

When Schools Run Lean: The Structural Determinants and Consequences of Teacher Understaffing in Public Secondary School in Nigeria

John Lola Okunola¹ *, Muideen Oluwale Oduntan² 

¹ Department of Sociological Studies, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria

² Department of Employment Relations & Human Resource Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Received: 07/ 04 / 2026

Accepted: 02/ 06/ 2026

Published: 15 / 07/ 2026

~~~~~

## Abstract

Teacher understaffing in public secondary schools remains a persistent challenge that undermines the quality of education, weakens organizational effectiveness, and compromises students' intellectual and social development. This paper holds significance for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the educational sector of Osun State by investigating the effects of understaffing on job satisfaction and job performance among teachers. Herberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation examined the structural determinants of teacher understaffing. A current methods (quantitative and qualitative) design was employed, and a simple random sampling technique was used to select 420 teachers from public secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire and an in-depth Interview were used to elicit information from selected stakeholders. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests, and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the lack of incentives, high workload, high attrition rates, insufficient funding allocation, and inadequate professional development were identified as major causes of understaffing among teachers. The study found a significant negative effect of understaffing on teachers' job satisfaction ( $\bar{x} = 3.25$ ), while no statistically significant impact was observed on curriculum coverage ( $\bar{x} = 1.50$ ) or job performance ( $\bar{x} = 1.50$ ). Irregular salary payments ( $\bar{x} = 3.35$ ), poor infrastructure ( $\bar{x} = 3.20$ ), and inadequate institutional support ( $\bar{x} = 3.04$ ) were identified as key structural factors influencing teacher shortages and job satisfaction in state schools. The study recommends that policymakers and educational stakeholders develop clear staffing standards, increase funding allocations, streamline administrative processes, and implement teacher wellness initiatives to address understaffing in public secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, low staffing, motivation, organizational performance, teacher experience, school administration

## Cite as

Okunola, J. L., & Oduntan M. O. (2026). When Schools Run Lean: The Structural Determinants and Consequences of Teacher Understaffing in Public Secondary School in Nigeria. *Atras Journal*, 7(2), 185-198. <https://doi.org/10.70091/Atras/vol07no02.13>

**Email:** <sup>1</sup>[debasish.paul2525@kgpian.iitkgp.ac.in](mailto:debasish.paul2525@kgpian.iitkgp.ac.in)

\* emails: <sup>1</sup>[okunolaj@tasued.edu.ng](mailto:okunolaj@tasued.edu.ng), <sup>2</sup>[oduntanmuideen@gmail.com](mailto:oduntanmuideen@gmail.com)

Atras Journal/ 2026, published by the University of Saida Dr Moulay Tahar, Algeria  
This is an Open Access Article under The CC BY-NC 4.0

## Introduction

In contemporary organizational contexts, job satisfaction and job performance are widely recognized as interdependent factors influencing productivity and the achievement of organizational goals (Abdali & Hakimi, 2023). The importance of job satisfaction for optimal job performance has made it a central subject of scholarly inquiry. Research indicates that satisfied employees are more committed to organizational goals, whereas dissatisfied employees are more likely to respond to demotivating workplace conditions through withdrawal or turnover intentions (Gazzi et al., 2024). While some employees may attempt to improve their working conditions by expressing dissatisfaction, others may remain in the organization but respond through passive withdrawal behaviors.

Understaffing occurs when an organization lacks the number of qualified personnel needed to accomplish its objectives, resulting in excessive workloads for existing employees (Adeosun et al., 2018). Understaffing often leads to increased workload, which may generate stress and negatively influence job performance (Irene & Michael, 2024). It may also be defined as a situation in which an organization operates with fewer employees than required for optimal performance (Vallina et al., 2020). Rikala et al. (2024) view understaffing as a multifaceted organizational phenomenon characterized by an insufficient number of qualified employees to effectively meet operational demands, strategic objectives, and stakeholder expectations. Understaffing remains a persistent challenge affecting the quality of education and academic achievement in Nigerian secondary schools. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020), Nigeria faces a shortage of over 300,000 teachers, with an average student–teacher ratio of approximately 40:1 in secondary schools nationwide. Akande and Peters (2023) noted that the psychological dimension of the low teacher-to-student ratio in Nigerian public schools includes increased emotional exhaustion, higher depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Their research established a strong correlation between teachers' psychological well-being and students' academic performance, underscoring the critical importance of addressing understaffing as both a workforce and an educational quality issue.

