KONTAGORA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (KIJER)
AND
THE SOCIETY FOR EDUCATORS, UNITED KINGDOM

A Joint Publication of the Kontagora International Journal of Educational Research (KIJER) and The Society for Educators

Vol. [3] No. [3] ([2026]) | ISSN: [3027-0618] | DOI: [https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23894931]

SPECIAL CONFERENCE PUBLICATION | SOCIETY FOR EDUCATORS

FACULTY RESEARCH PRESSURE AND STUDENT-CENTRED ENGAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING: EVIDENCE FROM ADEYEMI FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, ONDO, NIGERIA

LAWAL FATAI. ADEPOJU AND AYENI CATHERINE FOLAKE

Department of Educational Management, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Ondo State

*Corresponding email: lawfattypress@gmail.com

Received: [23 April 2026] | Accepted: [25 May 2026] | Published: [15 September 2026]

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement in university teaching at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Merton's Strain Theory, which explains how individuals respond when institutional expectations exceed available resources and opportunities. A descriptive correlational survey design was adopted. The population comprised 500 academic staff members, from which 200 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Faculty research pressure on Academic staff Questionnaire (IPFMQ), and Student-Centred Engagement Questionnaire (SCEQ). The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability coefficients obtained through Cronbach's alpha exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. The findings revealed that academic staff experienced a high level of faculty research pressure while the level of student-centred engagement was relatively low. Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement ($r = .035$, $p = .624$). The study concluded that although academic staff experienced substantial research pressure, this factor was not significantly associated with student-centred engagement among the respondents.

Keywords: Faculty research pressure, student-centred engagement, university teaching, faculty, strain theory

1. Introduction

Universities are established to advance knowledge through teaching, research, and community service. These three mandates are expected to complement one another in promoting institutional effectiveness and societal development. Within contemporary higher education systems, however, increasing emphasis has been placed on research productivity as a key indicator of academic performance. Publications in indexed journals, citation counts, research grants, and other measurable outputs have become important criteria for academic promotion, institutional ranking, and professional recognition.

Student-centred engagement refers to the extent to which academic staff actively support students' learning through instructional responsiveness, academic mentoring, accessibility, constructive feedback, and meaningful classroom interaction. Unlike student engagement, which focuses primarily on students' participation in learning activities, student-centred engagement emphasises the role of lecturers in creating learning environments that promote students' academic

development and wellbeing. It is also distinct from student-centred pedagogy, which focuses on instructional methods, and from faculty-student interaction, which represents only one dimension of engagement.

Recent developments in higher education have generated concerns regarding the increasing pressure placed on academics to sustain research productivity while simultaneously fulfilling teaching, mentoring, administrative, and community service responsibilities. As universities become increasingly performance-driven, academic staff may experience tension between institutional expectations for research output and their commitment to student-centred teaching practices. This tension has attracted growing scholarly attention because of its implications for teaching quality, student learning outcomes, and institutional effectiveness.

Research productivity has increasingly become a dominant criterion for academic promotion and performance evaluation in Nigerian universities. Evidence indicates that publication output and other related indicators carry substantial weight in promotion decisions, often exceeding the emphasis placed on teaching and community service (Archibong et al., 2010). Recent studies further show that many lecturers engage in research primarily because promotion systems strongly reward publication productivity while publication-based promotion requirements can generate significant pressure on academic staff (Izuakor et al., 2026). Although these studies demonstrate the centrality of research output within academic reward structures, they do not necessarily imply that research productivity diminishes teaching quality. Indeed, international evidence suggests that the relationship between research and teaching is more nuanced and may even be complementary under certain institutional conditions. Consequently, the present study does not assume that research expectations cause poor teaching; rather, it investigates whether perceived research pressure is associated with student-centred engagement among university lecturers.

The interaction between academic staff and student learning outcomes appears to be declining. Academic staff recognise that promotion is often accompanied by salary increases and career advancement; consequently, many devote substantial time to research activities, sometimes at the expense of student-centred engagement and teaching responsibilities. Kyaligonza and Kamagara (2017) posit that poor management support, such as insufficient facilities, low pay and lack of research grants, accounts for the lack of academic commitment to student engagement in universities. Similarly, Igbadumhe et al. (2022) submitted that academic staff often interact with students only half of the regular contact hours or are not regular in class, this attitude can indicate job-hopping intention. This finding implies that student-centred engagement is declining and may significantly impact the quality of graduates produced by universities if left unaddressed.

