

TEACHERS' COMPENSATION PACKAGES IN NIGERIAN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Education remains the bedrock of sustainable development, and at the heart of this foundation are teachers who are architects of knowledge, character, and innovation. In Nigeria's rapidly expanding private education sector, teachers in secondary schools play an indispensable role in shaping the future of the nation. However, the effectiveness of these educators is increasingly threatened by inadequate and inequitable compensation systems. This paper examines the multifaceted challenges hindering fair teacher compensation in Nigerian private secondary schools, including profit-driven school ownership models, economic instability, low and irregular income, poor financial management, multiple taxation, and weak regulatory oversight. These systemic barriers have led to poor remuneration, delayed salaries, low morale, and high turnover among teachers. The paper further explores the engagement of unqualified teachers, lack of career advancement opportunities, and insufficient welfare provisions as aggravating factors. The study advocates for the development of a national compensation framework for private schools, the provision of tax incentives to compliant ones, capacity building for proprietors, promotion of teacher unions, and the establishment of teacher welfare funds. In addition, strategies like, increased stakeholder collaboration, transparent financial management, and active parental engagement were proffered to address the challenges. The findings underscore that compensating teacher fairly is not merely a labor issue, it is a national priority and a strategic investment in human capital. Ultimately, the paper concludes that revitalizing the compensation structure of private secondary school teachers in Nigeria will not only uplift educators but also enhance the credibility and outcomes of the country's entire educational system.

Keywords: Teachers' Compensation, Burnout, Capacity Building, Innovation

Introduction

Teachers are key players that bring about success in any educational system. At any level, the teachers are the cornerstone of the educational system. This is because the objectives of education would be challenging to accomplish without the diligent efforts of teachers, regardless of how good the non-human resources (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, tables and chairs, textbooks, internet facilities, and instructional aids) supplied in schools are. Most people agree that teachers play crucial

roles in the development of the country. Teachers served as role models and held important leadership positions in their communities. But as the need for skilled workers with greater compensation packages increased quickly following independence, a large number of educators quit their careers to work in other public and private sectors.

Teachers are the cornerstone of educational quality. Hiring and retaining skilled and experienced teachers are crucial to achieving to the aims and objectives of secondary education in Nigeria. Since they convert educational policy into useful classroom applications, teachers play a critical role in achieving educational goals and assisting in the nation's sustainable development. There is widespread agreement that teaching was seen as a highly esteemed profession by practically every segment of Nigerian society prior to the country's independence.

In recent years, the number of professionals in nearly every area of the economy has been steadily declining in African nations, including Nigeria. The reason for this is the migration of professionals from the continent to other regions of the world in pursuit of employment opportunities (Adeosun, Adeyemi, & Adelowo, 2018). Many Nigerian workers who stay in the country take any job that comes up to make ends meet, but they all have the desire to leave as a reason of job unhappiness, which can be linked to inadequate compensation practices found in many Nigerian organisations (Adeosun et al, 2018). As observed by, Ekabu, Kalai, and Nyagah, (2018), graduates and job seekers can easily get temporary teaching positions in Nigerian private secondary schools without intending to pursue teaching as a long-term profession. Research has shown that schools with fair teacher compensation policies have a pool of contented, dedicated, and productive teachers (Adeosun, et al, 2018; Fadeyi, Sofoluwe, & Gbadeyan, 2015). This is because when the school administration has implemented beneficial compensation policies, teachers express work satisfaction (Onuorah, Okeke, Ikechukwu, 2019; Umemenzua & Akenzua, 2020). History has demonstrated that one of the most significant investments in human capital that fosters social well-being, economic advancement, the eradication of poverty, and national intercultural tolerance is education (Adil, Rao, Ayaz, & Shinwari, 2020). Private secondary schools are run and funded independently. The CMS Grammar School Lagos opened its doors in 1859, marking the beginning of secondary education in Nigeria. Nigeria's Methodist High School came next in 1878. Interestingly, Kings College Lagos, the first Government secondary school, opened its doors in 1927(Chigbo,2022). The surge of pupils attending private secondary schools are proof that the majority of parents are disinterested in government-funded schools. As a result, the number of private secondary schools opening up around the nation has increased exponentially.

