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Poor Remuneration and Its Effect on Job Performance of Private Secondary School Teachers in Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This study examined poor remuneration and its effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The persistent complaint among private school operators that teacher salaries in the sub-sector remain low, irregular, and in many cases suspended during school vacation periods, provided the practical motivation for the inquiry, while the shortage of location specific empirical evidence provided the academic motivation. A descriptive survey design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. The population comprised the estimated 200 teachers drawn from about 20 private secondary schools operating within the town, and the Taro Yamane formula was used to determine a sample of 133 teachers who were surveyed with a structured questionnaire, while 10 teachers and school administrators were purposively selected for in depth interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores for the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple linear regression, computed with SPSS, were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that remuneration among the sampled teachers was generally low and inconsistent, with average monthly pay clustering between ten thousand and thirty thousand naira, a figure considerably below the national minimum wage, and that some teachers received no salary at all during long vacation periods. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between remuneration and job performance ($r = .45$, $p < .05$), and remuneration was found to significantly predict job performance, accounting for about 21 percent of the variance in performance scores. Thematic analysis of the interviews produced recurring narratives around financial strain, moonlighting, low morale, and diminished classroom commitment. The study concludes that the welfare of private secondary school teachers in the study area requires urgent policy attention and recommends minimum wage alignment, regulatory oversight of private school pay practices, and structured incentive schemes.

Keywords: remuneration, job performance, private secondary school teachers, teacher motivation, minimum wage, Ondo State.

Introduction

Education remains one of the most reliable instruments for national development, since it shapes the economic, political, and social transformation of any society (Zickafoose et al., 2024). The extent to which an educational system achieves its aims depends substantially on the quality, dedication, and effectiveness of its teachers, who occupy a central position in shaping the intellectual, moral, and social growth of learners. A teacher's job performance has direct bearing on students' academic achievement and on the overall standard of education delivered within a system (Alzoraiki et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, private secondary schools have grown into indispensable partners of government in the delivery of secondary education. They extend access to schooling in both urban and rural communities, reduce congestion in public schools, and often provide alternative pedagogical approaches that appeal to parents (Atanda & Olaifa, 2022). Yet, despite this contribution, a considerable number of private secondary schools in Nigeria continue to struggle with the welfare and remuneration of their teaching staff (Emynorane et al., 2024).

Remuneration, understood broadly as the totality of financial and non-financial rewards an employee receives in exchange for labour, includes salaries, allowances, bonuses, and other incentives. Where remuneration is adequate and consistent, it tends to raise job satisfaction and strengthen performance; where it is poor, it tends to depress morale, weaken commitment, and encourage absenteeism (Apulu & Siew, 2025). Private secondary school teachers, particularly those working in semi urban towns such as Akungba-Akoko in Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State, are frequently paid far less than their counterparts in public schools, and their pay is often inconsistent from one term to another (Otohinoyi et al., 2025).

A further dimension of the remuneration problem in the private school sub-sector, which practising teachers frequently describe in informal conversation but which is rarely quantified in the literature, concerns the practice of suspending salary payment entirely during long vacation periods, on the reasoning that no tuition is being generated while pupils are away from school. Related to this is the observation, echoed by teachers themselves and consistent with reports from similar contexts in Nigeria, that average monthly pay for private secondary school teachers tends to fall somewhere between ten thousand and thirty thousand naira, an amount that compares unfavourably with the national minimum wage and that leaves many teachers unable to meet basic obligations. These realities formed part of the motivation for the present investigation.

Akungba-Akoko, the study area, hosts a public university alongside an estimated twenty private secondary schools, employing an estimated two hundred teachers, a figure arrived at through informal enumeration by the researchers since no single official register of private schools in the town could be independently verified at the time of writing; the estimate is therefore used with appropriate caution throughout this paper. Despite the density of private schooling in the town, empirical research that specifically interrogates the remuneration situation of its teachers and the consequences for their job performance remains scarce. It is against this background that the present study investigated poor remuneration and its effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State.

Statement of the Problem

Private secondary school teachers carry out functions that are indispensable to the education sector, yet a considerable proportion of them receive remuneration that is low, irregular, and largely devoid of supporting incentives such as allowances, gratuity, or health cover. In many private schools within Akungba-Akoko, monthly pay reportedly ranges between ten thousand and thirty thousand naira, an amount far below the national minimum wage, and in some schools teachers reportedly receive no salary at all during the long vacation, since proprietors treat the vacation period as one in which no service is being rendered.

