# Impact of Students' Self-determination and Motivation on Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility in Federal Universities in South-West Nigeria

## By

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**Abstract**

Instructional flexibility of academic staff is a vital requirement in today's dynamic educational landscape. If today's educational goals must be achieved for Higher Education to take its rightful place as the bedrock of societal development. And to achieve academic staff's instructional flexibility, students must be encouraged to participate in the teaching and learning process actively. This study explored the perceived impact of students' self-determination and motivation on academic staff instructional flexibility in Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. This study was anchored on the Self-determination theory of motivation. The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs. The population of the study included all the 6520 academic staff in six Federal Universities in the South-Western, Nigeria, that have been in existence for over 10 years before COVID-19. Raosoft's sample size online calculator was used to get the 400 sample size. The participants were selected from three federal universities for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. "Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility Scale (ASIFS)" and "Self-determination and Motivation Assessment Scale (S-DMAS)" were the instruments used for data collection. The descriptive statistics were used to analyse the collected demographic data. The only research question was answered using mean and standard deviation. The two hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance, using multiple linear regression and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools. The findings showed that students' self-determination and rank of academic staff significantly impact the instructional flexibility of academic staff, while motivation did not significantly predict academic staff's instructional flexibility. Based on the findings, it was recommended that for effective engagement of students' self-determination and motivation, the academic staff's strength should be increased. In addition, more training should be given to academic staff on leveraging students' self-determination and lecturers' instructional flexibility. Lastly, professional support and opportunities should be made available for all academic staff, irrespective of rank.

**Keywords**: Self-determination, motivation, academic staff, instructional flexibility, higher education

## Introduction

Higher Education (HE) is the linchpin of any society towards development, especially in the 21st century. This explains why the international debates on HE focus on quality education provisions, digitisation, access, and innovations as catalysts for its development, especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). To achieve these, academic staff are the major pilots of HE with major responsibility of ensuring the delivery of quality education that is achievable through mentoring, stimulation, scaffolding and personal interaction with students so that teaching and learning can be much more than a systemic way to achieve set objectives, and also could be a pedestal for apprenticeship, mentorship relationship between faculty and their students.

To achieve quality and effective teaching and learning, it is imperative for academic staff in their instructional deliveries to be more intentionally flexible. The faculty's instructional flexibility is needed while identifying and meeting the diverse educational peculiarities of their students using appropriate pedagogical approaches such as inquiry learning, group work, and project-based learning. Specifically, instructional delivery is the art of facilitating learning that is intended to modify the learner's behaviour to become a change agent in the society. According to Wordu and Akor (2018), instructional delivery is the academic staff's ability to actively employ their training, knowledge, skills and values to modify the learner's behaviour. In this 21st Century, advanced technology has greatly impacted instructional delivery practices in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) such that almost everything is now technologically enhanced, and the teaching and learning process is not left out.

According to Huang et al, (2020), the failure of HE programmes to produce students who are academically independent and innovative thinkers has been attributed to too much focus on the traditional learning system. This has heightened the call for the adoption of instructional flexibility, especially in Nigeria, by academic staff. Academic staff members are central to this challenge, requiring them to adopt flexible and innovative teaching methods that foster student engagement and promote effective learning outcomes. Instructional flexibility is therefore very critical in teaching –learning process.

Generally, instructional flexibility encompasses providing options in the learning environment so that a course of study better suits the specific needs of students. Academic staff instructional flexibility (ASIF) is a pedagogical method which fosters self-reliance and the development of abilities for lifelong learning. It is the ability of academic staff to adapt appropriate teaching methods, pace, content, and assessments to meet diverse learning needs of students, learning styles, and in unexpected situations. It is the art of teaching beyond rigid plans to create responsive, inclusive, and effective learning experiences for learners (Cassidy et al., 2016 and Nwosu, 2023).

To achieve ASIF, the following must be considered: the level of adaptability of the academic staff in changing teaching techniques based on students' performances or feedback, the flexibility of instruction to suit varied students' learning needs, the extent of students' engagement in the teaching/learning process, and the pedagogical content knowledge of the lecturer, among others. The level of instructional flexibility of lecturers towards improved effective education, is also

dependent on their demographic characteristics, such as age, marital status, job tenure, gender and rank.

