an important determinant of academic staff productivity.

Findings from hypothesis three showed that school heads' professional development practices have a positive and statistically significant influence on academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. This finding indicates that professional development opportunities provided or facilitated by school heads contribute significantly to enhancing the productivity of academic staff. It suggests that academic staff who are regularly exposed to relevant training, workshops, seminars, conferences, mentoring, and other capacity-building opportunities are better equipped to improve their professional knowledge, skills, and productivity. The finding agrees with Akinnawonu (2022), who reported a strong positive relationship between staff development opportunities and employees' job performance in universities in Ondo State. Similarly, Nwachukwu, Njihia, and Aringo (2024) found that professional development strategies positively influenced teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area. The present finding also agrees with Semako, Lawal, and Onasanya (2025) who found a significant positive relationship between professional development practices and teachers' productivity in Lagos State. However, the finding is at variance with Onyeka, Asiyai, and Anho (2025),

who investigated professional development as a predictor of teachers' productivity in public secondary schools in Bayelsa and Delta States and found no significant relationship between professional development and teachers' productivity. The difference in findings may be attributed to variations in educational contexts, the nature and quality of professional development programmes, institutional support, and the extent to which acquired knowledge and skills are applied in practice.

Conclusion

This study investigated school heads' creative leadership practices and academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. The findings revealed that technology integration, reward management and professional development showed significant and positive influences on academic staff productivity. Hence, the study concluded that school heads' creative leadership practices play a meaningful role in shaping academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education.

Recommendations

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

1. The management of Colleges of Education should provide adequate technological facilities and infrastructure to support academic staff in teaching, research, assessment, and community service activities.
2. School heads should adopt fair, transparent, timely, and performance-based reward management practices. This will make relatively high contribution to academic staff productivity in Colleges of Education.
3. The management of Colleges of Education should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of professional development programmes. This will ensure that professional development programmes are practical, needs-based, and capable of contributing meaningfully to academic staff productivity.

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