

Institutional Support for Faculty Learning Communities' Participation among LIS Educators in South West, Nigeria

¹Aramide Olufemi Kunle., ²Alade Victoria Adesola., ³Oduroye Peter

¹Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

²Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State

³Caleb University, Ikorodu, Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated institutional support for faculty learning communities' participation among Library and Information Science educators in the South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population of the study was 225 LIS educators in library schools (universities and polytechnics) in the South West, Nigeria. The total enumeration sampling technique was employed for the study. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. It was found that there are FLCs in the library schools. There is a high level of engagement in FLCs among the LIS educators. The types of institutional support available to the LIS educators in library schools in South-West Nigeria include library resources to support FLC activities, effective communication about FLC goals, and access to necessary IT facilities and assistance. The hypothesis tested revealed a positive influence of institutional support on FLC's participation among the LIS educators. Meanwhile, interdisciplinary collaboration and continuous learning are vital in promoting FLCs.

Keywords: Faculty Learning Communities, Institutional support, Library and Information Science Educators, Library schools, South-West Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

As the search for better approaches to teaching and learning continues, Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) have emerged as a promising strategy to enhance pedagogy in higher educational institutions. The rapidly evolving landscape of tertiary education has given impetus to the emergence of FLCs as mechanisms for promoting collaborative learning, professional development, and pedagogical innovations among lecturers. Faculty learning communities are collaborative groups of faculty members who engage in an active, sustained, and reflective process of learning and development to enhance their teaching, scholarship, and service to the institution. Faculty learning communities are diverse, interdisciplinary groups of faculty who come together to enhance their instructional approaches, investigate instructional change, and share their experience in employing equity-focused and research-based strategies in their teaching (University of California, 2024).

FLCs bring together lecturers from diverse backgrounds to share their knowledge, experiences, and best practices, which foster a culture of collaboration and continuous professional development, and ultimately enhance the quality of teaching and learning in educational institutions. It provides a supportive environment where members can engage in a variety of activities and experiment with new approaches to teaching, and share successes and challenges. Studies by Beach and Cox (2009) and Thompson et al. (2016) show that participation in FLCs increases faculty interest in teaching and learning, as well as provides support to change longstanding instructional practices. As such, educators are expected to participate actively in FLCs. Their participation can be measured in terms of frequency of attendance, level of engagement, purposes of participation, level of satisfaction, reflection, and application (Honingh & Hooge, 2014).

Participation of Library Information Science educators in Faculty Learning Communities is influenced by several factors. A significant factor influencing participation is workload and time constraints. LIS educators often balance teaching, research, administrative tasks, and service responsibilities, making it difficult to allocate time for additional developmental activities. Studies have shown that heavy teaching loads and rigid schedules reduce commitment to FLC initiatives, even when educators acknowledge their benefits. Similarly, professional development needs play a crucial role. Educators who seek to improve their digital pedagogy, curriculum design, or research engagement are more likely to join FLCs, especially when such communities address identified skill gaps.

Another important consideration is the perceived relevance and benefit of FLCs. Educators are more inclined to participate when they see clear connections between FLC activities and their instructional or research goals. This perception is further shaped by organizational culture, where institutions that encourage innovation, collaboration, and reflective teaching tend to foster greater participation. Peer influence and collegiality also contribute to participation, as supportive relationships often motivate educators to join and stay engaged in FLC activities. Access to technology and learning resources, including digital tools and support services, further enhances educators' willingness to participate, particularly in technology-dependent learning communities.

While these factors collectively shape participation patterns, scholars consistently highlight institutional support as the most influential predictor of sustained engagement in FLCs. Institutional support encompasses administrative encouragement, funding, infrastructure, and policy frameworks that enable or hinder educators' involvement. Administrative support from heads of departments, deans, and institutional leadership plays a fundamental role by signaling the value placed on collaborative professional development. When institutions provide explicit encouragement and integrate FLC participation into strategic development goals, educators experience a stronger sense of legitimacy and motivation for involvement.

Financial support is equally critical. Funding for workshops, collaborative activities, or the acquisition of teaching resources enhances participation by reducing the personal cost burden on educators. Additionally, institutions that offer workload adjustments, teaching relief, or incentives such as recognition in promotion criteria create an enabling environment for educators to actively engage in FLCs. The provision of adequate facilities and ICT infrastructure also shapes participation, as effective collaboration often depends on accessible meeting spaces, high-speed internet, and technical assistance.