For effective ASIF to be achieved in HEIs, perhaps, students must be encouraged to take responsibility in playing a more active role through their self-determination and motivation, which involves reflective involvement in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating learning. According to Little, as cited in Benson (2001), self-determination is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his/her learning. The capacity for student's autonomy will be displayed both in what the learner learns and how he or she transfers what has been learnt to wider contexts. The self-determined student is aware of the strategies to use primarily in learning, and also the student has the skill of conveying these strategies and styles to his/ her other learning (Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010).

**Statement of the problem**

The pedagogical landscape in the 21st century has evolved from traditional teacher-centred instruction and content-delivery models towards student-centred approaches, where learner characteristics have a significant impact on how we deliver instruction. A major framework that has emerged to explain this change is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) that established students' intrinsic motivation and perceptions of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness drive academic engagement. The personality and motivation of students are increasingly acknowledged not only to improve the grades of individual students but also contribute to setting the locus on instruction for their lecturers. In Nigeria, the South-West geopolitical zone is the home to knowledge seekers at all federal, states and private universities. These universities experience the highest number of applications for undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.

Despite the efficacy of instructional flexibility in theory, Lecturers in Nigerian federal universities resort mainly to rigid and normalised teaching techniques with an attendant lack of attention to distinct motivational orientations across a modern-day heterogeneous student population. All South-Western federal universities, particularly, are under peculiar pressures such as large class sizes, poor teaching facilities, and regular trade union (ASUU) actions which usually force lecturers into a 'survival' mode rather than adaptive in terms of teaching.

The existing literature has mostly studied how the academic staff's motivation influences students' academic performance, whereas there is a significant lack of indigenous literature on how learners' self-determination and motivation shape lecturers' instructional flexibility for achievable teaching/learning objectives. Students' self-determination and motivation for learning are major catalysts to encourage lecturers to teach innovatively. Where these are not present, a cycle of instructional stagnation is imminent, where teaching remains one-size-fits-all, students' learning needs notwithstanding. If the influence of self-determination and motivation on academic staff instructional flexibility is not clearly established, South-Western federal universities may continue to widen the gap between students' potentials and rigid teaching methods. This ultimately

hinders the quality of graduates entering the national/ global workforce. It was therefore pertinent to investigate how students' self-determination and motivation predict the instructional flexibility of academic staff.

**Aim and Specific Objectives**

This study investigated self-determination, motivation, and academic staff's instructional flexibility in Nigerian South-Western Federal Universities. Specifically, the study:

i. determined the level of academic staff's instructional flexibility in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities.

ii. investigated the joint contributions of self-determination and motivation to the prediction of academic staff's instructional flexibility in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities.

iii. examined significant differences in academic staff's instructional flexibility in South-western Nigerian Federal Universities based on rank.

**Research Question**

One research question was formulated to guide the study:

**RQ:** How instructionally flexible are the academic staff in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities?

**Null Hypotheses**

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance to guide the study. These hypotheses are:

**$H0_1$:** There is no significant joint contribution of self-determination and motivation to the prediction of academic staff's instructional flexibility.

**$H0_2$:** Rank does not make any significant difference in academic staff's instructional delivery.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on one management theory, which is:

**Self-Determination Theory of Motivation (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985):**

SDT posits that individuals have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory is a macro-level theory of both self-determination and human motivation that aims to explain the dynamics of human needs, motivation, and well-being within a social context. It explains that all individuals possess three universal and psychological needs, which are: autonomy (feeling self-governed and self-endorsed), competence (feeling competent and

effective), and relatedness (feeling connected, loved, and interacted); which propel and motivate them to act or not to act. Satisfying these needs enhances motivation and well-being. Both self-determination and motivation as independent variables in this study hinge on the SDT to determine the instructional flexibility of academic staff. In a learning context, when students feel motivated, competent, self-determined and connected, they are more likely to be engaged in the teaching and learning process, which can contribute to improved instructional flexibility of lecturers.