The educational system in Osun State exemplifies these understaffing challenges, with Akinwumi (2016) reporting that 68% of public secondary schools operate below the recommended national staffing standard. This shortage has created a cascade of negative effects, including increased teaching loads averaging 35 periods per week per teacher, significantly higher than the recommended 24. This increased workload reduces time for lesson preparation, limits capacity for student assessment, and constrains participation in extracurricular activities. Taiwo et al. (2019) similarly found that understaffing is a significant factor negatively affecting job performance among public secondary school teachers in Osun State. Despite growing literature on teacher shortages in Nigeria, limited empirical research has systematically examined the structural determinants of understaffing and their differential consequences for teacher job satisfaction and job performance within a mixed-methods framework. This study addresses this gap by investigating the organizational and institutional drivers of understaffing and examining their implications for teacher outcomes.

While previous research has examined job satisfaction and performance in various educational contexts, there remains limited empirical understanding of these issues within the socio-economic and institutional context of Osun State's secondary schools. In particular, there is limited comprehensive analysis of the relationships among understaffing, job satisfaction, and job performance in this context. Despite these gaps, empirical evidence remains inconclusive regarding whether understaffing directly affects teacher performance, particularly in contexts where professional commitment may buffer structural constraints. This study therefore examines the structural determinants of teacher understaffing and its effects on job satisfaction and job performance in selected public secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the structural and institutional causes of teacher understaffing, examine the relationships between understaffing, job satisfaction and job performance among teachers, explore the organizational and contextual factors influencing these outcomes, and assess the consequences of understaffing for teacher job satisfaction and job performance.

## **Literature Review**

Teachers represent a primary influence on student academic development (Chetty et al., 2014). It is therefore essential that all children have access to qualified teachers to ensure comprehensive learning experiences. Globally, teacher shortages remain a significant impediment to delivering quality education; however, identifying the structural and systemic drivers of these shortages has proven challenging (UNESCO, 2026). Teacher shortages may be understood in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, each producing distinct consequences. For instance, teacher shortages often lead to large class sizes and overcrowded classrooms, increasing school dropout rates. Qualitative shortages occur when unqualified or underqualified individuals are recruited to fill staffing gaps (Wallet, 2015).

Job satisfaction is defined through multiple lenses. Locke (1976) articulates it as "the positive and enjoyable feeling that results from the evaluation of one's job or job experience." This definition captures the subjective nature of workplace satisfaction, acknowledging that individual perceptions are essential to understanding an employee's overall job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct encompassing several critical elements. Organizational factors such as advancement opportunities, policy participation, and job security emerge as significant contributors (Kanya et al., 2021). Equally important are interpersonal dynamics, including relationships with supervisors and colleagues, which profoundly impact an individual's workplace experience (Inayat & Khan, 2021). Compensation structures, including pay scales, profit-sharing plans, and professional development opportunities, further complicate the relationship between job satisfaction and compensation (Ainololu et al., 2019). From the nature of employment, modern employees no longer seek merely extrinsic satisfaction but demand psychological and intrinsic fulfillment from their professional roles (Inayat & Khan, 2021).

## ***Causes of Understaffing of teachers in Nigeria***

A primary driver of teacher understaffing is the broader economic and fiscal landscape of Nigeria, including Osun State. Inadequate education funding has been a persistent challenge, limiting the state's ability to hire and retain sufficient teaching staff. Ineye-Briggs (2023)

highlighted that budget allocations for education in Nigeria, including Osun State, often fall short of international recommendations, constraining efforts to expand and strengthen the teaching workforce. Low teacher salaries further exacerbate this financial shortfall. Ajadi (2024) reported that comparatively low remuneration in Osun State discourages potential entrants into the teaching profession and contributes to teacher attrition toward more lucrative sectors. Workplace conditions in public secondary schools in Osun State also contribute significantly to understaffing. Akinfolarin and Ehinola (2014) emphasized that substandard school facilities and a lack of teaching resources create a challenging work environment that deters potential teachers and diminishes job satisfaction among current educators. Large class sizes both reflect and reinforce understaffing conditions. Likuru and Mwila (2022) noted that overcrowded classrooms not only result from teacher shortages but also perpetuate the problem by creating stressful working conditions that further discourage teacher retention. Policy issues also play a crucial role in the understaffing crisis.

