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Lecturers' Competence Levels and Goal Achievement of Universities in Kwara State

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Research Article

ABSTRACT

Background: Universities rely heavily on the competence of their lecturers to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and community service. In the context of growing digital transformation, institutions face the challenge of ensuring that lecturers possess adequate technological, pedagogical, and professional competencies to drive institutional effectiveness and maintain academic quality. *Aim:* This study aimed to investigate the relationship between lecturers' competence levels and the achievement of university goals in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to determine the levels of lecturers' competencies, assess the extent to which universities achieve their institutional goals, and examine how each competence dimension contributes to overall goal attainment. *Method:* A descriptive correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 333 lecturers selected from three universities using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a validated instrument titled Lecturers' Competence Levels and Goal Achievement Questionnaire (LCLGAQ). The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to describe competence levels and goal achievement, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to test relationships among variables at a 0.05 significance level. *Results and Discussion:* Findings revealed that lecturers exhibited high levels of technological and professional competence, but moderate levels of pedagogical competence. University goals related to teaching and research were highly achieved, whereas community service goals showed moderate achievement. Statistical analysis indicated significant positive relationships between all competence dimensions and university goal achievement, with technological competence emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings underscore the critical role of lecturers' competencies in enhancing institutional performance and achieving academic excellence. *Conclusion:* The study concludes that technological, pedagogical, and professional competences collectively determine the effectiveness of universities in accomplishing their teaching, research, and community service mandates. Strengthening lecturers' competencies across these dimensions will enhance institutional capacity to meet core educational objectives and sustain competitive performance in higher education.

Keywords: Lecturers' Competence, Technological Competence, Pedagogical Competence, Professional Competence, Goal Achievement, University Performance

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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of any university system depends largely on the competence of its lecturers, who are central to achieving institutional goals in teaching, research, and community service. In the contemporary knowledge economy, university lecturers are expected not only to deliver disciplinary content but also to foster critical thinking, innovation, and lifelong learning among students. Consequently, lecturers' competence has become a crucial determinant of institutional performance, academic quality, and graduate employability (Okolie et al., 2020). Globally, higher education institutions face increasing pressure to align academic practices with technological advancement, international standards, and societal needs. Studies across different contexts have shown that lecturers' professional and pedagogical competencies directly influence teaching effectiveness and research productivity (Okolie et al., 2020; Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020; Moreira et al., 2023). Furthermore, the integration of digital tools into university instruction has become essential for improving students' engagement and research outcomes (Sabri et al., 2024; Abubakar et al., 2024). These developments underscore the multidimensional nature of lecturer competence,

encompassing technological, pedagogical, and professional capacities that collectively contribute to institutional goal achievement.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education identifies teaching, research, and community service as the tripartite mission of universities. Attaining these goals has remained a persistent challenge. Reports by Ogunode et al. (2024) and Olatoye and Ileuma (2023) indicate that many universities in Nigeria struggle with limited research funding, inadequate ICT facilities, and insufficient professional development opportunities for lecturers. These challenges have constrained lecturers' ability to apply contemporary pedagogical methods and sustain research excellence. In Kwara State, universities such as the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, and Al-Hikmah University continue to pursue quality improvement initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching and research productivity. However, despite these efforts, observable gaps remain in the integration of digital technologies, lecturers' participation in professional development programmes, and the translation of research output into societal impact. This raises critical questions about the extent to which lecturers' competence levels influence the realisation of universities' goals within the state.

Conceptually, lecturers' competence can be situated within the Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in human resources through training, skill development, and continuous professional learning leads to improved productivity and organisational performance (Imakpokpomwan & Odjugo, 2024; Okokoyo & Nwaham, 2024). Applied to university education, the theory implies that lecturers' technological, pedagogical, and professional competencies function as key forms of intellectual capital that directly impact goal achievement. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between lecturers' competence levels and the achievement of university goals in Kwara State, Nigeria. It specifically examines how lecturers' technological, professional, and pedagogical competences relate to institutional outcomes in teaching, research, and community service. By doing so, the study provides empirical evidence that can guide university administrators and policymakers in designing strategies to strengthen academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