In Nigeria, senior secondary school education is an essential stage for forming young people's futures. It plays a crucial role in preparing young people to be well-rounded mentally, physically, and psychologically, equipping them to advance to higher education institutions. In order to maintain the quality of education provided to students, it is highly advantageous for teachers at this level of school to get fair compensation. Indeed, in Nigeria and many other developing countries throughout the world, the status of teachers is getting worse every day (Olajire, Uzonwanne, Okunola, Lanre-Babalola, & Alo, 2020). It has been noted in Finland for instance that, teachers are highly valued and

paid. They benefit from competitive, top-notch pay, benefits, and chances for professional growth (Adams-Budde, Crave & Hegedus 2021). With extra advantages like health insurance and extensive maternity/paternity leave, the average income for a Finnish teacher is between \$40,000 and \$50,000 year (Adams-Budde et al 2021). Teachers in the country enjoy high job satisfaction and a low burnout rate because of their generous pay that emphasizes work-life balance and assistance for in-service training (Harju & Niemi, 2024). Despite the low compensation status of teachers in most private schools in Nigeria, there are still some notable big schools in Nigeria that pay fair enough compensation to teachers as a result of the huge sum students pay as school fees. In Lagos State, Nigeria, a large number of big - standard private schools have started to understand the value of competitive pay and other benefits. For example, a private school in Lekki pays its teachers between \$150,000 and \$400,000 a month (Olujuwon, Omiyale, & Akintan 2021), depending on their level of experience. Health insurance, professional development, and a wellness program are included in this compensation package (Evans, Filmer, & Yuan 2022).

Teachers' compensation packages can be seen as the remuneration, benefits, and overall compensation provided to teachers. These packages aim to attract, motivate, and retain high-quality teachers by going beyond traditional salary structures and incorporating elements that recognize and reward excellence, dedication, and contributions to education. Activities for teaching and learning are initiated and facilitated by the teachers (Tijani & Etejere, 2021). It therefore important for teachers to be fairly compensated in order to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the job they do. Kayode (2011), sees the place of the teacher as an essential factor for educational development and of prime importance. Since teachers are the bedrock of any educational system it means they facilitate teaching and learning in the schools at all levels of education. Thus, it is anticipated that teachers ought to receive beneficial treatment in the form of favorable working conditions and be happy in their positions (Umemenzua & Akenzua, 2020). In Nigeria, compensation packages may differ greatly depending on individual/school's bargaining power, financing availability, and governmental rules. Many teachers complain about their pay, which may not be commensurate with their training, experience, or job requirements. In order to guarantee teachers' satisfaction, teacher compensation packages should frequently include benefits, bonuses, incentives, allowances, chances for advancement, growth, and recognition. These may also include the many rewards they get in recognition of their efforts. Compensation incentives consist of both monetary and non-monetary benefits, as well as direct and indirect remuneration.

An effective and suitable compensation plan can aid in luring and keeping skilled teachers who can support the school in fulfilling its objectives. Therefore, teachers must get timely and adequate compensation in order to carry out their statutory duties and meet the specified goals at the senior secondary level of education. To attract and retain teachers who possess the necessary talents for the school, an effective compensation plan should include a number of components to draw in and keep teachers who possess the abilities the school needs. The compensation of teachers plays a pivotal role in attracting, retaining, and motivating qualified educators. This paper aims to explore the various components of teachers' compensation packages in private secondary schools in Nigeria,

examining the challenges and proffering the way forward in the bid to contribute to the overall improvement of secondary education.

Development of Private Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Private secondary schools are run and funded independently. The CMS Grammar School Lagos opened its doors in 1859, marking the beginning of secondary education in Nigeria. Nigeria's Methodist High School came next in 1878. Interestingly, Kings College Lagos, the first Government secondary school, opened its doors in 1927(Chigbo,2022). The surge of pupils attending private secondary schools are proof that the majority of parents are disinterested in government-funded schools. As a result, the number of private secondary schools opening up around the nation has increased exponentially. The activities of the numerous Christian missionaries who came to Nigeria and brought the Western educational system in the 19th century was largely responsible for the development of secondary school education.