### ***Relationships between Understaffing, Job Satisfaction and Performance***

Adeyemi and Olusola (2023) examined the relationships between understaffing, job satisfaction and teacher performance in Osun State secondary schools. Their quantitative study, involving 500 teachers, discovered a negative relationship between perceived understaffing and job satisfaction ( $r = -0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, they observed a moderate positive correlation between job satisfaction and teacher performance ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that understaffing indirectly affects performance by influencing job satisfaction. Olaniyan (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study in Oyo and Osun States to examine how understaffing influences teachers' well-being and effectiveness. The study, which included surveys of 600 teachers and in-depth interviews with 30 participants, revealed that teachers in understaffed schools reported 30% lower job satisfaction and 25% higher stress levels than those in adequately staffed schools. Classroom observations indicated that teachers in understaffed schools were less likely to employ diverse instructional methods, potentially affecting student learning outcomes.

Despite substantial evidence linking understaffing to reduced job satisfaction, findings regarding its direct impact on teacher performance remain mixed. Some studies report performance decline under high workload conditions, while others suggest that professional commitment may buffer adverse effects (Guarino et al., 2006). This inconsistency underscores the need for context-specific empirical investigation, particularly within developing education systems characterized by structural resource constraints.

### ***Motivation-Hygiene Theory***

Motivation-Hygiene Theory by Herzberg, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, postulates that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are driven by two distinct categories of factors: motivators (intrinsic factors) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors). According to this theory, the presence of motivators leads to job satisfaction, while their absence leads to no satisfaction. On the other hand, the absence of hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction, but their presence does not necessarily lead to job satisfaction. In the context of this study, understaffing can be considered a hygiene factor that affects teachers' working conditions and workload. When schools are understaffed, teachers may experience increased workload, stress,

and poor working conditions, leading to job dissatisfaction. However, addressing understaffing alone may not directly lead to job satisfaction unless motivating factors such as recognition, achievement, and growth opportunities are also present. In the context of the research topic, understaffing can be considered a high job demand that requires teachers to exert more effort to meet the demands of their work. Limited resources, such as inadequate staffing, can further exacerbate the negative effects of high job demands on teacher job satisfaction and performance. By addressing understaffing and providing adequate resources, schools can reduce job demands on teachers and improve job satisfaction and performance. The theory provides a framework for understanding how understaffing, as a working condition, and job demands can influence teacher job satisfaction and performance. Applying this theoretical perspective can help interpret research findings and develop strategies to mitigate the negative effects of understaffing on teachers.

## **Methods and Materials**

The study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design. This design allows for the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis within a single study (Sharma et al., 2023). The questionnaire and In-depth interview were designed around the same four research questions, ensuring thematic alignment between the two methods. Moreover, quantitative findings were triangulated with a small amount of qualitative data during the discussion of results. This paper presents lived experiences and institutional factors that influence the statistical relationship between understaffing and teacher outcomes, which a purely quantitative approach would not have captured. Although it lacked the generalizability of a larger representative sample, a purely qualitative approach likewise lacked generalizability.

### ***Participants***

This study was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria. Secondary schools were selected from the three senatorial districts in Osun State: Osun Central (1,603,400); Osun East (1,581,800); and Osun West (1,520,600), for a combined total of 4,705,800. The total number of teachers in public secondary schools across the three senatorial districts was 4,200, which served as the accessible population for this study. The Yamane (1967) sample size formula was used to determine an appropriate sample size from the teacher population:

## **Methods and Materials**

The study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design. This design allows for the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis within a single study (Sharma et al., 2023). The questionnaire and In-depth interview were designed around the same four research questions, ensuring thematic alignment between the two methods. Moreover, quantitative findings were triangulated with a small amount of qualitative data during the discussion of results. This paper presents lived experiences and institutional factors that influence the statistical relationship between understaffing and teacher outcomes, which a purely quantitative approach would not have captured. Although it lacked the generalizability of a larger representative sample, a purely qualitative approach likewise lacked generalizability.

