

Discipline and Accountability as Correlates of Teacher Productivity in Public Secondary Schools in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examined the relationship between school leaders' discipline and accountability and teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria. Two hypotheses guided the study: whether leaders' discipline and accountability significantly relate to teacher productivity. A descriptive survey research design was employed to collect data from a representative sample. The population comprised all public secondary school teachers across the six states of Southwest Nigeria—Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. A multistage sampling procedure selected 1,500 respondents from 75 schools, with principals purposively chosen to assess teacher productivity. Data were collected using two self-designed instruments: the Discipline and Accountability Questionnaire (DAQ) and the Teacher Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ). The DAQ measured leaders' discipline and accountability on a four-point Likert scale, while the TPQ assessed teacher productivity indicators such as lesson preparation, instructional delivery, use of resources, classroom management, mastery of subject matter, and communication skills on a five-point scale. Both instruments underwent face and content validation and demonstrated high reliability (DAQ = 0.81; TPQ = 0.84). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 significance. Results indicated significant positive relationships between school leaders' discipline ($r = 0.425$, $p < 0.05$) and accountability ($r = 0.508$, $p < 0.05$) and teacher productivity. The findings highlight that disciplined and accountable leadership enhances teacher performance, organization, and professional commitment, creating a productive educational environment. It is recommended that schools implement clear disciplinary policies, accountability mechanisms, leadership training, and professional development programs emphasizing ethical conduct and responsibility to strengthen teacher productivity.

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Introduction

It has been noted that educators in Southwest Nigeria are demonstrating insufficient engagement in various dimensions of their professional duties, raising concerns about their overall effectiveness. This issue is evident in several pivotal areas including instructional activities, command of the subject matter, and student understanding. Educators are encountering challenges in creating a conducive and stimulating learning environment for students, frequently neglecting to develop comprehensive lesson plans and deliver lessons proficiently. The pedagogical strategies they employ are failing to produce the intended results, and their involvement in supplementary school activities is minimal.

Furthermore, the academic performance of students instructed by these educators is unsatisfactory, suggesting an ineffective implementation of student-centered pedagogical methodologies. Educators also demonstrate a deficiency in disciplinary skills, are unable to adequately cover the curriculum, and show insufficient commitment to the teaching profession. Their engagement with students in the classroom frequently falls short, and they struggle with fundamental responsibilities such as maintaining records and addressing student inquiries. The delivery of timely and constructive feedback to students remains a significant concern, as does their involvement in extracurricular programming and follow-up initiatives. Collectively, these challenges indicate a profound issue regarding teacher productivity, necessitating immediate intervention to improve educational outcomes in Southwest Nigeria. It has been observed that the performance levels of teachers in secondary education have been declining due to ineffective discipline and accountability. The productivity of educators appears to be contingent upon the traits exhibited by their leaders.

Discipline can be defined as the propensity to act in accordance with societal norms without the necessity of external compulsion. It encompasses self-regulation, which includes the management of one's behaviors, habits, desires, emotions, impulses, and overall conduct (Aguba, 2016). The significance of discipline within educational institutions is paramount for the attainment of educational objectives. It is essential for leaders to possess self-discipline to successfully cultivate discipline among others. Ebuara and Coker (2012) posit that discipline is characterized by a self-regulated adherence to established rules and regulations, alongside a recognition and submission to legitimate authority.

Before leaders can effectively promote discipline within educational settings, they must first exemplify self-discipline. This quality entails a commitment to diligent work and responsibilities, thereby facilitating the achievement of organizational aims. Efforts are directed not merely to evade punitive measures but rather to fulfil objectives. Nkang (2012) asserted that the cultivation of commendable behavior necessitates the development of a degree of self-control, enabling the establishment of appropriate habits without reliance on disciplinary interventions.