The establishment and growth of secondary schools were attributed to the work of private Christian missions and, later, to colonial government assistance. Christian missionaries and the colonial government constructed numerous secondary schools throughout various States in Nigeria following the opening of the country's first secondary school by Church Missionary Society (CMS) in June 1859. Thereafter, there was a need for establishment of more secondary schools (Osokoya, 2017). It is significant to note that the Federal Government of Nigeria reversed the right of private individuals, religious organizations, communities, and voluntary agencies to operate private secondary schools in Nigeria through the National Policy on Education (1981). However, the government still maintains control and supervision over the schools. One of the elements that made it easier for private secondary schools to open in Nigeria was this policy provision.

A number of Christian and Islamic religious organisations in Kwara State Nigeria set up their own private secondary schools to assist them in teaching their youngsters about their faith (Alabi & Saidu 2021). According to Abolade (2010), the rise in the formation of private secondary schools in Ogbomoso Metropolis, Oyo State Nigeria. was caused by political instability, economic hardship, low teachers' pay, and the industrial actions taken by public school teachers occasionally. Furthermore, the issue of teachers' salaries being paid insufficiently and irregularly contributed to a rise in the number of students enrolled in private secondary schools in states all over the nation. This is because some parents thought that their children would speak English well, that the student-teacher ratio was suitable, that the school facilities were decent, and that teaching and learning activities were being carried out successfully in private secondary schools (Alabi & Saidu 2021).

Concept of Teachers Compensation Packages

According to Adaramaja, Sulyman, and Ayinla (2022), in order to improve the efficiency of schools as a formal organisation, compensation is crucial. Compensation packages include fringe benefits, training opportunities, health insurance, and promotions. Mabaso and Dlamini (2021) opines that, compensation packages include a few fundamental elements that tend to increase workers' job satisfaction. Some of these in addition to salaries include; bonuses, incentives,

allowances, promotion and recognition. This is a common way to inspire employees and reward them for a job well done. It is often thought of as a monetary advantage that an employee receives as a reward for completing a certain assignment (Magaji, Akpa, & Ogundiwin, 2021).

Adil et al (2020) stated that one of the main purposes of personnel management is compensation, which each employee receives in return for his or her contributions to the company. People who believe they are underpaid feel emotionally unsatisfied. The compensation packages, which are structured as procedures, are created within the parameters of the organization's incentive philosophy, plans, and policies. It includes provisions in the form of structures, processes, and procedures that will maintain and offer suitable pay scales, benefits, and other forms of compensation.

Compensation can be divided into three categories: Direct compensation, Indirect Compensation and Non – financial compensation Pepra-Mensah, Adjei &Agyei (2017). Direct Compensation: Salary, commissions, bonuses, and other direct payments to employees are all considered forms of direct compensation (Asiegbu & Umaru, 2024). Direct compensation is defined by Mapano and Antoniano (2024) as monetary advantages given to employees in exchange for their services to the company. They also include, financial advantages, pension fund, housing rent allowance, transportation, leave travel allowance, medical reimbursements, special allowances, bonuses, gratuities, and so on. They are administered at a set time and at regular intervals. Direct compensation remains a critical issue in Nigerian education, particularly due to persistent underfunding and privatization trends that have undermined teachers' financial stability (ActionAid Nigeria, 2020).

Indirect Compensation: According to Naidu and Satyanarayana (2018), indirect compensation refers to non-monetary benefits offered and provided to employees in lieu of the services provided by them to the organization. They include Leave Policy, Overtime Policy, Car policy, Hospitalization, Insurance, Leave travel Assistance Limits, Retirement Benefits, Holiday Homes.

Non – Financial Compensation: non-financial compensation, according to Kumar (2019), includes things like chances for recognition, professional growth and advancement, as well as favorable working environment and conditions.

