

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF WAGE INCREASE ON
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' WELFARE AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract: *Teachers' welfare remains a persistent concern in Nigeria, particularly regarding the extent to which wage increases translate into meaningful professional and financial well-being. This study examined the perceived influence of wage increase on the welfare of secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria, with specific emphasis on professional development. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Equity Theory, and adopted a descriptive correlational survey design. A sample of 500 teachers was selected through multistage sampling from 20 public secondary schools across 10 Local Government Areas in Oyo State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with satisfactory reliability coefficients ($\alpha = 0.72$ for wage increase items; $\alpha = 0.83$ for welfare indicators). Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that teachers perceived wage increases as generally low (weighted mean = 2.22 < 2.50 threshold). However, wage increases positively influenced short-term and classroom-related professional development activities such as attending workshops, upgrading teaching skills, purchasing instructional materials, and engaging in research. Conversely, wage increases were insufficient to significantly support long-term professional advancement, including pursuing higher academic qualifications and professional certifications. The study concludes that while wage increases enhance immediate professional engagement, they remain inadequate for sustaining long-term professional growth. It*

recommends regular, substantial salary reviews and compensation structures that better support teachers' comprehensive professional development.

Keywords: *wage increase; teachers' welfare; professional development; motivation; public secondary schools.*

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of national development, and teachers serve as the primary agents through whom educational objectives are realized. Beyond transmitting knowledge and skills, teachers play a central role in shaping learners' intellectual, social, and professional growth. The effectiveness of teachers in performing these roles is closely linked to their welfare, particularly their remuneration and wage conditions. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, concerns about teachers' welfare, including wage levels, wage adjustments, and timely payment, have persisted for decades. A critical question remains: do wage increases translate into improved welfare and enhanced professional engagement for secondary school teachers, especially in states like Oyo, where teacher welfare significantly impacts educational quality?

The quality of education and academic success is largely determined by teachers. As specialists in the teaching profession, they facilitate learners' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies essential for personal and societal development (Eboatu & Ozigbo, 2015). While teachers can drive positive change in students' learning outcomes, research indicates that financial incentives, including adequate wages, are crucial to sustaining teacher effectiveness (Obadara, 2014). Inadequate remuneration can constrain teachers' ability to engage in professional development, limiting the enhancement of instructional skills and overall teaching quality.

Teacher welfare encompasses both financial and professional dimensions. A key aspect of financial welfare is wage level and adjustments, which directly influence teachers' capacity to pursue professional development. Competitive and timely salaries provide teachers with the economic resources to invest in training programs, workshops, postgraduate studies, and other forms of skill enhancement. Conversely, insufficient or delayed payments reduce teachers' ability to participate in professional growth activities, potentially limiting their instructional effectiveness (Punch, 2025; Athenacentre, 2024).

In Nigeria, several studies highlight persistent gaps in the alignment between wage adjustments and professional development. Despite government interventions such as periodic salary reviews and the

establishment of structures like the Teachers Salary Structure (TSS), many secondary school teachers continue to report low satisfaction with pay, delayed salary payments, and minimal opportunities for professional advancement (Ofoegbu, 2020; Akinyemi & Olatunji, 2022). Evidence from Oyo State shows that these challenges have left a significant proportion of teachers demotivated, reducing their willingness and ability to engage fully in professional development programs (Abiogu & Ugwuja, 2016). Such findings raise concerns about the effectiveness of wage adjustments in improving teacher welfare and professional capacity.

Empirical research, both in Nigeria and internationally, supports the link between compensation and professional development engagement. Internationally, studies show that well-structured salary systems, particularly those linked to professional growth incentives, enhance teacher participation in skill-building programs and contribute to instructional quality improvements (ScienceDirect, 2020; SEAH Publications, 2025). Similarly, research in Nigerian states indicates that teachers who perceive their remuneration as adequate and fair are more likely to engage in continuous professional development, suggesting that wage increases serve as both an enabler and motivator for professional growth (RSIS International, 2024; IJHSSM, 2024).