Furthermore, professional development structures—such as teaching and learning centers—serve as catalysts by organizing, sustaining, and evaluating FLC initiatives. These structures create formal pathways for educators to explore innovative pedagogies and participate in interdisciplinary collaborations. Recognition and reward systems, including certificates, awards, and performance appraisal considerations, further reinforce participation by highlighting the institutional value placed on educational innovation. Supportive institutional policies also play an essential role by providing frameworks that guide the establishment, management, and long-term sustainability of FLCs.

Overall, the literature suggests that while multiple factors influence the participation of LIS educators in Faculty Learning Communities, institutional support stands out as the most critical enabler. Institutions that invest in resource provision, supportive policies, recognition systems, and administrative encouragement create environments where FLCs can thrive and where educators can engage meaningfully in collective professional development.

Institutional support refers to the resources, opportunities, and services that institutions provide for employees to perform optimally (Lazarus et al., 2019). In educational settings, institutional support is the extent to which institutions provide the necessary resources, such as equipment, training, and well-formulated policies, to enhance service delivery. In the context of faculty learning communities, institutional support is the support and resources that educational institutions provide to encourage faculty engagement in collaborative professional development initiatives.

Despite the potential of FLCs in enhancing teaching quality and educators' development, participation in FLCs in developing nations like Nigeria remains a challenge (Hamzat et al., 2022). Preliminary investigation by the researcher indicated the same situation in South-west, Nigeria. This might be as a result of the lack of readiness of lecturers to participate in FLCs due to the absence of institutional support. Meanwhile, there is a paucity of empirical studies exploring the specific implications of institutional support on educators' participation in FLCs in the context of Nigerian universities. This present study, therefore, aims to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the influence of institutional support on Library and Information Science (LIS) educators' participation in FLCs in the South-West, Nigeria.

Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the availability of FLCs in library schools in the South West, Nigeria;
2. examine the level of engagement in FLCs by LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria; and
3. identify the institutional support available for LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria, to participate in FLCs.

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested in the study at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀: There is no significant influence of institutional support on FLCs' participation by LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The critical need for sustainable capacity building among faculty members in tertiary institutions has been emphasized in the literature, with considerable attention given to professional development. Many institutions require that the faculty staff engage in professional development activities, including workshops and conferences, peer observations and feedback, formal courses, mentoring and coaching, educational leave or sabbaticals, online courses, and webinars to ensure reflection on practice to develop and learn new skills (Steinert et al., 2016; Engin & Atkinson, 2015). However, FLCs have also emerged as one of the platforms for professional development of educators, particularly in tertiary institutions of learning. Hamzat et al. (2022) noted that one way to improve teaching and learning activities in universities and colleges is through the formation and operation of FLCs.

FLCs are small groups of faculty members who meet on a regular basis to discuss certain subjects, concerns, or practices with the purpose of enhancing the teaching and learning process within a faculty (Hamzat et al., 2022). FLCs are an emerging area of scholarship across the world, with only few literature available on the concept. Particularly, only a few scholars have researched FLCs within library schools in Nigeria. A study by Babatunde et al. (2024) investigated the participation of science-based faculty members in learning communities in public universities in Southwest Nigeria without addressing library schools. Lack of direct related studies indicates that library schools have not enjoyed organised and discipline-specific studies on FLCs. Even though there have not been formalised FLCs in most library schools in Nigeria, some informal mechanisms aiding faculty development and collaboration are found in the literature. A typical example of this is the work of Alabi (2018), which examined librarian–faculty collaboration in Lagos State institutions and found that faculty board meetings and library committee initiatives are effective avenues for collaboration.

Library and information science educators require institutional support to participate in FLCs. The employees require diverse support from their institutions to function effectively and efficiently. Institutional support is the organisational active encouragement in the form of policies, regulations, monetary and non-monetary that

assists employees to perform their responsibilities effectively and productively (Alabi, 2018). Aliyu (2023) viewed institutional support as a category of activities which includes expenditures for: central executive activities concerned with management and long-range planning of the entire institution; fiscal operations; administrative data processing; space management; employee personnel and records; logistical activities that provide procurement storerooms, safety, security, printing, and transportation services to the institution; and support services to faculty and staff that are not operated as auxiliary enterprise and activities concerned with community. Organisations that want to earn their employees' commitment must give adequate support.