Among the three mandates of academics (teaching, research and community service), university administration in Nigeria seems to prioritise research output as the only means by which academic staff contribute their quota to the existing body of knowledge, as preference is given to research output in the evaluation metrics of academic staff promotion. This development encourages academics to prioritise research output among the three domains. Okonedo (2015) opines that research output has been the most important measure in the university of academic participation, measured by the number of papers published in refereed journals and reputable conference proceedings.

Community service constitutes a core mandate of the university system for its host communities and serves as a vital mechanism for enhancing academics' experimental knowledge, professional competence and societal relevance. These opportunities remain elusive to many academic staff because their efforts are concentrated on research output to secure promotion. Igbadumhe et al. (2022) argued that institutional preference for research as a major criterion for promotion deprives academic staff of opportunities to enrich themselves with practical skills required for career growth, as community service capable of providing these skills was relegated to the background in the university system. Similarly, Adekalu et al. (2018) submitted that community service provided academic staff knowledge, experience and practical skills required for career growth, competencies, development and professionalism.

Concentration of efforts as well as prioritising research output by the university system will not only limit student-centred engagement but also deprive host communities of basic developments, as all efforts of academics are focused on research output. Awwalu and Najeemah (2014) argued that community service by the university academics is a medium through which management of the university responds to community needs and development of host communities through academic engagement.

The study was anchored on Merton's Strain Theory (1938). The theory was originally developed to explain how individuals respond when culturally approved goals are emphasised without corresponding access to legitimate means of achieving them. According to Merton, strain emerges when there is a discrepancy between societal expectations and the opportunities available for attaining those expectations. Such conditions may influence attitudes, behaviours, and patterns of adaptation. Although the theory was initially formulated to explain deviant behaviour within social systems,

contemporary scholars have extended its application to organisational and workplace settings where employees experience pressure arising from competing performance demands and limited resources. Within higher education institutions, academics are expected to simultaneously engage in teaching, research, community service, student mentoring, supervision, and administrative responsibilities. However, institutional reward systems frequently place considerable emphasis on measurable research outputs such as publications, citations, and grant acquisition.

The relevance of Strain Theory to this study lies in its capacity to explain how academics respond when institutional expectations exceed available resources, time, and professional support. Academic staff may experience strain when they are required to meet demanding research performance indicators while maintaining effective student-centred teaching practices. Such strain may influence workload allocation, professional priorities, and engagement with students. Consequently, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement in university teaching.

Merton (1938) argues that pressure emerges when socially prescribed goals are emphasised without equivalent attention to the means of achieving them. In the Nigerian educational system, institutional success is increasingly defined by research productivity, citation metrics and international rankings. Altbach et al. (2009) observed that research productivity has become a central indicator of institutional prestige and academic advancement within global higher education landscape. Reinforcing this position, Bello et al. (2023) argued that institutionalisation of the publish or perish culture has created a disparity in academic reward systems, whereby research publications receive greater recognition and career rewards than teaching-related contributions.

Strain surfaces when academic staff lack institutional support to meet prescribed performance goals. Merton (1938) emphasises in his theory that pressure becomes dysfunctional when legitimate means are constrained. In Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) has engaged the federal government several times, accusing it of limited funding, inadequate instructional infrastructure, disproportionate lecturer/student ratio, which preclude interactive and student-centred pedagogies. Tight (2020) reports that under-resourced universities struggle to balance research expectations with quality teaching. In situations such as this, academic staff have little option but to economise their efforts by reducing investment in student mentoring, participatory learning activities, student assessment and community service that partially contribute to their career growth.

Academic work has become increasingly intensified in Nigerian universities as academic staff are expected to simultaneously teach, mentor, assess, supervise research, perform community service, and undertake administrative duties. The enormous workload constitutes a major source of occupational strain. Wray and Kinman (2022) opined that when role demands exceed available time and energy, lecturers experience difficulty sustaining meaningful classroom interaction. Alluding to this, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) demonstrate that excessive workload negatively affects teaching quality leading to reduced feedback, limited student interaction, and a reliance on lecture-dominated instructional approaches.