It has been noted that the absence of a robust disciplinary framework, or the mere threat of punitive measures, can significantly undermine the overall effectiveness of an educational institution. Observations indicate that certain school leaders engage in unethical practices such as extortion, negligence, examination misconduct, sexual harassment, and chronic absenteeism. The apathetic demeanor exhibited by some school leaders constitutes an act of indiscipline and has emerged as a pressing concern for numerous stakeholders. Several leaders exhibit minimal engagement with school-related activities, often arriving late and departing early. Some leaders fail to dedicate themselves fully to their primary responsibilities, opting instead to pursue part-time employment to supplement their income.



Such acts of indiscipline among a subset of school leaders appear to detrimentally impact teacher productivity.

Professionalism pertains to the degree of accountability demonstrated by individuals in leadership positions. Accountability is a fundamental trait of effective leadership, signifying a responsibility to enhance the capabilities and performance of those accountable, rather than merely assessing outcomes or achievements (Aguba, 2016). Accountability encompasses various dimensions, including accessibility to staff for consultation, consistency in school presence, oversight and guidance in supervisory roles, as well as participation in additional school activities, such as extracurricular programs.

In educational settings, leaders are anticipated to manifest a high degree of accountability towards the school community and its stakeholders. However, practical experiences reveal that certain school leaders are frequently unavailable for consultations, exhibit irregularities in classroom supervision, and do not allocate sufficient time for administrative responsibilities. This lack of accountability among school leaders may adversely influence teacher productivity. The study examined discipline and accountability as correlates of teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria.

The following hypotheses were generated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between school leaders' discipline and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between school leaders' accountability and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

Literature Review

Teacher productivity is profoundly influenced by discipline, as disciplined educators are better equipped to organize their work, maintain consistency, and optimize their use of time and resources. By adhering to structured routines in lesson preparation, classroom management, and professional development, teachers can enhance student learning outcomes while ensuring timely completion of tasks. Discipline also enables educators to maintain high performance, make informed decisions, and manage complex responsibilities effectively. Self-disciplined habits, such as setting schedules, defining objectives, and committing to them, foster accountability, perseverance, and continuous improvement in the classroom. Ebuara and Coker (2012) emphasized that effective staff discipline relies on school administrators implementing strategies that encourage positive behaviors, including corrective measures and humanitarian approaches. Studies by Gina (2011), Simba, Agak, and Kabuka (2016), and Anyi (2017) indicate a positive correlation between teacher discipline and educational outcomes, demonstrating that structured conduct contributes to improved academic performance and school development. Similarly, Adeyeye, et al (2015) highlighted that self-discipline in the workplace can be reinforced by clearly communicating performance expectations, thereby sustaining teacher focus and productivity. Research in organizational settings, including studies by Preko and Adietey (2013), Zanabazar (2018), and Musriha (2013), further confirms that discipline enhances job satisfaction and overall productivity, illustrating its broader applicability to performance outcomes.

Accountability is another critical determinant of teacher productivity, as it ensures that educators maintain professional standards while delivering high-quality instruction. By monitoring performance, clarifying expectations, and providing support, accountability fosters a culture of ownership and continuous improvement. When teachers are held accountable, they are motivated to enhance their teaching practices, address diverse student needs, and pursue professional growth. Effective accountability mechanisms, such as



feedback systems, recognition of achievements, and professional development opportunities, reinforce the link between responsibility and productivity. Brundrette and Rhodes (2017) highlighted that accountability cultivates a culture of quality that drives improvements in teaching and learning, while Marzano and Waters (2015) noted that it enables teachers to implement policies that prioritize student outcomes, thereby enhancing performance, behavior, and overall job productivity.

Empirical evidence underscores the importance of accountability in shaping teacher effectiveness. Johnson (2016) found that students taught by educators rated highly in accountability demonstrated greater academic growth compared to peers taught by less accountable teachers. Odhiambo (2016) emphasized the growing demand from governments and the public for teacher accountability in achieving measurable student outcomes, reflecting societal expectations for educational quality. Yaro, Arshad, and Salleh (2016) further argued that accountability transcends mere compliance with regulations, focusing instead on results-oriented practices that ensure tangible improvements in student learning and educational performance.