Institutional supports comprise authorities and active support in the form of laws, regulations, financial, and non-financial parts that help bring changes in the functioning of a business or institution. Some of the institutional supports that can be provided by tertiary institutions of learning include research, technical, and pedagogical support (Al-Enazi, 2016). Some studies have examined the institutional conditions that propel the development and sustainability of FLCs, such as funding, policies, and a culture of collaboration that permits knowledge sharing, and shown that institutional support is vital for the enduring viability of FLC programmes (Addis et al., 2013).

Some scholars have investigated the relationship between institutional support and FLCs. Even though the studies do not relate the variables to LIS educators, such knowledge can be replicated in library schools. A study by Tinnell et al. (2019) aimed to determine if an FLC experience focused on collaborative student learning can have sustainable impacts for 2–3 years after completion of the FLC. Findings showed that the engineering faculty found success in implementing pragmatic pedagogical changes by engaging in an FLC that intentionally provided structures to promote a community of practice. In the United Arab Emirates, the study by Engin and Atkinson (2015) focused on FLCs in an English-medium university. The finding revealed cooperation and collegiality as a positive aspect of the FLC. Many participants said the community gave them a chance to work cooperatively and listen to colleagues. The participants developed their pedagogical knowledge and confidence through participating in the FLC. Although the feedback was positive, there were some areas the participants felt dissatisfied and suggested changes for the next time.

Hamzat et al. (2022) found a high level of readiness to participate in FLCs among academics at Adeleke University. The potential challenges noted included a lack of institutional support and membership commitment to participate. A study by Olabode et al. (2023) examined the influence of institutional support strategies on the effectiveness of faculty core job responsibilities in selected public universities in Nigeria. Results showed that research, pedagogical, and technical supports were predictors of faculty members' responsiveness to quality research productivity, quality knowledge sharing, and administrative efficiency. The study emphasised the need for a review of the various institutional supports in order to determine their appropriateness and relevance. A related study by Pelemo (2020) reported that librarians play a significant role in FLCs and have an impact on how they perform. The author reported that pressure to manage change, the high cost of digitizing local resources, and a lack of ICT tools for quick information retrieval are among the problems facing librarians who work with FLCs. Institutional support in the form of adequate funding and provision of relevant infrastructure will help to overcome such challenges.

Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by Communities of Practice Theory (CoPT) introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991). The theory posits that learning is a social process rooted in the interactions, relationships, and shared experiences that take place within a community. Members learn by actively participating in the community and developing a shared understanding of the group's goals and practices. The core idea behind this theory is that learning is not solely an individual cognitive process, but rather a situated, social, and collective phenomenon. It suggests that people learn and develop their skills through their participation in "communities of practice" - groups of individuals who share a common interest, domain of knowledge, or set of problems, and who engage in a process of collective learning through regular interaction and the sharing of experiences, insights, and best practices (StudySmarter, 2024).

These communities of practice are characterised by three essential elements which are: shared domain of interest or expertise that brings the community together and provides a common frame of reference; a sense of community that fosters trust, and mutual engagement among the members; as well as shared repertoire of resources, tools, experiences, and problem-solving approaches that the community develops and refines over time. The CoPT emphasises that learning is not just the acquisition of knowledge, but the process of becoming a participant in these communities, which involves the negotiation of meaning, the development of shared understanding, and the evolution of individual and collective practices (StudySmarter, 2024). The theory has been widely applied in various organisational and educational contexts, as it provides a framework for understanding how knowledge is created, shared, and sustained within groups, and how this process can be leveraged to enhance learning, innovation, and organisational performance.

This theory supports FLCs. The CoPT is highly relevant in the context of FLCs as it helps to explain the dynamics and benefits of FLCs. By viewing them as communities of practice, how the domain of shared interest, the sense of community and belonging, and the development of a shared range of practices all contribute to the professional growth and learning of the faculty members involved can be understood. The theory highlights the importance of the social and situated nature of learning, which is particularly relevant in the context of faculty development. It suggests that faculty members can learn and improve their teaching, research, and service activities not just through individual study or training, but through active engagement with their peers within these communities of practice. Furthermore, the CoPT can inform the design and facilitation of FLCs, helping to ensure that they foster the necessary elements of a thriving community of practice.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The descriptive survey was employed because it is a survey – based and to examine institutional support for learning communities participations among LIS Educators in South-West, Nigeria. The population of the study was 225 LIS educators in library schools (universities and polytechnics) in the South West, Nigeria. The LIS educators comprised lecturers in the LIS department and academic librarians who taught courses in the library schools. There are twenty-two (22) library schools in the South West, comprising 15 universities and 7 polytechnics. The educators in these institutions were homogeneous because they all had training in LIS with degrees that qualified them to teach. The total enumeration sampling technique was employed for the study. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. Items of the questionnaire were adapted from previous similar studies, while some were developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was validated by two lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Science, Adeleke University, Ede.