Persistent exposure to performance pressure and workload may result in psychological strain and professional strain. Maslach and Leiter (2016) describe burnout as emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy arising from chronic work stress. Bakker et al. (2014) reported that burnout among academic staff is associated with diminished motivation to engage students and reduced enthusiasm for innovative teaching practices. In relation to strain theory and the decline in student-centred engagement, Agnew (2006) explains that burnout occurs as a response to repeated failure or perceived inability to meet institutional expectations despite sustained efforts. He further stated that teaching becomes routinised rather than student- centred.

Strain theory posits that individuals adapt to pressure through coping mechanisms that may preserve institutional conformity while undermining core professional values (Merton, 1938). In the university setting, academic staff often cope by prioritising research output, minimising time spent on teaching preparation, as well as reducing availability for student consultation (Shin et al., 2014). Teichler (2017) argued that the growing emphasis on research productivity in higher education can influence how academics allocate their professional time and effort. As a result, a focus on research output at the expense of other mandates of academic staff may reflect institutional reward structures that privilege research over teaching and student-centred engagement, thereby reducing opportunities for meaningful interaction with students.

Student-centred pedagogy encourages active learning, robust collaboration and learner autonomy. Biggs and Tang (2011) argue that such approaches require sustained planning, emotional labour, continuous assessment, which can make many university lecturers overwhelmed by the enormity of workload before them. Under such conditions, Henard and Roseveare (2012) argued that academic staff increasingly adopt teacher-centred methods that prioritise efficiency and content coverage. Strain theory explains the shift away from student-centred teaching as an institutional consequence

rather than an individual faculty member failure. Froyd and Simpson (2010) argue that performance-driven academic cultures discourage innovative pedagogy by rewarding measurable outputs over instructional engagement.

Faculty-student interaction is a central component of student engagement and academic success. Tinto (2017) opines that heavy workloads and performance pressures significantly reduce opportunities for mentoring and informal academic interaction.

The cumulative effects of faculty research pressure, resource constraint, workload, burnout and adaptive coping strategies have contributed to a marked decline in student-centred engagement. Fredricks et al. (2004) and Kuh (2009) maintained that when faculty strain limits these elements, students become passive recipients of instruction rather than active participants in the learning process. Strain theory situates this outcome as a structural problem embedded within academic systems rather than an individual faculty member pedagogical shortcoming.

Reduced student-centred engagement has significant implications for teaching and learning outcomes. Kuh (2009) posits that empirical evidence links low engagement to poorer academic performance, weaker critical thinking skills and reduced student satisfaction. Kuh stated further that declining learning outcomes often prompt institutions to impose stricter accountability measures, further intensifying faculty research pressure. Strain Theory therefore reveals a self-reinforcing cycle in which institutional performance demands undermine teaching quality, ultimately threatening the educational mission of universities.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between work engagement behaviour, perceived organisational support and organisational climate (Kose, 2016). Other studies have investigated factors affecting scholarly research productivity in Nigerian universities (Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). However, relatively few studies have specifically examined how perceived faculty research pressure relates to student-centred engagement among academic staff within Nigerian universities. Furthermore, available studies have largely focused on research productivity outcomes rather than the implications of research- related pressures for lecturers' interactions with students. This study therefore contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between perceived faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff in Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Universities increasingly emphasise research productivity, publication outputs, citation impact, and institutional ranking as indicators of academic excellence. While these priorities are intended to strengthen institutional competitiveness and knowledge production, they may also generate significant performance pressures for academic staff. Academic staff are expected to satisfy research expectations while simultaneously fulfilling teaching, mentoring, supervision, administrative, and community service responsibilities.

