

Leader Integrity and Confidence as Correlates of Teacher Productivity in Public Secondary Schools in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examined the relationship between school leaders' integrity and confidence and teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed, covering all public secondary school teachers across the six states of Southwest Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique yielded a sample of 1,500 teachers from 75 schools, along with one principal from each school to assess teacher productivity. Data were collected using two self-designed instruments: the Integrity and Confidence Questionnaire (ICQ) and the Teacher Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ), both of which were validated by experts and tested for reliability using the test-retest method, yielding coefficients of 0.83 and 0.79 respectively. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics for research questions and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to test hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between school leaders' integrity and teacher productivity, indicating that ethical and principled leadership enhances teacher effectiveness and institutional performance. Conversely, no significant relationship was found between leaders' confidence and teacher productivity, suggesting that confidence alone may not substantially influence teachers' performance in this context. The study concludes that integrity is a critical determinant of teacher productivity in public secondary schools and recommends prioritizing ethical leadership through training, recruitment policies emphasizing integrity, accountability mechanisms, and professional development programs that foster a culture of respect and commitment to educational excellence.

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Introduction

Productivity refers to the effort directed toward achieving organizational effectiveness while utilizing available resources efficiently (Edo & Nwosu, 2018). It is often expressed as the relationship between outputs and the resources expended in producing them (Abodunrin, 2013). In the school system, productivity serves as a key indicator of job performance, with teacher productivity reflecting the extent to which educational objectives are achieved through teachers' commitment, competence, and effectiveness. Teacher productivity may vary depending on the level of effort invested by the teacher and can be assessed through job performance appraisal and the degree to which institutional goals are realized (Santibanez et al., 2022). Common indicators of low teacher productivity include absenteeism, lateness, abandonment of duty posts, and poor discipline, while student academic performance and instructional effectiveness remain the most widely used measures of teacher productivity.

Concerns about teacher productivity have persisted in Nigeria, particularly in public secondary schools, where many graduates face difficulties gaining admission into tertiary institutions. Public examination outcomes have raised questions about instructional effectiveness in schools. For instance, WAEC results for the May/June 2020 SSCE showed that although a sizeable proportion of candidates obtained the minimum credits required for further education, over 500,000 candidates failed to meet this benchmark, and failure rates have remained consistently high over the years (WAEC, 2022). Observations within schools further reveal that reduced teacher productivity is often manifested in poor classroom attendance, inadequate lesson preparation, weak instructional delivery, ineffective classroom management, limited use of instructional materials, poor communication skills, and low commitment to professional responsibilities. These challenges suggest that factors beyond teachers' technical competence may be influencing productivity in public secondary schools.

In addition, some teachers appear overly confident in their abilities, leading them to neglect lesson preparation or rely on outdated lesson plans that are neither updated nor adapted to students' developmental needs. Such practices often result in disorganized lesson delivery and monotonous teaching approaches that fail to engage learners. Effective learning, however, thrives in classrooms where active instruction and meaningful student participation are emphasized (Patall et al., 2023; Knight, 2012). A lack of innovation, inappropriate use of instructional materials, and weak classroom control can further contribute to student disengagement, indiscipline, and poor learning outcomes. Teacher absenteeism also disrupts instructional continuity and negatively affects student achievement, thereby reducing overall teacher productivity (Miller, 2012).

The declining level of teacher productivity in secondary schools appears to be closely linked to leadership attributes, particularly leaders' integrity and confidence. Integrity, as a core leadership characteristic, encompasses honesty, trustworthiness, moral uprightness, and consistency between words and actions. Educational leaders are expected to demonstrate integrity by acting ethically, honoring professional commitments, and avoiding conflicts between personal interests and official responsibilities (Odunaya & Olujunwon, 2015). However, lapses in integrity, including unethical practices and lack of accountability, have weakened leadership effectiveness in some schools. Confidence is equally vital, as it reflects a leader's self-assurance, decisiveness, and commitment to organizational goals (Michlitsch, 2019). Confident school leaders inspire trust, provide clear direction, and motivate teachers to perform optimally. Conversely, leaders who lack confidence are often perceived as weak, which undermines authority, reduces teacher morale, and negatively affects teacher productivity. The study examined leader integrity and confidence as correlates of teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria.

The following hypotheses were generated for the study:

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

Literature Review

The quality of education delivered within any school system is closely linked to the integrity and confidence demonstrated by its leaders and teachers, making continuous efforts toward quality improvement essential. Educational administrators play a pivotal role in shaping institutional values, policies, and practices that promote productivity and effectiveness. By fostering a culture grounded in clearly defined roles, accountability, ethical conduct, and intrinsic motivation, schools are better positioned to enhance adaptability, flexibility, and overall performance (Burhanuddin et al., 2018). A quality-oriented school culture encourages professionalism, responsible conduct, and commitment among staff, all of which contribute directly to teacher productivity and improved student outcomes.