The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections - sections A- D. Section A contains two (2) items on the demographic profile of the respondents. These include years of working experience and academic status. Section B covered the availability of FLCs and was measured using an adapted scale from the work of Babatunde (2021). The scale comprises ten (10) items using a four-point Likert scale of “Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1”. Section C sought the level of LIS educators' engagement in FLCs. It contained ten (10) items adapted from the work of Yates (2020) using four-point Likert scales of “Very High Level = 4, High Level = 3, Low Level = 2, and Very Low Level = 1”. Section D seeks to determine the types of institutional support available for LIS educators to participate in FLCs and will be measured using an adapted scale from the works of Olabode et al (2023). The scale comprises ten (10). The section is presented using a four-point Likert scale of “Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1”. The data generated were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The criterion means of 2.50 was used for the study (<2.50 = Low Extent/Disagree; >2.50 = High Extent/Agree). The analysis was facilitated with the use of SPSS Version 21.

Out of 225 copies of the questionnaire administered, 151 (67%) were completed and returned. A response rate of 66.1% was considered adequate for the study to minimize sampling error, as the response rate is typically less than 60%. Thirty-three (33) academic librarians and 118 lecturers in the LIS department responded to the

study. Ninety-two (92) of the respondents had worked for 10 years or above, while the remaining 59 had worked for less than 10 years.

RESULTS

Table 1: Availability of FLCs

Elements of FLCs	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean (x̄)	Std Dev.
There are opportunities for faculty members to establish common goals for their teaching, research, and community services	56	51	29	15	2.98	0.88
The elements of FLCs in my institution are more informal than formal.	48	37	42	24	2.77	0.99
There are opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration/teamwork among faculty members	42	51	32	26	2.76	0.96
Experienced faculty members guide and support newer or less experienced colleagues in teaching and research.	44	47	36	24	2.75	0.96
There are regular meetings for faculty members to discuss teaching, learning, and research	41	43	36	31	2.71	1.03
My institution provides resources for faculty development, such as workshops and conferences.	39	56	29	27	2.70	0.98
My institution's strategic plan includes support for FLCs	28	53	42	28	2.61	0.97
There are informal networks for faculty members to share resources, ideas, and best practices.	31	41	46	33	2.54	1.02
My institution has a formal FLC programme or initiatives	23	46	51	31	2.49	0.96
There are opportunities for peer mentoring or coaching among faculty members in my institution	18	43	56	34	2.40	0.96
Average Mean					2.67	
Criterion Mean					2.50	

Note SA= Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D =Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

As revealed in Table 1, the average mean is 2.67, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that there are FLCs in library schools in the South-West, Nigeria. The respondents claimed that there are

opportunities for faculty members to establish common goals for their teaching, research, and community services (\bar{x} =2.98, SD=0.88), The elements of FLCs in my institution are more informal than formal (\bar{x} =2.77, SD=0.99), and There are opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration/teamwork among faculty members (\bar{x} =2.77, SD=0.96). However, the respondents disagree that their institutions have a formal FLC programme or initiatives (\bar{x} =2.49, SD=0.96) and there are opportunities for peer mentoring or coaching among faculty members in their institutions (\bar{x} =2.40, SD=0.96).