**Literature review**

Based on educational frameworks, students' self-determination and motivation directly drive academic staff to increase their instructional flexibility by shifting their role from the rigid university lecturers to adaptive learning facilitators. Students' self-determination gives students the impetus to make choices toward a participatory learning experience.

McCombs (2010), posit that having choices allows learners to feel empowered that they have control or ownership over their learning. Consequently, this helps them to develop a sense of self-determination and self-motivation.

Self-determination in learners is the combination of required skills, knowledge, and beliefs that empowers a person to engage in goal-oriented, self-regulated, autonomous behaviour (CATS, 2026). Self-determination recognises learners as active participants in their own learning process, propelled by an inner will to engage actively in their learning process. Self-determined learners have the autonomy to take ownership of their learning goals, make informed decisions about learning strategies and persevere in the face of any challenges that may arise in the course of their learning processes.

According to Arno (2017), self-determination promotes reflection on learning, be it in face-to-face or online situations, with the potential of text-based interaction for planning, reviewing, and reflection. Self-determination can therefore become a space for reflection, exploration, and

development, in which learners can perform different actions vis-à-vis initiating interaction, assigning tasks, and evaluating that in classroom situations (whether online or physical) would be directed by the academic staff, deploying the social and cognitive strategies necessary to manage and organise the task.

According to McCombs (2010), having choices allows learners to feel empowered that they have control or ownership over their learning. Consequently, this helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and self-motivation. In the same vein, Yang, Chen, & Zhuang (2025) examined the influence of self-determination theory on student learning engagement in self-directed e-learning at five Chinese universities, using a structural equation model with 593 student questionnaires. High student self-determination, driven by autonomy and competence, prompted lecturers to exhibit instructional flexibility by incorporating interactive e-learning tools, such as discussion forums and self-paced modules, to enhance engagement, while low self-determination due to limited social support required adaptive strategies like simplified content and structured guidance. Challenges included technological disparities and faculty training gaps.

In addition to self-determination, motivation is a key factor in ensuring instructional flexibility of academic staff. When students display a high level of motivation, academic staff would want to explore different strategies in the delivery of instruction. Motivation is the key to success in the teaching-learning process. It is the inner drive that moves learners to participate actively in the learning process. When academic staff understand what drives their students, they are compelled to modify their teaching styles, lesson structures, and assessment methods to keep learners engaged. Students' motivation influences lecturers' instructional flexibility through the adaptation of instructional delivery to students' needs.

Various empirical studies have shown the relationship that exists between students' motivation and lecturers' instructional flexibility. Usher, Golding, Han, & Griffiths (2024) conducted a convergent mixed-methods study with 358 undergraduate psychology majors at a U.S. university, using surveys with closed- and open-ended questions to assess student motivation and learning experiences during the shift to remote instruction in Spring 2020. The findings revealed that declines in student motivation and self-regulation, with over 75% reporting increased stress and motivational challenges, prompted lecturers to exhibit instructional flexibility by adjusting teaching methods, such as incorporating asynchronous content and empathetic communication, though nearly half of the students noted reduced instructional quality.

Kwiek and Roszka (2024) studied 16,083 Polish STEMM scientists, noting senior lecturers (associate professors) exhibited high ASIF, using online tutorials and differentiated tasks to engage students. Assistant lecturers, with less experience, faced resource constraints, limiting pedagogical content knowledge application.

**Methodology**

The study employed descriptive and correlational survey research design, as it centred on academic staff and their opinions on the given subject. Descriptive survey research design addresses a large population that involves large educational problems for which solutions are needed (Ishtiaq, 2020). While,

The population of the study included 6520 academic staff in six Federal Universities in the South-Western, Nigeria that have been in existence for over 10 years. The six Universities were: University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, and Federal University of Technology, Akure. Raosoft sample size online calculator was used to get the 363 sample size at 95% level of

confidence and 5% margin error and 10% of the result obtained from the computation was added by the researchers, as contingency to further enhance the external validity of the study, which gave the designated sample size of 400 sample that was used for the study.