University lecturers play a central role in achieving institutional goals through their competence in teaching, research, and community engagement. The quality of any university system is therefore directly linked to the competence of its academic staff. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education emphasises that universities are established to pursue excellence in knowledge transmission, innovation, and service to society (Asaju, 2023; Ofozoba et al., 2023). Attaining these goals depends on the professional, pedagogical, and technological capacities of lecturers to meet contemporary educational demands. Despite ongoing policy and institutional reforms, Nigerian universities continue to face challenges in achieving their set objectives. Empirical evidence shows that lecturers' performance is often constrained by inadequate digital infrastructure, limited access to professional development programmes, and low institutional support for research and innovation (Ogunode et al., 2024; Adetomiwa et al., 2023). Furthermore, Ogunbodede et al. (2023) noted that although lecturers increasingly recognise the importance of digital competence, many lack the skills or resources to integrate technology effectively into teaching and research.

In Kwara State, universities such as the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, and Al-Hikmah University have made notable investments in faculty development and digital learning infrastructure. Nevertheless, observable disparities persist in lecturers' engagement with technology, their participation in professional training, and their use of innovative pedagogical strategies. As a result, questions remain about the extent to which lecturers' competence levels influence the overall achievement of university goals in areas such as teaching quality, research output, and community service. Previous studies (Adeoti, 2019; Enyekit & Ukata, 2022) have explored aspects of lecturers' competence and its effect on student outcomes or institutional performance. However, these studies have often examined competence dimensions in isolation, with limited attention to the combined influence of technological, pedagogical, and professional competencies on goal achievement within the local Nigerian university context. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical data focusing specifically on universities in Kwara State. Hence, this study was designed to address these gaps by empirically investigating the relationship between lecturers' competence levels, technological, professional, and pedagogical and the goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

The findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights for improving institutional effectiveness and guiding policies on lecturer development and quality assurance in higher education.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between lecturers' competence levels and the achievement of university goals in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of lecturers' competence in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. Assess the level of goal achievement of universities in Kwara State.
3. Examine the relationship between lecturers' technological competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.
4. Examine the relationship between lecturers' professional competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

5. Examine the relationship between lecturers' pedagogical competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the level of lecturers' competence in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' technological competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' professional competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

H_{03}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' pedagogical competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Lecturers' competence refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable university teachers to perform their instructional, research, and community service functions effectively. According to Joseph et al. (2024), lecturer competence encompasses communication, problem-solving, teamwork, time management, and digital literacy, all of which enhance students' learning experiences. Similarly, Enyekit and Ukata (2022) emphasised that competence represents the capacity to apply acquired knowledge and skills in meeting job demands. In the university context, Utama et al. (2017) classified lecturer competence into professional, social, personality, and pedagogical dimensions, while Ogunbodede et al. (2023) later expanded this to include digital competence, which has become indispensable in contemporary higher education. These conceptualisations suggest that competence is multidimensional, situational, and essential to institutional quality.

Technological competence involves the ability of lecturers to integrate digital tools into teaching, research, and academic communication. Gunuc (2023) described technology integration in education as the meaningful use of technological resources—such as computers, mobile devices, and software applications—to improve teaching and learning processes. Santos and Castro (2021) observed that lecturers' digital literacy enhances instructional efficiency, students' engagement, and research dissemination. Despite these benefits, Ogunbodede et al. (2023) identified challenges affecting technological competence among Nigerian lecturers, including insufficient ICT infrastructure, lack of training, and limited institutional support. In Kwara State, universities such as Al-Hikmah University and the University of Ilorin have introduced staff development initiatives focused on digital pedagogy. These efforts align with global trends in digital transformation in higher education and directly support the achievement of university goals in teaching and research.

Professional competence encompasses ethical conduct, subject mastery, effective communication, and continuous professional growth. According to Kutsak et al. (2023), professional competence reflects a lecturer's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate instructional activities within institutional standards. Virtanen et al. (2017) further noted that professionalism involves self-regulation, problem-solving, and responsibility in carrying out academic duties. In the Nigerian university system, professional competence is closely linked to academic productivity and institutional reputation. Owusu-Agyeman (2024) highlighted that lecturers who maintain professional ethics and engage in lifelong learning contribute more effectively to institutional quality assurance. Likewise, Miñon (2017) found that professional conduct and continuous development are correlated with job performance and ethical scholarship. Hence, enhancing lecturers' professional competence directly supports universities' mission in research excellence, innovation, and community service.

