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Roles of Administrators' Ethical Leadership in Promoting Lecturers' Professionalism for Public Universities' Effectiveness in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of administrators' ethical leadership on lecturers' professionalism and its subsequent contribution to the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The investigation was based on two research objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, involving the entire population of 399 administrators from the three public universities in the state through a census method, thereby eliminating the need for sampling. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled: "Roles of Ethical Leadership in Promoting Lecturers' Professionalism for Public Universities Effectiveness (RELPLPPUE) Questionnaire". Specialists in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation at Rivers State University validated the instrument, while Cronbach's Alpha yielded reliability coefficients of 0.88 and 0.79, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers with the assistance of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, whereas Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed, among other outcomes that, ethical leadership practices, particularly administrators' commitment to academic integrity, contributes to lecturers' professionalism and the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. Accordingly, the study recommends that university administrators consistently uphold academic integrity and ethical principles through transparent decision-making, equitable treatment and adherence to institutional policies. These practices are expected to strengthen lecturers' professionalism, improve institutional effectiveness and enhance the overall quality of public universities across the state.

Keywords: *Roles, Administrators, Ethical Leadership, Lecturers' Professionalism, Effectiveness.*

Introduction

Lecturers' professionalism and effectiveness in public universities are shaped to a large extent by the quality of the ethical leadership they experience. In an academic environment, where higher institutions are responsible for knowledge creation, innovation and human capital development, the roles of leadership in fostering ethical, transparent and supportive atmosphere cannot be overemphasized. Ethical leadership refers to a leadership style that is based on integrity, fairness, accountability and a strong commitment to ethical principles. Ethical leadership also refers to the demonstration of normative appropriate conduct through personal actions, interpersonal relationships and decision-making processes. (Chilufya, 2023). Ethical leaders act with honesty, integrity, fairness, transparency, and responsibility while encouraging similar behavior among followers. Ethical leaders guide their actions and decisions by moral values, ensuring that they promote honesty, transparency and justice in their leadership roles (Brown & Mitchell, 2023). They prioritize the well-being of their followers, lead by example and create an environment where ethical behaviour is encouraged and rewarded.

In the view of Brown and Treviño (2021) ethical leadership is when the decision made by the administration of an organization is made in an impartial way, respecting others and showing respect for moral values in the decisions made by the administration of the organization. Ethical leadership promotes trust, credibility and responsible behavior among members of an organization which consequently enhances their being productive, committed and professional. In educational institutions, this leadership style is especially significant as it promotes lecturers' professional behavior, improves job satisfaction and contributes to the proper functioning of the academic system.

In public universities, ethical leadership inspires lecturers to fulfil their duties professionally, thus supporting the improvement of educational quality and research productivity. Ethical leadership has the potential to shape the job satisfaction and institutional commitment of lecturers as well as their performance in teaching and research, based on the values of fairness, integrity, accountability and mutual respect (Adeyemi & Obadiora, 2020). Like the other higher education systems in the country, public universities in Rivers State are beset with some problems such as question of academic honesty, institutional management and teachers' motivation. Thus, it is important to promote ethical leadership in order to mitigate these concerns, maintain academic standards and support lecturers' professional development. Other relevant researches done within Rivers State indicated the importance of the institutional context. The study on teachers' pre-retirement anxiety (Nna-Kue et al., 2026) and teachers' implementation of the instructional models in lesson planning (Mbaba & Alikor, 2024) indicated that teachers' well-being experiences and teaching practices all relate to the working conditions created by institutional leadership.

