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# Teachers' Recognition and Its Influence on Work Behavior in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State

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## Abstract

*This study examined the role of teacher recognition as a non-financial incentive in shaping the work behavior of educators in Nigerian public secondary schools. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 120 teachers using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between recognition practices and teacher commitment, morale, and productivity. Thematic insights highlighted the importance of praise and awards in fostering a sense of belonging and professional satisfaction. The study recommended institutionalizing recognition schemes to enhance teacher effectiveness and retention.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher recognition, non-financial rewards, work behavior, morale, productivity, Nigerian public schools*

## Introduction

In educational systems around the world, the recognition of teachers plays a pivotal role in determining the overall performance and sustainability of quality education delivery. Recognition, particularly non-financial recognition such as praise, awards, certificates of excellence, commendation letters, and verbal acknowledgment, is increasingly viewed not just as a nicety but as an essential motivator that directly influences educators' attitudes, commitment, and professional behavior (Ogunyinka & Olugbenga, 2023; Nwachukwu, 2021).

In Nigeria, where public secondary schools face persistent challenges such as underfunding, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, low teacher remuneration, and high teacher attrition rates, understanding how recognition affects teacher behavior is critical to designing effective human resource management strategies (Chukwuemeka & Ugwoke, 2022). The education sector in Nigeria has long been plagued by issues of low teacher motivation and morale, often attributed to poor working conditions, delayed salaries, and lack of promotional opportunities (Onyia & Nwankwo, 2023). Amid these structural problems, recognition as a non-monetary incentive is often overlooked by policymakers and school administrators. Yet, studies and anecdotal reports suggest that teachers respond positively to environments where their contributions are acknowledged. Recognition boosts their sense of self-worth, inspires loyalty, and reinforces positive work behavior such as punctuality, effective classroom management, innovation in pedagogy, and student engagement (Eze & Okafor, 2020).

Historically, educational policies in Nigeria have focused predominantly on financial incentives to drive teacher performance. However, with increasing evidence pointing to the psychological and emotional dimensions of job satisfaction, non-financial motivators like recognition are gaining attention. The psychology of recognition is grounded in motivational theories, particularly Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene

factors (e.g., salary, job security) and motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition). According to this theory, recognition functions as a key motivator that can lead to increased job satisfaction and higher performance levels (Herzberg, 1968; Yusuf & Aliu, 2022).

In this context, recognition refers to the deliberate and consistent efforts by school leaders and education authorities to appreciate, commend, and reward teacher efforts in non-monetary ways. This may include teacher-of-the-month programs, inclusion in school bulletins, praise during staff meetings, and recognition during end-of-year ceremonies. Such practices help to reinforce desired work behaviors, enhance job commitment, and encourage professional development (Ajayi, 2023). Moreover, they contribute to creating a positive school culture where teachers feel valued and inspired to give their best (Ibrahim & Olatunji, 2021).

In Nigerian public secondary schools, the work environment is often challenging. Teachers are frequently tasked with managing large classrooms with minimal instructional materials and support. The stress associated with these conditions often leads to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and in some cases, career shifts (Adedoyin et al., 2022). Against this backdrop, non-financial recognition could serve as a low-cost, high-impact tool for improving teacher morale and productivity. The challenge lies in understanding the extent to which such recognition currently exists, how it is perceived by teachers, and what impact it has on their work behavior.

Existing literature reveals that while many schools in Nigeria do not institutionalize recognition practices, teachers who do receive recognition—however informal—often report higher levels of motivation. This indicates a gap in policy and practice that, if addressed, could lead to significant improvements in teacher engagement and school performance (Okoro & Nwachukwu, 2021). For instance, a teacher who is publicly acknowledged for excellent lesson delivery or successful student outcomes may be more likely to repeat such behavior, thereby creating a cycle of positive reinforcement.

