



Journal of Education, Learning, and Management (JELM)

ISSN: 3079-2541 (Online)

Volume 2 Issue 2, (2025)

 <https://doi.org/10.69739/jelm.v2i2.870>

 <https://journals.stecab.com/jelm>



Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

Professional Ethics and Performance-Based Pay Systems among Secondary School Teachers in Ife Zonal Area

*¹Peters, Olusegun, ¹Ajayi, Ifeoluwa O.

About Article

Article History

Submission: July 28, 2025

Acceptance : September 01, 2025

Publication : September 16, 2025

Keywords

Job Performance, Performance-Based Pay Systems, Professional Teachers, Teaching Profession, Teaching Professional Ethics

About Author

¹ Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, Nigeria

Contact @ Peters, Olusegun
theolusegunpeters@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of performance-based pay systems on the performance of secondary school teachers in Ife Zonal Area of Osun State Nigeria, and how they observed ethics of the teaching profession. Specifically, the study focused on: identifying the teaching professional ethics the teachers were commonly aware of and they observed; determining the extent to which they observed the ethics; and identifying the teachers' attitudes towards performance-based pay. While there are numerous studies on teachers' motivation and teachers' performance, the linking of performance-based pay for teachers as a factor of motivation and teachers' observance of professional ethics as an aspect of work performance is barely explored; hence, this study. The study employed the quantitative survey method, using structured questionnaires to collect data from 200 respondents, who were teachers selected with the use of a quota sampling method from the secondary schools selected with the simple random sampling method from all the secondary schools in the four local government areas of Ife Zonal Area. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, and summary statistics. The study found that a considerably high percentage (78.5%) of the teachers observed most of the examined ethics, a very low percentage of them (9%) moderately observed the ethics, while another small percentage of them (12.5%) lowly observed the ethics; this signifies that most of the teachers were aware of and they firmly observed most of the ethics. The study also found that a fairly large percentage of the teachers (63%) wanted a pay scheme that would compensate their performance, while 37% of them wanted their qualifications and duration of service compensated; this signifies that while majority of the teachers preferred a performance-based pay as a fairer reward system, a good number of them preferred a pay system based on qualifications and duration of service because it is more practicable. The study concluded that the effects a performance-based pay system has on teachers' dedication to the profession and its ethics are not definite, and that teachers are better motivated by other factors which are, in fact, not related to payment. The study contributed to the bank of existing literatures on teachers' motivation and performance with its specification on performance-based pay as a factor for motivation and observance of professional ethics as an important aspect of performance in the teaching profession.

Citation Style:

Peters, O., & Ajayi, I. O. (2025). Professional Ethics and Performance-Based Pay Systems among Secondary School Teachers in Ife Zonal Area. *Journal of Education, Learning, and Management*, 2(2), 158-168. <https://doi.org/10.69739/jelm.v2i2.870>



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensed Stecab Publishing, Bangladesh. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

1. INTRODUCTION

In many states in Nigeria, secondary schools, which are mostly in the jurisdiction of states government, commonly suffer poor funding, resource inadequacies, mismanagement, and dilapidating facilities. Also, their teachers are known for not receiving their salaries in due time (The Guardian, 15th October 2023; Ekwevugbe & Efetobor, 2025). Specific to Osun State, the teachers are generally known for suffering same ordeal in salary scale compared to other relating professions, unstable payment of salaries, work overload, dilapidating work environment, and working conditions that are difficult to manage (Akomolafe, 2020; Araromi & Salman, 2020). Consequently, these defects influence teachers' attitudes to work, and their commitment to the profession and the ethics guiding it. This compels investigations into ethical adherence among secondary school teachers in Osun State, particularly in Ife Zonal Area.

While government, education administrators, and teachers blame these problems on one another, and the lack of consensus on the major causes of teachers' underperformance and unprofessionalism continues to deter the arriving at developments that will enhance teachers' performance, promote teachers' adherence to professional ethics, and advance the teaching profession, researchers popularly point to teachers' perception of unfairness in their rewards—when compared within the profession and especially when compared with those of other professions—as a major cause of teachers' underperformance and unprofessionalism (Akunne *et al.*, 2023). This compels investigations into the influence of performance-based pay—as a form of reward system, on teachers' ethical adherence—as a major aspect of teachers' and performance on the job.

Thus, while the general objective of this research is to establish the effects a performance-based pay system has on how secondary school teachers in the Ife Zonal Area perform and observe professional ethics, the specific objectives are to: identify the teaching professional ethics the teachers are commonly aware of and they observe them; determine the extent to which the teachers observe the ethics; and identify the teachers' attitudes towards performance-based pay systems. The study is significant in determining teachers' awareness and observance of ethics of the teaching profession, and also in revealing the extent of teachers' tilt towards performance-based pay.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To stress the gaps this study fills, this section reviews the relevant contributions of different authors to conceptualizing factors key to the study. The empirical and theoretical frameworks backing the study are also discussed.

2.1. Conceptual review

To explore the dynamics of the factors core to the areas of this work and pin them down to the topic Professional Ethics and Performance-Based Pay Systems among Secondary School Teachers in Ife Zonal Area, this subsection examines the concepts of the following terms: performance (job performance), performance-based pay systems, and teaching professional ethics.

