INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' WORK ENVIRONMENT PROMOTION AND DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT ON TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KARU LGA, NASARAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study examined teachers' perceptions of principals' promotion of a favourable work environment and maintenance of discipline, and how these relate to secondary school teachers' productivity in Karu LGA, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used. From a population of approximately 200 teachers across five sampled schools, the Taro Yamane formula yielded a minimum sample of 134; 150 questionnaires were distributed (30 per school) and 145 were validly returned (96.7%). Data came from the QIPARTP questionnaire: five work-environment items and two discipline items drawn from a broader 24-item instrument with an overall reliability of 0.75 (N = 15 pilot). Means, standard deviations, and independent-samples t-tests were used, with a Bonferroni-adjusted threshold applied within each construct to control Type I error. Teachers strongly agreed that a favourable work environment — especially timely salary payment and good conditions — was linked to their productivity (cluster mean = 3.50); discipline was rated similarly highly (cluster mean = 3.33). After Bonferroni correction, private–public differences remained significant for two work-environment items (p = .004 each), but the earlier discipline difference (p = .038) no longer met the corrected threshold (α = .025).

Keywords: *Teacher productivity, work environment, discipline management, principals' administrative roles, Nasarawa State.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the backbone of any school system, and their productivity is central to institutional effectiveness. Yet many Nigerian secondary school teachers show signs of low commitment — lateness, inconsistent lesson preparation, disengagement — that undermine this role (Adeyemi, 2010). In this study, productivity is operationalised through teachers' self-reported commitment, motivation, and attitudinal engagement, indicators widely used as productivity proxies in the Nigerian educational administration literature (Adeyemi, 2010), rather than through direct output measures such as lesson delivery or student outcomes — a distinction returned to under Limitations.

The school principal, as chief administrator, is responsible for coordinating human and material resources toward institutional goals (Deal & Peterson, 2009). Among the many administrative levers available to principals — communication, instructional support, salary administration, discipline — this study focuses on two: teachers' perceptions of principals' promotion of a good work environment, and principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline.

The study is set in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, which has 24 public secondary schools and roughly 600 registered private secondary schools (Nasarawa State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2024). How teachers in this area perceive principals' handling of work environment and discipline, and how this relates to their own productivity, is the concern this study addresses.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher productivity is essential to the quality-education goals set out in the National Policy on Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013), and is often reflected in students' academic performance. Concerns have been raised regarding declining teacher commitment and classroom effectiveness in some Nigerian secondary schools — lateness, reduced class attendance, inconsistent lesson preparation — despite ongoing training and workshops. While existing studies (Odion & Mbanefo, 2025; Adegbesan, 2013; Sule, 2013) have examined various dimensions of principals' administrative roles, little attention has been paid specifically to teachers' perceptions of work environment promotion and discipline management in Karu LGA. This gap prompted the present study.

Purpose of the Study

This study examines teachers' perceptions of the influence of principals' work environment promotion and discipline management on their productivity in secondary schools in Karu LGA. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Examine the influence of principals' promotion of a good work environment on teachers' productivity.
2. Determine the influence of principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline on teachers' productivity.
3. Find out whether significant differences exist between private and public school teachers regarding principals' promotion of a favourable work environment.
4. Find out whether significant differences exist between private and public school teachers regarding principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of principals' promotion of a good work environment on teachers' productivity in Karu LGA?
2. What is the influence of principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline on teachers' productivity in Karu LGA?
3. What difference exists between private and public school teachers regarding principals' promotion of a favourable work environment?
4. What difference exists between private and public school teachers regarding principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline?

Research Hypotheses

Tested at $\alpha = 0.05$, with a Bonferroni-adjusted threshold applied within each construct to account for multiple item-level comparisons (see Method of Data Analysis):

Ho1: There is no significant difference between private and public school teachers' responses regarding principals' promotion of a favourable working environment on their productivity.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between private and public school teachers' responses regarding principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline on their productivity.

Literature Review

Work Environment and Teachers' Productivity

Work environment refers to the conditions, resources, and relationships shaping how people work (Ossai & Okokoyo, 2024). Anjorin (2026), studying Ondo North Senatorial District, found utilities, instructional resources, and furniture provision linked to teachers' productivity — closely matching this study's work-environment items. Nanzushi (2015) identified reward, leadership style, and work–life balance as key drivers; Ali et al. (2013) linked a positive environment to teacher commitment.

Salary features prominently here. MySalaryScale (2017) reported Nigerian public school teachers earning as little as ₦49,000 monthly; Ssegawa (2019) linked salary increments to higher commitment; Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) and Aroge (2016) both linked working conditions and job satisfaction to performance. Michael and Lucky (2026) found job satisfaction mediating the leadership–performance link in Delta State, and Oni, Nwajiuba, and Nwosu (2017) found motivation significantly tied to productivity in Lagos State — independent findings, from different states, supporting the pattern observed locally.