Teachers' compensation packages: These are incentives, bonuses, and other added advantages which must be included in compensation packages to keep workers from leaving to pursue better pay packages, career-development opportunities, fringe benefits, and incentives elsewhere (Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola & Hiersmac 2014). As opined by, Tackey, Tatsi, Akafia, Allotey, and Afful (2024) One of the most important facets of human resource management in education is compensation. Offering competitive and equitable pay packages is crucial to luring and keeping skilled teachers.

Teachers and administrative personnel must believe that their work is appreciated and adequately compensated. Additionally, compensation should be set up to reflect employees'

performance, credentials, and experience in order to encourage ongoing growth and advancement in the workplace. Compensation packages provided to teachers have significant impact on their morale and commitment to the school. Well – compensated teachers could have higher remarkable performance or productivity and promotion of ethical practices within the school than those ones who are poorly compensated (Kumar, 2019). Studies have revealed that schools with adequate compensation practices for their teachers have a pool of satisfied, committed and high performing teachers (Umemezia & Akenzua, 2020).

Teachers can only be effective when their compensation is commensurate with the amount of work they do. William (2018) also emphasized that negative working conditions, such as inadequate compensation offered by private secondary schools, cause low levels of commitment, poor job satisfaction, and ultimately poor performance from the teachers. Private schools can succeed greatly if school administration makes sure that salaries are paid on time and enhances current compensation packages to include both monetary and non-monetary benefits, according to Uwannah, Eteete, and Mark (2019). Only when their pay is in line with the amount of work they do will teachers be effective.

Fair Teachers' Compensation Packages: Fair teachers' compensation packages are a fundamental requirement for building a motivated, professional, and effective teaching workforce in Nigerian private secondary schools. However, in many cases, the compensation provided to teachers in the private education sector are neither adequate nor consistent with the demands of their role. This has contributed to several challenges affecting teacher retention, morale, and educational quality.

Many private school teachers are underpaid relative to their qualifications and workload. Some earn below the national minimum wage, despite working long hours, handling large classes, and engaging in multiple school responsibilities. Unlike their counterparts in public schools who may benefit from pensions and structured salary scales, private school teachers often have no such security or benefits (Umemenzia & Akenzua, 2020). Examples of fair compensation packages for teachers include; Competitive salary structure, timely payment of salaries, health and welfare benefits, professional development opportunities, job security and pension plans, bonuses and incentives, housing and transport allowances, work-life balance support and transparent salary grading system. The importance of giving fair compensation packages to teachers includes; Enhancement of teacher motivation and performance, reduction of teacher turnover, improvement of student outcomes, promotion of equity and professionalism, encouragement of continuous professional development, support of economic stability for teachers.

Poor Teachers' Compensation Packages in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools: The issue of poor compensation for teachers in Nigerian secondary schools especially in private schools has become a critical concern that directly affects the quality of education and teacher morale across the country. Despite the pivotal role teachers play in shaping the academic, moral, and professional foundations of future generations, their remuneration in many private secondary schools remain disproportionately low and inconsistent. Many private school owners prioritize profit over staff welfare, often treating teachers as expendable resources. In several instances, teachers are paid far

below the minimum wage, with no benefits such as health insurance, pension contributions, or allowances for housing and transportation. Some are even denied payment during school holidays, despite being expected to engage in administrative duties, planning, or extra lessons (UNESCO 2021).

Adaramaja et al. (2022) stated that teachers in Kwara State secondary schools occasionally receive their pay after month ends. Furthermore, despite the fact that commodity prices are rising daily, private secondary school teachers have voiced serious concerns about the new minimum wage, which has not been implemented, making it difficult for them to adequately support themselves and their families. This poor compensation structure not only demotivates teachers but also contributes to high turnover rates, burnout, and a general decline in teaching quality. When educators are forced to take on multiple jobs to make ends meet, their dedication to classroom instruction is compromised. Furthermore, the lack of job security and professional development opportunities discourage talented graduates from pursuing careers in education. The implications of this trend are far-reaching. Students suffer from a lack of continuity in teaching, unstable learning environments, and reduced access to experienced, committed educators. Ultimately, the long-term effects include a decline in academic performance and a weakening of the overall educational system in Nigeria.