2.1.1. Performance (Job Performance)

Regardless of the varying positions of authors like Mrunal (2022) and Fisher (2021) on the understanding of performance, the point of convergence remains that it is the demonstration of capability, ability, capacity, and effort on a task, and the accomplishment of relative goals on the task. In the teaching profession, performance is dependent on and responsive to variables that may be individual, institutional or/and environmental (i.e., expectations of the curriculum, feedbacks from the students, as well as peers, parents and institutional reviews), and it is assessed based on standards set on these variables. Performance here, highlights the teacher's ability to inculcate discipline in students, and efficiently deliver instructions to impart expected knowledge and cause assessable behaviors or change of behaviors in learners (Edo & Johnson, 2024; Koko & Dike, 2022). Thus, for a teacher to achieve performance in the profession, promptness, outlook, outspokenness, informed approaches, lesson plans and its delivery, leadership qualities, lesson plans, classroom control and management, and student participation are core of what he or she must exhibit and be assessed on (Akram *et al.*, 2021).

2.1.2. Performance-based pay systems

Basically, performance-based pay systems are remuneration structures set up for employees to earn according to their productivity, quantity and/or quality of their output, their skills, and the development of existing and new skills, as well as the attainment of expectations and set objectives. Scholars have postulated that, because they are tied to productivity, performance-based pay systems are efficient remuneration schemes, and they can enhance job satisfaction and productivity on the job (Ingrid *et al.*, 2023). However, other submissions posit that performance-based pay systems can cause inequalities among workers and create the feeling of unfairness from the employer to the employees and among employees (Akpanim, 2021). In Nigerian education system, there are recommendations of performance-based pay systems as workable solution to teachers' absenteeism and underperformance. There are also highlights of factors that may cause the failure of performance-based pay systems in the sector, i.e., lack of credibility and validity of the appraisal systems, poor data systems, unavailability and inadequacy of the resources determining teachers' performance, individual and systemic corruption, favoritism, tribal sentiments, and religious sentiments.

2.1.3. Teaching professional ethics

Professional ethics are codes and principles intended to guide behaviors and define conducts and practices in a profession. They are used to establish and uphold societal trust in a profession, as well as to ensure practitioners' competence and sense of responsibility to a profession and its goals. According to Grigoropoulos (2019) and Zahra (2021), professional ethics are also a yardstick for resolving conflicts and other complications in a profession. Professional ethics are embedded in the codes of conduct of a professional body, they are legally and/or institutionally binding and enforced, and breaches on them could warrant punishments. As elsewhere around the world, teachers in Nigeria are entrusted to be external parents to their students,



to care for them, and help in shaping their behaviors and development into persons with qualities society need to sustain itself, and promote its cultures and values (Ipalibo-Wokoma *et al.*, 2019). Hence, it becomes important for the teaching profession in Nigeria to be guided with ethics able to protect it and its goals; such as constructed and monitored by the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) (Korode, 2020; Adinna, 2023).

2.1.4 Examined Elements of Ethics of the Nigerian Teaching Profession

To ensure the protection of the teaching profession in Nigeria, and control teachers' conduct and delivery of their responsibilities, there are ethical standards developed and monitored by the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). Highlighted below are elements of the ethics this study examined.

- i. Teachers shall maintain confidentiality in every secret and confidential matter.
- ii. Teachers shall be of pleasant personalities at all time.
- iii. Teachers shall be courteous and approachable when needed.
- iv. Teachers shall be firm, fair, and consistent.
- v. Teachers shall be impartial in their relationship with the students and other staff.
- vi. Teachers shall maintain a cordial relationship with the principal at all times.
- vii. All teachers shall submit themselves to the school rules and regulations.
- viii. The services of the teachers shall be geared towards achieving the common goals of education.
- ix. Smoking, and drinking of any kind of alcoholic drink in the school is unethical.
- x. Teachers shall always be decent in their dressing.
- xi. Teachers shall be loyal to the school and its authority.
- xii. No teacher shall do anything that would bring shame and dishonor to the teaching profession.
- xiii. It is unethical for teachers to discriminate the students based on their race or background.
- xiv. Teachers shall not delegate duties requiring their own expertise to any unqualified person.
- xv. Teachers shall always be punctual to the school and to classes.
- xvi. Teachers shall always keep up to date all relevant school records as required of them.
- xvii. All teachers shall participate in co-curricular activities.
- xviii. Teachers cannot be absent from the school and classes without an express consent of the principal.
- xix. Conducting classes for students outside school hours for a fee is unethical.
- xx. Teachers shall attend all relevant and officially required conferences, workshops, and seminars.
- xxi. No teacher shall engage in any act or activity which involves bribery.
- xxii. Corporal punishments can be administered, but only in accordance with prevailing regulations.
- xxiii. No teacher shall reveal any examination question whether internal or external.

xxiv. Teachers cannot use their position to promote their political aspirations or political party in the school.

xxv. Under-performing teachers shall be tolerated and helped by other teachers.

2.2. Empirical review

To pin the understanding of performance down to teaching profession and the teaching profession in Nigeria, and to reveal the yardsticks for determining teacher performance in a new world with new expectations from the education system and educators, studies like Edo and Johnson (2024) and Fardin (2021) suggested that, to determine teachers' performance, factors like mastery of subject matter, lesson planning and delivery, classroom management, ethical stance, etc. of the teacher must be considered, as indicators like these do not only guide teachers, the school, and the education system in delivering on their contributions to producing the kind of educated citizens demanded by the country, they also make provisions for the qualities required of teachers to be efficient in helping the country meet up with the evolving global educational priorities. These studies suggested ethical stance as one of the major indicators of teachers' performance, which creates a need to explore how teachers' reward influence their ethical stance, and specifically how a performance-based pay for teachers would influence their ethical stance.

To emphasize the importance of performance-based pay in the teaching profession, Cowan *et al.* (2020) argued against using student's performance as the sole evaluator of teacher's effectiveness on the job; they argued that student performance is mostly determined or influenced by other factors than the teacher. A teacher can be at their best on the job in parity with the standards of the profession but the student is unable to exhibit the quality of the teacher's efficiency because of environmental, psychological, and background factors. The authors suggested that teacher's effectiveness and efficiency on the job should be determined mostly based on the elements of their performance and behaviors on the job in parity with the standards of the profession, and their reward should be determined using the level of their performance on the job as framework. These scholars posited that teachers' professional behaviors are practicable frameworks for defining their performance, however, they did not stress their studies to how factors like performance-based reward influence professional behaviors.