Table 2: Level of Engagement in FLCs among LIS Educators

Level of Engagement	VHL (4)	HL (3)	LL (2)	VLL (1)	Mean (\bar{x})	Std Dev.
Collaboration with colleagues on a research project	71	43	23	14	3.10	0.89
Guiding and supporting newer or less experienced colleagues in teaching and research	56	58	29	8	3.09	0.82
Sharing teaching practices, experiences, or resources with colleagues	62	43	29	17	2.97	0.94
Seeking feedback from colleagues on teaching or research activities	42	67	22	20	2.93	0.91
Contribution to FLC discussions	48	54	26	23	2.89	1.00
Attendance in a meeting for faculty members to discuss teaching, learning, and research	39	62	34	16	2.84	0.93
Participation in informal networks for faculty members to share resources, ideas, and best practices.	35	51	39	26	2.73	1.01
Attending FLC-sponsored events	31	31	35	54	2.23	1.09
Volunteer for a task within FLC	16	27	48	60	2.01	1.02
Taking up a leadership role within FLCs	19	22	44	66	1.99	1.02
Average Mean					2.68	
Criterion Mean					2.50	

Note: VHL = Very High Level, HL = High Level, LL = Low Level, VLL = Very Low Level

As revealed in Table 2, the average mean (\bar{x} =2.68) is higher than the criterion mean (\bar{x} =2.50). This means a high level of engagement in FLCs among LIS educators in the South-West, Nigeria. The respondents claimed that they collaborate with colleagues on a research project (=3.10, SD 0.89), guide and support newer or less experienced colleagues in teaching and research (=3.09, SD = 0.82), and share teaching practices, experiences, or resources with colleagues (\bar{x} = 2.97, SD = 0.94). However, their responses are below the 2.50 threshold in areas such as attending FLC-sponsored events (\bar{x} = 2.23, SD = 1.09), volunteering for a task within FLC (\bar{x} = 2.01, SD = 1.02), and taking up a leadership role within FLCs (\bar{x} = 1.99, SD = 1.02).

Table 3: Types of Institutional Support

Types	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean(\bar{x})	Std Dev.
Library resources to support FLC activities	53	71	19	8	3.22	0.78
Effective communication about FLC goals, expectations, and outcomes	41	57	29	24	2.79	0.95
Access to necessary IT facilities and assistance.	43	51	33	24	2.77	0.98
Trained/experienced facilitators to guide FLC discussions and activities	36	41	47	27	2.59	1.02
Recognition and rewards from administrators (HODs, Deans, VCs/Rectors) for FLC participation	31	36	52	32	2.47	1.04
Designated meeting spaces or facilities for FLC gatherings	26	42	57	26	2.43	0.96
Adjusted workload to accommodate FLC participation	22	37	43	49	2.29	1.04
Funding for FLC activities, workshops, and travel to conferences	29	33	37	52	2.29	1.08
Programmes for promoting faculty well-being.	19	39	46	47	2.27	1.04

Note SA= Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D =Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

As revealed in Table 3. The respondents agree that the types of institutional supports to the LIS educators in library schools in South-West Nigeria include provision of library resources to support FLC activities (\bar{x} =3.22), effective communication about FLC goals, expectations, and outcomes (\bar{x} =2.79), and access to necessary IT facilities and assistance (\bar{x} =2.77). they disagree in areas such as recognition and rewards from administrators for FLC participation (\bar{x} =2.47), designated meeting spaces for FLC gatherings (\bar{x} =2.43), adjusted workload to accommodate FLC participation (\bar{x} =2.29), funding for FLC activities, workshops, and travel (\bar{x} =2.29), and programmes for promoting faculty well-being (\bar{x} =2.27).

There is no significant influence of institutional support on FLCs' participation by LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.882 ^a	.715	.602	.614
a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional support				

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.335	2	63.633	52.814	.000 ^b
	Residual	52.822	149	.271		
	Total	141.402	151			
a. Dependent Variable: FLCs' participation						
b. Predictor: (Constant), Institutional support						

Table 6: Coefficient Summary Table of the influence of institutional support on Service FLCs' participation among LIS educators

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.612	.619		2.700	.010
	Institutional support	1.190	.124	.671	7.220	.000
a. Dependent Variable: FLCs' participation						

The results of the regression analysis on the influence of institutional support on FLC's participation among LIS educators in library schools in South-West, Nigeria, are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6. As reflected in Table 4, institutional support has a positive influence on FLC's participation among the LIS educators ($R = 0.882$, $p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination (Adj. R^2) of 0.619 indicates that institutional support accounted for 51.3% of the changes in FLC' participation, while the remaining 58.7% variation in FLC' participation is explained by other variables not investigated in this study.

