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International journal of integrated education Teachers' Welfare and Motivation: Implications for Students' Academic Achievement: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: This study investigated the influence of teachers' welfare and motivation on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria. Key welfare indicators examined were salary regularity, promotion opportunities, working conditions, professional development, healthcare benefits and recognition systems. A descriptive survey design was employed. Data were obtained from 420 respondents comprising teachers, principals and students drawn from 15 public secondary schools across North-central Nigeria. The data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Regression Techniques. Findings revealed that teachers' welfare significantly predicted students' academic achievement ($r = .71, p < .05$). Teacher motivation also showed a strong positive relationship with classroom effectiveness and students' examination performance ($r = .68, p < .05$). Furthermore, schools with stronger welfare provisions recorded higher student pass rates than schools with weaker welfare systems. The results indicated that teachers who are adequately motivated demonstrate higher commitment, punctuality, better lesson preparation and stronger learner support, all of which positively affect academic outcomes. The study concludes that teacher welfare and motivation remain critical determinants of educational quality and student success in North-central Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that Governments and school Proprietors in the region should prioritise prompt salary payment, timely promotion, housing assistance, healthcare support, continuous professional development and staff recognition schemes in order to strengthen teacher performance and improve students' academic achievement.

Keywords: Teachers' Welfare, Teacher Motivation, Academic Achievement, Job Satisfaction, School Effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for national development, social mobility and economic transformation. Through education, societies transmit values, develop human capital and prepare citizens for productive participation in civic and economic life. At the centre of this process stands the teacher, whose professional competence, commitment and emotional well-being largely determine the quality of learning that takes place in schools. No education system can rise above the quality, dedication and motivation of its teachers. Consequently, any meaningful attempt to improve students' academic achievement must pay serious attention to the welfare and motivation of teachers.

Motivation according to Ogunode, Zakari & Edinoh (2023) is the force driving an individual towards the attainment of certain goals or achievements. Motivation is an invisible drive that influences the action of an individual towards a particular goal [1]. Motivation can be viewed as a force that propels an individual to carry out some tasks or production. Also, Josiah, Audu, and Ogunode (2023) defined motivation as those forces that influence an individual to give his or her best in an institution and in realisation of goals. Motivation is the drive that influences an individual to achieve maximum output for himself or an institution. Ogunode, Kasimu & Sambo (2023) viewed motivation as an invisible force that compels and inspire individuals towards one direction or action for a greater productivity. Thence, motivation is the force that propels an individual to carry out specific functions without complaint.

Ogunode, Zakari & Edinoh (2023) was of the opinion that teachers' welfare extends beyond salary payment to include promotion opportunities, job security, manageable workload, healthcare support, safe working environments, professional development opportunities, recognition and access to adequate teaching resources [2], [3]. Where these conditions are absent, teachers may become frustrated, emotionally exhausted and professionally disengaged. Such circumstances often manifest in lateness, absenteeism, reduced lesson preparation, low enthusiasm and limited commitment to learners' progress. Conversely, when teachers are respected, fairly remunerated and supported professionally, they are more likely to demonstrate creativity, punctuality, instructional effectiveness and sustained commitment to student success.

The importance of welfare and motivation in shaping employee productivity has long been established in organisational and educational research. Maslow (1943) argued that individuals perform best when their physiological, safety, social and esteem needs are reasonably met. Herzberg (1959) distinguished between hygiene factors, such as salary, good working conditions, and motivators, such as recognition and achievement. Vroom (1964) further explained that, employees exert greater effort when they perceive a clear relationship between effort, performance and reward. Becker (1964) also emphasised that, investment in human capital yields productivity gains [4]. Within educational administration, Hoy and Miskel (2013) maintained that teacher morale and organisational climate strongly influence school effectiveness. Similarly, Ingersoll (2001) linked poor working conditions with teacher attrition, while Hanushek (2011) underscored the central role of teacher quality in determining student outcomes.

Recent international evidence continues to support these theoretical positions. Hoque et al. (2023) found that, teachers' job satisfaction significantly contributes to students' academic achievement across national contexts. Kumari and Kumar (2023) likewise reported that, motivation positively influences teachers' job performance and organisational commitment [5], [6]. In Nigeria, Akwe (2025) established that remuneration, promotion and welfare support significantly correlates with students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

Despite these insights, many public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria continue to contend with delayed salaries, irregular promotions, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials and limited recognition for teachers' efforts. These challenges often weaken morale and may contribute to declining student outcomes. However, various studies have been carried out by different scholars at different times and places to proffer solution to this problem but the problem persisted. It is against this background that the present study fitted as it investigates the implications of teachers' welfare and motivation for students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria is carried out to fill in the gap with sub-variables such as; salary regularities, promotions and professional development, etc.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent underperformance of students in many public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria has generated concern among educators, policymakers and parents. While factors such as infrastructure, curriculum and parental background have received attention, the welfare and motivation of teachers often remain insufficiently addressed. In many schools, teachers experience irregular salary payments, delayed promotions, poor working conditions, excessive workload, limited professional development opportunities and inadequate recognition for meritorious service.