Challenges of Teachers' Compensation Packages in Private Secondary Schools in Nigeria

The following are the identified challenges affecting teachers' compensation packages in Nigerian private secondary schools:

Financial incapability of private schools' owners: Majority of private schools' owners are usually bent on making profit in the business of the education being provided. Private schools in Nigeria are known to have operated as profit-driven businesses for more than four decades; they are often owned by a person, a partner, a group, a nonprofit, or a religious institution (Chigbo, 2022). As such, they find it difficult to devote enough resources to the needs of the teachers in the aspects of providing adequate compensation packages, supporting teachers financially for professional development, providing welfare services such as, subsidized health scheme, subsidized transport system, provision for loan facilities and provision of retirement benefits. In essence, private secondary schools are mostly funded by their owners. The state government has no say in how private schools are run financially. While private secondary schools may not offer conducive and comfortable learning settings, the majority of them link the high fees they demand at the secondary school level to the money they spend to hire qualified and experienced teachers.

Incessant taxing of private secondary schools: It has been observed that private senior secondary schools pay enormous tax to government and examination bodies. This is part of the reasons the schools find it difficult to pay befitting compensation packages to teachers. A group of private school owners in Nigeria, the Network of Private Independent and Articulate School Executives, has condemned the multiple taxation of private school owners by various government agencies. It was further stressed by that, in order to get a reduction in the taxes that school owners pay to the government and examination bodies, NIAPSE will exert pressure on the government. The submission of the said organization implied the expansion

of private education in Nigeria is being hindered by this multi-taxation. Private school owners frequently lament being subjected to taxes and levies from multiple government agencies (e.g., local governments, education boards, examination bodies, sanitation departments). This financial burden reduces funds available for staff welfare and discourages expansion or salary enhancement initiatives.

Profit Driven Motive of Private School Owners: Many private schools in Nigeria are established primarily as business ventures rather than service-oriented institutions. The overriding goal of profit maximization often supersedes staff welfare. As a result, expenditures on quality compensation packages are viewed as financial liabilities rather than investments, leading to underpayment, delayed salaries, and poor benefits.

High Operational Costs and Economic Instability: The Nigerian economic environment is volatile, with inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, and erratic utility bills. Private school proprietors must cover costs such as facility maintenance, teaching materials, electricity (often from generators), water, and rent. These rising expenses limit the financial capacity to prioritize adequate teacher compensation.

Low and Irregular School Income: Many private schools, especially those in low- and middle-income communities, struggle with inconsistent cash flow due to irregular tuition payments from parents. This cash crunch directly affects the ability of school management to plan and disburse salaries regularly and fairly.

Inadequate Financial Literacy and Strategic Management: A significant number of private school owners lack training in financial planning, human resource management, and strategic budgeting. This deficiency often leads to misallocation of resources, poor salary structuring, and an inability to prioritize staff welfare.

Poor Regulatory Oversight by The Government: The absence of a strong regulatory framework allows private school operators to act unchecked. With no binding minimum wage specific to private school teachers and little monitoring from education ministries, some school owners exploit this gap by offering substandard wages.

Competition and Price Wars: In urban centers, many private schools compete for limited student populations. To attract parents, they lower tuition fees—often to unsustainable levels. This tuition suppression limits income and makes it difficult to pay teachers competitive salaries.

Employment of Unqualified or Unlicensed Teachers: To reduce costs, some private schools intentionally recruit underqualified or inexperienced teachers who accept low pay. Such schools may decide to only hire few qualified teachers and pay them less compensation in comparison to their qualification since they sought for cheap labor. This practice perpetuates the cycle of poor compensation and compromises educational quality.

Inadequate Policy and Institutional Support for Teacher Welfare: There is a lack of collective bargaining units or effective teacher unions for private school teachers. Without formal structures

advocating for better compensation, private school teachers are often voiceless and vulnerable to exploitation.