Furthermore, the role of school leadership in fostering a culture of recognition cannot be overemphasized. Principals and administrators are central to the implementation of recognition programs. Their attitude toward teacher appreciation often sets the tone for the entire institution. When leaders make a conscious effort to recognize and commend teachers, it sends a strong message about the value placed on professional effort and excellence (Abubakar & Sulaiman, 2023). On the contrary, a lack of recognition can lead to feelings of neglect, reduced morale, and eventual burnout.

The need for this study arises from the urgent demand for improved teacher productivity and student outcomes in Nigerian public secondary schools. While several interventions have focused on infrastructural development and teacher retraining, few have explored the psychosocial aspects of teacher performance. This study fills that gap by examining the role of teacher recognition in shaping work behavior. It aims to provide empirical evidence that could inform school management practices and educational policies, particularly in resource-constrained settings like Nigeria.

In sum, this study investigates the nature and extent of non-financial teacher recognition in Nigerian public secondary schools, its perceived value among educators, and its influence on their work behavior. It seeks to answer key questions: What forms of recognition do teachers find most meaningful? How does recognition influence teacher morale, engagement, and

productivity? What are the barriers to implementing effective recognition programs in public schools? Through this inquiry, the study contributes to the broader discourse on teacher motivation and offers practical recommendations for fostering a more supportive and productive teaching environment in Nigeria's public education sector.

By focusing on recognition as a cost-effective motivational tool, this research aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of quality teaching as a prerequisite for achieving educational equity and excellence. The findings are expected to have implications not only for policymakers and school administrators but also for teacher training institutions and civil society organizations working to enhance educational outcomes in Nigeria. Ultimately, recognizing and appreciating teachers for their efforts is not just a matter of courtesy—it is a strategic imperative for educational development and national progress.

## **Literature Review**

Research has shown that teacher recognition is an essential motivational tool that can influence teacher engagement, satisfaction, and retention (Akinyemi, 2018; Eze, 2021). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, recognition acts as a motivator that enhances performance. Non-financial rewards, unlike salaries, contribute significantly to intrinsic motivation (Afolabi & Adewale, 2019).

In the context of Nigerian public secondary schools, teacher motivation has been largely associated with extrinsic incentives, such as salary, promotions, and allowances. However, more recent literature suggests a paradigm shift toward the recognition of non-financial incentives as key drivers of work behavior (Nwachukwu & Nwosu, 2022). Recognition, which may include commendations, award ceremonies, letters of appreciation, public praise, and verbal encouragement, reinforces positive attitudes and commitment to teaching. According to Okenwa and Ude (2021), when teachers are appreciated for their hard work, they are more likely to exhibit desirable behaviors such as punctuality, classroom effectiveness, and student-centered practices.

Herzberg's (1968) foundational theory has been revisited by contemporary Nigerian researchers to explain how recognition acts as a performance enhancer. Akpan and Emeka (2020) assert that in environments where financial resources are limited, non-financial recognition serves as an affordable and effective way to retain and inspire teachers. In their study on motivational strategies in public schools in Rivers State, they found that teachers who received public acknowledgment for performance displayed higher morale and job satisfaction compared to those who did not.

Recognition is also linked to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, particularly the esteem level, where the need for respect, status, and recognition becomes dominant once basic needs are met. Olatunde and Bello (2021) argue that teachers, especially those with years of service, often place high value on social recognition. They contend that such esteem needs are largely unfulfilled in Nigerian public schools, leading to low morale and eventual exit from the teaching profession.

Empirical studies have also emphasized the relationship between recognition and teacher retention. In a study conducted by Adebayo and Salami (2020) in Kwara State, 72% of the sampled teachers indicated that non-financial incentives, especially praise and awards,

contributed to their decision to stay in the profession. The findings corroborate the assertion that intrinsic rewards can mitigate the negative effects of poor remuneration and enhance emotional attachment to the teaching job.