Despite these insights, the direct relationship between wage increases and teacher welfare in relation to professional development remains underexplored in Oyo State. Most prior studies have broadly examined teacher welfare without isolating the role of wage adjustments in facilitating professional engagement. Others have focused on delayed payments or general job satisfaction without evaluating whether upward wage adjustments enhance teachers' professional capacities and skills. This gap limits understanding of how salary policies can be strategically designed to support professional growth alongside improving welfare.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the perceived influence of wage increases on the welfare of secondary school teachers in Oyo State, with particular emphasis on professional development. By focusing on how salary adjustments impact teachers' ability and willingness to engage in professional learning activities, the study provides context-specific evidence on the wage-welfare-professional development nexus. This evidence contributes to policy discussions on the design of compensation structures that not only improve teachers' financial welfare but also enhance instructional quality through sustained professional growth.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' professional development is widely recognized as a critical factor in improving instructional quality and student outcomes. Continuous engagement in workshops, certification programs, higher academic training, research activities, and other capacity-building initiatives is essential for sustaining pedagogical competence in secondary education. In Nigeria, secondary school teachers are expected to update their knowledge and skills regularly in response to curriculum reforms, technological advancements, and evolving educational standards. However, meaningful participation in professional development often requires financial resources.

Wage increase has traditionally been regarded as a strategy for improving teachers' welfare and enhancing their capacity to perform effectively. Improved remuneration may potentially enable teachers to invest in professional growth activities such as attending workshops, acquiring instructional materials, pursuing advanced qualifications, and participating in academic conferences. Nonetheless, wage increases do not automatically translate into professional advancement, particularly in contexts where economic pressures and rising living costs may offset income gains.

Existing empirical studies have largely examined teacher remuneration in relation to job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and retention. While these studies provide valuable insights into the broader welfare implications of salary adjustments, limited empirical attention has been given specifically to the perceived influence of wage increase on teachers' professional development. Furthermore, there is insufficient contextual evidence focusing on secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria, where socio-economic and institutional factors may shape how wage adjustments affect professional growth.

This limited focus creates uncertainty regarding whether wage increases meaningfully enhance teachers' capacity for sustained professional development in the study area. Consequently, the problem addressed in this study is the need to empirically examine the perceived influence of wage increase on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The goal of this research is to;

1. discover teacher's perception of their wage increase and welfare in Oyo State
2. examine the perceived influence of wage increase on teachers' professional development.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Human Capital Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Equity Theory, providing a multidimensional lens to understand how wage increases may influence secondary school teachers' engagement in professional development. Together, these theories capture the economic, motivational, and social factors that shape teachers' professional behaviors and investment in their skills.

Human Capital Theory

At the heart of this framework is Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964), which views education and training as forms of capital investment that enhance an individual's productivity, career prospects, and economic returns. In the context of teaching, a teacher's knowledge, skills, and instructional competence represent a critical form of human capital. These capabilities can be strengthened through professional development activities such as workshops, postgraduate programs, and targeted training sessions (Hanushek, 2011).

From this perspective, wage increases serve a dual purpose. They not only provide teachers with additional financial resources to pursue development opportunities but also reduce the trade-offs associated with dedicating time and energy to skill enhancement. In essence, better pay can make professional growth both more feasible and more attractive. Contemporary research supports this idea: compensation structures that reward additional qualifications or increased responsibilities encourage teachers to remain engaged in professional learning, thereby reinforcing their human capital (Ballou & Podgursky, 2020; OECD, 2025). Wage increases, therefore, are not merely financial benefits, they are investments that can strengthen teachers' capabilities and, ultimately, improve educational outcomes.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to examine the perceived wage increase and its impact on the welfare of secondary school teachers in Oyo State in terms of professional development. The participants were 500 public secondary school teachers selected from twenty randomly selected secondary schools from ten local governments in Oyo State. The instrument used was Wage Increase and Teacher Welfare which comprised three sections: demographic characteristics, perceived wage increase, and teachers' welfare indicator: professional development. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha produced coefficients for perceived wage increase items (0.72) and for welfare-indicator (0.83) indicating strong internal consistency across the instrument. Data were analyzed using

descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics, including Pearson product–moment correlation and regression, tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Perception of wage increase and secondary school teacher's welfare.

S/N	Wage increase and welfare	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. D
1.	My current wage level is sufficient to meet my living expenses.	68 13.6%	68 13.6%	85 17%	279 55.8%	1.85	1.10
2.	The welfare provisions for teachers in my school/state are satisfactory.	0	153 (30.6%)	347 (69.4%)	0	2.31	0.46
3.	I receive regular payment of my wages/salaries.	279 (55.8%)	85 (17.0%)	68 (13.6%)	68 (13.6%)	3.15	1.10
4	The current wage structure for teachers in my state is fair.	0	0	500 (100%)	0	2.00	0.00
5.	I am satisfied with the benefits (e.g., health insurance, pension) provided to	0	153 (30.6%)	68 (13.6%)	279 (55.8%)	1.75	0.90

	teachers.						
6.	The wage level for teachers in my state is comparable to other professions with similar qualifications .	68 (13.6%)	279 (55.8%)	153 (30.6%)	0	2.83	0.64
7.	I feel financially secure in my job as a teacher.	0	153 (30.6%)	68 (13.6%)	279 (55.8%)	1.75	0.90
8.	The current welfare provisions motivate me to perform better in my job.	0	136 (27.2%)	279 (55.8%)	85 (17.0%)	2.10	0.66
9.	Teachers' welfare is a priority in my school/state.	68 (13.6%)	136 (27.2%)	296 (59.2%)	0	2.54	0.72
10.	I am satisfied with the overall compensation package for teachers in my state.	68 (13.6%)	85 (17.0%)	68 (13.6%)	279 (55.8%)	1.88	1.12
Weighted Mean= 2.22; Threshold=2.50							