Student-centred engagement remains an important component of effective university teaching because it promotes meaningful learning experiences, academic support, and positive educational outcomes. However, concerns have emerged regarding the extent to which increasing research-related demands may affect lecturers' capacity to sustain student-centred teaching practices. Although universities increasingly emphasise research productivity as a measure of academic excellence, concerns persist regarding whether such expectations may inadvertently reduce lecturers' commitment to student-centred teaching practices. While considerable attention has been devoted to research productivity and academic workload, empirical evidence on how perceived faculty research pressure relates to lecturers' engagement with students remains limited, particularly within Nigerian universities. It is against this background that this study investigated the relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What is the extent of perceived faculty research pressure among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education?
2. What is the level of student-centred engagement among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education?

1.3. Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant relationship between perceived faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff.

2. Methodology

2.1. Operationalisation and Measurement of Variables

The study investigated two major constructs: faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement. Faculty research pressure was operationalised as academics' perception of promotion requirements, publication expectations, research productivity demands, and institutional emphasis on research output. Student-centred engagement was operationalised as lecturers' commitment to instructional responsiveness, academic mentoring, accessibility to students, constructive feedback, and support for students' learning experiences.

2.2. Validity of Instrument

The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The validators examined the relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and adequacy of the items in relation to the objectives of the study. Their comments and recommendations informed the modification and refinement of the instruments before administration.

2.3. Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Prior to the final reliability estimation, negatively worded items were reverse-scored to ensure directional consistency among the scale items. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.703 for the faculty research pressure scale and 0.821 for the student engagement scale. According to the commonly accepted benchmark of 0.70 and above, the coefficients indicate acceptable and good internal consistency, respectively. The results suggest that the instrument possessed sufficient reliability for data collection and subsequent statistical analysis.

2.4. Sampling

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select respondents for the study. The population of 500 academic staff members was first stratified according to faculties and academic ranks to ensure adequate representation of the various categories of academic staff within the university. Stratification was considered appropriate because academic staff differ in their teaching responsibilities, research expectations, administrative duties, and levels of experience, which could influence their perceptions of research pressure, workload, and student-centred engagement.

Following the stratification, the sample size of 200 respondents was proportionately allocated to each faculty based on the number of academic staff within the respective faculties. The proportionate allocation formula used was:

$n_h = (N_h / N) \times n$

Where:

n_h = sample size allocated to a particular stratum (faculty)

N_h = population of academic staff in the stratum

N = total population of academic staff (500)

n = total sample size (200)

Thereafter, simple random sampling was used within each stratum to select the required number of respondents. The names of eligible academic staff members were obtained from the university's staff records, and respondents were selected through a balloting procedure in which every academic staff member within each stratum had an equal chance of being selected. The combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques enhanced the representativeness of the sample and minimised sampling bias, thereby improving the generalisability of the findings to academic staff of Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

2.5. Ethical Principles and Data Analysis

Ethical principles guiding social science research were strictly observed. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from respondents, anonymity was guaranteed, and all information provided was treated confidentially. Data

collected were used strictly for academic purposes. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlation at the 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

Research question 1: What is the extent of perceived faculty research pressure among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education?

Table 1.1: Extent of Perceived Faculty Research Pressure among Academic Staff

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Promotion decisions in my institution are driven primarily by the number of publications produced	5 (2.5%)	8 (4.0%)	19 (9.5%)	61 (30.5%)	107 (53.5%)	4.29	0.97
2	Teaching quality carries less weight than research output in performance appraisal	112 (56.0%)	64 (32.0%)	19 (9.5%)	5 (2.5%)	-	4.42	0.74
3	My institution's appraisal system explicitly prioritises publication metrics (counts, impact factors, citations)	97 (48.5%)	82 (41.0%)	13 (6.5%)	6 (3.0%)	2 (1.0%)	4.33	0.81
4	Meeting publication benchmarks is essential for favourable annual review in my department	80 (40.0%)	82 (41.0%)	15 (7.5%)	17 (8.5%)	6 (3.0%)	4.07	1.04
5	Research outputs are more strongly rewarded than mentoring or student support activities	92 (46.0%)	66 (33.0%)	28 (14.0%)	8 (4.0%)	6 (3.0%)	4.15	1.00
6	Institutional recognition (awards, leadership roles) is largely based on research productivity	69 (34.5%)	67 (33.5%)	45 (22.5%)	15 (7.5%)	4 (2.0%)	3.91	1.02
7	Failure to meet publication expectations adversely affects how my performance is evaluated	75 (37.5%)	64 (32.0%)	38 (19.0%)	19 (9.5%)	4 (2.0%)	3.94	1.0
8	Promotion and appraisal policies in my institution create pressure to produce research outputs regularly	62 (31.0%)	63 (31.5%)	43 (21.5%)	18 (9.0%)	14 (7.0%)	3.71	1.19
9	Indicators of research productivity are more transparent and consequential than indicators of teaching or mentoring quality	69 (34.5%)	51 (25.5%)	36 (18.0%)	22 (11.0%)	22 (11.0%)	3.71	1.34
10	In my university, career advancement is closely aligned with publication outcomes rather than pedagogical contribution	87 (43.0%)	69 (34.5%)	21 (10.5%)	14 (7.0%)	9 (4.5%)	4.06	1.10
	WEIGHTED MEAN						4.05	1.02