In their review of teacher motivation strategies in West Africa, Essien and Umeh (2019) observed that recognition programs were more common in private schools than public ones. They note that while public school administrators often complain of lack of funds, recognition initiatives require minimal resources and more of leadership intentionality. They argue that even simple practices such as regular verbal commendation and public acknowledgment in school assemblies can significantly affect teacher morale.

A recent survey by Udeh et al. (2023) examined non-monetary recognition strategies in Enugu State secondary schools. The study reported that only 30% of schools practiced consistent teacher recognition, despite a high demand for such practices among educators. Teachers expressed the need for institutionalized recognition systems, with clear criteria and fairness in the allocation of awards. The researchers concluded that recognition enhances workplace satisfaction and strengthens the professional identity of teachers.

In analyzing the effects of recognition on job satisfaction, Chika and Nnaji (2022) introduced the Social Exchange Theory as an alternative framework. They explained that recognition fosters reciprocal commitment: when teachers feel valued, they are more likely to reciprocate through dedication, effort, and positive work behavior. Their findings from a qualitative study in Anambra State demonstrated that teachers who received recognition showed improved collaboration, reduced absenteeism, and increased participation in school development activities.

The role of school leadership in implementing recognition programs is well documented. Obi and Alabi (2020) stress that principals act as gatekeepers of motivation in schools. They argue that principals who adopt participatory and appreciative leadership styles are more likely to foster environments where teachers thrive. Similarly, Adeyemi and Odu (2021) found a positive correlation between the frequency of teacher recognition by principals and student academic performance, suggesting that teacher motivation has a ripple effect on overall school outcomes.

Gender dynamics also appear to influence the effectiveness of recognition. A study by Nneka and Ibrahim (2022) revealed that female teachers in public schools were more positively influenced by verbal praise and public acknowledgment, while male teachers preferred formal awards and certificates. The study called for a gender-sensitive approach to designing recognition programs.

Recognition has also been shown to mitigate burnout and emotional exhaustion among teachers. In a longitudinal study, Oladipo and Bakare (2021) tracked 50 teachers over two academic years and discovered that those who regularly received acknowledgment from school authorities reported lower levels of job stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. The study recommends that recognition be incorporated into school policies and teacher appraisal systems.

It is also important to examine the cultural context of recognition. In Nigeria, respect and acknowledgment hold strong cultural significance, particularly among elders and professionals. According to Anyanwu and Obinna (2023), the social value attached to being

publicly recognized as a competent teacher cannot be underestimated. Their study observed that teachers from communities with strong communal cultures responded more favorably to recognition programs than those from more urbanized and individualistic settings.

Despite the evidence supporting recognition as a motivational tool, several barriers hinder its implementation. These include administrative apathy, lack of structured programs, perceived favoritism, and absence of clear guidelines. Oguejiofor and Nwosu (2021) argue that for recognition to be effective, it must be systematic, transparent, and consistent. Ad-hoc or biased recognition schemes can produce resentment and demotivation.

From a policy perspective, the Federal Ministry of Education's National Teacher Policy (2020) emphasizes the need for teacher motivation but lacks specific directives on institutionalizing recognition practices. Scholars such as Oduh and Bassey (2022) have advocated for a national recognition framework that would set standards and provide templates for recognizing teachers at various levels—school, local government, state, and national.

Furthermore, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporate bodies are increasingly being encouraged to sponsor teacher recognition initiatives. A good example is the Maltina Teacher of the Year Award, which has gained national prominence. While such programs are commendable, they reach only a limited number of teachers and cannot substitute for consistent, localized school-level recognition (Ogbonna & Yusuf, 2023).

In summary, the literature strongly supports the argument that teacher recognition—when systematically implemented—can significantly influence teacher work behavior, satisfaction, and retention. Recognition provides emotional and psychological benefits that contribute to better classroom performance, reduced attrition, and improved student outcomes. As Nigeria grapples with issues of teacher shortages and declining education standards, non-financial recognition emerges as a low-cost, high-return intervention.