Table 1 shows that the level of teachers perceived wage increase was low because the weighted mean of 2.22 is below the threshold set at 2.50. However, the participants showed higher perception regarding item 3 - I receive regular payment of my wages/salaries (mean=3.15), items 6 - The wage level for teachers in my state is comparable to other professions with similar qualifications (mean=2.83) and item 9 -

Teachers' welfare is a priority in my school/state (mean=2.54), which yield mean values that were greater than the threshold. This result implies that despite low perception of wage increase among the teachers, the reported regular payment of their salaries, that their wage level is comparable to other states' and that their school/state prioritized their welfare.

Table 2: Perceived Influence of Wage Increase on Teachers' Professional Development

S/N	Wage increase and Professional development	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St.d
1	Wage increase enables me to attend professional workshops	0	438 (96.6%)	17 (3.4%)	0	2.97	0.18
2	Wage increase enables me to pursue higher academic qualifications.	68 (13.6%)	85 (17.0%)	347 (67.4%)	0	2.44	0.72
3	Wage increase enables me to afford professional certification programmes.	0	136 (27.2%)	347 (69.4%)	17 (3.4%)	2.24	0.50
4	Wage increase enables me to commit more strongly to my professional growth.	0	136 (27.2%)	364 (72.8%)	0	2.27	0.45
5	Wage increase enables me to	136 (27.2%)	364 (72.8%)	0	0	3.27	0.45

	upgrade my teaching skills.						
6	Wage increase enables me to purchase instructional materials.	347 (69.4%)	68 (13.6%)	85 (17.0%)	0	3.52	0.77
7	Wage increase enables me to engage more actively in research activities.	0	432 (86.4%)	68 (13.6%)	0	2.86	0.34
8	Wage increase enables me to participate in conferences more frequently.	0	136 (27.2%)	347 (69.4%)	17 (3.4%)	2.24	0.50
9	Wage increase enables me to invest in self-development courses.	0	221 (44.2%)	279 (55.8%)	0	2.44	0.55
10	Wage increase enables me to enhance my long-term career growth.	68 (13.6%)	85 (17.0%)	347 (69.4%)	0	2.44	0.72
Weighted Mean: 2.67, Threshold: 2.50							

Table 2 presents the perceived influence of wage increase on teachers' professional development. The results indicate selective positive effects. Respondents agreed that wage increase enables them to attend professional workshops (Mean = 2.97), upgrade their teaching skills (Mean = 3.27), purchase instructional materials (Mean = 3.52), and

engage more actively in research activities (Mean = 2.86), as these mean scores exceed the benchmark of 2.50. This suggests that improved remuneration supports immediate and practice-oriented professional development activities.

However, lower mean scores were recorded for pursuing higher academic qualifications (Mean = 2.44), affording professional certification programs (Mean = 2.24), committing more strongly to professional growth (Mean = 2.27), participating in conferences (Mean = 2.24), investing in self-development courses (Mean = 2.44), and enhancing long-term career growth (Mean = 2.44), all of which fall below the acceptance threshold. The findings indicate that wage increase enhances short-term and classroom-related professional development activities but appears insufficient to significantly influence long-term or financially intensive professional advancement among secondary school teachers in Oyo State.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide insightful evidence on the complex relationship between wage increases, teacher welfare, and professional development in Oyo State secondary schools. Overall, teachers perceived the level of wage increase as low. However, certain aspects, such as regularity of wage payment, comparability of wage levels with other professions, and prioritization of teacher welfare were rated above the benchmark. These findings indicate that although structural improvements exist, particularly in the consistency of payment and attention to welfare, the overall magnitude of wage increase is insufficient to substantially enhance teachers' welfare or facilitate extensive professional development. This aligns with studies showing that many Nigerian teachers perceive compensation as inadequate, even when payments are regular (Abiogu & Ugwuja, 2016; Ofoegbu, 2020).