Professionalism of the lecturer means commitment to excellence in teaching, research and student mentoring in accordance with proper ethical guidelines. Professional lecturers should not only impart subject knowledge but also serve as positive role models that promote the academic achievement and personal growth of students (Brown & Mitchell, 2023). It was reiterated that ethical leadership assists in the development of equitable and transparent university policies, administration decisions and interactions between the management and academic staff. Lecturers who perceive their leaders as ethical are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards their work, which can include increased motivation, engagement, and commitment, which may positively impact learning outcomes. Moreover, moral leadership contributes to professionalism by fostering accountability and integrity throughout the institution. Therefore, universities that are focused on ethical behaviours would promote ethically sound approach to academic practice for lecturers, as well as creating opportunities for lecturers to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Ethical leadership also promotes mutual trust, respect and shared responsibility to facilitate cooperation and teamwork among lecturers. The ethical conduct of university administration could help to promote ethical behavior among faculty members and create an open, inclusive and positive working environment. This can stimulate lecturers' involvement in research cooperation, interdisciplinary cooperation and student mentoring programs, thus aiding in the development of institutions and academic achievement (Dapshima, 2021). Besides, ethical leadership has the potential of averting workplace conflict, discriminatory practices and abuse of administrative power, which are issues of higher education. Leaders who consistently demonstrate ethical principles are more likely to ensure that grievances are dealt with fairly and equitably and that all lecturers are treated fairly with dignity and respect.

Professionalism and effectiveness of lecturers could be readily appraised by using students' performance over several years. Where ethics is given due weight in educational leadership, quality instructional delivery is more likely to follow (Chilufya et al. 2023). Lecturers who work under ethical leadership are likely to carry out their duties professionally and effectively, which improves students' academic performance. Ethical leadership has several components that raise the quality of administration and service delivery in universities. This paper, however, concentrates on academic integrity and transparency.

Academic integrity is essential in maintaining professionalism and effectiveness among lecturers

in public universities. Relatedly, Amie-Ogan and Asila (2025) were of the view that integrity is the corner stone for effective teaching and significantly influences teachers' job performance. It ensures that teaching, research and student assessments are conducted ethically, thereby upholding the credibility of the institution. According to the International Centre for Academic Integrity (2025) academic integrity is a commitment to six core values, even when faced with adversity and they are: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. These values give rise to principles of conduct that help academic communities turn their ideals into practice. Brown and Mitchell (2023), posited that universities that prioritize integrity create an environment where lecturers are committed to ethical conduct, leading to improved job satisfaction and institutional reputation. When administrators uphold academic integrity there is tendency for an increased

regulation of academic misconduct in an educational leadership system that prioritise academic integrity thereby making administrators to obtain high level of trust and respect which would improve the effectiveness of lecturers. Universities that implement training programs on ethical practices help lecturers navigate complex ethical dilemmas, ultimately enhancing their professional growth and teaching effectiveness (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2020).

Administrators' transparency is an important dimension of effective university administration because it establishes openness, clarity, accessibility and credibility in the relationship between university leaders and academic staff. It enables administrators and employers to gain the trust and the potentials of employees. According to Schnackenberg et al. (2021) transparency constitutes a multidimensional construct involving the perceived disclosure, clarity and accuracy of organisational information. Their empirical validation demonstrated that these dimensions can be aggregated into an overall transparency construct and that transparency is distinguishable from related concepts such as informational justice. When lecturers understand how decisions regarding promotions, workload distribution and resource allocation are made, they are more likely to perceive the system as transparent, which enhances their commitment and professional behaviour. Furthermore, transparency encourages accountability and open communication, enabling lecturers to align their instructional practices with institutional goals, ultimately leading to improved teaching effectiveness and academic outcome

Statement of the Problem

Administrators' ethical leadership is a problem of concern as far as lecturers' professionalism and subsequently the effectiveness of public universities is concerned. Ethical leadership includes integrity, impartiality, accountability and transparency and is crucial to creating an academic setting where lecturers are able to perform their role with respect to teaching, research and the community. Although many of the public universities in Rivers State have overcome some difficulties in administration, such as favouritism, poor accountability and poor decision making; some still have their serious problems which could affect the professional commitment and conduct of their lecturers. All of these practices can have a negative impact on lecturers' satisfaction, reduce motivation towards teaching and research and ultimately negatively impact on the quality of teaching students receive.