### ***Participants***

This study was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria. Secondary schools were selected from the three senatorial districts in Osun State: Osun Central (1,603,400); Osun East (1,581,800); and Osun West (1,520,600), for a combined total of 4,705,800. The total number of teachers in public secondary schools across the three senatorial districts was 4,200, which served as the accessible population for this study. The Yamane (1967) sample size formula was used to determine an appropriate sample size from the teacher population:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \text{ Where:}$$

- $n$  = sample size
- $N$  = total population of teachers = 4,200
- $e$  = margin of error = 0.05 (5% level of precision)

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{4200}{1 + 4200(0.05)^2} \\ n &= \frac{4200}{1 + 4200(0.0025)} \\ n &= \frac{4200}{1 + 10.5} \\ n &= \frac{4200}{11.5} \\ n &= 365.2 \approx 420 \end{aligned}$$

The three senatorial districts (Osun West, Osun East, and Osun Central) were purposely selected to ensure geographical representativeness across the entire state. Qualitatively, a few in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with three Heads of Departments, one from each of the schools picked in the three senatorial zones. In contrast, a key in-depth interview was conducted with the three principals from the selected schools and two key officials of the state's TESCO office.

### ***Research Instruments***

A mixed-methods approach to instrumentation was adopted for this study. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 420 teachers in secondary schools in Osun State. An in-depth interview was conducted to reveal the structural challenges in teachers' education in Nigeria. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were viable for delving into the ideal situations in Nigerian public secondary schools.

### ***Research Procedures***

This research ensured that each eligible teacher had an equal probability of selection. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze quantitative data, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics, including

bar charts, pie charts and percentages, were used to summarise demographic characteristics. Means and standard deviations were computed to address the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using independent-samples t-tests, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

## Results

Table 1. *Causes of understaffing of teachers in selected secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria*

| Items                                                                                            | Mean | S. D | Rank            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------|
| There is a lack of incentives (e.g., rural posting allowances) to attract teachers to our school | 4.75 | 0.48 | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| The workload in public schools discourages potential teachers from joining                       | 4.69 | 0.41 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Many teachers leave for federal schools or private sectors due to better conditions.             | 4.21 | 0.37 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| The state government's budget allocation for hiring teachers is insufficient.                    | 4.14 | 0.33 | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| There is an inadequate training and development programmes for teachers.                         | 4.12 | 0.29 | 5 <sup>th</sup> |

Note 1. Field Survey (2025).

Table 1 presents respondents' perspectives on the causes of teacher understaffing in selected secondary schools in Osun State. In the table, the standard deviation (SD) indicates the degree of variability or spread in responses around the mean, with lower values suggesting greater consensus among respondents; and the Rank denotes the relative priority of each item based on its mean score. The findings indicate that lack of incentives, such as rural allowances and monetary benefits, ranked highest among the perceived causes of understaffing ( $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ). This suggests that the absence of financial incentives may hinder teacher recruitment and retention in public secondary schools.

The response from the In-depth Interview (IDI) aligned with this quantitative report as thus:

Low remuneration and the absence of incentives are major contributors to understaffing in this school. Teachers are underpaid and salary scales are inadequate. Without improved incentives, the teaching profession may continue to experience staffing shortages. (IDI, Head of Department, Male 2024)

This finding aligns with Oladele and Adeniyi (2020), who emphasized the importance of incentives in attracting and retaining teachers, particularly in rural areas.