The integration of discipline and accountability within educational settings produces a synergistic effect on teacher productivity. While discipline fosters consistency, organization, and self-regulation, accountability reinforces responsibility, motivation, and commitment to student achievement. Together, these factors create an environment in which teachers can maximize their professional skills, deliver quality instruction, and contribute to positive student outcomes. Administrators who implement policies promoting disciplined behavior and robust accountability mechanisms enable educators to maintain focus, uphold professional standards, and achieve both personal and institutional objectives.

In conclusion, the literature consistently demonstrates that teacher productivity is strongly influenced by the dual pillars of discipline and accountability. Effective educational leaders and institutions recognize that fostering structured, responsible, and results-oriented practices among educators is essential for achieving optimal performance. By cultivating self-discipline, providing clear expectations, implementing performance monitoring systems, and encouraging accountability, schools can create a supportive environment that enhances teacher efficiency, promotes continuous professional growth, and ultimately improves student learning outcomes.

Methods and Materials

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for examining large populations by selecting representative samples. This approach allows researchers to draw inferences from observations in the field regarding the characteristics of the defined population. The population for this study comprised all public secondary school teachers across the six states of Southwest Nigeria, namely Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. This broad coverage ensured that the findings would reflect diverse educational contexts and administrative practices within the region. The descriptive survey design facilitated the collection of data without manipulating variables, enabling an accurate assessment of the relationships between discipline, accountability, and teacher productivity.

A total of 1,500 respondents from 75 public secondary schools were selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Initially, simple random sampling was used to select three states from the six in Southwest Nigeria. This was followed by proportionate stratified sampling to choose 25 local government areas from the selected states. Three schools were then selected from each local government using stratified random sampling, while 20 teachers were randomly chosen from each school. In addition, one principal from each school



was purposively selected to provide assessments of teacher productivity, as principals are considered best positioned to evaluate staff performance. This multistage sampling ensured that the study captured a representative and diverse sample across the region.

Data collection was achieved through two self-designed instruments: the Discipline and Accountability Questionnaire (DAQ) and the Teacher Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ). The DAQ comprised two sections, with Section A gathering respondents' background information and Section B containing 10 items measuring discipline and accountability using a four-point Likert scale. The TPQ included three sections covering principal biodata, teacher biodata, and key indicators of teacher productivity such as lesson preparation, instructional delivery, use of teaching resources, classroom management, mastery of subject matter, and communication skills, scored on a five-point scale ranging from Excellent to Poor. Both instruments underwent face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement to ensure relevance and appropriateness.

Reliability of the instruments was established using the test-retest method, administered to 60 teachers and their principals from two schools outside the main sample. Correlations of responses across a two-week interval produced reliability coefficients of 0.81 for the DAQ and 0.84 for the TPQ, indicating high reliability. The instruments were administered by the researcher with assistance from six trained research assistants, who were instructed on the study objectives, administration procedures, and retrieval of completed questionnaires. Follow-up visits ensured timely and accurate completion of instruments. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and charts to answer research questions, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, enabling the assessment of relationships between discipline, accountability, and teacher productivity.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school leaders' discipline and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

Table 1: Relationship between school leaders' discipline and teacher productivity

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Discipline	1469	14.85	1.68	0.425*	0.000
Teacher Productivity	1469	86.90	5.62		

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.425 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the p-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school leaders' discipline and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between school leaders' accountability and teacher productivity in public secondary schools

Table 2: Relationship between school leaders' accountability and teacher productivity

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Accountability	1469	13.73	2.10	0.508*	0.000
Teacher Productivity	1469	86.90	5.62		

*P<0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.508 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the p-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school leaders' accountability and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