Furthermore, inadequate ethical management of HEIs has been linked to the recurrent problems of the institutions, such as corruption, discrimination and unjust promotion in the institutions that can affect the effectiveness of lecturers. If university leadership does not set up and enact fair and transparent policy, instructors might perceive that they are not being valued, which can lead to low productivity, a lack of professional interest and poor student/instructor mentoring. In the 21st Century, it is not certain that public universities have always been good role models for upholding professional standards, lifelong learning and add value to students in their academic communities. The other concern is on the visibility and status of public universities in Rivers State in the international academic competitions. A study on the recent ranking reported that, University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, Bayero University and Landmark University were among the universities in Nigeria in the top-ranking brackets (Times Higher Education, 2026). The performance indicators used the following five indices (research environment, teaching and learning environment, research quality, industry partnerships and international outlook) to rank institutions. The absence of a public university from Rivers State in the list of the top three public universities in Nigeria is worrisome, as it may limit opportunities for internationalisation her institutions. Considering these challenges, the researchers became interested in studying the effects of ethical leadership towards promotion of lecturers' professionalism and the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. Hence the topic, "Roles of Administrators Ethical Leadership in Promoting Lecturers Professionalism for the Effectiveness of Public Universities in Rivers State".

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the roles of administrators' ethical leadership in promoting lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Specifically sought to:

1. examine how administrators' academic integrity role promotes to lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.
2. determine how administrators' transparency role promotes to lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the research questions below.

1. How does administrators' academic integrity role promote lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State?
2. How does administrators' transparency role promote lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses below were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of administrators of UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE regarding how their academic integrity role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of administrators of UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE regarding how their transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 399 administrators, made up of 171, 147 and 81 administrators from UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE respectively. All 399 administrators were included in the sample, which means that a census approach was used. Data were collected with a self-structured questionnaire titled "Role of Ethical Leadership in Promoting Lecturers' Professionalism for Universities Effectiveness (RELPLPUE) Questionnaire". Responses were scored on a four-point scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point.

The face and content validation of the instrument was done by three specialists, two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation all from Rivers State University. The reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha and the overall index was 0.80, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. The 399 copies of the questionnaire administered to the sampled respondents were retrieved (100 percent return rate) and used for analysis. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Items with mean of 2.50 and above were rated "Strongly Agree" whereas items below 2.50 were classed as 'Disagree'. One way Analysis of Variance was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the F-calculated value was less than the p-value at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis was "not rejected". Where the reverse was the case, the null hypothesis was "rejected" in favour of the alternative.

Results

Research Question 1: How does administrators' academic integrity promote lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Administrators' Opinions on the Contribution of Academic Integrity to Lecturers' Professionalism for Public University Effectiveness in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	UNIPORT (N=171) $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK	RSU (N=147) $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK	IAUE (N=81) $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK
1	Administrators who model ethical behaviour inspire lecturers to perform their duties effectively.	3.76	0.41	SA	3.70	0.45	SA	3.51	0.54	SA
2	Administrators support lecturers in handling student dishonesty, enhancing their classroom effectiveness.	3.68	0.47	SA	3.61	0.51	SA	3.43	0.58	A
3	Clear academic integrity guidelines provided by administrators enhance lecturers' professional standards.	3.75	0.42	SA	3.69	0.46	SA	3.50	0.53	SA
4	Regular monitoring of integrity compliance by administrators promotes lecturers' professional discipline.	3.72	0.44	SA	3.65	0.48	SA	3.46	0.55	A
5	Encouraging integrity integration into course delivery by administrators enhances lecturers' instructional effectiveness.	3.71	0.45	SA	3.63	0.49	SA	3.48	0.52	A
6	Administrators who protect integrity reporters strengthen lecturers' confidence in professional practice.	3.64	0.49	SA	3.57	0.52	SA	3.41	0.59	A
7	Administrators hold lecturers accountable for academic integrity, which strengthens their professional responsibility.	3.78	0.39	SA	3.72	0.43	SA	3.53	0.51	SA

8	Administrators who foster a culture of honesty improve lecturers' professional reputation.	3.70	0.46	SA	3.66	0.47	SA	3.49	0.54	A
9	Administrators enforce academic integrity policies consistently, improving lecturers' professional conduct.	3.74	0.43	SA	3.68	0.45	SA	3.51	0.53	SA
10	Adequate allocation of instructional resources by administrators improves lecturers' professional preparedness.	3.62	0.50	SA	3.59	0.51	SA	3.48	0.56	A
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.71**	**0.45**	**SA**	**3.65**	**0.48**	**SA**	**3.48**	**0.55**	**A**