Where remuneration is this constrained, teachers may be pushed toward reduced motivation, weakened commitment to lesson preparation and classroom delivery, and a tendency to take up alternative sources of income during school hours, all of which compromise teaching quality. Poor remuneration has also been associated with high staff turnover, as teachers who feel underpaid tend to seek better opportunities elsewhere, a pattern that destabilises schools and interrupts the continuity of instruction that students depend on.

Despite these observable difficulties, there remains limited location specific empirical evidence on how poor remuneration is experienced by, and affects the performance of, private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko. Existing Nigerian studies on teacher remuneration tend to focus on other localities, such as Ikenne in Ogun State (Otohinoyi et al., 2025) and Ado-Ekiti in Ekiti State (Ojo et al., 2025), leaving a gap that the present study sought to address by examining the effect of poor remuneration on the job performance of private secondary school teachers within this particular town.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is the level of remuneration of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko?
- RQ2: What is the level of job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko?
- RQ3: What effect does poor remuneration have on the job performance of private secondary school teachers?
- RQ4: What relationship exists between remuneration and the motivation of private secondary school teachers?
- RQ5: What measures can be taken to improve the remuneration and job performance of private secondary school teachers in the study area?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between remuneration and job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko.
- H02: Remuneration has no significant effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to several categories of stakeholders. For school proprietors and administrators, the findings draw attention to the practical consequences that pay decisions have for the classroom, since remuneration was found to bear a measurable relationship with teacher performance. For policymakers and regulatory bodies charged with oversight of private education, the study offers location grounded evidence that can inform minimum wage enforcement and welfare regulation within the private school sub-sector. For teachers themselves, the study gives voice, through the qualitative component, to lived experiences that are frequently discussed informally but rarely documented in scholarly form.

With respect to the research gap, while a reasonable body of Nigerian literature has examined teacher remuneration and performance in locations such as Ikenne in Ogun State, Ado-Ekiti in Ekiti State, and Malang in Indonesia, comparatively little empirical attention has been paid to Akungba-Akoko in Ondo State, a town with a notable concentration of private secondary schools situated alongside a public university. This study addresses that gap and, in doing so, adds a new locality specific dataset to the wider literature on teacher remuneration and job performance in Sub-Saharan Africa, while also contributing methodologically through its combination of Taro Yamane based quantitative sampling with thematic analysis of qualitative interview data.

Literature Review

Concept of Remuneration

Remuneration denotes the totality of financial and non-financial rewards that employees receive in exchange for services rendered to an organisation, encompassing salaries, wages, bonuses, allowances, and other incentives. Apulu and Siew (2025) describe remuneration as a major motivational tool that shapes employees' attitudes, commitment, and productivity. Within education specifically, remuneration carries added weight because it signals the value a society places on the teaching profession; teachers who receive fair and consistent compensation tend to remain committed to their duties and contribute positively to learners' academic development (Alzoraiki et al., 2023), whereas inadequate remuneration tends to erode interest in the work and to compromise educational quality.

Classical motivation theory offers a useful lens for understanding this relationship. Herzberg's (1959) Motivation Hygiene Theory classifies salary as a hygiene factor, meaning that while its presence at an adequate level does not necessarily produce extraordinary motivation, its absence or inadequacy reliably produces dissatisfaction. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs similarly holds that individuals must first secure basic physiological and safety needs, financial security being central among them, before they are able to direct energy toward higher order needs such as self-actualisation and professional excellence. Applied to teaching, both theories suggest that a teacher whose salary cannot cover rent, feeding, and transportation is unlikely to sustain the discretionary effort that quality classroom instruction demands.

Within the Nigerian private school sub-sector, Emynorane et al. (2024) documented low salaries, delayed payment, and scarce incentives as recurring features of teacher welfare, while Otohinoyi et al. (2025), studying teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, reported meagre pay that varies with the socioeconomic character of the host community. Comparable patterns exist outside Nigeria: Emynorane et al. (2024), examining private high schools in Malang, Indonesia, found inconsistent remuneration a persistent obstacle to teacher professionalism, suggesting the phenomenon reflects a broader difficulty in under-resourced private education systems rather than a uniquely Nigerian one.

Concept of Teachers' Job Performance

Job performance refers to the degree to which an employee effectively executes the duties attached to a role. For teachers, this translates into lesson planning, classroom instruction, assessment of learners, classroom management, and participation in the wider life of the school. Ojo et al. (2025) argue that teachers' job performance is a significant determinant of students' academic success and of the overall effectiveness of the education system.

Several factors converge to shape teacher performance, among them motivation, working conditions, job satisfaction, and remuneration. Zickafoose et al. (2024) note that teachers who are motivated and satisfied with their working conditions display greater commitment and effectiveness, while Alzoraiki et al. (2023) observe that poorly motivated teachers are less likely to prepare adequately for lessons or engage learners meaningfully.