Way Forward to Enhancing Compensation Packages in Private Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

Compliance with National minimum wage policy: The National Minimum Wage Policy must be strictly followed in order to improve compensation packages in Nigeria's private secondary schools. Many private schools continue to underpay their teachers and non-academic personnel, citing a lack of funding or unstable finances, even though the policy requires a minimum wage for all employees. In addition to undermining teachers' dignity, this non-compliance raises turnover rates, lowers morale, and decreases productivity. Private school owners must prioritise pay compliance as a moral and legal need in order to remedy this. Through required wage disclosure frameworks and frequent audits by government regulatory agencies like the Ministry of Labour and Employment and relevant education authorities, efforts should be stepped up to monitor and enforce compliance.

Provision of Tax Reliefs and Subsidies: Private schools that meet compensation benchmarks should be eligible for tax holidays or reliefs. This would ease financial burdens and encourage proprietors to prioritize teacher welfare. Government subsidies can decrease the overall operating costs of private schools, whether in the form of direct financial grants, subsidized access to educational resources, or infrastructure support. Schools are better able to invest in their human resources, particularly their teaching staff, when they are able to alleviate some of their financial constraints.

Capacity building for Proprietors and School Managers: A critical step toward improving teachers' compensation packages in private secondary schools is the continuous professional development of school proprietors and managers. Many private school owners start their institutions with noble intentions but often lack formal training in essential areas like financial management, staff welfare planning, and human resources. This gap can result in poor budgeting, misallocation of resources, and an inability to design sustainable and competitive compensation packages for teachers. Regular capacity-building programs can equip proprietors and school heads with the knowledge and skills needed to: develop realistic and sustainable salary structures, plan and manage staff benefits (health insurance, pensions, bonuses), create HR policies that foster teacher retention and satisfaction and explore innovative financing models to support staff welfare. These training programs can be facilitated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private education associations, and relevant government agencies. When properly trained, school leaders are better positioned to balance profitability with staff welfare, leading to more competitive and motivating compensation packages for teachers. Investing in the leadership and administrative capacity of school owners is not just about management it's a direct investment in the quality of education, teacher morale, and ultimately, student outcomes. Proprietors and school heads should undergo regular training in school financial management, staff welfare planning, and human resources. NGOs, private education associations, and government agencies can facilitate these programs.

Promotion of Private School Teacher Unions: Teachers in private schools should be encouraged to form unions or welfare associations that can advocate for better working conditions, negotiate with

school owners, and mediate disputes. Unlike their counterparts in public schools, many private school teachers lack collective bargaining power and are often employed without formal contracts, clear salary scales, or grievance resolution mechanisms. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, low pay, and job insecurity. By forming or joining unions or professional welfare associations, private school teachers can: negotiate fair and transparent compensation structures, advocate for regular salary reviews, benefits, and improved working conditions, establish support systems to address issues such as delayed payments, unfair dismissals, or lack of professional development, collaborate with education stakeholders to influence policy reforms that benefit the private education workforce. To make this a reality, civil society organizations, private education networks, and policymakers should create safe and enabling environments for such associations to operate. This includes protecting teachers' rights to unionize and providing legal backing to ensure these bodies are recognized by proprietors and regulatory agencies. Strengthening the collective voice of private school teachers is key to elevating the profession, ensuring dignity in the workplace, and driving long-term improvements in compensation and job satisfaction.

Encouragement of Stakeholder Partnerships: Another sustainable way forward in addressing the challenges of teacher compensation in private secondary schools is the active encouragement of partnerships among key stakeholders such as parents, school management, alumni associations, and local communities. Often, the burden of funding teacher salaries and welfare falls solely on school proprietors, many of whom operate within tight financial constraints. However, by fostering collaborative relationships with these stakeholders, schools can tap into alternative sources of support that ease this burden and improve the quality of teacher compensation. Parents, for instance, can play a crucial role by supporting structured welfare contributions or voluntary levies aimed specifically at enhancing teacher benefits or funding training programs. Alumni associations, driven by a sense of gratitude and loyalty to their alma mater, can be mobilized to raise funds for teacher development, appreciation initiatives, or infrastructural support that benefits staff. Additionally, local communities, including religious institutions and civic groups, can partner with schools to provide non-financial incentives such as affordable housing, public recognition for outstanding teachers, or subsidized services. Such partnerships not only create a sense of shared responsibility but also strengthen the social value placed on teachers and the work they do. When various segments of the community work together to support educators, it reinforces the idea that quality education is a collective investment, and that improving teacher welfare is key to achieving it. Therefore, stakeholder collaboration must be actively encouraged and strategically managed as a vital pathway toward more equitable and sustainable compensation packages for private school teachers.