To determine teacher's performance on the job in Nigeria and the dynamics of performance-based reward systems that will be largely fair to all parties, Uchenna (2025) and Akpanim (2021) buttressed the arguments of Cowan *et al.* (2020) for determining teacher's efficiency and effectiveness, they revealed metrics such as institutional assessments, colleague assessments, ethical compliance and professional standing, mastery of responsibilities and roles in the school system, and so on as core to determining teacher performance in Nigeria. They recommended varieties of performance-based pay systems having prospects of succeeding in Nigeria. These studies, however, did not examine teachers' attitudes to the recommended performance-based pay systems, and how these attitudes will determine teachers' performance and adherence to professional ethics.



Thus, this study was carried out within the empirical purviews of these works, to further the understanding of the influence of teachers' reward on their performance, determine the relationship between performance-based pay and how teachers observe professional ethics, and to pin down the relevance of the phenomena to Ife Zonal Area of Osun State Nigeria.

2.3. Theoretical review

To enhance the examination and explanation of the factors core to this study, and in the context of Nigerian teaching profession, Incentive Theory of Motivation and Adam Stacy's Equity Theory of Motivation are reviewed in this section.

2.3.1. Incentive theory of motivation

A prominent contributor to the behaviorists' ideas of Incentive Theory of Motivation is Clark L. Hull. While Clark's contributions in Hull (1943) predominantly emphasize internal drives (such as hunger, thirst, etc.) as the core motivators of behaviors, his ideas would develop into emphasizing external rewards (the push-pull effects) as equally core to motivation as internal drives are. The push-pull ideas are that while the pull incentive indicates the rewarding outcome of a behavior, the push incentive indicates the punishing outcome of a behavior. Modern authors who have contributed to these ideas and applied it to the teaching profession agree that external incentives (pull and push) are crucial drivers of motivation, and essential in organized entities like the teaching profession (Shintri & Narasalagi, 2021; Birchler, 2024; Yang *et al.*, 2020).

In the context of teaching profession in Nigeria, largely because of the demotivating challenges teachers face in the profession, the incentive theory has received various scholarly and political examinations, in other to reach applicable understandings of how teachers' attitudes to work and their professional stances are influenced by incentives (Yusuf *et al.*, 2024; Bawalla & Adenugba, 2021; Nwakohu, 2021). It has been argued that low salaries, and delayed payment of salaries and benefits, payment of salaries by installments, impoverishing gratuity and pension payment culture, and the poor working conditions, all rampant in Nigerian teaching profession, reduce teachers' motivation to work and be professional on the job; they encourage absenteeism, trading while on duty, assigning professional tasks to students, and gross disregard for the teaching professional ethics (Igbegiri, 2021). These ideas emphasize how reward systems influence the performance and professionalism of teachers.

2.3.2. Equity theory of motivation

The Equity Theory of Motivation, as developed by John Stacey Adams, emphasize the idea that fairness and equity in a work setting are crucial to employee motivation. Adams (1963) supposes that employees' desire to maintain a balance between their inputs at work, and the outcomes (outputs) following their inputs (where inputs are: efforts, skills, time, etc., and outputs are: wages and salary, recognition, promotion, etc.). Adams further explained that employees also desire fairness in their inputs and outputs when compared with those of other workers. Hence, if an imbalance or unfairness is perceived in comparing their input with their output and their input

and output with those of other workers, employees may get demotivated to perform better or encouraged to be negative with work. Yang *et al.* (2020) discuss these perspectives in light of modern phenomena, and with emphasis on how perceived inequity in a reward system can largely reduce employee's commitment and performance. Thus, equity theorists agree that it is a productive means of motivation for an organization to maintain fairness and transparency in their reward systems. The Nigerian education system battles with different organizational, institutional and infrastructural challenges. With these problems taking a toll mostly on the teachers, and complex inputs being required of the teachers. In addition to requiring complex inputs from teachers, and teachers' rewards not leveling up with their inputs, teachers also complain about nepotistic promotions and politicized recognition within the system, as well as the disparities in the reward of qualification and length of service at the expense of resourcefulness, efficiency, professionalism, etc. (Asuquo *et al.* 2024). Anele and Ogona (2022) and Asuquo *et al.* (2024) further emphasize the alignment of teachers' rewards relatively to their delivery on the job and their professionalism, and the frameworks to be used for determining benefits, promotions, recognition, career advancement opportunities should be largely based on teachers' delivery rather than being mainly on qualifications, length of service, nepotism, politics, etc., so as to curb the perception of inequity among teachers, and also curb the under-utilization of teachers and non-observance of the teaching professional ethics.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This study is built on the Incentive Theory of Motivation and Equity Theory of Motivation. It adopts Clark Hull's "push-pull" submissions on the Incentive Theory of Motivation because the theory explains different forms of factors causing motivation and demotivation, classifying them as push or pull. Hull (1943) explains the push factors as pre-informed or expected penalties for not exhibiting a wanted behavior or for exhibiting an unwanted behavior, it also explains the pull factors as anticipated rewards for exhibiting a wanted behavior or for not exhibiting an unwanted behavior. These explanations continue to influence contemporary applications of the theory, and its application to organized settings like schools, as a setting where extrinsic factors like salaries, recognition, promotion, bonuses, and disciplinary actions influence teachers' attitudes to work (Din Bandhu *et al.*, 2024).