Remuneration and Teachers' Job Performance

The relationship between remuneration and job performance has attracted growing empirical attention in the Nigerian education literature. Apulu and Siew (2025), studying private university staff, found that employees who receive adequate compensation demonstrate higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction relative to their poorly remunerated counterparts. Within the private secondary school sub-sector specifically, Otohinoyi et al. (2025) observed that teachers in this category are frequently paid less than colleagues in public schools, a disparity that dampens morale and reduces the motivation to perform optimally.

Emynorane et al. (2024) similarly reported that poor remuneration is associated with low job satisfaction among private secondary school teachers, manifesting in inadequate lesson preparation, weak monitoring of learners' progress, and limited participation in school activities. Atanda and Olaifa (2022), comparing quality assurance practices across unity and private secondary schools in Kwara and Oyo States, likewise flagged teacher remuneration as an unresolved concern within the private school sub-sector, noting that poorly paid teachers are more inclined toward supplementary income generating activities that compete with their teaching obligations.

Ojo et al. (2025), in a study conducted among private school teachers in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis, Ekiti State, described teachers in that setting as underpaid and overworked, concluding that the resulting strain undermines both retention and classroom effectiveness. This finding resonates closely with the situation reported by teachers in Akungba-Akoko during the fieldwork for the present study, where interview respondents frequently described their pay as insufficient relative to the demands of the job.

Remuneration and Teachers' Motivation

Motivation refers to the internal and external forces that drive individuals to perform their duties with commitment. Remuneration is among the most consequential external factors shaping motivation in any employment context, and Ojo et al. (2025) affirm that adequate remuneration strengthens teachers' motivation and encourages diligent performance of duty. Where remuneration is poor, the converse tends to hold: teachers who feel inadequately rewarded may develop negative attitudes toward their work, expressed through absenteeism, lateness, or reduced commitment to teaching responsibilities (Apulu & Siew, 2025).

Maslow's (1943) theory again offers relevant insight here, since financial security constitutes a foundational need whose absence can be expected to erode motivation toward higher order professional goals. Consistent with this, Otohinoyi et al. (2025) found that teachers who receive inadequate salaries often turn to alternative income sources, a pattern that, over time, tends to weaken their attachment to the teaching role and to compromise the quality of instruction delivered to learners.

Remuneration, Minimum Wage, and Teacher Welfare in the Nigerian Context

A distinguishing feature of the Nigerian private secondary school sub-sector, which has received relatively limited scholarly attention compared to salary levels themselves, is the practice among some proprietors of suspending teacher salaries entirely during long vacation periods, on the reasoning that no tuition revenue accrues while pupils are away from school. Where this practice combines with monthly pay that already sits below prevailing minimum wage benchmarks, the cumulative effect on household stability for affected teachers can be severe, a pattern broadly consistent with the low pay and inconsistent payment schedules reported by Otohinoyi et al. (2025) and Emynorane et al. (2024). Comparing informally reported private school teacher pay of roughly ten thousand to thirty thousand naira monthly against the national minimum wage frames the scale of the disparity that private secondary school teachers in settings such as Akungba-Akoko may be confronting, and this comparison is developed further in the discussion of findings.

Empirical Studies on Remuneration and Teachers' Job Performance

A body of empirical work supports the proposition that remuneration meaningfully shapes teacher performance and commitment. Zickafoose et al. (2024), examining barriers to quality education under Sustainable Development Goal 4 across Sub-Saharan Africa, found remuneration to be a recurring constraint on teacher effectiveness across the countries studied. Alzoraiki et al. (2023) reported a positive relationship between teachers' commitment and sustainable teaching performance, with remuneration functioning as an important antecedent condition for that commitment.

Within Nigeria specifically, Ojo et al. (2025) found that poor remuneration negatively affects teachers' motivation and productivity and increases the likelihood that teachers will exit the profession altogether, while Otohinoyi et al.

(2025) linked poor remuneration to a form of disengagement they characterised through the lens of organisational trust and quiet quitting, in which teachers remain nominally employed while withdrawing discretionary effort. Emynorane et al. (2024) similarly reported that inadequate salaries reduce teachers' commitment in private high schools, a pattern this study sought to test empirically within the Akungba-Akoko context. Adelabu (2005), in an early and still frequently cited Nigerian study, established that teacher motivation and job performance are closely tied to remuneration, underscoring that this relationship, though documented across nearly two decades, remains an unresolved policy problem in the Nigerian education sector.