Table 5 presents the results of the ANOVA of the regression test, which revealed that institutional support has a significant influence on FLC's participation among the LIS educators. This is explained by the F-value (52.814) and low p-value (0.000), which is statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval. Hence, the result indicates that institutional support significantly affects FLC's participation among LIS educators.

The results of regression coefficients shown in Table 6 revealed that at a 95% confidence level, a unit increase in institutional support will lead to a 1.190 increase in FLC's participation, given that all other factors are held constant. Based on this result (Adj. $R^2 = 0.602$, $F(1, 149) = 49.671$, $p = 0.000$), the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant influence of institutional support on FLCs' participation by LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria, is rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of institutional support on FLCs' participation by LIS educators in library schools in the South West, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

This study examined institutional support for faculty learning communities' participation among LIS educators in South-West, Nigeria. The study found that FLCs are available in library schools in South-West, Nigeria. This is evident as there are opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and common academic interests,

even though peer mentoring systems and formal initiatives are lacking. Responses indicated that there are opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration/teamwork among faculty members. However, a lack of formal initiative indicates that the library schools do not have the administrative determination to wholly implement FLCs' programmes. This agrees with the findings of Jacob et al. (2020) that some of the universities in Nigeria do not have policy frameworks and administrative will to support the implementation of FLC programmes. Meanwhile, a study by Tinnell et al. (2019) emphasised the importance of formal FLC structures in supporting academic innovation.

The modern trend in higher education requires that lecturers engage in FLC programmes. The current study found that LIS educators participate in FLC programmes to a high level. This is particularly noticeable in areas such as collaborative research, mentorship, and sharing teaching practices. This finding shows that there the cooperation among the education, which is good for the advancement of the LIS profession. Nevertheless, there is a low level of participation in FLC-sponsored events, volunteering for tasks, and leadership roles. This is in line with the findings of a study by Adigun et al. (2024), who reported that lecturers in Nigerian universities regularly participate in informal collaboration but retreat from rigorous academic tasks because of workload pressures and lack of incentives. A similar study by Ogunraku (2016) posited that academic staff in Nigerian universities do not want to take up leadership and administrative responsibilities, even though they are involved in research collaboration.

The institutional support for FLCs' participation found in this study includes the provision of library resources, effective communication, and access to IT facilities, among others. Nevertheless, vital supports such as funding, recognition and rewards, and workload adjustment are not available. The areas not properly addressed in the institutional support may make the goal of FLC programmes difficult to achieve. A prior study by Jacob and Lawan (2020) has shown that some universities in Nigeria only provide basic infrastructural support but fail to incentivize or reward faculty development participation. Likewise, Alade et al. (202) found that lack of financial and administrative support is among the major barriers to the involvement of lecturers in FLC programmes.

The hypothesis tested revealed a significant influence of institutional support on FLCs' participation among LIS educators in South-West, Nigeria. This means that library schools should make institutional investment in FLC as a way of motivating their staff. This finding is in agreement with that of Owan et al. (2024), who found that institutional support has a significant effect on the involvement of lecturers in collaborative learning and research. A study by Rossoni et al. (2024) also reveals that universities that invest in faculty development infrastructure and recognition programmes usually experience enhanced academic participation and innovation. This is so as institutional support is a motivator and enabler of continued FLC participation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated how institutional support facilitates participation in FLC among LIS educators in South-West Nigeria. The study affirms that the educators engage in FLCs, even though the mode of engagement is mostly informal. The educators have not exploited peer mentoring as a means of participation in FLCs. A high level of participation in FLC activities is demonstrated by the educators, particularly in collaborative research, mentorship, and sharing teaching practices. Nevertheless, there is a low level of participation in taking up leadership roles or volunteering for tasks. The finding that institutional support significantly influenced FLC participation means that the university management should invest in FLCs. Even though the study acknowledged vital supports such as access to library resources, effective communication, and IT facilities, the lack of financial support, recognition, and excessive workload adjustments may limit the level of participation. The university management should support FLCs to enhance educational innovation and professional development among the educators.

Recommendations

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

1. FLCs programmes should be introduced in the universities with clear plans, goals, and support systems.

2. Universities should adjust the workload of the educators and give them financial support to attend FLC-related workshops, conferences, and activities.
3. Formal and appreciable reward systems should be introduced to motivate the educators to participate in FLC programmes.
4. There should be an institutional arrangement to train facilitators who can demonstrate proficiency in leading and sustaining FLC activities.

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