This study also adopts the Equity Theory of Motivation, as the submissions of John Stacey Adams in Adams (1963) explain that employees' perception of fairness or unfairness at work—especially when they compare their input and output with those of others—will influence their performance. In the context of the teaching profession, the theory suggest that teachers will have sense of inequity and get demotivated to contribute their best performance if they perceive that their colleagues and/or contemporaries in other professions receive better reward for similar efforts, or similar or better rewards for lesser efforts (Yang *et al.*, 2024; Anele & Ogona, 2022).

The study adopted these theories for their suggested frameworks for the explanation of teachers' performance and ethical behaviors in par with rewards and punishments, and how, if



to achieve the best performance and good ethical observance from teachers, comparability of incentives and efforts across colleagues and contemporaries must show fairness.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the framework within which this study was conducted. It presents the research design, the study population, the sample, and the techniques employed in getting the samples. It also presents the research instruments, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection instruments, and the method used in analyzing the data.

3.1. Research design

This study employs the quantitative survey method using questionnaires to collect responses from 200 respondents who were selected using a combination of simple random sampling and quota sampling.

3.2. Study area

The area for this study is Ife Zonal Area of Osun State, Nigeria; this Zonal Area consists of four local government areas, which include: Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, and Ife South.

3.3. Study Population

The study population are teachers in secondary schools in Ife Zonal Area who were still serving during the timeframe of this study.

3.4. Sample size and sampling technique

The study sample is composed of 200 participants who were staff of the secondary schools selected from the population; these staff included principals, vice principals, Heads of Department, class teachers, and subject teachers selected by firstly using the simple random sampling method to select five schools per local government area from the list of all the secondary schools in each of the four local government areas in the Ife Zonal Area (i.e., five schools per Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North and Ife South local government areas; making it 20 schools selected in total), and from every five schools selected, ten teachers were selected using the quota sampling method. This selection indicates 10 teachers selected from every of the five selected schools from the four local government areas, making it 50 teachers selected from each local government areas, and 200 teacher-respondents in total.

3.5. Research instruments

The primary data used in this study were collected using self-administered questionnaires to get information from the respondents (the teachers). The secondary were collected from relevant books, journals, newspapers, archival materials, and theses.

3.6. Reliability and validity of research instruments

The reliability of testing the effects of performance-based pay on teachers' performance and how they observed the professional ethics was statistically confirmed within an interval of ± 2 , which is acceptable for a quantitative research. The Content

Validity Index (CVI) was found by considering the number of items declared relevant (80), and it was divided by total number of items presented (89), making the CVI of the questionnaires equal to 0.899, which is above the standard for testing validity (0.7). Thus, the questionnaire was considered valid.

3.7. Data types, sources and collection

For this study, the primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires to get information from the respondents. The secondary data were collected from relevant books, journals, newspapers, archival materials, and theses; all published within the timeframe of the execution of this study to five years backwards, exempting only some cases where sources of theories, frameworks, news, and historical records are cited.

3.8. Method of analysis

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Summary statistics in form of quantitative measures were done using frequencies and percentages.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results derived from the analysis of the data collected on this study. The results are also discussed with references to different postulations of relevant secondary materials.

4.1. Analysis of the research objectives

4.1.1. Research objective 1: identify teaching professional ethics the teachers are commonly aware of and they observe

Section B of the questionnaire collected responses in relation to this research objective. 25 elements of ethics of the teaching profession were highlighted with other five items that are not ethics of the profession (making all the items in the section of the questionnaire 30); this was to task the respondents to recognize the ethics of the profession apart from the non-ethics. The respondents were required to identify which ones represented ethics of the teaching profession by marking either "Yes" or "No" for each of the 30 listed items. In the imputation of the responses into the SPSS program, "Yes" was coded 1 and "No" was coded 2. This was done so as to identify the ethics which the teachers were commonly aware of, and the ones which they were commonly not aware of, and also to identify the ethics commonly observed by them.

In analyzing the responses of the teachers to the listed items (as in Table 1 below), the percentages of the yeses to the items were analyzed based on a set standard: 70% to 100% indicates 'Highly Aware of'; 60% to 69% indicates 'Moderately Aware of'; 50% to 59% indicates 'Averagely Aware of'; 40% to 49% indicates 'Lowly Aware of'; and 1% to 39% indicates 'Poorly Aware of'. The percentages of the yeses to the professional ethics commonly observed by the teachers were also analyzed based on a set standard: 70% to 100% indicates 'Commonly Observed'; 60% to 69% indicates 'Moderately Observed'; 50% to 59% indicates 'Averagely Observed'; 40% to 49% indicates 'Lowly Observed'; and 1% to 39% indicates 'Commonly unobserved'.



Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of the ethics and non-ethics