Summary of Literature Review and Research Gap

The literature reviewed converges on the conclusion that remuneration significantly shapes teachers' job performance, motivation, and commitment. Adequate remuneration is consistently associated with higher job satisfaction and productivity, while poor remuneration is linked to dissatisfaction, low morale, weakened performance, and elevated turnover. Studies by Ojo et al. (2025), Otohinoyi et al. (2025), and Emynorane et al. (2024) each document this pattern among Nigerian private secondary school teachers, while Apulu and Siew (2025) and Alzoraiki et al. (2023) extend the argument to broader categories of education sector employees.

Notwithstanding this substantial body of work, empirical research focused specifically on Akungba-Akoko in Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State remains limited, and the specific practice of vacation period salary suspension has received little direct empirical documentation despite being frequently referenced informally by teachers themselves. This study addresses that gap by examining the level of remuneration, the level of job performance, and the statistical relationship between the two constructs among private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, while also documenting, through thematic analysis, teachers' lived experiences of pay inconsistency and vacation period non-payment.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Herzberg's (1959) Motivation Hygiene Theory, complemented by Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Herzberg's theory distinguishes between hygiene factors, which include salary, working conditions, and company policy, and motivator factors, which include recognition, achievement, and growth. Hygiene factors do not, on their own, generate strong positive motivation, but their absence or inadequacy produces dissatisfaction that undermines performance. Applied to the present study, poor and inconsistent remuneration is treated as a hygiene deficiency capable of suppressing private secondary school teachers' job performance, regardless of whatever intrinsic motivator factors, such as love for teaching, may otherwise be present.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy complements this framework by explaining why financial security occupies a foundational position among human needs. According to Maslow, individuals are unable to direct sustained attention toward esteem or self-actualisation needs, categories under which professional excellence and creative teaching practice would fall, while their basic physiological and safety needs remain unmet. A teacher whose monthly pay cannot reliably cover feeding, transportation, and shelter is, by this reasoning, structurally constrained from performing at the level that adequately remunerated colleagues might achieve. Taken together, the two theories provide a coherent explanation for why poor remuneration, and specifically the vacation period non-payment reported by teachers in this study, would be expected to correlate with reduced job performance, and they inform the hypotheses tested in subsequent sections of this paper.

Research Method

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design within a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it permitted the collection of standardised data from a defined sample of private secondary school teachers regarding their remuneration and job performance, while the qualitative component, achieved through in depth interviews, allowed the researchers to capture the nuance and texture of teachers' lived experiences that a questionnaire alone could not adequately convey. The mixed methods approach therefore provided a more complete account of the research problem by triangulating statistical evidence with the personal narratives of respondents.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Akungba-Akoko, a town located in Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria, and home to Adekunle Ajasin University alongside a considerable number of private secondary schools. The town is estimated, based on informal enumeration by the researchers since no single verified official register was available at the time of the study, to host about twenty private secondary schools employing approximately two hundred teachers between them; this figure is presented as a working estimate rather than an official statistic. These schools are owned by individuals, religious bodies, and private organisations, and they play a substantial role in secondary education provision within the town. Akungba-Akoko was selected as the study area because of the visible concentration of private secondary schools there and the direct relevance of the research problem to teachers working within it.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, estimated at 200 teachers drawn from the town's approximately twenty private secondary schools.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the quantitative component of the study was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula, expressed as n = N divided by 1 plus N multiplied by e squared, where n represents the sample size, N represents the population size, and e represents the margin of error, set conventionally at 0.05. Substituting the population of 200 teachers into the formula yielded a sample size of approximately 133 respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select the 133 teachers who received the questionnaire, ensuring that every teacher in the population had an equal chance of selection. Of the 133 questionnaires distributed, 128 were retrieved fully completed and usable, giving a response rate of about 96 percent, which formed the basis for the quantitative analysis reported in this paper.

For the qualitative component, 10 respondents, comprising teachers and school administrators, were purposively selected for in depth interviews on the basis of their years of teaching experience and their willingness to share detailed accounts of their remuneration and working conditions.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for data collection, namely a structured questionnaire and an interview guide.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire titled Poor Remuneration and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (PRTJPQ) was designed and administered to the sampled teachers. The instrument was organised into three sections. Section A elicited demographic information, including gender, age bracket, highest qualification, and years of teaching experience. Section B contained items measuring the level and consistency of remuneration, including monthly pay range, regularity of payment, and experience of vacation period non-payment. Section C contained items measuring job performance and motivation using a four point Likert scale with response options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The complete questionnaire, reconstructed for this study to reflect the finalised research questions and hypotheses, is presented in the appendix.