These unfavourable conditions can reduce morale, weaken instructional commitment and diminish classroom effectiveness. Teachers who feel undervalued may struggle to sustain enthusiasm, provide individual learner support or invest additional effort in lesson preparation and assessment. The cumulative effect may be poor students learning outcomes, weak examination performance and declining confidence in the public education system.

Although previous studies have examined teacher motivation generally, but no such study was carried out in North-central Nigeria. There remains a need for empirical evidence specifically focused on North-central Nigeria. This study therefore addresses the problem of whether improved teachers' welfare and motivation can significantly enhance students' academic achievement in public secondary schools within the region.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

- a. Examine the relationship between teachers' welfare and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria.
- b. Determine the effect of teacher motivation on classroom effectiveness.
- c. Identify key welfare factors influencing teacher performance.
- d. Assess whether motivated teachers produce better student outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' welfare and students' academic achievement.

H2: Teacher motivation has no significant effect on students' academic achievement.

H3: Working conditions do not significantly influence teacher effectiveness.

Literature Review

Concept of Teachers' Welfare

Teachers' welfare refers to the range of financial, professional and social provisions designed to support teachers' well-being and effectiveness. These include salaries, allowances, promotion, pensions, healthcare, housing assistance, manageable workload, job security and safe working environments. UNESCO (2016) recognises teacher welfare as fundamental to quality education and sustainable school improvement. Adequate welfare creates a sense of security and belonging, thereby enabling teachers to focus on teaching and learner development [7].

Teacher Motivation

Motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate, direct and sustain behaviour towards the achievement of desired goals. Herzberg (1959) identified salary and working conditions as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction, while recognition, responsibility and achievement function as intrinsic motivators. In the school context, motivated teachers are more likely to demonstrate resilience, commitment, innovation and persistence in supporting learners. Ogunode, Zakari & Edinoh (2023) defined motivation as the process of influencing and stimulating a person to take action that will accomplish desired goals. They explained that teachers' motivation relates to a purposive and goal directed behaviour, performance and attitude towards work, stressing that such factors

include physiological, psychological and environmental aspects of the individual employee's background. Motivation is both external and internal process that makes a person move towards a goal. It is generally assumed that motivation influences people's attitude and performance at work [8]. Teacher motivation is directly linked to the teacher's desire to take part in the pedagogical process and interest in sharing their knowledge with the students. It determines their involvement or non-involvement in teaching activities (Ofoegbu, 2004). Teacher motivation therefore is anything done to make teachers happy, satisfied, dedicated and committed in such a way that they bring out the best in their places of work so that both students, parents and society will greatly benefit from their services.

Empirical Studies

Empirical evidence consistently suggests that teachers' welfare and motivation are associated with improved educational outcomes. Akwe (2025) found strong links between remuneration, promotion opportunities and students' academic success in Nigeria. Kumari and Kumar (2023) reported that motivation significantly improves teachers' job performance and productivity. Hoque et al. (2023) concluded that satisfied teachers provide greater instructional attention, stronger emotional support and better learning outcomes for students. These findings suggest that teacher welfare is not merely an administrative issue but a strategic factor in academic achievement.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a sizeable population and examine existing relationships among Welfare, Motivation and Academic Achievement without manipulating variables.

Population

The population comprised 1,250 respondents drawn, from public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria. The respondents included Teachers, Principals and Senior Secondary School Students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 420 respondents was selected using Stratified Random Sampling to ensure fair representation of the relevant stakeholder groups. The sample consisted of:

- a. 300 teachers.
- b. 15 principals
- c. 105 students

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Teachers' Welfare, Motivation and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (TWMAAQ)*. The instrument contained items on salary regularity, promotion, working conditions, motivation and perceived student academic outcomes.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was subjected to expert reviews for content validity. Reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.84, indicating strong internal consistency.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Descriptive and Inferential Statistics, including Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Regression Analysis. These tools were employed to determine the strength and significance of relationships among the variables under investigation.

3. Results

The results of this study are presented in line with the research objectives and hypotheses. The analysis focused on teachers' perceptions of welfare conditions, the relationship between welfare variables and students' academic achievement, as well as comparative pass rates across schools with differing welfare standards in public secondary schools in North-central Nigeria [9], [10].