Items of the Ethics	Yes		No		Total	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
Teachers shall maintain confidentiality in officially confidential matters	187	93.5	13	6.5	200	100
Teachers shall maintain cordial relationship with the principal and staff	178	89	22	11	200	100
Teachers shall maintain pleasant personalities at all times	118	94	12	6	200	100
Teachers shall be courteous and approachable when needed	184	92	12	6	200	100
It is a duty that teachers attend all relevant and required professional conferences	173	86.5	27	13.5	200	100
Teachers shall keep up to date their relevant school records	188	94	12	6	200	100
Teacher shall submit themselves to the rules and regulations of the school	193	96.5	7	3.5	200	100
Teachers shall delegate to any unqualified person duties requiring their expertise	183	91.5	17	8.5	200	100
Teachers shall not reveal examination questions whether internal or external	196	98	4	2	200	100
Teachers shall be firm, fair and consistent	163	81.5	37	18.5	200	100
Teachers cannot be absent from school without permission from the principal	187	93.5	13	6.5	200	100
Teacher shall never take any type of alcoholic drink or smoke in school	178	89	22	11	200	100
Teachers shall be of exemplary character in honesty, moral, and integrity	118	94	12	6	200	100
Teachers shall be loyal to the school and its authority	193	96.5	7	3.5	200	100
Teachers shall be exemplary in their dressing	184	92	16	8	200	100
Teachers cannot be racially discriminatory	181	90.5	19	4.5	200	100
Under-performing teachers shall be tolerated and helped by other teachers	132	66	68	34	200	100
Teachers shall participate actively in co-curricular activities	191	95.5	9	4.5	200	100
Teachers shall direct their services towards achieving the set goals of education	186	93	14	7	200	100
Teachers cannot use their positions to spread any political ideology	97	48.5	103	51.5	200	100
Teachers shall be impartial with every student and with other staff	192	96	8	4	200	100
Teachers shall never take bribe or exploit their students in any form	188	94	12	6	200	100
Teachers shall do nothing to bring dishonor to the profession	191	95.5	9	4.5	200	100
Teachers can administer corporal punishment only according to regulations	115	57.5	85	42.5	200	100
It is unethical for teachers to offer classes to students off school hours for a fee	179	89.5	21	10.5	200	100
School tasks should be assigned to teachers on gender bases	97	48.5	103	51.5	200	100
Teachers can run their personal businesses within the school	92	46	108	54	200	100
Teachers can leave the school without the consent of the principal	118	59	82	41	200	100
Teachers can teach in any language they understand best	93	93	107	53.5	200	100
Teachers can use the services of students for personal benefits	66	66	134	67	200	100

Source: Authors' compilation, 2025

From the responses to the items listed in Table 1 above, it can be deduced that the teachers were highly aware of almost all of the elements of the ethics listed in the table, except for the ethic numbered 17—which they were also aware of, but at a moderate level (only 66% of the respondents were aware of it); the ethic numbered 20—which the respondents were but lowly aware of (only 48.5% of the respondents were aware of it); and the ethic numbered 24—which the teachers were but averagely aware of (only 57.5% of the respondents were aware of it).

The reason for the moderate awareness of ethic number 17 is attributed to the low existence of teamwork in the teaching profession, and the difficulties in promoting teamwork in the profession (Chinenye, 2025; Msonge & Lekule, 2024). The reason for the low awareness of ethic numbered 20 on the table is attributed to the culture of Nigerian politicians using teachers for political purposes, and the large participation of the teachers of Ife Zonal Area in politics (Ifegbesan *et al.*, 2021). While the reason for the average awareness and observation of



ethic numbered 24 is attributed to the rampant use of corporal punishment among teachers (Ige, 2024; Nwafor, 2021). From the distribution of the frequency and percentage in Table 1 above, it can be inferred that almost all the elements of the ethics were commonly observed except: ethic numbered 17—which was but moderately observed; ethic numbered 20—which was but lowly observed; and ethic numbered 24—which was averagely observed. It can therefore be deduced that the ethics which the teachers were lowly aware of were also lowly observed by the teachers.

Analyzed in Table 2 below, with their frequency and percentage

distributions, are the items listed in the Section B of the questionnaire but they are not elements of the ethics. On the list of items in Table 1 above, respondents were required to mark “Yes” to the ethics and “No” to the non-ethics. To analyze the responses of the respondents to these items, the frequency and percentage distribution to the yeses were analyzed with set standards so as to identify the extent to which each of the items were mistaken to be an element of the ethics of the teaching profession: 70% to 100% indicates ‘Very High’, 60% to 69% indicates ‘High’, 50% to 59% indicates ‘Average’, 40% to 49% indicates ‘Low’, and 1% to 39% indicates ‘Very Low’.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the non-ethics

Items not Elements of the Ethics	Yes		No		Total		Extent
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	
School tasks should be assigned to teachers on gender bases	97	48.5	103	51.5	200	100	Low
Teachers can run their personal businesses within the school	92	46	108	54	200	100	Low
Teachers can leave the school without the consent of the principal	118	59	82	41	200	100	Average
Teachers can teach in any language they understand best	93	46.5	107	53.5	200	100	Low
Teachers can use the services of students for personal benefits	66	33	134	67	200	100	Very low

Source: Authors' compilation, 2025

From the frequency and percentage distribution of the responses in Table 2 above, it can be deduced that the number of respondents who chose item 1 as ethic of the profession is ‘low’ (48.5%); that is, almost average of the teachers investigated believed it was ethical for the school responsibilities to be assigned to the teachers based on their gender; this is largely attributed to the societal and organizational norms of distributing functions and responsibilities according to genders (Olonade *et al.*, 2021; Olayinka & Warren, 2019; Abanyam *et al.*, 2020). It can also be deduced that the percentage of respondents who believed item 2 on the list was an ethic of the teaching profession is also low (46%); thus, it can be implied that 46% percent of the teachers believed it was not unethical to run businesses other than their teaching job within the school premises. This emphasizes the complaints about teachers trading in the school premises and in fact using students as customers (Adinna, 2023; Nnorom & Ezenwagu, 2020; Akinwarere, 2021; Uwazurike & Ugochukwu, 2021).

The “Yes” responses (59%) to item 3 indicates that an averagely high percentage of the respondents believed it was not unethical for a teacher to leave the school premises without the consent of the school authority. This emphasizes the reports on the unprofessional culture of teachers leaving the school during school hours (Adinna, 2023; Nnorom & Ezenwagu, 2020; Akinwarere, 2021; Uwazurike & Ugochukwu, 2021). A low percent of the respondents (46.5%) believed it was ethical for teachers to teach their subjects with a language other than the language set for teaching in Nigeria. This situation was rampant in schools in the Ife Zonal Area and in Osun State generally; teachers taught their subjects in local dialects (Ibeneme & Akinlabi, 2021; Oso, 2024; Adeosun, 2024; Ayofe & Faremi, 2021).