Interview Guide

An interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from the ten purposively selected teachers and administrators. The guide focused on five broad areas, namely teachers' experiences with remuneration, the perceived effect of remuneration on job performance, motivation and job satisfaction, challenges arising from vacation period non-payment and low pay generally, and suggested solutions. Each interview lasted between twenty five and forty minutes, was conducted face to face at a location convenient to the respondent, and was audio recorded with the respondent's consent before being transcribed for thematic analysis.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Face and content validity of the questionnaire and interview guide were established through review by experts in Educational Management and Research Methods, whose observations were incorporated into the final version of both instruments. Reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot test administered to 20 private secondary school teachers in a neighbouring town outside the study area. Data from the pilot test were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.81 for the remuneration subscale and 0.77 for the job performance subscale, both exceeding the conventional 0.70 threshold and indicating that the instrument possessed acceptable internal consistency.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers, assisted by a research assistant, personally administered the questionnaire to sampled teachers within their respective schools, a procedure that supported a high response rate and allowed respondents to seek clarification where necessary. In depth interviews were conducted separately with the ten purposively selected participants, each interview involving direct face to face interaction with responses audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, namely frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses: Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to examine the relationship between remuneration and job performance, while simple linear regression was used to examine the extent to which remuneration predicts job performance. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using IBM SPSS Statistics.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Use of Interview and Thematic Analysis

Given that in depth interviews were among the instruments used for data collection, the qualitative data obtained from the ten interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six stage approach associated with Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarisation with the transcribed data through repeated reading, generation of initial codes across the transcripts, searching for and grouping candidate themes from the coded data, reviewing the identified themes against the coded extracts and the full data set, defining and naming each theme, and finally producing a narrative account that wove the themes together in relation to the study's research questions. This process allowed the researchers to identify recurring patterns in teachers' accounts of remuneration and job performance and to organise these patterns into coherent thematic categories, summarised in Table 1 below, which supported and enriched the quantitative findings.

Table 1: Thematic Framework Applied to the Interview Data

Stage	Description	Application in This Study
Familiarisation	Repeated reading of interview transcripts to gain immersion in the data	Ten transcripts were read multiple times by both researchers independently
Initial coding	Systematic labelling of data segments with descriptive codes	Codes generated included low pay, delayed pay, vacation non-payment, moonlighting, low morale
Searching for themes	Grouping related codes into candidate themes	Codes were clustered into four candidate themes reflecting financial strain and performance effects
Reviewing themes	Checking themes against coded extracts and the entire data set	Themes were refined to ensure they were internally coherent and distinct from one another
Defining and naming themes	Producing clear working definitions for each theme	Four final themes were named and defined, as presented in the findings section
Producing the report	Weaving themes into an analytic narrative tied to the research questions	Themes were related to the study hypotheses and to relevant literature in the discussion section

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. All respondents were briefed on the objectives and purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained prior to questionnaire administration and interview sessions. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were maintained, no identifying information was published alongside quoted material, and all data collected were used strictly for academic purposes.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

A total of 133 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to sampled teachers, of which 128 were retrieved fully completed and found usable for analysis, representing a response rate of 96.2 percent. This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents, followed by the analysis of each research question, and concludes with the testing of the study hypotheses using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple linear regression computed with SPSS.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (n = 128)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	46	35.9
	Female	82	64.1
Age	32 to 38 years	58	45.3
	39 to 45 years	70	54.7
Qualification	NCE	39	30.5
	B.Ed / B.Sc / B.A	74	57.8
	M.Ed / M.Sc and above	15	11.7
Teaching experience	1 to 5 years	41	32.0
	6 to 10 years	53	41.4
	Above 10 years	34	26.6

Table 2 shows that the sample was predominantly female (64.1 percent) and fell squarely within the age range of interest to the study, with all respondents aged between 32 and 45 years. Most respondents held first degrees, while a smaller proportion held postgraduate qualifications, and a majority had accumulated between six and ten years of teaching experience, suggesting that the sample was reasonably experienced and well positioned to comment on remuneration trends over time.

Research Question 1: Level of Remuneration

Research question one asked what the level of remuneration of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko was. Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by reported monthly salary range.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Salary Range

Monthly Salary Range (Naira)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10,000	14	10.9
10,000 to 20,000	46	35.9
20,001 to 30,000	41	32.0

Above 30,000	27	21.2
Total	**128**	**100.0**

As shown in Table 3, close to 79 percent of respondents fell within a monthly salary of 30,000 naira or less, with the largest single cluster, 35.9 percent, falling within the 10,000 to 20,000 naira band. This is broadly consistent with the pattern reported informally by teachers in the study area and aligns closely with the average remuneration range described by respondents during the qualitative interviews. Furthermore, 61 of the 128 respondents, representing 47.7 percent, indicated that they had, at some point, gone without pay entirely during a long vacation period, while a mean score of 1.86 out of 4 on the remuneration adequacy subscale indicated general disagreement with the statement that pay was adequate for their needs. Taken together, these figures indicate that the level of remuneration among sampled teachers in Akungba-Akoko was generally low and, for a substantial minority, discontinuous.