Table 1. Teachers' Perception of Welfare Conditions in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Welfare Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Salary Regularity	2.41	Low
Promotion Opportunity	2.76	Moderate
Working Environment	2.58	Moderate
Healthcare Support	2.21	Low
Professional Development	3.14	High
Recognition/Rewards	2.33	Low

The data in Table 1 indicate mixed perceptions of welfare conditions among teachers. Professional development recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.14$), suggesting that respondents acknowledged the availability of training opportunities. Promotion opportunity ($M = 2.76$) and working environment ($M = 2.58$) were rated moderate, indicating partial satisfaction. However, salary regularity ($M = 2.41$), healthcare support ($M = 2.21$) and recognition/rewards ($M = 2.33$) were rated low, reflecting areas of serious concern [11]. These findings suggest that while some developmental support exists, essential welfare provisions remain inadequate.

Table 2. Relationship Between Welfare Variables and Students' Academic Achievement.

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Welfare vs Achievement	.71	.000	Significant
Motivation vs Achievement	.68	.001	Significant
Working Conditions vs Effectiveness	.63	.002	Significant

Table 2 reveals statistically significant positive relationships among the variables examined. Teachers' welfare showed a strong correlation with students' academic achievement ($r = .71$, $p < .05$) [12]. Teacher motivation also correlated positively with students' achievement ($r = .68$, $p < .05$), while working conditions significantly related to teacher effectiveness ($r = .63$, $p < .05$). Accordingly, all three null hypotheses were rejected.

Table 3. Student Pass Rates by School Welfare Level.

Welfare Level	Average Pass Rate (%)
High Welfare Schools	81
Moderate Welfare Schools	69
Low Welfare Schools	54

Table 3 shows clear differences in academic outcomes across schools. Students in high welfare schools recorded the highest average pass rate (81%), followed by moderate welfare schools (69%), while low welfare schools had the lowest pass rate (54%). This suggests that improved teacher welfare is associated with stronger student performance [13].

Charts

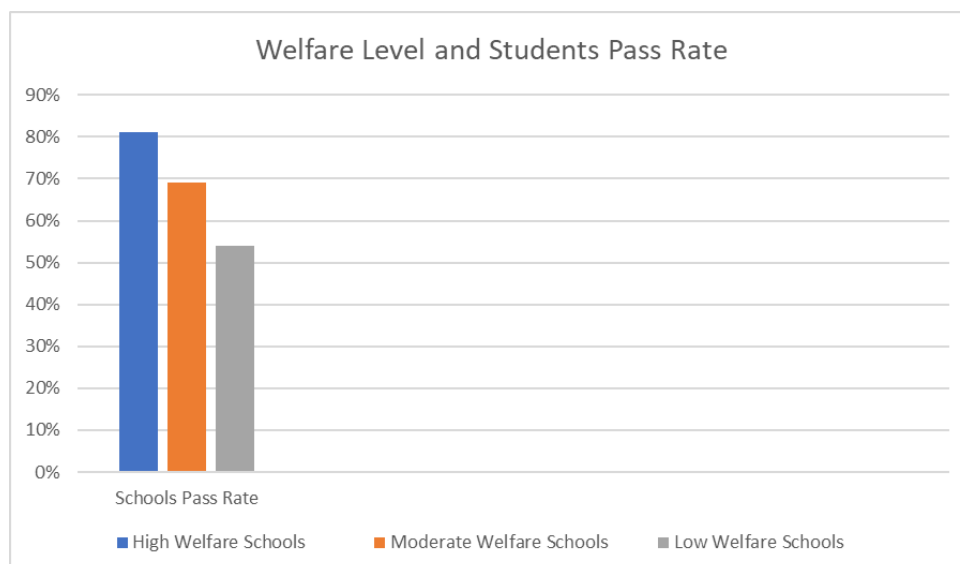


Chart 1:

Chart 1 revealed the welfare level and student pass rate high welfare schools 81% moderate welfare schools 69% and low welfare schools 54%.