From the perspective of Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964), the low overall perception of wage increase has implications for teachers' capacity to invest in professional growth. Human Capital Theory posits that financial resources enable individuals to pursue education, training, and skill enhancement that improve productivity and professional effectiveness. The findings suggest that while teachers can afford immediate, low-cost professional activities, their capacity to engage in higher-cost or long-term professional development, such as advanced degrees or professional certifications, remains limited. This reflects the practical constraints of insufficient remuneration on enhancing teachers' human capital.

The findings further resonate with Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964). Teachers reported that wage increases positively influenced participation in immediate, practical professional activities, including attending workshops, upgrading teaching skills, purchasing instructional materials, and engaging in research activities. This supports the theory's proposition that individuals are motivated when they perceive a clear link between their efforts and valued outcomes. Here, wage increases create tangible pathways for teachers to access professional growth opportunities directly applicable to classroom practice, thereby reinforcing motivation and engagement.

However, wage increases were less influential in enabling teachers to pursue long-term or financially intensive professional development activities. Activities such as pursuing higher academic qualifications, professional certification programme, committing more strongly to professional growth, and participating in conferences. This suggests that while wage increases support immediate professional needs, they remain inadequate to sustain long-term career advancement. Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) helps explain this finding: teachers may perceive that the rewards from wage increases do not sufficiently compensate for the higher cost, effort, or time commitment required for long-term professional growth. When remuneration fails to adequately recognize these investments, motivation to engage in such activities diminishes.

The selective impact of wage increases highlights the interplay between financial capacity and motivational perception. While teachers can manage short-term skill upgrades, limited salary increments constrain engagement in more ambitious professional development activities requiring substantial financial or personal investment. This partial alignment with theoretical predictions underscores that wage increases alone are insufficient; the magnitude, frequency, and structure of pay adjustments critically influence professional development decisions.

These results are consistent with international evidence demonstrating the link between teacher compensation and professional engagement. Research by OECD (2025) and Ballou & Podgursky (2020) emphasizes that competitive pay structures are associated with enhanced participation in professional activities and improved instructional effectiveness. Similarly, studies in sub-Saharan Africa (Toropova et al., 2021) show that wage-related incentives can motivate teachers to pursue skills that directly impact classroom practice, while inadequate remuneration limits engagement in more resource-intensive professional growth pathways.

In summary, this study reveals a complex relationship between wage increase, teacher welfare, and professional development. Wage increases appear effective in supporting short-term, practice-oriented professional activities, consistent with Human Capital and Expectancy Theories. Yet, their limited impact on long-term, financially demanding professional development highlights constraints posed by insufficient remuneration and perceived inequities, as described by Equity Theory. These findings suggest that to maximize the impact of wage policies on professional growth, salary enhancements should not only be regular and fair but also substantial enough to enable teachers to invest in both short-term and long-term professional development initiatives.

Conclusion

This study shows that wage increases for secondary school teachers in Oyo State have a selective impact on their professional development. Teachers reported that higher pay makes it easier for them to attend workshops, improve their classroom skills, purchase teaching materials, and engage in research. These findings suggest that when teachers feel supported financially, they are more able and willing to invest in activities that directly enhance their day-to-day teaching.

However, the study also reveals that wage increases alone are often not enough to support long-term professional growth. Many teachers still struggle to pursue higher degrees, professional certifications, or attend conferences, largely because the financial burden remains too high. In this sense, salary improvements act as a motivational boost, but without substantial and consistent increases, they cannot fully enable teachers to reach their professional potential.

These results underscore a complex connection between compensation, welfare, and professional development. Fair and regular pay helps teachers meet immediate professional needs, but meaningful, long-term growth requires stronger financial investment and recognition of the effort involved. Ultimately, improving teacher welfare through well-structured wage policies is not just about increasing salaries, it is about giving teachers the resources, stability, and motivation they need to grow professionally and, in turn, improve the quality of education in their classrooms.

Recommendations

1. The findings of this study suggest that while wage increases support short-term professional activities, they are insufficient to promote long-term professional growth. To address this, salary adjustments should be both regular and substantial enough to enable teachers to pursue

advanced qualifications, certifications, and professional conferences. Linking wage increases to professional development efforts can further motivate teachers by reinforcing the connection between effort and tangible rewards.

2. Timely and consistent salary payment is essential, allowing teachers to plan and engage in skill-enhancing activities without financial strain. In addition, broader welfare support, such as health benefits and access to professional development funding, can enhance teachers' overall well-being and capacity for growth. Finally, state education authorities should monitor and adjust compensation policies based on teacher feedback to ensure that wage structures effectively meet both financial and professional needs. Implementing these measures will strengthen teacher motivation, professional competence, and the quality of education in secondary schools.

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