Table 1.1 presents respondents' perceptions of faculty research pressure. The weighted mean score of 4.05 exceeds the criterion mean of 3.00, indicating a high level of perceived faculty research pressure associated with research productivity. The respondents generally agreed that promotion decisions, performance appraisal systems, institutional recognition and career advancement are strongly linked to publication outputs and other research indicators. The high mean scores recorded across most items suggest that academic staff perceive research productivity as a dominant criterion in institutional evaluation and professional advancement. The finding indicates that research output occupies a central position within the performance expectations of the university system.

Research question 2: What is the level of student-centred engagement among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education?

Table 1.2: Level of Student-Centred Engagement among Academic Staff

s/n	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	mean	SD
1	I hold regular mentoring sessions with students outside formal classroom teaching	10 (5.0%)	16 (8.0%)	25 (12.5%)	105 (52.5%)	44 (22.0%)	2.20	1.03
2	I make myself available to students for academic guidance when needed	15 (7.5%)	26 (13.0%)	17 (8.5%)	91 (45.5%)	51 (25.5%)	2.32	1.20
3	I demonstrate scholarly writing and research processes during teaching or supervision	62 (31.0%)	87 (43.5%)	9 (4.5%)	23 (11.5%)	19 (9.5%)	3.75	1.27
4	I encourage students to observe and adopt my research and academic practices	10 (5.0%)	37 (18.5%)	22 (11.0%)	67 (33.5%)	64 (32.0%)	2.31	1.23
5	I provide timely and detailed feedback on students' research work	35 (17.5%)	15 (7.5%)	13 (6.5%)	59 (29.5%)	78 (39.0%)	2.35	1.48
6	I adapt my teaching strategies to meet individual students' learning needs	54 (27.0%)	72 (36.0%)	10 (5.0%)	38 (19.0%)	26 (13.0%)	3.45	1.39
7	I design learning activities that prioritize student participation and inquiry	34 (17.0%)	22 (11.0%)	8 (4.0%)	87 (43.5%)	49 (24.5%)	2.53	1.41
8	I encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions and learning activities	13 (6.5%)	15 (7.5%)	10 (5.0%)	96 (48.0%)	66 (33.0%)	2.07	1.12
9	I prioritise teaching/mentoring of students over research productivity	6 (3.0%)	10 (5.0%)	5 (2.5%)	101 (50.5%)	78 (39.0%)	1.83	.927
10	I maintain long-term academic mentoring relationship with students	29 (14.5%)	17 (8.5%)	3 (1.5%)	85 (42.5%)	66 (33.0%)	2.29	1.38
	WEIGHTED MEAN						**2.51**	**1.10**

Table 1.2 presents the level of student-centred engagement among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education. The weighted mean score of 2.51 is lower than the criterion mean of 3.00, indicating a low level of student-centred engagement among the respondents. The finding suggests that academic staff exhibited relatively limited involvement in activities such as academic mentoring, student consultation, timely feedback and other student support practices. The result implies that student-centred engagement has not attained the expected level within the institution. This finding may reflect the competing demands placed on academic staff through research obligations, workload pressures, administrative responsibilities and other institutional expectations.