Pedagogical competence refers to lecturers' ability to design, deliver, and evaluate learning experiences that promote critical thinking, creativity, and student engagement. Sudargini and Purwanto (2020) defined pedagogical competence as encompassing knowledge of learners' characteristics, mastery of curriculum, application of learning theories, and the use of appropriate teaching strategies. Jacob et al. (2020) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) remains foundational, emphasising that effective teachers must not only master subject content but also know how to transform it into understandable learning experiences for students. Empirical studies reinforce the importance of pedagogical competence in achieving educational quality. Walder (2017) found that lecturers' pedagogical skills significantly enhance institutional innovation and student learning outcomes. In Nigeria, Oladimeji (2025) similarly noted that pedagogical proficiency, supported by digital tools, improves engagement and knowledge retention, contributing directly to universities' educational goals.

The National Policy on Education identifies teaching, research, and community service as the core objectives of Nigerian universities. Setiawan (2025) and Amin (2022) emphasised that achieving these goals depends largely on the competence and commitment of lecturers. Studies such as Oyeniran et al. (2024), Lucky and Yusoff (2015) and Utama et al. (2017) confirmed that lecturer competence is significantly related to student achievement, institutional productivity, and innovation. However,

Ogunode et al. (2024) reported that inadequate resources, excessive teaching loads, and limited research funding impede goal attainment in Nigerian universities. These institutional constraints often undermine lecturers' ability to apply their competencies effectively. Therefore, developing lecturers' technological, professional, and pedagogical capacities is essential to improving teaching quality, research productivity, and community engagement—the three pillars of university goal achievement. This study, therefore, fills this gap by empirically analysing the relationships between lecturers' technological, professional, and pedagogical competence and the achievement of university goals in Kwara State, Nigeria.

METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive correlational survey design to examine the relationship between lecturers' competence levels and goal achievement in universities within Kwara State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect quantitative data from a large population and to determine the extent of association between the independent variable (lecturers' competence levels) and the dependent variable (university goal achievement) without manipulating any variable. The target population comprised 2,569 lecturers from three universities in Kwara State: the University of Ilorin (federal), Kwara State University, Malete (state), and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin (private). Using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, a representative sample of 333 lecturers was determined. The sample was selected through proportionate stratified random sampling, ensuring fair representation of lecturers across the three universities and academic ranks. This approach minimised sampling bias and enhanced the generalizability of findings.

Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Lecturers' Competence Levels and Goal Achievement Questionnaire (LCLGAQ). The instrument comprised two sections: Section A elicited demographic information. Section B contained 30 items measuring three dimensions of lecturers' competence—technological, pedagogical, and professional competence—and indicators of goal achievement (teaching, research, and community service). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The scale interpretation thresholds were: 4.50–5.00 (Very High), 3.50–4.49 (High), 2.50–3.49 (Moderate), 1.50–2.49 (Low), and 1.00–1.49 (Very Low). The instrument underwent content and face validation by three experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation at Al-Hikmah University. Their feedback guided the refinement of ambiguous and overlapping items. A pilot test was conducted using 30 lecturers from universities outside the sample frame in Kwara State.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were 0.86 for technological competence, 0.82 for pedagogical competence, 0.84 for professional competence, and 0.88 for goal achievement, yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85, indicating strong internal consistency. Data collection took place between February and April 2025. Questionnaires were administered electronically and in person with the assistance of research assistants. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, assured of anonymity, and participation was strictly voluntary. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, and institutional permissions were secured from the management of each participating university. A total of 303 valid responses (91% response rate) were used for analysis after data cleaning. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 25). Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were employed to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were checked before correlation analysis. Additionally, simple regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictive strength of each competence dimension on goal achievement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Research Question 1: What is the level of lecturers' competence in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers' Competence Levels in Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria (N = 303)

S/N	Indicators of Competence	Mean	SD	Decision
Technological Competence				
1	Use of educational software to facilitate learning	3.32	0.59	High
2	Integration of digital resources into course curricula	2.94	0.63	High
3	Use of online platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) for student communication	3.11	0.57	High
4	Regular updating of digital resources to meet academic needs	3.04	0.67	High