4.1.2. Research objective 2: determine the extent to which the teachers observe the teaching professional ethics

Section C of the questionnaire investigated the respondents on the extent to which they observed the ethics of the teaching profession. Listed in the section of the questionnaire are 25 elements of the ethics, on which the respondents were instructed to indicate how frequently they observed each by marking one of “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely” and “Never” as provided in the options to each of these items. In imputing the collected data to the SPSS program, the elements of the ethics which are positive in nature were coded positively, and the ones that are negative in nature were coded negatively. Items like “how frequently do you reveal exam question?” were considered negative, as no respondents would want to indicate that they ever did any of these. While items like “how frequently do you maintain pleasant personalities?” were considered positive as no respondent would want to indicate that they have not being doing any of these.

The responses to these items were inverted when being coded into the SPSS program; i.e., “Always” on the negative questions were coded 5 while they were coded 1 on the positive questions, “Often” on the negative questions were coded 4 while they were coded 2 on the positive questions, “Sometimes” were coded 3 on the negative questions and also 3 on the positive question—being the mid-option. “Rarely” was coded 2 on the negative questions while they were coded 4 on the positive questions, and “Never” was coded 1 on the negative questions while they were coded 4 on the positive questions. On Table 3 below, analysis of the extent to which the teachers observed the ethics of the profession are presented in relations with imputation method employed (as explained above). In doing this, standards were set in relations to the percentage of the



responses; 70% to 100% indicates 'Highly Observed', 60% to 69% indicates 'Moderately Observed', 50% to 59% indicates 'Averagely Observed', 40% to 49% indicates 'Lowly Observed', and 1% to 39% indicates 'Poorly Observed'.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of teachers' adherence to the ethics

Extent	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Highly Adhered to	157	78.5
Moderately Adhered to	18	9
Lowly Adhered to	25	12.5
Total	200	100

Source: Authors' compilation, 2025

Analysis of the extent to which the teachers observed or adhered to professional ethics as displayed in table 3 above shows that 78.5% of the respondents highly observed the ethics of teaching profession, 9% of the respondents moderately observed them, while 12.5% of the respondents lowly observed them. This emphasizes a high level of adherence to professional ethics among teachers in Ife Zonal Area (Lawal *et al.*, 2024). However, there is the presence of 9% moderate observance and 12.5% low observance, making up a total of 21.5% of respondents who were not highly observing ethics of the profession; this raises concerns about the stability of ethical practices in the study area.

4.1.3. Research objective 3: identify teachers' attitudes towards performance-based pay system

Section D of the questionnaire investigated attitudes of the respondents to performance-based pay. In doing this, some responsibilities of teachers in school were listed in the section of the questionnaire. These responsibilities were related to how the teachers should be paid, and the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the positions of each of the items in the section. The levels of agreement provided in the options of the items are: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". In the imputation of the responses to these options into the SPSS program, the positive and the negative items were coded inversely. "Strongly Agree" on the positive items were coded 1 while on the negative items they were coded 4, "Agree" on the positive items were coded 2 while on the negative items they were coded 3, "Disagree" on the positive items were coded 3 while they were coded 2 on the negative items, and "Strongly Disagree" on the positive items were coded 4 while they were coded 1 on the negative items.

The attitudes of the respondents to performance-based pay system are presented in Table 4 below in frequencies and percentages according to their responses to the items in the questionnaires. To define the positivity or negativity of the attitude, a standard was set in relations with these functions and the percentages derived from the frequencies of the responses of the respondents: 50% to 100% was set as the standard for determining the positive attitude, and 1% to 49% was set as the standard for determining the negative attitude.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Teachers' Attitudes to Performance-Based Pay

Attitudes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive attitude	126	63%
Negative attitude	74	37%
Total	200	100%

Source: Authors' compilation, 2025

Relating the analysis of Table 4 above with the standards sets for determining positive and negative attitudes of the respondents, it was observed that 63% of the respondents had positive attitude towards performance-based pay, while the remaining 37% had negative attitude towards it. That is, 63% of the teachers investigated wanted their pay to be based on their performance in school and their professionalism, while 37% of the teachers rejected payment based on their performance and their professionalism. It is therefore difficult to generalize that the teachers wanted to be rewarded in accordance with their level of performance and professionalism at work, since such a large percentage of the teachers (37%) were not satisfied with rewards based on how they perform at work.

Thus, it can be implied that a fairly large percentage of the teachers (63%) wanted a pay scheme that would compensate them according to how much teaching qualities they possess, how they deliver their services, how effective and efficient they are on the job, and how they adhere to ethics of the teaching profession. Some of these teachers however wanted to be paid based on the certificate they hold and how long they have been working, not on how they do the job or how much they can maximize the available resources to achieve the common goals of education. As much as a performance-based pay system can improve accountability, its implementation in Nigeria may encounter early pitfalls due to systemic issues like politicization of assessments and rewards, inadequate or unavailable needed resources to facilitate teachers' performance, and inconsistency in the monitoring and assessment of teachers' performance; the teachers' negative attitude to a performance-based pay system can be attributed to these.

5. CONCLUSION

Researchers, governments, education stakeholders, parents, school owners, school administrators and teachers have raised debates for and against the gross decline in the adherence to professional ethics among teachers, and the sabotaged ability or inability to perform efficiently as teachers. There have also been different recommendations as workable factors to motivating and enhancing teachers for better performance and professionalism—one of them being performance-based reward systems. This prompted the need to investigate how teachers' assessable performance and professionalism can be influenced when aligned with performance-based reward. Thus, this study was executed with the general aim to assess how the implementation of a performance-based pay system in secondary school systems of the study area will influence teachers' performance and their ethical conducts, and



specifically to: identify teaching professional ethics commonly observed by the teachers; determine the extent to which the teachers observe teaching professional ethics; and identify the teachers' attitudes towards performance-based pay systems.