There is no significant relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement at Adeyemi Federal University of Education

Table 1. 3: Relationship Between Perceived Faculty Research Pressure and Student-Centred Engagement among Academic Staff

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Faculty research pressure	200	38.06	2.79	198			
Student-Centred Engagement	200	26.29	2.87	198	- 0.035	0.624	Not significant

Table 1.3 shows that academic staff recorded a mean score of 38.06(SD =2.79) on faculty research pressure and 26.29(SD =2.87) on student-centred engagement. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed a negligible negative relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff, $r(198) = -.035$, $p = .624$. Since the p-value exceeded the .05 significance level, the relationship was not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected because the relationship was not statistically significant. The finding indicates that although academic staff experienced considerable research pressure, it was not significantly associated with their level of student-centred engagement.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that academic staff experienced a high level of faculty research pressure (Weighted Mean = 4.05). This suggests that research productivity has become a dominant criterion for performance evaluation, promotion,

institutional recognition, and career advancement among academics. The result supports the position of Archibong et al. (2010), who reported that promotion systems in Nigerian universities place substantial emphasis on publication output. The finding is further consistent with Izuakor et al. (2026), who observed that publication-based promotion requirements increasingly generate pressure among academics because research productivity attracts greater institutional recognition than teaching-related activities.

The study further revealed a low level of student-centred engagement among academic staff (Weighted Mean = 2.51). This indicates that lecturers demonstrated limited involvement in mentoring, student consultation, timely feedback, and other forms of academic support. The finding supports the submissions of Tinto (2017), who argued that increasing workload and institutional performance demands reduce opportunities for meaningful faculty-student interaction. Similarly, Kuh (2009) maintained that reduced academic engagement weakens students' learning experiences and overall academic development.

The hypothesis testing showed that faculty research pressure was not significantly related to student-centred engagement ($r = –0.035$, $p = .624$). Although a weak negative relationship was observed, the association was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that despite experiencing considerable research pressure, academic staff may still maintain some level of commitment to teaching and student support activities. The finding differs from Gibbs and Coffey (2004), who reported that excessive academic workload often reduces teaching quality and limits lecturer-student interaction. The finding also differs from Wray and Kinman (2022), who argued that increasing performance demands can diminish lecturers' capacity to sustain meaningful engagement with students.

A possible explanation for the insignificant relationship is that academic staff may have developed coping mechanisms that enable them to balance research responsibilities with teaching obligations. The finding therefore suggests that professional commitment, institutional support, and adaptive work strategies may help explain variation in student-centred engagement. This position aligns with Merton's Strain Theory, which proposes that individuals adopt various adaptive responses when institutional expectations exceed available resources. Rather than completely withdrawing from teaching responsibilities, academic staff may adjust their work practices in ways that enable them to satisfy both research and instructional obligations. From a theoretical perspective, the findings provide only partial support for Strain Theory. While the theory predicts that excessive faculty research pressure may alter professional behaviour, the present study found no significant evidence that research pressure translated into reduced student-centred engagement. This suggests that the relationship between faculty research pressure and teaching practices may be influenced by other organisational and personal factors such as institutional climate, leadership support, job commitment, professional ethics, and workload management practices.

The findings therefore contribute to the growing literature on academic work by showing that high research pressure was not significantly associated with lower student-centred engagement among university lecturers. The result highlights the complexity of academic work and suggests that future studies should investigate additional variables that may explain variations in lecturers' engagement with students.

5. Conclusion

This study examined faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. The findings revealed no statistically significant relationship between faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement among academic staff. Although respondents experienced substantial research pressure, this pressure was not significantly associated with their level of student-centred engagement.

6. Recommendations

University management should adopt a more balanced academic evaluation system that accords adequate recognition to teaching effectiveness, student mentoring, community service, and research productivity.

Academic staff should be provided with institutional support mechanisms such as research grants, research assistants, and reduced administrative workload to facilitate effective management of competing academic responsibilities.

Faculties and departments should institutionalise structured mentoring, academic advising and student consultation programmes to strengthen student-centred engagement among lecturers.

Professional development programmes focusing on student-centred teaching strategies should be organised periodically to enhance lecturers' instructional effectiveness.