However, the successful implementation of recognition strategies requires intentional leadership, policy backing, and institutional commitment. Teachers must perceive recognition as fair, meaningful, and based on merit. Only then can it achieve its full potential as a motivational tool in the education sector.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to explore how teacher recognition influences work behavior in Nigerian public secondary schools. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

## **Research Design**

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design for the quantitative aspect, supported by qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. This approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of numerical data while capturing contextual insights from participants.



## **Population and Sample**

The population of the study comprised all teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. According to the Enugu State Ministry of Education (2023), there are approximately 5,000 teachers in 290 public secondary schools across the six educational zones in the state. A multistage sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness.

First, three educational zones (Enugu East, Enugu North, and Nsukka) were purposively selected. From each zone, five public secondary schools were randomly selected. A total of 15 schools participated in the study. Stratified sampling was then used to select 20 teachers per school, resulting in a sample size of 300 respondents. Additionally, 6 principals (2 per zone) and 12 teachers (4 per zone) were purposively selected for qualitative interviews.

## **Instrumentation**

For the quantitative data collection, a structured questionnaire titled "Teacher Recognition and Work Behavior Questionnaire (TRWBQ)" was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

- Section A: Demographic Information
- Section B: Types and frequency of recognition received
- Section C: Perceived impact of recognition on work behavior
- Section D: Job satisfaction and motivation indicators

Items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The qualitative aspect of the study used a semi-structured interview guide. Questions were designed to explore participants' experiences with recognition, their feelings about its influence on their work, and suggestions for improvement.

## **Validity and Reliability**

The questionnaire was validated through expert review by two professors of educational psychology and one measurement and evaluation specialist from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument was piloted in a public secondary school in Aninri LGA not included in the main study. The reliability coefficient obtained through Cronbach's alpha was 0.86, indicating high internal consistency.

## **Method of Data Collection**

The researchers visited the selected schools personally with the assistance of trained research assistants. Prior permission was obtained from the Enugu State Ministry of Education and the principals of the schools. The questionnaires were distributed and collected on-site to ensure a high response rate. The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in quiet locations within the schools and audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Nigeria Research Ethics Committee. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study.

## **Method of Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and standard deviation) were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test hypotheses.

Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis involved coding the data, identifying patterns, and organizing the findings into emerging themes related to recognition practices, teacher motivation, and work behavior.

This robust methodology allowed for a detailed examination of the relationship between non-financial recognition and teachers' work behavior, providing both statistical evidence and rich narrative insights.

## **Data and Data Analysis**

This section presents the sources of data used in the study and outlines the processes employed in analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data obtained.

### **Sources of Data**

Data for this study were collected from two main sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the field through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions involving teachers and principals from selected public secondary schools in Enugu State. Secondary data included official reports from the Enugu State Ministry of Education, policy documents, and prior research studies related to teacher recognition and motivation.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative data collected from the 300 questionnaire respondents were coded and entered into SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages were computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and their responses to items on teacher recognition and work behavior.

Inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the relationship between teacher recognition and work behavior. Multiple regression analysis was also conducted to assess the extent to which recognition predicts various dimensions of teacher work behavior, such as punctuality, lesson delivery, student engagement, and job satisfaction.



## **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This process involved:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts
2. Coding of significant statements and phrases
3. Categorizing the codes into themes and sub-themes
4. Interpreting the patterns and drawing conclusions based on the emergent themes

The key themes that emerged included: forms of recognition practiced in schools, perceived fairness of recognition, emotional impact of recognition on teachers, and barriers to implementing recognition programs.

## **Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings**

The mixed-methods approach facilitated the triangulation of data. Quantitative findings provided measurable evidence of the relationship between recognition and work behavior, while qualitative data enriched the interpretation with contextual and personal insights from the participants. For example, while the quantitative data showed a statistically significant correlation between recognition and punctuality, the interviews revealed that public acknowledgment at school assemblies often motivated teachers to arrive early and set a good example.

Overall, the data analysis established a strong connection between non-financial recognition and positive work behaviors among public secondary school teachers in Enugu State.