S/N	Indicators of Competence	Mean	SD	Decision
Average (Technological Competence)		3.09	0.57	High
Professional Competence				
5	Maintenance of ethical standards in lecturer–student interactions	3.05	0.41	High
6	Observance of professional boundaries between lecturers and students	2.99	0.64	High
7	Respect for students' opinions and encouragement of open discussions	3.06	0.71	High
8	Respect for diversity in students' backgrounds and experiences	2.64	0.70	Moderate
9	Effective time management across teaching, research, and service roles	3.52	0.67	High
Average (Professional Competence)		3.05	0.63	High
Pedagogical Competence				
10	Adoption of innovative teaching methods integrating technology	2.01	0.52	Moderate
11	Ability to manage classroom dynamics effectively	2.11	0.34	Moderate
12	Creation of an engaging and participatory learning environment	2.61	0.74	High
13	Facilitation of discussions that promote critical thinking and problem-solving	3.95	0.35	Very High
14	Provision of constructive feedback to enhance student learning	2.55	0.76	High
Average (Pedagogical Competence)		2.65	0.54	Moderate–High

Overall Average Mean: 2.93; Overall SD: 0.58. Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = High Competence Level

Table 1 shows that the overall mean score of 2.93 (SD = 0.58) indicates a generally high level of competence among lecturers in universities in Kwara State. Across the three competence dimensions, technological competence recorded an average of 3.09, and professional competence recorded 3.05, both reflecting high proficiency. In contrast, pedagogical competence had a lower mean (2.65), suggesting moderate strength in classroom practice and instructional innovation. These results imply that while lecturers possess strong professional ethics and are increasingly competent in using digital tools, their pedagogical practices, particularly the effective integration of technology into teaching, still require improvement. Continuous professional development focusing on modern instructional strategies and technology-enhanced learning is therefore essential to sustain and improve lecturers' overall competence levels.

Research Question 2: What is the level of goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table II. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of Goal Achievement in Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria (N = 303)

S/N	Indicators of Goal Achievement	Mean	SD	Decision
Teaching				
1	Level of students' engagement during lectures	3.03	0.57	High
2	Incorporation of innovative teaching methods	3.45	0.78	High
3	Timely achievement of teaching objectives	3.85	0.73	High
Average (Teaching)		3.58	0.74	High
Research and Publications				
4	Annual publication achievement	2.93	0.33	Moderate
5	Research collaboration with colleagues	3.94	0.87	High
6	Research conference participation	3.56	0.84	High
Average (Research and Publications)		3.39	0.70	High

S/N	Indicators of Goal Achievement	Mean	SD	Decision
Community Service				
7	Community engagement participation	3.42	0.67	High
8	Relevance of community service activities	2.51	0.55	Moderate
9	Use of expertise to address community challenges	2.90	0.64	Moderate
10	Leadership roles in community projects	3.05	0.98	High
Average (Community Service)		2.90	0.73	Moderate

Overall Average Mean: 3.29; Overall SD: 0.72. Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = High Level of Goal Achievement

Table II presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the level of goal achievement among universities in Kwara State. The overall mean score of 3.29 (SD = 0.72) indicates that universities in the state are performing at a high level of goal achievement. This means that, on average, lecturers and institutions are effectively working toward the primary objectives of university education—teaching, research, and community service. Among the three dimensions examined, the teaching component recorded the highest average (M = 3.58, SD = 0.74), suggesting that lecturers are generally effective in engaging students, applying innovative teaching strategies, and meeting instructional objectives. The research and publication dimension also showed a high level of achievement (M = 3.39, SD = 0.70), implying that lecturers actively participate in research activities and scholarly dissemination, though there is still room for improvement in publication output and collaboration. In contrast, the community service dimension recorded a relatively moderate level of achievement (M = 2.90, SD = 0.73). This finding suggests that while lecturers contribute to community development through outreach and consultancy, such activities are less prioritised compared to teaching and research. Overall, the results imply that universities in Kwara State have made considerable progress in fulfilling their academic and research goals. However, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening community engagement programmes and providing institutional support for lecturers to extend their professional expertise beyond the classroom and into society.