In executing the objectives of this research, the study adopted a quantitative survey method prompting data to be collected from respondents using structured questionnaires and analyzed using numerical and statistical standards like frequencies and percentages in highlighting the interpretation of the findings. The sample from which the needed data were collected are 200 teachers selected with a quota sampling method, assigning ten teachers to each of the five school selected with a random sampling method from the secondary schools in the four local government areas of Ife Zonal Area. The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' orientations of ethical conducts and their attitudes toward performance-based pay systems. The study found that most of the teachers were aware of most of the ethics of the teaching profession, and that while certain ethics such as punctuality, record keeping, and honesty were moderately observed, others such as collaboration, confidentiality, and impartiality were less observed—possibly due to systemic and societal factors. The study also found that most teachers in Ife Zonal Area preferred the current pay system that rewards teachers based on their qualifications and length of service, rather than a system that rewards based on performance.

Findings of this study further validate the Incentive Theory of Motivation—especially Clark Hull's "push-pull" dynamic of it; the implementation of a performance-based pay system could serve as a pull factor by offering rewards for observable ethical behaviors and enhanced job performance, this study however revealed that such external rewards alone are insufficient to sustain long-term motivation among teachers. The study further revealed that while a performance-based pay, as a motivator, may influence measurable indicators of performance, such as punctuality and class attendance, internal motivators, such as personal values, interest in teaching, and professional pride will still play significant roles in driving performance and ethical adherence. The results also align closely with the assumptions of Equity Theory of Motivation by John Stacey Adams; teachers in this study expressed dissatisfaction with the idea of a performance-based pay system, not merely because of the reluctance to be assessed with new methods, but largely due to perceived risks of inequity and favoritism in how performance would be measured and rewarded. This supports the theoretical claim that when employees perceive that input-output ratios are unfair, either among their colleagues or in comparison with peers in other professions, they are likely to reduce their efforts or become ethically disengaged.

The study concluded that while a performance-based pay system may improve teachers' observable behaviors like attendance, punctuality and so on, it has limited effects on deeper ethical values such as honesty, fairness, and professionalism. Also, teachers' rejection of a performance-based pay system reflects their fear of the workability and fairness of such system, and reveals teachers' desire for equity, transparency, and consistency in their reward system. Therefore, as neither of the conventional pay system nor a performance-based pay system

can be a wholesome or sufficient reward system, educational stakeholders must consider a more integrated reward approach that combines fair pay practices to be able to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and ethical conducts of teachers.

REFERENCES

- Abanyam, N. L., Syvanus, O., & Ahima, S. E. (2020). Gender Role and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 10(1), 109–117.
- Adeosun, M. (2024). *How Can I Teach When I Was Not Taught How?: Teacher Education For Mother Tongue Instruction For STEM In Southwest Nigeria*. Theses and Dissertations, 6516. <https://commons.und.edu/theses/6516>
- Adinna, P. I. (2023). Evaluation of Professional Ethics of Teaching for Teachers' Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. *Journal of Educational Research*, 8(1).
- Akinwarere, K. C. (2021). An Assessment of Ethics and Code of Conduct: Compliance in Secondary Institutions in Nigeria. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 10(8). <https://doi.org/10.21275/SR21731005844>
- Akpanim, N. E. (2021). The Nigerian Public Service and the Challenge of Sustainable Development. *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance (AKSUJACOG)*, 1(2).
- Akram, M., Munir, F., & Bilal, A. (2021). Effect of Teacher Performance Evaluation on School Effectiveness. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, 4(1), 431-439. [https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss1-2021\(431-439\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss1-2021(431-439))
- Akunne, L. I., Nwadinobi, V. N., Mokwelu, O. B., & Ezeokafor, S. C. (2023). The Relationship between Teacher's Motivation and their Job Satisfaction in Secondary Schools in Onitsha Education Zone Anambra State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 42(1), 31-38. <https://doi.org/10.9734/AJESS/2023/v42i1907>
- Anele, G. M., & Ogona, I. K. (2022). Psychological Wages and Gifts as Reward System and Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 15(3), 463-479.
- Asuquo, M. E., Ukpog, N. N., Duke, I. J., & Inah, J. E. (2024). Reward System and Secondary School Teachers' Attitude to Work in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Inter-Disciplinary Journal of Science Education (IJ-SED)*, 5(2).
- Ayofe, A. O., & Faremi, M. F. (2021). Effect of Mother Tongue on Academic Performance of Students in English Language in Obokun Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. *Al Hikmah Journal of Educational Management and Counselling*, 4(1).