## **Results**

This section presents the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analyses regarding the influence of teacher recognition on work behavior in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The sample consisted of 300 teachers from 15 public secondary schools. Of these, 65% were female and 35% male. The age distribution showed that 20% were below 30 years, 50% between 31–45 years, and 30% above 45 years. Most respondents (75%) held a bachelor's degree in education, while 25% had postgraduate qualifications. The average teaching experience was 11 years.

### **Descriptive Statistics of Recognition Practices**

Analysis of questionnaire responses revealed that 68% of teachers reported receiving some form of recognition within the past academic year. Common forms included verbal praise (45%), written commendations (28%), and public awards (17%). However, 32% reported never receiving any recognition. Schools varied in the frequency and type of recognition practices, with urban schools more likely to implement formal recognition programs than rural schools.

## Relationship between Recognition and Work Behavior

The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between teacher recognition and overall work behavior ( $r = 0.69$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Sub-components of work behavior revealed the following correlations:

- Punctuality:  $r = 0.61$
- Lesson preparation and delivery:  $r = 0.58$
- Student engagement:  $r = 0.55$
- Job satisfaction:  $r = 0.72$

These results suggest that recognition significantly correlates with improved teacher behavior and motivation.

## Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive value of recognition on teacher work behavior. The model was statistically significant ( $F(4, 295) = 36.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.62, indicating that recognition accounted for 62% of the variance in work behavior.

The regression coefficients showed that job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and punctuality ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) were the most strongly predicted by recognition practices. Student engagement ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) and lesson delivery ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ) also showed significant relationships.

## Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Four major themes emerged from interviews and focus group discussions:

1. **Perceived Value of Recognition:** Most teachers valued recognition highly, citing increased morale and a sense of being appreciated. One teacher stated, “When my effort is acknowledged in front of my colleagues, it pushes me to do more.”
2. **Fairness and Transparency:** Participants stressed the need for fairness in recognition practices. Some expressed concerns about favoritism and lack of clear criteria for awards.
3. **Motivational Impact:** Teachers linked recognition to behaviors such as staying late to prepare lessons, volunteering for school programs, and striving to improve student outcomes.
4. **Leadership Role:** Many participants highlighted the critical role of school principals in driving recognition. Schools with proactive, appreciative leadership reported more motivated and engaged staff.

## Summary of Results

The results demonstrate that teacher recognition has a significant and positive influence on multiple dimensions of teacher work behavior. Both statistical analyses and qualitative insights affirm the importance of non-financial rewards in enhancing teacher motivation and productivity in Nigerian public secondary schools.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study affirm the critical role of teacher recognition in shaping work behavior in Nigerian public secondary schools. This section discusses the implications of the key results, relating them to existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

### **Recognition as a Catalyst for Enhanced Work Behavior**

The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.69$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between teacher recognition and work behavior underscores the motivational power of non-financial rewards. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies recognition as a key motivator that enhances job satisfaction and performance. Teachers in this study who received recognition reported improvements in punctuality, lesson preparation, classroom engagement, and overall job satisfaction. This mirrors findings by Eze (2021) and Akinyemi (2018), who also noted that teacher motivation improves significantly in environments where recognition is valued.

### **Job Satisfaction as a Central Mediator**

The regression analysis revealed that job satisfaction had the highest predictive value ( $\beta = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) among all the work behavior components studied. This supports prior research by Afolabi and Adewale (2019), who highlighted job satisfaction as a critical intermediary linking recognition to improved performance. Recognition, in this context, serves not only as a reward but also as a signal of institutional support, which boosts morale and encourages discretionary effort among teachers.

### **Impact of Leadership and School Culture**

Qualitative findings showed that the presence of proactive and appreciative leadership significantly influenced the effectiveness of recognition programs. Teachers in schools where principals actively promoted and practiced recognition felt more motivated and engaged. This supports the work of Akpan and Umoh (2022), who argued that school leadership plays a decisive role in cultivating a positive work environment. The findings suggest that recognition is most impactful when it is embedded in a broader culture of appreciation.