Staff and Students' Discipline and Teachers' Productivity

Discipline is the system of rules used to manage behaviour and maintain order (Jade, 2023); Nigerian secondary schools continue to report malpractice and insubordination. School rules foster self-discipline (Nasarawa State Government, 2010), and Nzokurum and Iremeka (2017) found discipline management significantly correlated with productivity in Enugu State. Owan and Ekpe (2019), independently in Cross River State, found disciplinary practices — warning, suspension, dismissal — each significantly related to job effectiveness, supporting what teachers here reported: discipline as the single highest-scoring item overall (mean = 3.61).

Theoretical Framework

Three complementary theories anchor this study. Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971, 1996) holds that effective leaders provide direction and support shaping subordinates' effort, with supportive/directive dimensions explaining how principals guide commitment through environment and discipline (Dixon & Hart, 2010; Alanazi et al., 2013). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) distinguishes hygiene factors — salary, conditions — from motivators; their absence breeds dissatisfaction, helping explain why salary and conditions scored so strongly here. Fayol's (1916/1949) principle of discipline provides the administrative rationale for why clear, fairly enforced rules matter. Together these frame salary payment, environment, and discipline as expressions of the dynamics this study examines, rather than being tested as discrete constructs.

The literature points consistently toward a positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and teacher productivity, but most existing work — Adegbesan (2013) and Sule (2013) on leadership and supervision — has focused elsewhere. Very little has examined work environment and discipline jointly, or compared these across ownership types in Karu LGA specifically.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, using questionnaires to assess teachers' perceptions of the research problem. As a descriptive design, it does not permit causal inference; findings are reported throughout as perceived associations rather than causal effects.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

Karu LGA's wider teacher population, across 12 public senior, 12 public junior, and roughly 600 registered private secondary schools, is approximately 8,364 (Nasarawa State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2024). Sample size was determined from the combined teaching staff of the five schools selected for data collection — Government Secondary School Bakin Ado, Government Secondary School Masaka, Ambassador Sky Pathway Academy, Divine Fortune International Academy, and Valliant Private School Ado (two public, three private) — whose combined staff numbered approximately 200.

Simple random sampling selected teacher-respondents within each school. The two-public/three-private split reflects an attempt at broad representation across ownership types rather than strict proportional sampling relative to the LGA's far larger private-school population (≈600 private vs. 24 public schools); this trade-off, made to keep both groups large enough for meaningful comparison, is acknowledged as a limitation.

Applying the Taro Yamane formula, $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, with N = 200 and e = 0.05, yielded a minimum required sample of 133.3, rounded to 134. To allow for non-response, 150 questionnaires were distributed (30 per school); 145 were validly returned (96.7%), comfortably above the minimum.

Instrument, Validity, and Reliability

Data were collected using the Questionnaire on the Impact of Principals' Administrative Roles on Teachers' Productivity (QIPARTP): Section A (demographics) and Section B (24 items across five clusters — general administrative roles, communication, instructional materials sustainability, work environment, and ways of improving productivity), on a four-point Likert scale (SA=4 to SD=1).

This paper reports two components: the five-item Work Environment cluster, and two discipline-related items drawn from elsewhere in the instrument (one from general administrative roles, one from ways of improving productivity). Discipline was not designed as a standalone cluster; these two items should be read as an indicative measure, not a separately validated sub-scale.

Three experts — a supervisor, a Measurement and Evaluation lecturer, and an Educational Administration and Planning specialist — reviewed the instrument for validity. A pilot test of 15 teachers returned an overall reliability of 0.75 (Cronbach's Alpha) for the full 24-item instrument (Mbanefo, 2023b); the two-item discipline measure's reliability was not separately established, noted as a limitation below.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, with anonymity and confidentiality assured. An introduction letter was obtained from the NOUN Wuse II Study Centre, and attestation letters were secured from all five participating schools.

Method of Data Analysis

SPSS was used to compute means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions (decision rule: 3.2–4.0 = Strongly Agree, 2.4–3.19 = Agree). Independent-samples t-tests compared private and public school teachers' responses per item. Because Hypothesis 1 spans five items and Hypothesis 2 spans two, testing each separately inflates Type I error beyond the nominal 0.05 level. A Bonferroni correction was therefore applied within each construct ($\alpha = .05/5 = .01$ for H1; $\alpha = .05/2 = .025$ for H2); results are reported at both thresholds for transparency.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the influence of principals' promotion of a good work environment on teachers' productivity in Karu LGA, Nasarawa State?