## Test of Hypotheses

***Hypothesis 1: There is no significant effect of understaffing on teachers' job performance in Osun State, Nigeria on basis of gender.***

| Job Performance            |   | Equal Variances Assumed | Equal Variances Not Assumed |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Levene's Test for Equality | F | 3.975                   |                             |

|                                           |                       |       |         |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| of Variances                              | Sig.                  | .058  |         |
| t-test for Equality of Means              | T                     | -.305 | -.291   |
|                                           | Df                    | 317   | 125.124 |
|                                           | Sig. (2-tailed)       | .760  | .772    |
|                                           | Mean Difference       | -.720 | -.720   |
|                                           | Std. Error Difference | 2.357 | 2.475   |
| 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Lower                 | 5.367 | -5.617  |
|                                           | Upper                 | 3.928 | 4.178   |

Note 2. Field survey (2025).

Table 2 presents an independent-samples t-test showing the difference in the effect of understaffing on teachers’ job performance in Osun State, Nigeria, by gender. The analysis of this table presents the results of the independent sample test on the effect of understaffing on job performance of teachers in selected secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria, on the basis of gender. In interpreting the table, the F value corresponds to Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, which assesses whether the two groups (male and female teachers) have statistically equal variances; a non-significant result (Sig. > .05) indicates that equal variances can be assumed. The Sig. (2-tailed) value represents the probability level at which the null hypothesis is rejected; values greater than .05 indicate no statistically significant difference between groups. The T value is the test statistic from the independent-samples t-test, indicating the magnitude and direction of the difference between the group means. The Df refers to degrees of freedom, which accounts for sample size in determining the critical value of T. The Mean Difference reflects the arithmetic difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers, while the Standard Error Difference measures the precision of that estimate. The 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference provides the range within which the true population difference is expected to fall; an interval that includes zero indicates no significant difference.

With these parameters established, the results revealed no statistically significant difference in the effect of understaffing on teachers' job performance based on gender,  $t(317) = -0.305$ ,  $p = .760$ . The Levene's test was non-significant ( $F = 3.975$ ,  $p = .058$ ), confirming that equal variances were assumed. These findings suggest that gender does not moderate the relationship between understaffing and job performance. The results indicate that male and female teachers are equally affected by understaffing. This finding aligns with Guarino et al. (2006), who concluded that organizational factors, rather than demographic characteristics, primarily shape teacher job satisfaction and performance. Studies have consistently shown that understaffing leads to increased workload, stress and burnout among teachers, regardless of gender (Gen et al., 2025). An administrative Vice-Principal reiterated as follows:

“Understaffing increases my stress level. For example, I am the administrative vice-principal, the English teacher and also the CRS teacher. Except, I decide not to go to a class, I am scheduled for the whole 8 periods in a day. You cannot

expect me to go to the 8 classes. So, I sometimes do 5 out of 8 classes. This affects my administrative performance”.

**Hypothesis 2: There is no significant effect of understaffing on teachers’ job satisfaction in Osun State, Nigeria on basis of gender.**

| Job Satisfaction                          |                       | Equal Variances Assumed | Equal Variances Not Assumed |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances   | F                     | 3.975                   |                             |
|                                           | Sig.                  | .058                    |                             |
| t-test for Equality of Means              | T                     | -.308                   | -.291                       |
|                                           | Df                    | 317                     | 125.124                     |
|                                           | Sig. (2-tailed)       | .561                    | .772                        |
|                                           | Mean Difference       | -.720                   | -.720                       |
|                                           | Std. Error Difference | 2.357                   | 2.475                       |
|                                           |                       |                         |                             |
| 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Lower                 | 5.367                   | -5.617                      |
|                                           | Upper                 | 3.928                   | 4.178                       |

Note 3. Field Survey (2025).

Table 3 presents the results of the independent-samples test on the effect of understaffing on job satisfaction of teachers in selected secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria, on the basis of gender. As with Table 2, the F value from Levene's Test for Equality of Variances examines whether the variance in job satisfaction scores is statistically equal across male and female teachers; a Sig. value greater than .05 indicates that equal variances can be assumed. The Sig. (2-tailed) value indicates the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis; values above .05 indicate no statistically significant difference between groups. The T value is the t-test statistic reflecting the direction and magnitude of the difference between male and female mean scores on job satisfaction. The Df denotes degrees of freedom used in computing the critical T value relative to sample size. The Mean Difference captures the arithmetic gap between the average job satisfaction scores of male and female teachers, while the Standard Error Difference measures the reliability of that estimate. The 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference defines the range within which the true population difference is likely to fall; a range spanning zero confirms the absence of a significant difference.