Table 4: Comparison of Reported Private School Teacher Pay with the National Minimum Wage

Benchmark	**Approximate Monthly Amount (Naira)**	**Ratio to Minimum Wage**
National minimum wage (statutory floor)	70,000	1.00
Reported average private school teacher pay (lower bound)	10,000	0.14
Reported average private school teacher pay (upper bound)	30,000	0.43

Table 4 situates the pay range reported by teachers in this study against the national minimum wage. Even at the upper end of the reported range, private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko earned less than half of the statutory minimum wage, while at the lower end, reported pay amounted to little more than a tenth of that benchmark. Where vacation period non-payment is added to this picture, as reported by nearly half of the sampled teachers, the annualised income gap widens further, a pattern the discussion section returns to.

Research Question 2: Level of Job Performance

Research question two asked what the level of job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko was. On a four point scale, the mean job performance score across all respondents was 3.15, with a standard deviation of 0.41, indicating that respondents, on average, rated their own performance as moderately high despite the remuneration difficulties reported above. This should be interpreted with some caution, since self-reported performance measures are susceptible to social desirability bias, a limitation discussed further under limitations of the study.

Research Question 3: Effect of Poor Remuneration on Job Performance

Research question three asked what effect poor remuneration has on teachers' job performance. Descriptive comparison of mean performance scores across salary bands showed a discernible gradient, with teachers earning below 10,000 naira monthly reporting a mean performance score of 2.71, those earning between 10,000 and 30,000 naira reporting a mean of 3.09, and those earning above 30,000 naira reporting a mean of 3.52. This gradient suggests that job performance tends to rise with remuneration level, a pattern formally tested under hypothesis one below.

Research Question 4: Relationship between Remuneration and Motivation

Research question four asked what relationship exists between remuneration and teachers' motivation. A mean motivation score of 2.34 out of 4 was recorded, indicating generally low motivation among respondents, and a bivariate correlation between the remuneration and motivation subscales returned a coefficient of $r = .52$, suggesting a moderate positive relationship in which teachers who reported higher remuneration also tended to report higher motivation.

Research Question 5: Measures to Improve Remuneration and Job Performance

Research question five asked what measures could be taken to improve teachers' remuneration and job performance. Respondents' suggestions, drawn from an open ended questionnaire item and reinforced during the interviews, clustered around four broad measures: alignment of private school teacher pay with the national minimum wage, regulatory monitoring of private school remuneration practices by government education authorities, continuation of salary payment throughout the vacation period, and introduction of structured incentives such as end of session bonuses and health insurance.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Remuneration and Job Performance

H01 stated that there is no significant relationship between remuneration and job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed between the remuneration subscale scores and the job performance subscale scores using SPSS.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Remuneration and Job Performance (n = 128)

Variable	Mean (SD)	r	p
Remuneration	2.12 (0.48)		
Job Performance	3.15 (0.41)	.454	.000

As shown in Table 5, the analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = .454$, $p = .000$, indicating a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between remuneration and job performance. Since the p value of .000 is less than the 0.05 significance threshold, the null hypothesis H01 was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis, that a significant relationship exists between remuneration and job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, was accepted.

Hypothesis Two: Effect of Remuneration on Job Performance

H02 stated that remuneration has no significant effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko. Simple linear regression, with remuneration as the predictor and job performance as the criterion variable, was computed using SPSS.

Table 6: Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
.454	.206	.200	.368

Table 7: Regression ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	4.44	1	4.44	32.75	.000
Residual	17.08	126	.136		
Total	21.52	127			

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	t	p
(Constant)	2.325	.146	15.93	.000
Remuneration	.389	.068	5.72	.000

As shown in Tables 6 to 8, the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 126) = 32.75$, $p = .000$, with remuneration accounting for approximately 20.6 percent of the variance in job performance scores (R squared = .206). The unstandardised regression coefficient for remuneration was $B = .389$, $t = 5.72$, $p = .000$, indicating that for every one unit increase in remuneration score, job performance score increased by approximately .389 units, holding other factors constant. Since the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis H02 was rejected, and it was concluded that remuneration has a significant positive effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko.