Discussion

The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between school leaders' discipline and teacher productivity in public secondary schools. This relationship underscores the importance of maintaining effective discipline among educators to enhance overall productivity. The findings of this study corroborates with the findings of Ebuara and Coker (2012) which emphasized the pivotal role of school administrators in ensuring staff discipline by employing various techniques to cultivate good behaviour. They argued that discipline significantly influences teacher productivity, advocating for management to address factors affecting discipline such as retributive actions, corrective measures, and fostering humane relations. Similarly, Gina (2011) supported this correlation, linking high rates of indiscipline to diminished morale and productivity among teachers. In the same vain, Khoiri (2020) reinforced this idea by demonstrating a moderate relationship between discipline and academic performance in primary schools, indicating improved performance with increased discipline levels, among student nurses this was also displayed as reported by Ajayi et al., (2025).

The support for the importance of discipline in educational settings comes from Anyi (2017), who highlighted its positive impact on school development. Anyi advocated for establishing clear standards of conduct and promoting adherence to these standards to foster a conducive academic environment. Adeyeye et al. (2015) underscored the role of clear performance expectations in sustaining self-discipline among teachers, facilitating focus on assigned duties. The relevance of discipline extends beyond the education sector, as observed by Preko and Adietey (2013) in their study on sales executives in banks, which found a positive correlation between leader discipline and job productivity. Similarly. Zanabazar (2018) also emphasized the positive influence of leader discipline on organizational productivity. By prioritizing discipline, leaders can cultivate a culture of accountability and responsibility among staff, ultimately contributing to teacher productivity.

It was also revealed that there was a significant relationship between school leaders' accountability and teacher productivity in public secondary schools. This correlation underscores the importance of accountability measures in fostering an environment conducive to quality teaching and learning. This implies that by holding teachers accountable, schools can ensure continuous improvement in instructional practices, ultimately enhancing student learning experiences. The findings of this study agrees with Brundrette and Rhodes (2017) who found that accountability initiatives promote a culture of quality, leading to improvements in teaching and learning outcomes. Similarly, Marzano and Waters (2015) advocate for increased accountability, suggesting that teachers play a crucial role in driving student achievement through strategic policies that prioritize learning outcomes.

The Support for the positive relationship between teacher accountability and student performance is further revealed by Johnson (2016), who found that effective teachers, as determined by accountability measures, tend to produce students with typical or high growth on standardized tests. This implies that holding teachers accountable for their performance can positively impact on student learning outcomes. Additionally, Odhiambo (2016) highlights the growing demand for teacher accountability from both government and the public, particularly in evaluating schools based on academic results. This aligns with the



notion that accountability measures serve as a means to ensure educational quality and student success. By establishing clear expectations and fostering a culture of accountability, schools can strive towards continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that both school leaders' discipline and accountability have significant positive relationships with teacher productivity in public secondary schools. This underscores the critical role of effective leadership practices in fostering a productive educational environment, as disciplined and accountable leaders create structures, expectations, and support systems that enhance teachers' performance, commitment, and overall contribution to student learning outcomes.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators should implement clear and consistent disciplinary policies within the school, ensuring fairness and accountability toward improving teacher productivity in schools.
2. Educational authorities and school boards should establish mechanisms for accountability at all levels of the school system, including regular performance evaluations and feedback loops.
3. School administrators should prioritize the cultivation of discipline among leaders through regular training, enforcement of professional standards, and mentoring programs to ensure consistent adherence to rules and expectations.
4. Policies and procedures should be established to enhance accountability, including clear performance indicators, regular monitoring of teacher and leader activities, and feedback mechanisms to ensure transparency and responsibility.
5. Recruitment and promotion of school leaders should emphasize demonstrated discipline and accountability, alongside professional experience, to ensure that only leaders capable of fostering productive school environments are appointed.
6. Schools should implement continuous professional development programs that reinforce the importance of leadership discipline and accountability, while fostering a culture of ethical conduct, mutual respect, and shared commitment to educational excellence.

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