Table 1: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Influence of Principals' Promotion of a Good Work Environment on Teachers' Productivity (N=145)

S/N	Items	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	Decision
14	Work environment promotes teachers' commitment to quality work production	-	2	71	72	3.48	.528	S. Agree
15	When the working environment is favourable it influences my teaching and the students learn better	-	-	62	83	3.57	.496	S. Agree
16	Early payment of staff salary motivates teachers to do work better	-	1	39	105	3.72	.467	S. Agree
17	Good pay influences teachers' commitment to their work	-	-	51	94	3.65	.479	S. Agree
18	When a principal promotes discipline in school, it leads to positive attitude to work by teachers	-	6	116	23	3.12	.433	Agree
	Cluster Mean					3.50	.479	S. Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024. $\bar{x}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Scale: SD = Strongly Disagree (1); D = Disagree (2); A = Agree (3); SA = Strongly Agree (4). Decision rule: 3.2–4.0 = Strongly Agree; 2.4–3.19 = Agree.

Table 1 shows that the cluster mean ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50, SD = 0.479) falls within the Strongly Agree range, indicating that teachers perceived principals' promotion of a good work environment as positively associated with their productivity. Item 16 recorded the highest mean (3.72), reflecting strong agreement that early payment of staff salary motivates teachers, followed by item 17 (3.65) and item 15 (3.57). Item 18 recorded a mean of 3.12, which falls within the Agree range under the study's decision rule (corrected from an earlier misclassification as Strongly Agree).

Research Question 2: What is the influence of principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline on teachers' productivity in Karu LGA, Nasarawa State?

Table 2: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Influence of Principals' Maintenance of Staff and Students' Discipline on Teachers' Productivity (N=145)

S/N	Items	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	Decision
4	Principals' maintaining of staff and students' discipline promotes teachers' productivity	-	1	54	90	3.61	.503	S. Agree
22	Principal's ensuring of discipline in my school promotes teachers' confidence to work	-	8	123	14	3.04	.389	Agree
	Cluster Mean					3.33	.45	S. Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024. $\bar{x}$ = Mean; SD (in item labels) = Strongly Disagree; Std.Dev. = Standard Deviation.

Table 2 shows a cluster mean of 3.33, within the Strongly Agree range, indicating that teachers perceived principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline as positively associated with their productivity. Item 4 recorded the highest single-item mean in the entire study (3.61), while item 22 recorded a mean of 3.04 (Agree).

Research Question 3 / Testing of Hypothesis 1 (Ho1): What difference exists between teachers in private and public secondary schools regarding principals' promotion of a favourable work environment?

Table 3: Independent-Samples t-test on Ho1 — Principals' Promotion of a Favourable Work Environment and Teachers' Productivity, by School Type (N=145)

S/N	Item	School	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	T	p	Dec. α=.05	Dec. Bonf. α=.01
14	Work environment promotes teachers' commitment to quality work production	Private Public	85 60	3.38 3.63	.534 .486	-2.960	.004	S	S
15	When the working environment is favourable it influences my teaching and the students learn better	Private Public	85 60	3.56 3.58	.499 .497	-.222	.825	NS	NS
16	Early payment of staff salary motivates teachers to do work better	Private Public	85 60	3.62 3.85	.511 .360	-2.952	.004	S	S

17	Good pay influences teachers' commitment to their work	Private Public	85 60	3.60 3.72	.493 .454	- 1.44 9	.149	NS	NS
18	When a principal promotes discipline in school, it leads to positive attitude to work by teachers	Private Public	85 60	3.15 3.07	.362 .516	1.18 3	.239	NS	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2024. df = 143; conventional α = .05; Bonferroni-adjusted α = .05/5 = .01; S = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

Table 3 shows that items 14 and 16 remained statistically significant even after applying the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold (p = .004 in both cases, below α = .01), indicating a genuine difference between private school teachers (means 3.38 and 3.62) and public school teachers (means 3.63 and 3.85) in their perceptions of work environment as a motivator and of early salary payment. Items 15, 17, and 18 were not significant at either threshold. Null hypothesis 1 is therefore partially rejected: private and public school teachers differ significantly in their perceptions on two of the five work-environment items.

Research Question 4 / Testing of Hypothesis 2 (Ho2): What difference exists between teachers in private and public secondary schools regarding principals' maintenance of staff and students' discipline?