The multi-stage cluster sampling technique was used to select the participants. Three universities: University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and Federal University of Technology, Akure; to represent the three South-western clusters of Lagos and Ogun, Oyo and Osun, and Ondo and Ekiti were selected using Cluster sampling technique. To select the academic staff from the selected universities: University of Lagos (170), University of Ibadan (145) and Federal University of Technology, Akure (85); stratified random sampling was employed.

Two questionnaires were adapted as instruments for data collection. The first is:
Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility Scale (ASIFS).
This instrument had two sections (Sections A and B). The demographic data of the participants such as the state, gender, age, rank, job tenure and marital status were elicited with Section A. While Section B sought information on academic staff's instructional flexibility, and it consists of five sub-scales that focus on each index of the dependent variable. The instrument was scored using a five-point Likert scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Average Extent (AE), Little Extent (LE), No Extent (NE), rated: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.
The second instrument is Self-determination and Motivation Assessment Scale (S-DMAS).
This instrument elicited information from participants on how the self-determination and motivation of their students predict their instructional flexibility. This had two sub-scales that focused on each index of the independent variable. The instrument was rated using a five-point Likert-type rating scale stated as Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).
The instruments were validated by lecturers, in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. These experts assessed the suitability of the language; and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their corrections and advice given paved the way for modification of the drafts and the final draft.

To ensure the internal consistency of the instruments, the researchers pilot tested the instruments in a study on 34 academic staff in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, which was not part of the sample of the study. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. The overall estimated reliability values of .88 and .87 obtained indicated that the instruments were reliable.

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the only research question, multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis one, and hypothesis two was tested using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at .05 level of significance.

**Results**

Findings from the data analysed are presented below:

**RQ:** How instructionally flexible are the academic staff in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities?

**Table 1**

***Level of Instructional Flexibility among Academic Staff in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities***

| N | Variables | Mean ($\bar{x}$) | Standard Deviation ($\sigma$) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 363 | Instructional flexibility | 3.75 | .62 |

Table 1 represents the mean score of 3.75 which implied a high level of instructional flexibility among the academic staff, having classified instructional flexibility on a scale of one to five namely: Very Low Instructional Flexibility (1.00 - 1.75), Low Instructional Flexibility (1.76 - 2.50), Moderate Instructional Flexibility (2.51 - 3.25), High Instructional Flexibility (3.26 - 4.00), and Very High Instructional Flexibility (4.01 - 5.00) respectively.

**$H0_1$:** There is no significant joint contributions of self-determination and motivation to the prediction of academic staff's instructional flexibility.

**Table 2**

***Joint Contributions of Self-determination and Motivation to the prediction of instructional flexibility of Academic Staff***

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error | Durbin Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .58 | .33 | .33 | .32 | 1.29 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-determination, Motivation

b. Dependent Variable: Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility

Information in Table 2 illustrated a Multiple Regression analysis showing the contribution of Self-determination and motivation to the prediction of instructional flexibility of academic staff. The results showed the correlation coefficient, R = .58, which implied there was a moderate and positive significant relationship between the predictors and academic staff instructional flexibility. The adjusted $R^2$ of .33 indicated 33% of the dependent variables were contributed by the independent variables. This inferred that 33% of the inputs (self-determination, motivation) were explained by the variance in the instructional flexibility of academic staff in Federal South-West Universities. This meant that the remaining 67% maybe captured by other exogenous variables not included in this study. This suggested a weak relationship among the variables and indicated that the model provided a good fit for the data. However, in order to ascertain the significance of the adjusted $R^2$, the Analysis of Variance was presented in table 3.