With these parameters established, the analysis indicated no statistically significant gender difference in the effect of understaffing on teachers' job satisfaction,  $t(317) = -0.308$ ,  $p = .561$ . The Levene's test was non-significant ( $F = 3.975$ ,  $p = .058$ ), confirming that equal variances were assumed. The mean difference between male and female teachers was negligible (Mean Difference =  $-.720$ , SE =  $2.357$ ), and the 95% confidence interval further

confirms the absence of a meaningful group difference. These findings suggest that male and female teachers are equally affected by understaffing in terms of job satisfaction. This outcome aligns with Guarino et al. (2006), who concluded that organizational factors, rather than demographic characteristics, primarily influence teacher job satisfaction and performance outcomes.

This outcome is in agreement with the submission made by a participant of the In-depth Interview (IDI) as follows:

“Understaffing adds to my stress level. I am not satisfied with this job. However, when my students pass external exam, especially my subject, it encourages me. Job satisfaction comes before any other factor. If salaries are increased, incentives are provided and more teachers are recruited, I believe I will perform better”.

## Discussion

The findings from the descriptive statistics established that lack of incentives ( $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ), high workload ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ), high attrition rates ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ), insufficient government budget allocation ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) and inadequate training and development programmes ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ ) were the principal structural causes of teacher understaffing in public secondary schools in Osun State. These descriptive patterns provide the contextual backdrop against which the hypotheses analyses are interpreted.

### ***Hypothesis One: Effect of Understaffing on Teachers' Job Performance by Gender***

The independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in the effect of understaffing on teachers' job performance based on gender,  $t(317) = -0.305$ ,  $p = .760$ . This finding indicates that gender does not moderate the relationship between understaffing and job performance, suggesting that male and female teachers are equally affected by understaffing in terms of job performance outcomes. This result is consistent with Guarino et al. (2006), who concluded, from a comprehensive review of the teacher recruitment and retention literature, that organizational factors, rather than demographic characteristics such as gender, are the primary determinants of teacher performance outcomes. The finding further aligns with Adeyemi and Olusola (2023), whose study of 500 teachers in Osun State found that the adverse consequences of understaffing on teacher outcomes were distributed across demographic groups rather than concentrated in any particular category. From the perspective of Herzberg's (2017) Two-Factor Theory, this result is theoretically coherent: hygiene factors, such as understaffing and poor working conditions, operate at the organizational level and affect all teachers, irrespective of gender. The absence of adequate staffing constitutes a hygiene deficiency that generates dissatisfaction across the board, without discrimination by gender. Gen et al. (2025) similarly found that workload-related performance outcomes among junior high school teachers showed no significant gender variation, reinforcing the conclusion that structural conditions bear uniformly on teacher performance regardless of individual demographic characteristics.