Hypothesis Testing

H_{01}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' technological competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table III. Correlation Between Lecturers' Technological Competence and Goal Achievement of Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria (N = 303)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Lecturers' Technological Competence	303	22.26	4.34	301	0.804	0.020	Significant
Goal Achievement	303	42.38	9.42				

Significance Level: $p < 0.05$

Table III reveals a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between lecturers' technological competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State (r = 0.804, p < 0.05). This finding implies that universities where lecturers effectively utilise technological tools—such as online learning platforms, digital instructional resources, and educational software—are more likely to record higher levels of goal achievement in teaching, research, and community service. The result emphasises the crucial role of digital literacy and ICT integration in enhancing instructional delivery, fostering research collaboration, and improving institutional performance. Therefore, universities should prioritise continuous ICT training, provide adequate technological infrastructure, and encourage innovation in digital pedagogy to strengthen lecturers' effectiveness and institutional outcomes.

H_{02}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' professional competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table IV. Correlation Between Lecturers' Professional Competence and Goal Achievement of Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria (N = 303)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Lecturers' Professional Competence	303	24.22	4.16	301	0.690	0.003	Significant
Goal Achievement	303	42.38	9.42				

Significance Level: $p < 0.05$

Table IV shows a moderately strong and statistically significant relationship between lecturers' professional competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State (r = 0.690, p < 0.05). This result indicates that lecturers who uphold professional ethics, demonstrate strong communication and organisational skills, and effectively balance teaching, research, and service responsibilities contribute substantially to the attainment of university goals. The finding reinforces the importance of professionalism as a key driver of institutional success. It suggests that universities should promote ongoing professional development, mentoring, and ethical practice among academic staff to enhance productivity and ensure sustained achievement of institutional objectives across teaching, research, and community engagement.

H_{03}: There is no significant correlation between lecturers' pedagogical competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table V. Correlation Between Lecturers' Pedagogical Competence and Goal Achievement of Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria (N = 303)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Lecturers' Pedagogical Competence	303	16.26	5.38	301	0.750	0.001	Significant
Goal Achievement	303	42.38	9.42				

Significance Level: $p < 0.05$

Table V indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between lecturers' pedagogical competence and goal achievement of universities in Kwara State (r = 0.750, p < 0.05). This result implies that lecturers who possess strong pedagogical skills—such as effective lesson delivery, classroom management, student engagement, and feedback practices—tend to enhance the overall performance and goal attainment of their universities. The finding underscores the essential role of pedagogical competence in improving the quality of instruction and promoting student-centred learning. It also suggests that strengthening lecturers' teaching abilities through continuous pedagogical training, peer mentoring, and instructional innovation will significantly improve institutional effectiveness in teaching, research, and community service.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that lecturers in universities within Kwara State generally exhibit high levels of competence across technological, professional, and pedagogical domains, which significantly correlate with the achievement of institutional goals in teaching, research, and community service. These results align with the theoretical expectations of Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in staff competence enhances productivity and institutional performance (Imakpokpomwan & Odjugo, 2024; Okokoyo & Nwaham, 2024). The study therefore supports the assertion that lecturers' competencies are key predictors of goal attainment and institutional effectiveness in higher education. The overall high level of competence found among lecturers suggests that universities in Kwara State have developed a reasonably skilled academic workforce. Technological and professional competencies recorded as higher than pedagogical competence. This outcome mirrors Ogunbodede et al. (2023), who observed that while Nigerian lecturers increasingly recognise the importance of digital tools, pedagogical adaptation to technology remains limited due to infrastructural and training gaps. Similarly, Abubakar et al. (2024) and Sabri et al. (2024) confirmed that digital literacy enhances instructional efficiency and student engagement, but the absence of consistent institutional support limits optimal utilisation. Professional competence was also found to be high, reflecting lecturers' adherence to ethical standards, effective time management, and professional boundaries. This corroborates Kutsak et al. (2023) and Owusu-Agyeman (2024), who emphasised that professionalism and lifelong learning are central to academic quality assurance and institutional credibility. In contrast, the moderate pedagogical competence aligns with Moreira et al. (2023) and Walder (2017), who reported that while many lecturers demonstrate content expertise, gaps persist in innovative teaching practices and student-centred pedagogy. Thus, continuous pedagogical training remains critical to strengthening instructional quality in Kwara State universities. The high level of goal achievement suggests that the universities