Empirical studies consistently show that integrity is a critical determinant of teacher productivity and student achievement. Research examining teacher behavior and student academic performance has demonstrated a strong relationship between teachers' integrity, punctuality, confidence, and students' academic success, suggesting that ethical conduct and professionalism among teachers enhance instructional effectiveness and job performance (Mehdipour & Balaramulu, 2017). Integrity fosters trust, consistency, and responsibility, enabling teachers to remain committed to their duties and to the goals of the educational system. When teachers operate within a framework of honesty and ethical responsibility, they are more likely to sustain high performance levels and positively influence learners' academic outcomes.

Further evidence highlights the strong predictive power of integrity in relation to job productivity. Romero (2017) found that integrity accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in productivity and was significantly associated with student outcomes such as graduation status and academic achievement. This finding reinforces the argument that integrity is not merely a moral attribute but a functional quality that directly impacts organizational performance. Educators who uphold integrity tend to demonstrate professionalism, dedication, and accountability, which translate into improved teaching quality and more effective learning experiences.

Scholarly perspectives on character education and professional ethics further emphasize the importance of integrity in teaching. Educators who exemplify integrity are expected to deliver high-quality academic programs while also modeling moral values that shape students' character and attitudes toward learning (Lumpkin, 2016). Similarly, educators are encouraged to demonstrate commitment, punctuality, and ethical conduct as role models within the school environment (Fatai, 2015). Professionals who adhere to integrity principles often experience greater job satisfaction and long-term success, outcomes that positively influence productivity and institutional stability (Varas-Hernandez, 2016). Collectively, these findings suggest that integrity is foundational to sustained teacher productivity and effective educational delivery.

In addition to integrity, confidence plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher productivity. Studies on leadership and organizational performance indicate a strong relationship between confidence and productivity. Research conducted among organizations in the United Arab Emirates revealed that higher levels of leader confidence were associated with increased productivity, improved teamwork, enhanced performance, and reduced staff turnover

(Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014). Confidence enables leaders and teachers alike to make decisive choices, inspire trust, and provide clear direction, all of which are essential for effective school functioning.

Teachers' self-confidence significantly influences their classroom practices and professional effectiveness. Confident educators are more likely to innovate, adopt creative instructional strategies, and establish positive relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. Such teachers typically display greater enthusiasm and motivation, which enhances lesson planning, classroom management, assessment practices, and problem-solving abilities. Self-assured teachers are also more willing to experiment with new teaching approaches, adapt to changing classroom dynamics, and respond constructively to challenges, thereby increasing their overall productivity. Confidence allows educators to set high expectations for themselves and their students, motivating sustained effort and improved performance.

Moreover, self-confidence enhances teachers' ability to manage stress and navigate the complexities of the teaching profession. Educators who believe in their abilities tend to demonstrate resilience and adaptability, qualities that support consistent performance despite professional challenges. Confident teachers are also more effective communicators, fostering open dialogue, constructive feedback, and supportive classroom environments. These positive interactions contribute to increased student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement, further reinforcing the link between confidence and teacher productivity.

Empirical research supports the strong association between confidence and job productivity. Martensen and Gronholdt (2016) identified confidence as a key factor influencing employee diligence and productivity, emphasizing the importance of leadership effectiveness, personal development, creativity, and innovation. Similarly, Tomic (2018) reported a positive correlation between confidence and productivity, underscoring the need for strategies that enhance staff confidence. Additional studies have highlighted confidence as a critical leadership attribute necessary for sustaining productivity and improving organizational performance (Bloemer & Schröder, 2013). Research focusing on ethical leadership and organizational outcomes has further confirmed the relationship between confidence and job productivity, reinforcing its relevance within educational settings (Tseng & Wu, 2017).

Overall, integrity and confidence emerge as essential attributes that significantly influence teacher productivity. Integrity fosters professionalism, accountability, and ethical conduct, while confidence enhances motivation, innovation, resilience, and effective interaction. Together, these leadership and personal qualities create conditions that support high levels of teacher performance and improved educational outcomes.

Methods and Materials

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between leader integrity, confidence, and teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria. The population comprised all public secondary school teachers across the six states in the region, namely Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from a large population and facilitated the description and analysis of existing conditions without manipulating variables. The broad coverage of the Southwest geopolitical zone ensured that the findings would reflect diverse school contexts and administrative practices within the region.

A sample of 1,500 respondents was drawn from 75 public secondary schools using a multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, simple random sampling was employed to select three states from the six states in Southwest Nigeria. This was followed by proportionate stratified sampling to select 25 local government areas from the chosen states.

In the third stage, three public secondary schools were selected from each local government area using stratified random sampling, resulting in a total of 75 schools. The final stage involved the selection of 20 teachers from each school through simple random sampling. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select one principal from each sampled school to assess teacher productivity, as principals were considered best positioned to evaluate teachers' performance within their schools.