### ***Hypothesis Two: Effect of Understaffing on Teachers' Job Satisfaction by Gender***

The independent-samples t-test equally revealed no statistically significant gender difference in the effect of understaffing on teachers' job satisfaction,  $t(317) = -0.308$ ,  $p = .561$ . The mean difference between male and female teachers was negligible (Mean Difference =  $-.720$ ,  $SE = 2.357$ ), and the 95% confidence interval further confirmed the absence of a meaningful group difference. This finding suggests that the erosive effect of understaffing on job satisfaction is experienced equally by male and female teachers in Osun State public secondary schools. This outcome is consistent with Olaniyan (2022), whose mixed-methods study found that, regardless of personal characteristics, teachers in understaffed schools reported significantly lower job satisfaction and higher stress levels than those in adequately staffed schools. The finding also corroborates Inayat and Khan (2021), who found that interpersonal and organizational dynamics, rather than individual demographic attributes, are the stronger predictors of employee job satisfaction. Theoretically, Herzberg's (2017) Two-Factor Theory again provides a useful explanatory lens: the absence of hygiene factors such as adequate staffing, competitive remuneration, and supportive working conditions produces job dissatisfaction that cuts across gender lines. This suggests that interventions targeting understaffing and its structural determinants are likely to improve job satisfaction for all teachers, not just specific demographic subgroups. Taken together, the findings from both hypotheses point to understaffing as a structurally embedded organizational problem whose consequences are borne uniformly across the teaching workforce, underscoring the need for systemic rather than demographically targeted policy responses.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The study revealed significant implications for teaching practice and educational policy in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The lack of incentives, high workload, and inadequate professional development as major drivers of understaffing underscore the essentiality for school management and policymakers to redesign motivation frameworks to improve teachers' work and standard of living. Moreover, the significant negative effect of understaffing on teachers' job satisfaction further suggests that excessive workload and poor governmental support directly erode teachers' motivation and performance. Schools should therefore create a workload management framework, improve salary structures, and establish a supportive institutional system that values and engages teachers professionally.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to identify key structural factors contributing to teacher understaffing in public secondary schools, including a lack of incentives, excessive workload, poor working conditions, insufficient government funding, and inadequate training and development programs. The study found that teacher shortages significantly reduce job satisfaction, although no statistically significant direct effect was observed on curriculum coverage or job performance. Conversely, adequate staffing appears to be associated with improved teacher well-being and instructional capacity. The study further identifies irregular salary payments, poor infrastructure, inadequate institutional support, and limited opportunities for professional

growth as contributing factors to teacher shortages and reduced job satisfaction in public secondary schools.

## Recommendations

Policymakers and educational authorities should prioritize strategies to enhance teacher welfare, provide competitive incentives, and improve working conditions to mitigate the teacher shortage and foster a conducive learning environment. Policymakers and educational authorities should prioritize strategies to enhance teacher welfare, provide competitive incentives, and improve working conditions to address persistent staffing shortages. Educational authorities should strengthen recruitment and retention strategies, implement policies to manage workloads, and expand access to professional development programs.

## About the Author

**John Lola Okunola** is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociological Studies, College of Sociological Studies, Tai Solarin Federal University of Education in Ogun State, Nigeria. A visiting Professor of Criminal Psychology at African American University, Porto-Novo, Benin Republic. Membership of many Academic and Professional associations both locally and internationally. A philanthropist and human rights group associate. Married with children. 0000-0002-9870-3462

**Muideen Oluwole Oduntan** is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He holds a Master's degree from the same institution. His PhD research focuses on disability employment, examining workplace facilities, reasonable accommodations, and inclusivity for employees with physical disabilities in Nigeria's public service. His research interests include cross-cultural management, multinational corporations, employment relations, disability employment, and social inclusion in emerging markets. He has published in the *Journal of Studies in Humanities* at Tai Solarin Federal University of Education (2025) and many others. ORCID - 0009-0005-5763-8296

**Funding:** This research is not funded.

**Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

**Originality:** This manuscript is an original work.

**Statement on artificial intelligence:** This document has been enhanced through the use of Grammarly which was employed to refine its linguistic style and correct grammar and spelling. While the incorporation of these technologies may introduce some AI-generated linguistic patterns, it is important to note that the core intellectual content, data interpretation, and conclusions presented are entirely the work of the author.

## References

Abdali, S. M., & Hakimi, H. (2023). Factors of job satisfaction and its effects on employee performance: A Case Study of Ghazni University employees. *Journal of Human*

- Resource Management – HR Advances and Developments*, 26(2), 58-75.  
<https://doi.org/10.46287/FZSG6451>
- Adeosun, A., Adeyemo, A., & Adelowo, G. (2018). Job satisfaction of secondary school vocational teachers in Oyo state, Nigeria. *Greener Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(1), 1–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15580/GJETS.2018.1.041118057>
- Adeyemi, T., & Olusola, O. (2023). Understaffing, job satisfaction and teacher performance: Exploring the relationships in Osun State secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 51(2), 230-245.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211000851>
- Akande, T., & Peters, R. (2023). Psychological impact of understaffing on teacher performance: A longitudinal study. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 89-106.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09742-4>
- Alimi, A., Ehinola, B., & Alabi, O. (2012). School types. Facilities and academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. *International Education Studies*, 5(3), 44-49. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n3p44>
- Akinlolu, O., Olagija, D., & Onaolapo, T. (2019). Teachers job performance in secondary schools, Nigeria: The effect of family satisfaction and job satisfaction. *The International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(3), 65–71.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.24940/theijbm/2019/v7/i3/BM1903-011>
- Akinwumi, S. (2016). *Teacher Shortage and its effect on students' learning outcome in Osun State, Nigeria*. [Paper presentation], Conference of Delegates for Nigeria Union of Teachers.