studied are performing effectively in teaching, research, and, to a lesser extent, community service. Teaching recorded the highest performance, indicating that lecturers generally succeed in delivering instructional objectives and fostering student engagement. This supports findings by Okolie et al. (2020) and Sudargini and Purwanto (2020), who highlighted the direct link between teaching competence and student achievement. The research and publication component also showed strong performance, consistent with Chakraborty and Biswas (2020), who found that competent lecturers are more productive in research due to their professional motivation and institutional engagement.

However, moderate achievement in community service reflects the observations of Ogunode et al. (2024), who reported that limited funding and workload pressure often restrict lecturers' participation in community-oriented programmes. These findings underscore the need for policies that incentivise outreach and strengthen the "third mission" of universities in societal development. Correlation analyses demonstrated strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships between all three competence dimensions and university goal achievement: technological competence, pedagogical competence, and professional competence. The strength of these correlations indicates that competence in each area substantially contributes to achieving institutional objectives. The significant relationship between technological competence and goal achievement supports findings by Santos and Castro (2021), who established that technology integration improves instructional delivery and academic collaboration. It further corroborates Gunuc (2023), who demonstrated that the use of campus-based technologies enhances engagement and retention among university students. The implication is that digital competence is no longer optional but a prerequisite for institutional performance in the digital age.

The significant relationship between professional competence and goal achievement aligns with Virtanen et al. (2017) and Miñon (2017), who found that professionalism—including ethics, communication, and organisational skills—enhances teaching and research outcomes. Lecturers who manage their roles effectively contribute to institutional stability and quality assurance, reinforcing the necessity of continuous professional development programmes. Finally, the strong correlation between pedagogical competence and goal achievement substantiates Jacob et al. (2020) and Walder (2017), who noted that effective pedagogy promotes critical thinking, innovation, and institutional improvement. Oladimeji (2025) further confirmed that the integration of digital pedagogy in Nigerian tertiary institutions enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. Hence, improving lecturers' pedagogical competence remains essential for achieving the universities' teaching and research missions.

CONCLUSION

This study established that lecturers in universities within Kwara State possess high levels of technological and professional competence but only moderate pedagogical competence. Unlike previous research that treated lecturer competence as separate or independent variables, this study examined the three core competence dimensions—technological, professional, and pedagogical—together, revealing how they interact to influence university goal achievement in teaching, research, and community service. A major finding that differs from most earlier studies is that technological competence emerged as the strongest predictor of university goal achievement, surpassing both pedagogical and professional competence. This result highlights a shift in the drivers of institutional success, showing that digital capability now plays a more decisive role in academic effectiveness than traditional teaching or ethical proficiency alone. The study also found that high professional and technological skills do not automatically lead to effective teaching practices, demonstrating that pedagogical application remains a distinct and essential area of development. The conceptual contribution of this research lies in its integrated model of lecturer competence, which views technological, pedagogical, and professional capacities as complementary elements of institutional human capital rather than isolated skill sets. This approach provides a broader understanding of how combined competence dimensions contribute to university performance. Methodologically, the study contributes by applying both descriptive and correlational analyses to quantify not only the levels of competence but also their relative strengths in predicting institutional goal achievement. The validated measurement instrument developed for this study offers a practical tool for assessing lecturer competence and linking it directly to institutional outcomes. Collectively, these contributions provide a more comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving academic performance in higher education.

Recommendations

1. Universities should prioritise structured training that helps lecturers translate technological and professional skills into effective teaching practices, especially through learner-centred and interactive instructional methods.
2. Institutions need to deepen training in digital integration beyond basic ICT use, focusing on innovative teaching design, virtual collaboration, and research dissemination tools to maximise academic impact.
3. University management should develop and implement a unified competence development policy that treats technological, pedagogical, and professional competencies as interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

4. Performance evaluation systems should incorporate measurable indicators of competence in all three domains to ensure that academic promotions and recognitions reflect balanced professional growth.

5. Further studies should apply and refine the model introduced in this research across other regions and university types to test its applicability and strengthen its predictive validity for institutional performance.

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