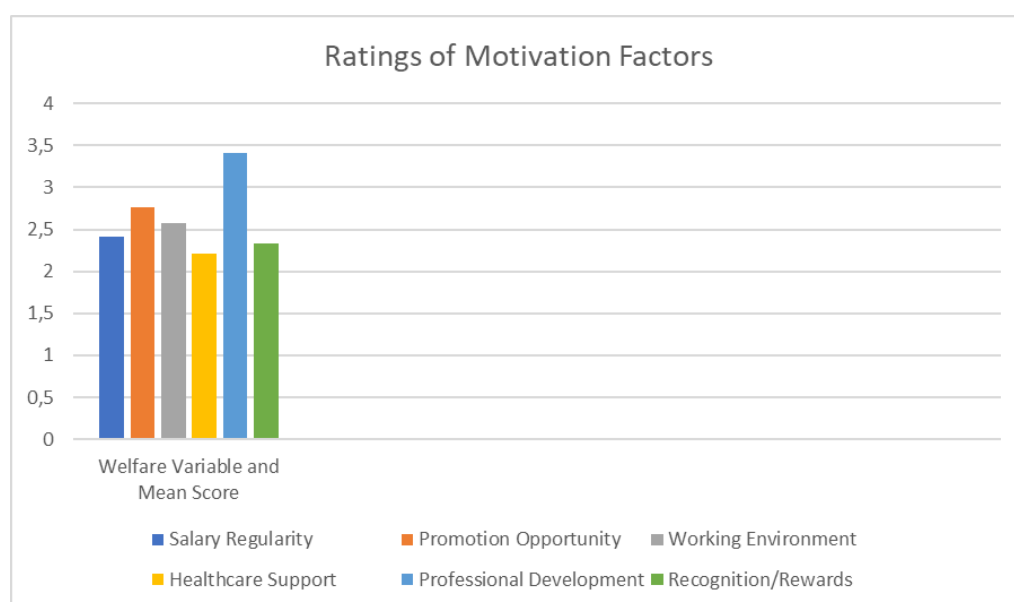


Chart 2:

This chart revealed teachers' perception of welfare conditions in public secondary schools in north central Nigeria. The data indicate mixed perceptions of welfare conditions and motivation factors among teachers. Professional development recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.14$), suggesting that respondents acknowledged the availability of training opportunities [14]. Promotion opportunity ($M = 2.76$) and working environment ($M = 2.58$) were rated moderate, indicating partial satisfaction. However, salary regularity ($M = 2.41$), healthcare support ($M = 2.21$) and recognition/rewards ($M = 2.33$) were rated low, reflecting areas of serious concern. These findings suggest that while some developmental support exists, essential welfare provisions remain inadequate.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate a strong and meaningful relationship between teachers' welfare and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Schools where salaries were paid promptly, promotions were processed regularly and working environments were supportive recorded substantially higher student pass rates than schools where welfare provisions were weak [15]. This finding supports Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, which posits that poor welfare conditions generate dissatisfaction and reduce employee effectiveness. In educational settings, such dissatisfaction may manifest in reduced commitment, absenteeism and lower teaching quality.

The significant positive relationship between teacher motivation and student achievement further indicates that motivated teachers are more likely to prepare lessons thoroughly, provide timely feedback, supervise learners effectively and sustain classroom discipline [16]. This aligns with Vroom's expectancy theory, which suggests that employees exert greater effort when rewards are valued and perceived as attainable. Where teachers believe that hard work leads to recognition, advancement or improved welfare, they are more likely to invest energy in their duties [17].

The findings also corroborate contemporary international evidence. Hoque et al. reported that teacher job satisfaction is positively associated with students learning outcomes across educational systems. Kumari and Kumar similarly found that motivation improves teachers' job performance, organisational commitment and productivity. Within the Nigerian context, Akwe established that remuneration and promotion opportunities significantly enhance educational outcomes in public schools.

The low ratings for salary regularity, healthcare support and recognition in this study are particularly noteworthy. These are fundamental aspects of teachers' well-being and morale. When neglected, teachers may seek alternative income sources, become emotionally detached from their work or leave the profession entirely. Such instability disrupts instructional continuity and ultimately disadvantages students.

Overall, the evidence suggests that improving teacher welfare is not merely an administrative responsibility but a strategic intervention for raising academic standards and restoring confidence in public education across North-central Nigeria.

5. Conclusion

Teachers' welfare and motivation are not peripheral concerns; they are central determinants of educational quality, institutional effectiveness and students' academic success. The findings of this study clearly indicate that schools with stronger welfare systems record better student outcomes than those with poor welfare conditions. Teachers who are adequately supported demonstrate higher morale, stronger commitment, better classroom delivery and greater willingness to invest in learners' progress. For North-central Nigeria to improve educational performance and human capital development, teacher welfare must be treated as a priority rather than an afterthought. Sustainable investment in teachers is ultimately an investment in students, schools and national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Governments should ensure prompt and regular payment of teachers' salaries.
- b. Promotion procedures should be transparent, merit-based, and timely.
- c. Comprehensive healthcare and housing support should be provided for teachers.
- d. School infrastructure and instructional resources should be improved.
- e. A regular professional development programme should be organised to strengthen pedagogical competence.

- f. Recognition and reward schemes should be introduced for outstanding service.
- g. Excessive workload and overcrowded classrooms should be reduced through additional recruitment.
- h. Teachers should be actively involved in school decision-making processes to enhance ownership and morale.

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