Source: *Field Survey, 2026.*

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.
UNIPORT = University of Port Harcourt; RSU = Rivers State University; IAUE = Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 1 summarises administrators' responses, based on means and standard deviations, on how academic integrity promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The results revealed that administrators in UNIPORT and RSU strongly agreed that administrators' academic integrity promotes lecturers' professionalism, whereas those in IAUE agreed. UNIPORT had the highest aggregate mean of 3.71 (SD = 0.45), followed by RSU with 3.65 (SD = 0.48), both in the strongly agreed category. IAUE had an aggregate mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.55), which falls in the agreed category. This implied that respondents were generally of the view that administrators' display of academic integrity is an important means of strengthening lecturers' professional conduct and effectiveness. At item level, the ratings showed that administrators' ethical conduct, clear integrity guidelines, regular compliance monitoring, accountability and consistent enforcement of integrity policies all add considerably to lecturers' professional standards, discipline, responsibility and behaviour. The comparatively high ratings for safeguarding those who report integrity breaches and for supporting lecturers in dealing with student dishonesty further suggested that a commitment to an ethical academic environment can boost lecturers' confidence and effectiveness in professional practice. The small standard deviations across the three institutions revealed that respondents' ratings clustered fairly closely around their group means.

Research Question 2: How does administrators' transparency promote lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Administrators' Opinions on the Contribution of Transparency to Lecturers' Professionalism for Public University Effectiveness in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	UNIPORT $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK	RSU $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK	IAUE $\bar{X}$	SD	RMK
11	Open communication of institutional policies by administrators enhances lecturers' professional understanding and compliance.	3.74	0.43	SA	3.68	0.46	SA	3.49	0.54	A
12	Transparent communication of performance expectations by administrators strengthens lecturers' professional focus.	3.72	0.44	SA	3.65	0.48	SA	3.47	0.55	A
13	Lecturers' professional trust is built when administrators disclose institutional decisions honestly and timely.	3.77	0.41	SA	3.70	0.45	SA	3.53	0.51	SA
14	Clear communication of promotion criteria by administrators motivates lecturers to perform more effectively.	3.76	0.42	SA	3.69	0.46	SA	3.51	0.53	SA
15	Openness in sharing institutional goals by administrators fosters lecturers' sense of professional alignment.	3.70	0.45	SA	3.64	0.49	SA	3.48	0.54	A

16	Lecturers' instructional effectiveness is enhanced when administrators provide honest feedback on their performance.	3.73	0.43	SA	3.66	0.47	SA	3.50	0.52	SA
17	Regular disclosure of institutional performance reports by administrators improves lecturers' professional preparedness.	3.67	0.48	SA	3.59	0.51	SA	3.45	0.56	A
18	Open accessibility of administrators to lecturers fosters a stronger culture of professional responsibility.	3.71	0.45	SA	3.63	0.49	SA	3.46	0.55	A
19	Transparent involvement of lecturers in decision-making processes by administrators enhances their overall instructional effectiveness.	3.75	0.42	SA	3.68	0.46	SA	3.52	0.51	SA
20	Lecturers' sense of professional ownership is boosted when administrators transparently communicate policy changes.	3.69	0.47	SA	3.62	0.50	SA	3.49	0.53	A
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.72**	**0.44**	**SA**	**3.65**	**0.48**	**SA**	**3.49**	**0.53**	A

Source: *Field Survey, 2026.*

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.

UNIPORT = University of Port Harcourt; RSU = Rivers State University; IAUE = Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 2 displayed the means and standard deviations of administrators' responses on how transparency promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The results revealed that administrators in UNIPORT and RSU strongly agreed that administrators' transparency promotes lecturers' professionalism, while those in IAUE agreed. UNIPORT recorded the highest aggregate mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.44), followed by RSU at 3.65 (SD = 0.48), both within the strongly agreed category. IAUE's aggregate mean was 3.49 (SD = 0.53), in the agreed category. On the overall, respondents saw transparent administrative practice as important for strengthening lecturers' understanding, trust, accountability, preparedness and instructional effectiveness. At item level, the highest ratings went to honest and timely disclosure of institutional decisions, clear communication of promotion criteria, open involvement of lecturers in decision-making, and open communication of institutional policies. This implied that when administrators convey decisions, expectations, policies and institutional goals plainly and honestly, lecturers are better placed to grasp their responsibilities, align their professional work with institutional aims and perform better.