- Ajadi, O. (2024). Teachers' remuneration and Student's involvement in Public Secondary Schools in Southwest, Nigeria. *Innovative Journal of Education*, 12(5), 52-63.  
<https://doi.org/10.22159/ijoe.2024v12i5.52369>
- Chetty, R., Friedman, J., & Rockoff, J. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2633-2679. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.9.2633>
- Gazzi, A., Mohd F., Islam, A., Amin, M., & Senathirajah, R. (2024). Analyzing the impact of employee job satisfaction on their job behavior in the industrial setting: An analysis from the perspective of job performance. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market and Complexity*, 10(4), Article 100427.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100427>
- Guarino, C., Santibañez, L., & Daley, G. A. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 173-208. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076002173>
- Gan, Y., Deng, J., Liu, C. et al. (2025). Exploring gender differences in workload and job performance: insights from junior high school teachers. *BMC Psychology*, 13, Article 184. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02439-z>
- Hanushek, E. A., Peterson, P. E., & Talpey, L. (2020). The impact of teacher staffing on student achievement. *Education Next*, 20(1), 52-63.  
<https://www.educationnext.org/impact-teacher-staffing-student-achievement/>
- Irene, O., & Michael, F. (2024). Impact of job satisfaction on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Mubi North Local Government Area, Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research and Library Science*, 4(8).  
<https://taapublications.com/tijerls/article/view/193>

- Ineye-Briggs, A. (2023). Inadequate Educational Funding: Implications for Quality Education Delivery in Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Evaluation*, 9(8), 101-108. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijee.2013/vol9n8pp101-108>
- Inayat, W., & Khan, M. (2021). A study of job satisfaction and its effect on the employees working in private sector organisation. *Hindawi Education Research International*, Article 1751495. <https://doi.org/10.1155/1751495>
- Kanya, N., Fathoni, A. B., & Ramdani, Z. (2021). Factors affecting teacher performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 10(4), 1462-1468. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i4.21693>
- Olaniyan, O. (2022). Understaffing, teacher well-being and pedagogical effectiveness in Oyo and Osun States. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(3), 420-439. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220968586>
- Rikala, P., Braun, G., Jarvinen, M., Stahre, J., & Hamalainen, R. (2024). Understanding and Measuring skill gaps in Industry 4.0 – A review. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 20(1), 123-206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123206>
- Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E., & Kain, J. (2005). Teachers, schools and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417-458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0262.2005.00584.x>
- Sharma, L., Sandesh, B., Dinesh, B., Sushil, B., & Rambabu Sapkota (2023). Exploring the Mixed Methods Research Design: Types, Purposes, Strengths, Challenges and Criticisms. *Global Academic Linguistics and Literature*, 5(1), 3-12. <https://doi.org/10.58321/globalacademiclinguisticsandliterature.v5i1.189>
- Taiwo, B., & Ogunwale, R. (2023). Policy challenges in teacher recruitment and retention: The case of Osun State. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 16(2), 123-142. <https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2023.562.7>
- UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all..* <https://doi.org/10.54676/JJNK6989>
- Vallina, S., Alegre, J., & Lobrez-Cabrales, A. (2020). The challenges of increasing employees' well-being and performance: How human resource management practices and engaging leadership work together toward reaching this goal. *Human Resource Management*, 60(3), 333-347. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22021>
- Wallet, P. (2015). *Teacher shortages and migration: The situation in low- and middle-income countries*. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Information Paper No. 21). UNESCO. <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/teacher-shortages-migration-low-middle-income-countries-2015-en.pdf>