Data for the study were collected using two self-designed instruments: the Integrity and Confidence Questionnaire (ICQ) and the Teacher Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ). The ICQ comprised two sections, with Section A focusing on respondents' background information and Section B containing 10 items measuring leader integrity and confidence. These items were structured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The TPQ consisted of three sections covering principals' biodata, teachers' biodata, and key indicators of teacher productivity, including lesson preparation, lesson delivery, use of instructional resources, discipline, mastery of subject matter, and communication skills. Responses on the TPQ were rated using a five-point scale ranging from Excellent to Poor.

The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement to ensure their suitability and relevance. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, with the instruments administered twice to 40 teachers and their principals in two schools not included in the main study, at a two-week interval. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to compute reliability coefficients, yielding values of 0.83 for the ICQ and 0.79 for the TPQ, which were considered adequate. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the assistance of six trained research assistants, and follow-up visits ensured proper completion and retrieval. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer research questions and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to test hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

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

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

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Integrity	1469	14.72	1.61	0.610*	0.000
Teacher Productivity	1469	86.90	5.62		

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.610 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the p-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school leaders' integrity and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

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

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

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Confidence	1469	14.66	1.72	0.017	0.507
Teacher Productivity	1469	86.90	5.62		

P>0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.017 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the p-value (0.507) > 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between school leaders' confidence and teacher productivity in public secondary schools.

Discussion

It was revealed that there was a significant relationship between school leaders' integrity and teacher productivity in public secondary schools. This implies that the integrity demonstrated by school leaders influences the productivity of teachers within the educational setting. Mehdipour and Balaramulu (2017) supported this notion in their study on the influence of teacher behaviour on student academic achievement, where they found a significant relationship between teachers' integrity, punctuality, confidence, and students' academic achievement. This suggests that when educators act with integrity, it fosters a positive and conducive environment to academic success, ultimately enhancing teacher productivity. Furthermore, Lumpkin (2016) emphasized the importance of teachers demonstrating integrity in providing quality academic programme and positive educational experiences. The finding therefore supports Fatai (2015) who advocated for teachers to serve as role models in matters of punctuality and integrity, reinforcing the idea that integrity in educators contributes to overall productivity.

Similarly the results of this study agrees with Romero (2017) how further supported the relationship between integrity and productivity in his study on how integrity impacts job productivity. He found a significant correlation between integrity and student outcomes, particularly graduation status and Grade Point Average (GPA). This indicates that integrity not only influences teacher productivity but also student success, highlighting its broader impact within the educational context. The implications of these findings are significant for educational leadership and policy. School leaders should prioritize fostering a culture of integrity among educators, as it enhances teacher productivity

The study however revealed that there was no significant relationship between school leaders' confidence and teacher productivity in public secondary schools. One probable reason for this finding could be the complex nature of the educational environment, where multiple factors beyond the confidence of school leaders may influence teacher productivity. Factors such as workload, classroom dynamics, administrative support, and student behaviour could potentially overshadow the impact of leader confidence on teacher productivity. Authors such as Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2014), Martensen and Gronholdt (2016), Tomic (2018), and Tseng and Wu (2017) have supported the idea that confidence plays a significant role in productivity within organizational settings which contradicted the current finding. They argue that higher levels of confidence can lead to increased teamwork, better performance, and reduced turnover. Additionally, these researchers suggest that confidence is positively correlated with job productivity, emphasizing the importance of understanding and enhancing confidence among staff members. However, the findings of the current study contradict these assertions, indicating a discrepancy between the general organizational context and the specific context of public secondary schools. While confidence may indeed be a crucial factor in other settings, its impact on teacher productivity in public secondary schools may be overshadowed by other contextual factors unique to the education sector. The implication of these findings is that interventions aimed at improving teacher productivity in public secondary schools may need to focus on a broader range of factors beyond leader confidence alone.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that school leaders' integrity has a significant positive relationship with teacher productivity in public secondary schools, highlighting the critical role of ethical leadership in fostering a productive educational environment. Conversely, school leaders' confidence does not appear to have a significant impact on teacher productivity, suggesting that while confidence may be valuable in other leadership contexts, it is integrity that more strongly influences teachers' effectiveness and commitment in the school setting.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators should prioritize the cultivation of integrity among leaders through regular training, ethical workshops, and mentorship programs to enhance teacher productivity.
2. Recruitment and promotion of school leaders should place greater emphasis on demonstrated ethical conduct and adherence to professional standards rather than solely on experience or academic qualifications.
3. Schools should implement accountability mechanisms to monitor leaders' actions, ensuring that decisions and policies reflect honesty, fairness, and transparency.
4. Professional development programs for teachers should include sessions that reinforce the importance of working under leaders with high integrity, fostering a culture of mutual respect and shared commitment to educational excellence.

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