Strengthening Regulatory Oversight: Government education inspectors should regularly assess not just school infrastructure but also teacher welfare compliance. Schools found to be exploiting teachers should face penalties, including license suspension.

Establishment of Teachers' Welfare Fund: To enhance the financial security and well-being of private school teachers, a Teachers' Welfare Fund can be established at either the national or state level. This fund would serve as a vital support mechanism to assist teachers during emergencies,

promote access to healthcare, and enable opportunities for professional development. Given that many private educators often lack formal benefits and job security, such a fund would bridge critical gaps in their social and economic safety nets. The fund could be sustained through a combination of public and private contributions. Public-private partnerships would play a crucial role, bringing together government support and resources from private education providers, philanthropic institutions, and donor agencies. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, particularly from sectors related to education, healthcare, and technology, could also be tapped to contribute to the fund. Additionally, voluntary contributions from individuals, schools, alumni networks, and NGOs could provide supplementary financial support.

Encouraging Transparent Financial Practices in Private Schools: Encouraging transparent financial practices in private schools is essential for fostering a culture of trust, accountability, and shared responsibility. When school administrations adopt open budgeting processes and engage senior teaching and administrative staff in financial planning, it not only promotes a sense of inclusion but also ensures that key concerns, such as fair compensation and resource allocation, are given due consideration. Transparent financial management helps dispel perceptions of inequity and mismanagement, which can often lead to dissatisfaction and low morale among staff. By making financial information such as budget priorities, expenditure breakdowns, and projected revenues accessible to key stakeholders within the institution, school leaders demonstrate a commitment to fairness and collaborative decision-making. This openness can also encourage more informed and constructive dialogue around institutional priorities, whether related to salaries, infrastructure, training, or student support.

Parental Sensitization: Parental sensitization plays a crucial role in creating a supportive and sustainable educational environment, particularly when it comes to the often-overlooked issue of teacher compensation. Many parents may not immediately recognize the direct connection between fair wages for teachers and the quality of education their children receive. Educating parents on this relationship is essential to building their understanding and willingness to support necessary institutional changes. When teachers are fairly compensated, they are more likely to remain motivated, committed, and professionally invested in their work. This translates into more consistent teaching, better classroom preparation, and a stronger teacher-student rapport all of which significantly enhance student learning outcomes. Conversely, underpaid or financially stressed teachers may face burnout, high turnover, or a diminished capacity to deliver high-quality instruction, which inevitably impacts students. Schools have a responsibility to communicate this clearly to parents, not as a demand for higher fees, but as an invitation to invest in a more stable and effective educational system for their children. When parents understand that reasonable adjustments to tuition fees are intended not just for infrastructure or administrative costs, but to ensure that the teachers guiding their children's development are treated with dignity and fairness, they are more likely to be supportive and cooperative.

Conclusion

Teachers are the architects of a country's future aside from being educators. They shoulder the burden of educational transition in Nigeria's private secondary school industry, but they are nonetheless underpaid and undervalued. Economic limitations, bad governance, and profit-driven incentives are only a few of the issues impeding equitable remuneration; these issues must be addressed quickly and compassionately in order to overcome larger systemic problems. School owners, legislators, and other stakeholders must acknowledge the importance of teacher welfare if Nigeria is to develop a long-lasting and high-quality private education sector. Increased pay is a calculated investment in the advancement of the country, not only a question of equity. A well-paid, driven teacher is more than just an employee; they are a mentor, a role model, and a catalyst for national development. Nigeria as the giant of Africa has to prove its prowess in the area of the educational sector and part of the ways of achieving this, is to compete globally and produce the kind of students needed in the twenty-first century. The classroom must stop being a place of neglect and turn into a haven of dignity. Improving teacher compensation in private secondary schools and all other institutions in the country is not just a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in high-quality education. The time to act is now, because when we invest in our teachers, we invest in our future.

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