**Table 3**

***Analysis of Variance for Self-determination and motivation***

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F-ratio (cal.) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 20.23 | 2 | 5.06 | 49.19 | .000 |
| Residual | 40.62 | 397 | .10 | | |
| Total | 60.85 | 399 | | | |

Dependent Variable: Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility @ p-value < .05
Predictors: (Constant), self-determination, motivation

The information in Table 3 presented the Analysis of Variance for the variables, where F-ratio (cal.) = 49.19, df =2, 397 and p-value = .000 < .05 level of significance. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected and that there was a significant joint contributions of Self-determination and Motivation to the prediction of academic staff instructional flexibility in federal South-West universities. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant contribution of study group autonomy to the prediction of academic staff's instructional flexibility was rejected. To determine the relative joint contributions of each independent variable to the dependent variable, Table 4 was presented.

**Table 4:** ***Relative Joint Contributions of Self-determination and Motivation to the prediction of instructional flexibility of Academic Staff***

| Model | Unstandardised Coefficients B | Unstandardised Coefficients Std. Error | Standardised Coefficients Beta | T | Sig. | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.454 | .178 | | 8.169 | .000 | Significant |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation | .004 | .047 | .005 | .094 | .925 | Not Significant |
| Self-determination | .339 | .045 | .393 | 7.519 | .000 | Significant |

Dependent Variable: Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility Significant @ p-value < .05

The information in Table 4 indicated the relative contributions of study-group autonomy to the prediction of instructional flexibility of academic staff. The result showed motivation Beta coefficient = .005 and p-value = .925 > .05, and Self-determination Beta coefficient = .393 and p-value = .000 < .05. The p-value indicated that the relative contribution of self-determination was statistically significant to the prediction of instructional flexibility of academic staff, while motivation was statistically not significant to instructional flexibility of academic staff. This implied that for every unit of change in self-determination, there was .393 increase in the prediction of instructional flexibility of academic staff; while, for every unit of change in motivation, there was no significant prediction to the instructional flexibility of academic staff. The analysis showed that self-determination had a stronger positive contribution to the prediction of academic staff instructional flexibility.

**H0$_2$:** Rank does not make any significant difference in academic staff's instructional delivery.

**Table 5**

***Differences in Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility based on Rank***

| | **Sum of squares** | **df** | **Mean Squares** | ***F*** | ***p*-value** | **Remark** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 4.739 | 2 | 1.185 | 8.341 | .000 | Significant |
| Within Groups | 56.108 | 397 | .142 | | | |
| Total | 60.848 | 399 | | | | |

Significant @ *p*-value <.05

The information in Table 5 showed the one-way Analysis of Variance of the rank difference in the instructional flexibility of academic staff. The result indicated that rank makes significant difference in the instructional flexibility of academic staff [$F$ (4, 395) = 8.34, $p$ = .000]. Therefore, hypothesis two was not accepted. However, in order to reveal the group with significant difference, a Post Hoc test was presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** ***Post Hoc Test of Rank and Academic Staff Instructional Flexibility***

| (I) Rank | (J) Rank | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lecturer II | Lecturer I | .10173 | .06796 | .565 |
| | Senior lecturer | .27141* | .06606 | .000 |
| | Reader | .23700* | .08391 | .040 |
| | Professor | .02173 | .07175 | .998 |
| Lecturer I | Lecturer II | -.10173 | .06796 | .565 |
| | Senior lecturer | .16968* | .04874 | .005 |
| | Reader | .13526 | .07109 | .317 |
| | Professor | -.08000 | .05621 | .613 |
| Senior lecturer | Lecturer II | -.27141* | .06606 | .000 |
| | Lecturer I | -.16968* | .04874 | .005 |
| | Reader | -.03442 | .06927 | .988 |
| | Professor | -.24969* | .05390 | .000 |
| Reader | Lecturer II | -.23700* | .08391 | .040 |
| | Lecturer I | -.13526 | .07109 | .317 |
| | Senior lecturer | .03442 | .06927 | .988 |
| | Professor | -.21527* | .07472 | .034 |
| Professor | Lecturer II | -.02173 | .07175 | .998 |
| | Lecturer I | .08000 | .05621 | .613 |
| | Senior lecturer | .24969* | .05390 | .000 |
| | Reader | .21527* | .07472 | .034 |