Future studies should investigate other organisational and personal factors such as institutional climate, leadership support, workload management and professional commitment that may influence student-centred engagement

DECLARATIONS

Funding

The author received no specific funding for this work.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

References

Adekalu, S. O., Suandi, T., Krauss, S. E., & Ismail, I. A. (2018). Challenges obstructing academic's career experience in community engagement practice: The Nigerian universities experience. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences,* 8(12), *109–122. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-122/4999*

Agnew, R. (2006). *Pressured into crime*: *An overview of general strain theory*. Roxbury Publishing.

Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. E. (2009). *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution.* UNESCO.

Archibong, I. A., Effiom, D. O., Omoike, D., & Edet, A. O. (2010). Academic staff disposition to promotion criteria in Nigerian universities. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning,* 7(10), 25–30. https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v7i10.153

Awwalu, M. I., & Najeemah, B. M. Y. (2014). University community engagement towards development of local communities in Sokoto, Nigeria. Paper presented at the National Conference on University–Industry–Community Engagement, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia, 17–18 November 2014

Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2014). Burnout and work engagement: The JD-R approach. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, *389–411.*

Bello, S. A., Azubuike, F. C., & Akande, O. A. (2023). Reputation disparity in teaching and research productivity and rewards in the context of consequences of institutionalization of publish-or-perish culture in academia. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(3), *574–584. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12417*

Biggs, J. B., & Tang, C. (2011). Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does (4th ed.). Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education.

Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), *59–109. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059*

Froyd, J., & Simpson, N. (2010). Student-centered learning: Addressing faculty questions about student-centered learning. Texas A&M University.

Gibbs, G., & Coffey, M. (2004). The impact of training of university teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and the approach to learning of their students. *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 5(1), *87–100. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787404040463*

Henard, F., & Roseveare, D. (2012). Fostering quality teaching in higher education: Policies and practices. OECD.

Igbadumhe, A. F., Akinbo, T. M., & Adepoju, O. O. (2022). Empirical investigation of management support and academic staff engagement in selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 28(6), *1–8.*

Imhonopi, D., & Urim, U. M. (2013). Determinants of scholarly research productivity in Nigerian universities. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 8(17), *1534–1545.*

Izuakor, C. F., Emeghebo, U. M., Nwakile, T. C., & Omego, G. N. (2026). Promotion incentives and the dynamics of research motivation among technical and vocational education and training lecturers in Nigerian universities. *Discover Education,* 5, *Article 148. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-026-01201-w*

Kose, A. (2016). The relationship between work engagement behavior and perceived organizational support. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 16(4), *1359–1376.*

Kuh, G. D. (2009). What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(6), *683–706. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0099*

Kyaligonza, R., & Kamagara, E. (2017). Staff turnover in public universities in Uganda. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, 9(2), *59–72.*

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), *103–111. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311*

Merton, R. K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), *672–682. https://doi.org/10.2307/2084686*

Okonedo, S. (2015). Research and publication productivity of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-Journal), *Article 1297.*

Shin, J. C., Jung, J., Postiglione, G. A., & Azman, N. (2014). Research productivity of returnees from study abroad in Korea, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. *Minerva,* 52(4), *467–487. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-014-9261-9*

Teichler, U. (2017). The professional relevance of study: Disputes, widely shared approaches, and future perspectives. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 5(2), *135–161. https://doi.org/10.1163/22125868-12340065*

Tight, M. (2020). Student retention and engagement in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 44(5), *689–704. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1576860*

Tinto, V. (2017). Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(3), *254–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115621917*

Wray, S., & Kinman, G. (2022). The psychosocial hazards of academic work: An analysis of trends. *Studies in Higher Education,* 47(11), *2308–2321. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1793934*

CITE THIS ARTICLE

APA

Adepoju, L. F., & Ayeni, C. F. (2026). Faculty research pressure and student-centred engagement in university teaching: Evidence from Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. *Kontagora International Journal of Educational Research (KIJER), 3*(3), 175–184.

Chicago

Adepoju, Lawal Fatai, and Catherine Folake Ayeni. "Faculty Research Pressure and Student-Centred Engagement in University Teaching: Evidence from Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria." *Kontagora International Journal of Educational Research (KIJER)* 3, no. 3 (2026): 175–184.