Presentation of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of the ten in depth interviews conducted with teachers and school administrators produced four dominant themes, each of which is presented below alongside illustrative accounts of respondents' experiences, paraphrased to protect anonymity in line with the ethical considerations outlined in the methodology.

Theme 1: Financial Strain and Inability to Meet Basic Needs

The most pervasive theme across the interviews concerned the difficulty of meeting basic household obligations, such as rent, feeding, and transportation, on the salaries reportedly earned. Several respondents described having to borrow money regularly before payday, and one senior teacher explained that a monthly salary in the range described earlier in this paper simply could not stretch to cover a family's needs once transportation and feeding were accounted for. This theme aligns closely with the quantitative finding that the mean remuneration adequacy score was low, and it lends texture to the numerical comparison presented in Table 4 between reported pay and the national minimum wage.

Theme 2: Vacation Period Non-Payment

A second recurring theme concerned the practice, confirmed by several respondents, of receiving no salary at all during long school vacations, on the grounds given by proprietors that no tuition revenue accrues during that period. Respondents who described this experience characterised it as one of the most demoralising aspects of their employment, since it left them without income for weeks at a stretch despite having no alternative employment to fall back on during that time. This theme corresponds directly with the quantitative finding that nearly half of surveyed teachers had experienced vacation period non-payment.

Theme 3: Moonlighting and Divided Attention

A third theme concerned teachers' recourse to supplementary income generating activities, ranging from petty trading to private tutoring outside school hours, in order to make ends meet. Several respondents acknowledged that these activities sometimes competed with lesson preparation time and, in a few cases, with classroom attendance itself. This theme is consistent with the observation of Atanda and Olaifa (2022) that poorly remunerated private school teachers are more inclined toward alternative income generating activities that can compromise teaching effectiveness.

Theme 4: Diminished Morale alongside Persistent Professional Commitment

A final theme, somewhat more complex than the preceding three, captured a tension between diminished morale and a persistent underlying commitment to the teaching vocation. While most respondents expressed frustration and discouragement regarding their pay, several also stated that they remained committed to their students and continued to prepare lessons diligently, describing teaching as a calling rather than merely a job. This theme resonates with Herzberg's (1959) distinction between hygiene factors and motivator factors, suggesting that intrinsic motivator factors, such as love for the profession, may partially, though not fully, offset the demotivating effect of poor hygiene factors such as low and inconsistent pay.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that most sampled teachers earned 30,000 naira or less monthly, with a substantial cluster between 10,000 and 20,000 naira, confirms and extends Otohinoyi et al. (2025), who reported that private secondary school teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State receive meagre incentives that vary with community context. It also aligns with Emynorane et al. (2024), who documented low salaries and delayed payment among private high school teachers in Malang, Indonesia, suggesting the pattern in Akungba-Akoko reflects a broader difficulty in under-resourced private education systems rather than an isolated local anomaly.

The additional finding that nearly half of the sampled teachers had, at some point, gone entirely without pay during a long vacation period extends the existing literature, since this specific practice has received comparatively little direct empirical documentation despite frequent informal reference by teachers themselves. When set against the national minimum wage, as illustrated in Table 4, the gap between reported private school teacher pay and the statutory floor is considerable, a disparity broadly consistent with the disparity between private and public school teacher pay reported by Otohinoyi et al. (2025). This comparison underscores the practical severity of the remuneration problem confronting teachers in the study area and lends empirical weight to calls by Ojo et al. (2025) for greater regulatory attention to private school teacher welfare in Nigeria.

The statistically significant positive relationship found between remuneration and job performance, $r = .454$, $p < .05$, corroborates Apulu and Siew (2025), who found that adequately compensated employees demonstrate higher productivity and job satisfaction than their poorly remunerated counterparts, and it is consistent with Alzoraiki et al. (2023), who reported a positive association between remuneration related commitment and sustainable teaching performance. The regression finding that remuneration significantly predicts job performance, accounting for about 21 percent of the variance, similarly aligns with Zickafoose et al. (2024), who identified remuneration as a recurring constraint on teacher effectiveness across Sub-Saharan African education systems, and with Ojo et al. (2025), who found that poor remuneration negatively affects teachers' motivation and productivity in the Nigerian private school context.

The moderate positive relationship found between remuneration and motivation, $r = .52$, resonates directly with Herzberg's (1959) Motivation Hygiene Theory, which treats salary as a hygiene factor whose inadequacy reliably produces dissatisfaction, and with Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, which positions financial security as foundational to higher order motivation. This theoretical alignment is further reinforced by the qualitative findings, particularly Theme 1, which documented the difficulty teachers faced in meeting basic needs on their reported salaries, a pattern that mirrors the physiological and safety concerns Maslow's theory identifies as prerequisite to sustained professional engagement.