Table 4: Independent-Samples t-test on Ho2 — Principals' Maintenance of Staff and Students' Discipline and Teachers' Productivity, by School Type (N=145)

S/N	Item	School	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	p	Dec. α=.05	Dec. Bonf. α=.025
4	Principals' maintaining of staff and students' discipline promotes teachers' productivity	Private Public	85 60	3.54 3.72	.524 .454	- 2.09 5	.038	S	NS
22	Principal's ensuring of discipline in my school promotes teachers' confidence to work	Private Public	85 60	3.04 3.05	.392 .387	-.224	.823	NS	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2024. df = 143; conventional α = .05; Bonferroni-adjusted α = .05/2 = .025; S = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

Table 4 shows that item 4 reached significance at the conventional 0.05 level (p = .038) but does not meet the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold of .025 for this two-item construct; it is therefore interpreted as not statistically significant once the multiple-comparison correction is applied.

Item 22 was not significant at either threshold. Null hypothesis 2 is retained: this study did not find a statistically robust difference between private and public school teachers' perceptions of principals' maintenance of discipline once Type I error inflation from multiple item-level comparisons is accounted for.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Principals' Promotion of a Good Work Environment and Teachers' Productivity

Teachers clearly linked a favourable work environment to their own productivity (cluster mean = 3.50), with early salary payment (3.72) and favourable conditions (3.57) drawing the strongest agreement. This tracks with Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017), Usop et al. (2013), and Michael and Lucky (2026), whose Delta State study found job satisfaction mediating the link between principals' leadership and teacher performance — and with Odion and Mbanefo (2025), drawing on the same broader Karu LGA dataset, who found similar credit given to enabling administrative conditions.

Two items held up as significant after Bonferroni correction ($p = .004$ for items 14 and 16), meaning private and public school teachers genuinely differ here rather than the gap being a testing artefact. Public school teachers were more emphatic that early salary payment motivates them (3.85 vs. 3.62) — plausibly reflecting the salary-delay patterns often reported in Nigeria's public school system (MySalaryScale, 2017).

Principals' Maintenance of Discipline and Teachers' Productivity

Discipline mattered too — item 4 produced the study's single highest mean (3.61), echoing Nzokurum and Iremeka (2017) and Owan and Ekpe (2019), both finding discipline management significantly tied to teacher effectiveness elsewhere in Nigeria. Unlike work environment, though, the private–public difference here ($p = .038$) falls short of the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold ($\alpha = .025$) for this two-item construct. Once the extra caution against false positives is factored in, teachers across both school types appear to value consistent discipline enforcement about equally.

Implications of the Study

For state government and school management boards, the salary finding reframes prompt payment from a routine welfare matter into something closer to a productivity lever — teachers themselves connect the two. On discipline, the corrected results counsel restraint: since the public–private difference didn't hold up statistically, this study doesn't support treating discipline strategy differently by ownership type, but it does support clear, consistently enforced standards regardless of school type.

For principal-preparation programmes, both findings suggest work environment management and discipline enforcement deserve a real place in the curriculum. And the pattern here echoes prior Sub-Saharan African evidence (Ali et al., 2013; Nzokurum & Iremeka, 2017), hinting the dynamics observed in Karu LGA may extend beyond it — though with only five schools sampled, that remains a suggestion worth testing further, not a claim to generalise yet.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations bear on how these findings should be read. The study drew on five schools (two public, three private), so some of the apparent public/private difference could reflect individual school leadership rather than anything systemic about ownership type.

Productivity was measured through self-reported commitment and attitude rather than direct output (lesson preparation, student outcomes) — a common approach in this literature (Adeyemi, 2010) but a narrower construct than "productivity" in the fullest sense. Most importantly, the discipline construct rests on just two items pulled from different clusters of the original 24-item instrument, not a purpose-built sub-scale — a narrow basis for a construct this central to the study — and its reliability was not independently established. Finally, because only item-level (not respondent-level) data were available, a Bonferroni correction was used in place of a composite-score analysis, which would require respondent-level data this study did not have access to — worth building in for any follow-up work on this dataset.

CONCLUSION

Teachers in Karu LGA saw a real connection between how principals handled work environment and discipline and how productive they themselves felt, consistently across both public and private schools — especially around salary and conditions. Discipline maintenance stood out most (mean = 3.61), leaving little doubt teachers see it as central to their effectiveness. Once multiple comparisons were accounted for, the public–private gap held for two work-environment items but not for discipline, suggesting teachers across both school types are largely aligned on how much discipline matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Principals should prioritise a conducive work environment, including timely salary payment, which teachers associated with their motivation.
2. School administrators should establish and consistently communicate clear disciplinary policies for staff and students.
3. School authorities should prioritise timely salary payment and strengthen teacher welfare programmes — salary timeliness specifically, the dimension examined here, rather than remuneration levels generally.
4. Regular staff welfare meetings should be institutionalised, giving teachers a channel to raise work-environment concerns.
5. Future studies should retain respondent-level data for composite-score analysis, and incorporate direct output measures alongside attitudinal indicators of productivity.

Declarations

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