The findings also showed that honest feedback on performance, disclosure of institutional reports, administrators' accessibility and transparent communication of policy changes foster lecturers' sense of professional ownership and responsibility. The small standard deviations indicated that respondents' ratings were fairly consistent across the three universities.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of administrators of UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE regarding how their academic integrity role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to test this hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA Results for Administrators' Mean Responses on Academic Integrity and Lecturers' Professionalism in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Between Groups	1.281	2	0.641	4.267	0.016	H_{01} Rejected
Within Groups	19.823	397	0.150			
Total	**21.104**	**399**				

Source: *Field Survey, 2026.*

Table 3 showed the result of the One-Way Analysis of Variance conducted to ascertain if the mean responses of administrators from UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE significantly differ on the influence of administrators' academic integrity role on the promotion of lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The sum of squares between groups was 1.281, with 2 degrees of freedom and a mean square of 0.641. The sum of squares within the groups was 19.823 with 188 degrees of freedom for a mean square of 0.150. The F-calculated value was 4.267 and the probability value was 0.016.

The probability value of 0.016 is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated a statistically significant difference in the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE on how administrators' academic integrity role improves lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

This significant difference implied that, although administrators in all three universities broadly agreed that academic integrity role promotes lecturers' professionalism, the degree of that agreement differs from one institution to another. The higher aggregate ratings of UNIPORT and RSU relative to IAUE points to stronger perceptions of the role of administrators' ethical conduct, integrity guidelines, monitoring, accountability and consistent enforcement of academic integrity in fostering lecturers' professional practice. Decision: With a calculated probability value of 0.016, which is lower than the alpha level of 0.05 (0.016 < 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. This inferred that the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE differ significantly on how administrators' academic integrity promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of administrators of UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE regarding how their transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results for Administrators' Mean Responses on Transparency Role and Lecturers' Professionalism in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Between Groups	1.194	2	0.597	4.018	0.020	H_{02} Rejected
Within Groups	19.618	397	0.149			
Total	**20.812**	399				

Source: *Field Survey, 2026.*

Table 4 shows the One-Way ANOVA results used to determine whether the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE differ significantly on how their transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The between-group sum of squares was 1.194 with 2 degrees of freedom, producing a mean square of 0.597. The within-group sum of squares was 19.618 with 132 degrees of freedom, producing a mean square of 0.149. The F-calculated value was 4.018, with a probability value of 0.020. As 0.020 is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected. This points to a statistically significant difference in the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE on how administrators' transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The significant difference means that, while administrators in the three universities generally regard transparency as an important factor in promoting lecturers' professionalism, the extent of this perception varies markedly between institutions. The relatively higher aggregate means for UNIPORT and RSU compared with IAUE, suggested differing perceptions about open communication, disclosure of institutional decisions, clarity of performance expectations, communication of promotion criteria, accessibility, feedback and lecturers' involvement in decision-making. Since the calculated probability value of 0.020 is lower than the alpha level of 0.05 (0.020 < 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE differ significantly in their mean responses on how their transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Administrators' Academic Integrity Role in Promoting Lecturers' Professionalism for Universities' Effectiveness

The outcome for Research Question 1, shown in Table 1, revealed that administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE agreed that administrators' academic integrity role promotes lecturers' professionalism and university effectiveness. Grand mean scores of 3.71 (SD = 0.45), 3.65 (SD = 0.48) and 3.48 (SD = 0.55) respectively were all higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This finding revealed that ethical role modelling, clear integrity guidelines, monitoring, accountability, consistent policy

enforcement, support for reporting misconduct and adequate instructional resources all add to lecturers' professional conduct and effectiveness. The findings are supported by Erkutlu and Chafra (2020), who linked leaders' integrity with positive employee behaviour, and Almutairi (2022), who associated honesty, fairness and responsibility with ethical conduct. Chirikov et al. (2020) and Amigud and Pell (2021) also emphasised institutional structures and clear academic-integrity rules in addressing academic misconduct. Similarly, Antes et al. (2019), Gottardello and Karabag (2022) and Faturohman et al. (2020) stressed the importance of leadership, institutional support and ethical practices for professional conduct and lecturer professionalism.