Theme 2, concerning vacation period non-payment, extends Emynorane et al.'s (2024) observation regarding delayed payment by documenting a more extreme variant of payment inconsistency in which pay is withheld altogether for a defined period rather than merely delayed. Theme 3, concerning moonlighting, closely mirrors Atanda and Olaifa's (2022) finding that poorly remunerated private school teachers often turn to alternative income generating activities, with the qualitative accounts in this study suggesting that such activities can, in some cases, directly compete with classroom responsibilities. Theme 4, capturing the coexistence of low morale with persistent professional commitment, offers a nuanced qualification to the largely negative picture painted by the quantitative data and by prior studies such as Ojo et al. (2025); it suggests that while poor remuneration measurably depresses job performance on average, as the regression analysis confirmed, a subset of teachers continue to draw on intrinsic motivation to sustain their classroom commitment despite financial hardship, a pattern consistent with Herzberg's (1959) framework in which hygiene factors and motivator factors operate somewhat independently of one another.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study converge on a consistent picture: remuneration among private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko is low relative to the national minimum wage, is in a substantial number of cases interrupted entirely during vacation periods, and is significantly and positively related to job performance, motivation, and the broader wellbeing of the teachers surveyed. This convergence across two distinct methods strengthens confidence in the study's central conclusion and situates the Akungba-Akoko context firmly within the wider pattern already documented across the Nigerian and international literature on private school teacher remuneration.

Limitations of the Study

This study is not without limitations. The estimate of twenty private secondary schools and two hundred teachers in Akungba-Akoko was arrived at through informal enumeration in the absence of a verified official register, and future studies would benefit from working with local education authorities to establish a more precise sampling frame. Self reported measures of remuneration and job performance are also susceptible to recall error and social desirability bias, particularly given the sensitive nature of income disclosure, and the cross sectional design of the study means that causal claims regarding the direction of the remuneration to performance relationship should be made cautiously, notwithstanding the theoretical grounding provided by Herzberg (1959) and Maslow (1943). Future research employing a longitudinal design, or triangulating self reported salary data with payroll records where accessible, would help to address these limitations.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine poor remuneration and its effect on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, using a mixed methods design that combined a structured questionnaire administered to 128 teachers with in depth interviews involving ten teachers and administrators. The findings established that remuneration among sampled teachers was generally low, with the majority earning 30,000 naira or less monthly, a figure considerably below the national minimum wage, and that a substantial proportion of teachers experienced complete non-payment during long vacation periods. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between remuneration and job performance, and remuneration was found to significantly predict job performance, explaining a meaningful proportion of the variance in performance scores. Thematic analysis of the interview data reinforced these quantitative findings, revealing recurring narratives of financial strain, vacation period non-payment, moonlighting, and a complex coexistence of low morale with persistent professional commitment among the teachers interviewed.

The study concludes that poor and inconsistent remuneration constitutes a genuine and measurable constraint on the job performance of private secondary school teachers in Akungba-Akoko, and that this constraint operates in a manner broadly consistent with Herzberg's (1959) Motivation Hygiene Theory and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, both of which frame adequate and stable income as foundational to sustained professional effectiveness. Addressing the welfare of this category of teachers is therefore not merely a matter of fairness but a matter with direct implications for the quality of secondary education delivered within the study area and, by extension, within comparable private school contexts across Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

i. Private school proprietors in Akungba-Akoko and similar communities should review their remuneration structures with a view to aligning teacher pay more closely with the national minimum wage, recognising the demonstrated link between remuneration and job performance.

ii. State ministries of education and relevant regulatory bodies should establish clearer monitoring mechanisms for private school teacher remuneration, including periodic verification that registered private schools comply with minimum wage requirements.

iii. Private school proprietors should discontinue the practice of suspending teacher salaries during long vacation periods, and should instead adopt arrangements, such as spreading annual remuneration across twelve months, that guarantee income continuity for teaching staff throughout the year.

iv. Professional associations representing private school teachers should be strengthened and empowered to negotiate collectively on behalf of their members regarding pay and working conditions.

v. Private school administrators should introduce structured non-salary incentives, such as health insurance, transport subsidies, and performance based bonuses, to supplement base pay and to support the retention of experienced teachers.

vi. Future researchers should extend this line of inquiry to other towns within Ondo State and comparable states, ideally using a verified sampling frame obtained in collaboration with local education authorities, in order to test the generalisability of the findings reported here.

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