- Bawalla, O. G., & Adenugba, A. A. (2021). Financial Rewards and Job Commitment among Public Secondary School Teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 15, 72-81. <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v15i01.41928>
- Birchler, J. (2024). *Understanding Teacher Behavior and its Influence on Student On-Task Behavior*. The Graduate School, University at Albany, State University of New York.
- Chinenye, O. (2025). Teamwork and Work Environment as Correlates of Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. *GPH-International Journal of Educational Research*, 8(02), 192-202. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15032625>
- Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., & Theobald, R. (2020). *Performance Evaluations as a Measure of Teacher Effectiveness when Standards Differ: Accounting for Variation across Classrooms, Schools, and Districts*. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.
- Din Bandhu, M., Murali, M., Noel, A. P. N., Pravin, J., Alok, B., & Kuldeep, K. S. (2024). Theories of Motivation: A Comprehensive Analysis of Human Behavior Drivers. *Acta Psychologica*, 244, 104177.
- Edo, B. L., & Johnson, B. G. (2024). School Management Practices and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research*, 12(2), 11-22.
- Ekwevugbe, A. O., & Efebor, S. (2025). Working Conditions as a Correlate of Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Delta State Nigeria. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 23(3), 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2025/v23i3652>
- Fardin, M. M. (2021). Dimensions of Teacher Performance Evaluation by Students in Higher Education. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(2), 18-25. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i2.3673>
- Fisher, N. (2021). Performance Measurement: Issues, Approaches, and Opportunities. *Harvard Data Science Review*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.c28d2a68>
- Grigoropoulos, J. E. (2019). The Role of Ethics in 21st Century Organizations. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 5(2). <http://10.29329/ijpe.2019.189.12>
- Hull, C. L. (1943). *Principles of Behavior: An Introduction to Behavior Theory*. Appleton-Century-Crofts. New York.
- Ibeneme, O. T., & Akinlabi, W. I. (2021). Gender Interaction Effect with Mother Tongue Model of Instruction on Blocklaying Students' Achievement and Retention in Technical Colleges. *NAU Journal of Technology & Vocational Education*, 6(1).
- Ifegbesan, A. P., Iyunade, O. T., & Itasanmi, B. S. (2021). Assessing Nigerian Teachers' Participation, Attitude and Perception of Democratic Governance. *Journal of African Social Studies (JASS)*, 2(1).
- Igbegiri, D. C. (2021). Teacher Commitment to Duty and Attainment of Educational Goals. *Global Journal of Research in Education & Literature*, 01(03).
- Ige, A. M. (2024). Reflections on the Use of Corporal Punishment to Curb Indiscipline of Learners. *Journal of South Asian Research*, 2(2), 187-202.
- Ingrid, S. F., Barry, G., & Ji, H. K. (2023). Determinants of Employee Performance in Emerging Economy. *Personnel Psychology*, 76, 687-718. <http://10.1111/peps.12583>
- Ipalibo-Wokoma, B., Madumere, O. C. U., & Anyamele, S. C. (2019). Teachers' Ethical Behaviour: A Panacea for Curbing Corruption in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 3(9).
- Koko, M. N., & Dike, C. (2022). Teaching Staff Management and Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research*, 10(2), 111-118.
- Korode, A. K. (2020). Teachers' Profession Ethics in Classroom Management and Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Secondary Schools. *Journal of Education and Policy Review*, 12(1).
- Lawal, R. O., Gbesoevi, E. S., & Oloyede, W. O. (2024). Teachers' Compliance with Professional Ethics and Their Enhanced Productivity in Lagos State Public Senior Secondary Schools Education District I, Nigeria. *Zamfara International Journal of Education (ZIJE) The Official Journal of the Faculty of Education Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State*, 4(4). <https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14609051>
- Mrunal, C. J. (2022). *Introduction to Management*. BRCM College of Business Administration.
- Msonge, E., & Lekule, C. S. (2024). Fostering Teacher Teamwork: Strategies and Challenges for School Heads, a Study of Community Secondary Schools in Nyamagana-Mwanza, Tanzania. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 50(4), 212-226. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2024/v50i41324>
- Nnorom, S. U., & Ezenwagu, S. (2020). Proffering Solution to Professional Misconduct among Secondary School Teachers in Nnewi Education Zone. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, IV(V).
- Nwafor, G. N. (2021). *Corporal Punishment in Eastern Nigeria*. San Jose State University. <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.usbn-f6sr>
- Nwakohu, B. N. (2021). Imperativeness of Principals' Reward Management for Teachers' Job Commitment in Secondary Education in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Society*, 11(3), 1858-1867.



- Olayinka, R., & Warren, C.H. (2019). Gender and Leadership Style in Nigeria's Secondary Schools. *World Journal of Educational Research*, 6(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v6n3p417>
- Olonade, O. Y., Oyibode, B. O., Olalekan, I. B., George, T. O., Iwelumor, O. S., Ozoya, M. I., Egharevba, M. E., & Adetunde, C. O. (2021). Understanding Gender Issues in Nigeria: The Imperative for Sustainable Development. *Heliyon*, 7, e07622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07622>
- Oso, M. T. (2024). An Assessment of the Language of Instruction in Selected Senior Secondary Two Science Classrooms in Osun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 15(10). <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/15-10-02>
- Shintri, S., & Narasalagi, V. M. (2021). Analysis of Motivation on Teachers' Behavior. *International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research*, 3(3).
- The Guardian. (15th October, 2023). NUT's Culpability in Teachers' Plight, by Jide Oyewusi. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/columnists/nuts-culpability-in-teachers-plight/>
- Uchenna, C. O. (2025). Performance Management and Productivity of Employees in Nigeria Public Sector. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 27(4), 41-57. <http://10.9790/487X-2704034157>
- Uwazurike, C. N., & Ugochukwu, E. C. (2021). Principalship and Effective Management of Teachers' Indiscipline in Nigeria Secondary Schools. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, V(VII).
- Yang, J., Li, A., Farajtabar, M., Sunehag, P., Hughes, E., & Zha, H. (2020). *Learning to Incentivize Other Learning Agents*. 34th Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2020), Vancouver, Canada.
- Yusuf, S., Ibrahim, M. A., & Adam, U. (2024). *Reward Strategies for Teachers' In Nigerian Secondary Schools: Challenges and Way Forward*. Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
- Zahra, M. (2021). The Importance and Necessity of Professional Ethics in the Organization and the Role of Managers. *Psychology and Behavioural Science International Journal*, 18(1), 555979. <http://10.19080/PBSIJ.2021.18.555979>