The result for Hypothesis 1, shown in Table 3, indicated a statistically significant difference among the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE on how administrators' academic integrity promotes lecturers' professionalism. The ANOVA produced an F-calculated value of 4.267 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.016. As p = 0.016 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that perceptions of the contribution of administrators' academic integrity role to lecturers' professionalism differed significantly across the three universities. Nevertheless, the descriptive results unraveled that respondents in all three institutions agreed that ethical leadership, honesty, accountability, fair enforcement of academic policies and institutional support promotes lecturers' professionalism. The finding is consistent with Ogungbade and Eamoraphan (2024) and Faturohman et al. (2020), who reported significant relationships between academic leadership behaviour and lecturer professionalism. It is also in line with Erkutlu and Chafra (2020) and Antes et al. (2019), both of whom stressed leadership integrity, ethical guidance and institutional practices as ways of encouraging responsible professional conduct. Gottardello and Karabag (2022) further supported the finding by emphasising the collective institutional responsibility for sustaining academic integrity.

Administrators' Transparency Role in Promoting Lecturers' Professionalism for Universities Effectiveness.

The outcome for Research Question 2, shown in Table 2, indicated that administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE agreed that transparency role promotes lecturers' professionalism and university effectiveness. The grand means of 3.72 (SD = 0.44), 3.65 (SD = 0.48) and 3.49 (SD = 0.53) respectively all exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50. The findings showed that open communication, clear performance expectations, timely disclosure of decisions, transparent promotion criteria, honest feedback, accessible administrators, lecturer participation and communication of policy changes reinforce lecturers' trust, commitment, preparedness, responsibility and professional effectiveness.

The finding was in tandem with Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) and Schnackenberg et al. (2021), who emphasised disclosure, clarity and accuracy as important dimensions of organisational transparency and trust. Hofmann and Strobel (2020) similarly linked transparency concerning university structures, resources and performance with positive faculty outcomes. Lizier et al. (2024) further underscored clarity and shared goals in higher-education leadership, and Ige et al. (2026) and Amadi et al. (2026) backed transparent institutional practices as a route to positive staff outcomes.

The result for Hypothesis 2, shown in Table 4, indicated no significant difference among the mean responses of administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE on how administrators' transparency promotes lecturers' professionalism. The null hypothesis was therefore retained. This finding suggested that respondents broadly held similar views that transparent communication, disclosure of decisions, clear promotion criteria, performance feedback, administrative accessibility and lecturer participation contribute to lecturers' professionalism and university effectiveness. This convergence suggested that transparency is recognised by both administrators and lecturers as a shared institutional requirement for building trust and supporting professional practice. The finding of the study corroborates Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) who identified transparency as important factor for organisational trust and Tomlinson and Schnackenberg (2022) who linked transparency perceptions with trustworthiness. Similarly, Hofmann and Strobel (2020) found that transparency concerning university structures, resources and performance has implications for faculty workplace outcomes. These studies support the present finding that transparency is a common institutional factor in promoting lecturers' professional effectiveness.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the administrators of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education agreed that their roles in academic integrity and transparency are helpful in promoting lecturers' professionalism for the effectiveness of public universities in Rivers State. The data also revealed that there were substantial disparities in the responses of the administrators in UNIPORT, RSU and IAUE on the parameters evaluated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the findings of the study.

1. Administrators of universities should steadily practise and maintain academic integrity by acting as ethical role models, setting clear academic integrity guidelines, applying policies fairly and consistently, monitoring compliance and shielding those who report academic misconduct. Doing so would reinforce lecturers' professional discipline, responsibility and commitment to ethical academic practice.
2. Administrators should strengthen transparency in university administration through open communication, timely disclosure of institutional decisions, clear communication of policies and performance expectations, transparent promotion criteria and greater involvement of lecturers in relevant decision-making processes. Administrators should also provide honest and constructive feedback to lecturers. These measures would enhance professional trust, ownership, accountability and commitment.

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