Significant @ *p*-value < .05

The Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test was run to determine the significant ranks of academic staff instructional flexibility. The result in Table 6 revealed that there was significant difference in the instructional flexibility of Lecturers II and Senior lecturers (p = .000 <.05), there was also significant difference between the instructional flexibility of Lecturers II and Readers (p = .040 < .05). Also, the instructional flexibility of Lecturers I significantly differed from Senior lecturers (p = .005 < .05). Additionally, the instructional flexibility of Senior lecturers was significantly different from the instructional flexibility of Professors (p = .000 < .05). Readers' instructional

flexibility was significantly different from the instructional flexibilities of Professors ($p = .034 < .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis two was not accepted.

**Discussion of Results**

The first finding showed that there was a high level of instructional flexibility of academic staff in federal universities of South-Western, Nigeria. This suggested that academic staff were willing and open to adapt their instructional delivery to meet student's learning needs. They are comfortable using diverse teaching methods based on their students' feedback and performance. This finding negated the finding of Kayi and Dambo (2018) who postulated the failure of some lecturers in adopting contemporary instructional methods to improve the quality of instructional delivery in business education.

Other findings indicated that self-determination significantly predicts the instructional flexibility of academic staff. While, it also revealed that motivation does not significantly predict academic staff instructional flexibility. These results align with previous research by Yang et al. (2025) which showed that high students' self-determination, driven by autonomy and competence, prompted lecturers to exhibit instructional flexibility by incorporating interactive e-learning tools, such as discussion forums and self-paced modules, to enhance engagement, while low self-determination due to limited social support required adaptive strategies like simplified content and structured guidance. It also aligns with the findings of McCombs (2010), which revealed that having choices allows learners to feel empowered that they have control or ownership over their learning. The positive relationship between self-determination and instructional flexibility supports the idea that grooming autonomous students will make him/her to be aware of which strategies to use primarily in learning, also the student has the skill of conveying these strategies and styles to his/ her other learning (Karababa, et al., 2010). The self-determination, showed particularly strong predictive capabilities for the instructional flexibility of faculty members, while students' motivation did not significantly predict the instructional flexibility of academic staff. However, this finding contradicts the finding of Usher et al. (2024), which revealed that declines in student motivation and self-regulation, with over 75% reporting increased stress and motivational challenges, prompted lecturers to exhibit instructional flexibility by adjusting teaching methods

Additionally, the third finding showed that rank significantly predicted the instructional flexibility of academic staff. This finding is supported by the study of Kwiek and Roszka (2021) who analysed a dataset of Italian full professors (N=5,000), using a classificatory approach to examine rank-based teaching practices. Their finding showed that senior lecturers and professors exhibited high ASIF, leveraging pedagogical content knowledge to differentiate instruction with interactive seminars and digital tools, engaging students effectively. While, assistant lecturers, with limited autonomy, relied on standardized curricula, constraining adaptability, thereby exhibited low instructional flexibility.

**Conclusion**

This study provides evidence that self-determination is an important predictor of academic staff's instructional flexibility in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities. It also showed that students' motivation did not significantly predict the instructional flexibility of lecturers.

Additionally, this study revealed that rank significantly determine the instructional flexibility of academic staff in South-Western Nigerian Federal Universities. These findings have important implications for educational policy and practice.

**Implications for Policy and Practice:**

Findings from this study have the following implications for policy and practice:

**For Policy:**

i. Universities should invest in and promote students' autonomy through improved self-determination strategies to enhance instructional flexibility and improve the quality of education.

**For Practice:**

i. Prioritise students' self-determination strategies implementation: Universities should strategically invest in and prioritise the implementation of students' self-determination strategies.

ii. Develop Targeted Training Programs: Design and implement targeted training programs for academic staff focusing on the effective use of students' self-determination strategies.

iii. Address Rank-Related Interventions: Develop interventions (such as an academic staff development workshop) to address any barriers that may be hindering academic staff from adopting flexible teaching practices based on their ranks.

iv. Invest in Technology Infrastructure and Resources: Ensure that universities have adequate technology infrastructure and resources to improve students' self-determination strategies.

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