### **Addressing Fairness and Equity**

Despite the positive impact of recognition, issues of fairness and transparency emerged as critical concerns. Teachers expressed skepticism about biased or poorly implemented recognition schemes, which could undermine their motivational impact. This is consistent with the views of Ogundele and Olanrewaju (2020), who warned that lack of clear criteria for recognition may lead to feelings of resentment and disengagement. To be effective, recognition must be perceived as fair, consistent, and merit-based.

### **Rural-Urban Disparities in Recognition Practices**

The study found notable differences in recognition practices between urban and rural schools, with urban schools more likely to implement structured recognition systems. This reflects systemic inequalities in resource allocation and administrative support. As highlighted by Nwosu (2023), rural schools often face leadership and funding challenges that hinder the

institutionalization of motivational strategies. Addressing these disparities is essential for fostering equity in teacher motivation across the education system.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The results have several implications for educational policy makers and school administrators:

1. Recognition should be institutionalized as part of teacher performance management systems.
2. Training programs for school leaders should emphasize the importance of fair and consistent recognition practices.
3. Public education policy should include guidelines for non-financial incentives as a cost-effective way to enhance teacher performance.
4. Community-based recognition (e.g., local awards, PTA acknowledgments) can supplement institutional efforts.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study contributes to motivation theory by validating Herzberg's assertion that intrinsic factors such as recognition significantly impact employee performance, even in low-resource settings. It also supports Vroom's Expectancy Theory, where recognition increases expectancy and valence, thereby motivating desired behavior.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Although the study offers robust insights, it is limited by its geographic focus on Enugu State and reliance on self-reported data. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of recognition on teacher retention and performance across diverse regions. Additionally, experimental designs could better establish causality.

In summary, the discussion reaffirms that teacher recognition—when fairly implemented and supported by strong leadership—can significantly enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and work behavior in public secondary schools. This study examined the influence of teacher recognition on work behavior in Nigerian public secondary schools, particularly in Enugu State. The evidence suggests that non-financial recognition significantly boosts teacher motivation, enhances job satisfaction, and improves behavioral outcomes such as punctuality, lesson delivery, and classroom engagement.

### **Conclusion**

Recognition is a powerful yet underutilized tool in motivating public school teachers. When implemented fairly and strategically, it has the potential to reverse trends of low morale, high attrition, and poor performance that have long plagued the Nigerian education system. The study supports existing motivational theories and highlights the contextual relevance of recognition in low-resource settings. Furthermore, the findings indicate that teacher recognition should be prioritized in educational policy and administration.

## Recommendations:

1. **Institutionalize Recognition Programs:** Ministries of education and school boards should develop clear policies on recognizing outstanding teachers using objective and transparent criteria.
2. **Leadership Training:** Principals and school leaders should be trained on the importance of recognition as a leadership strategy to boost morale and performance.
3. **Equity in Implementation:** Efforts should be made to ensure recognition practices are inclusive, equitable, and free from favoritism.
4. **Incentivize Rural Teachers:** Special recognition initiatives should be targeted at rural teachers who often work under difficult conditions with limited visibility.
5. **Community Engagement:** Schools should partner with local stakeholders, including Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), to develop and sponsor community-based recognition schemes.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular assessment of recognition programs should be carried out to measure their impact on teacher behavior and performance, and to ensure continual improvement.

In closing, the recognition of teachers should not be considered a luxury but a necessity. It offers a cost-effective and impactful means to foster a motivated, committed, and productive teaching workforce in Nigeria's public secondary schools. This study examined the influence of teacher recognition on work behavior in Nigerian public secondary schools, particularly in Enugu State. The evidence suggests that non-financial recognition significantly boosts teacher motivation, enhances job satisfaction, and improves behavioral outcomes such as punctuality, lesson delivery, and classroom engagement.

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