

## DEMOTION AND WORKERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBIO-AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

**Lynus, S. T.**

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between demotion and workers' productivity in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The objectives of the study was to determine the relationship between the demotion and measures of workers' productivity (efficiency, resource utilization, quality output) in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study was anchored on Bureaucratic Theory and Theory X and Y. The researcher utilized the correlational research design. The target population of this study consisted of 510 staff of ten (10) private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA, Rivers State. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested with Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $R^{\circ}$ ) technique. The result showed that demotion has a moderate positive relationship with measures of workers' productivity (efficiency, resource utilization, quality output) in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. It was concluded that demotion significantly influence workers' productivity in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State should instill proper workplace disciplinary measures such as demotion, suspension and dismissal so as to enhance workers' productivity in the organization.

**Keywords:** Demotion, workers' productivity, efficiency, resource utilization, quality output

### INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns of every business organization is how to increase the productivity of its workforce. Business organizations must maintain enough productivity to have a competitive position. Productivity is a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory, system etc. in converting inputs into useful outputs. According to Mathis and John (2013), productivity is defined as a measure of the quantity and quality of work completed while taking into consideration the cost of capital employed. Employee productivity reflects the productivity of labour in terms of the individual's capacity to work and the intensity of their effort (Kane, 2014). Previous studies have been conducted using different important variables such as work environment, leadership, job satisfaction, training, motivation, organizational culture, performance management, etc, to predict workers productivity (Duru & Shimawua, 2019; Ipole & Okpa, 2019; Ezeamama, 2019; Elliot, 2019; Huselid, 2014; Ker, 2021; Rogers & Hunter; Odesanya, 2020). One concept that is gaining enormous popularity in both business research and practice to improve workers' productivity is workplace discipline through demotion.

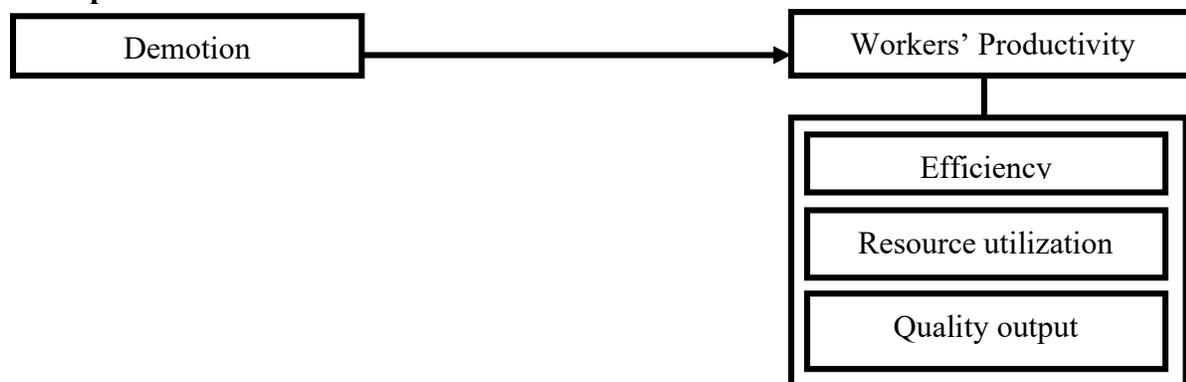
Demotion implies a downward movement. Demotion can also be defined as a downward movement within an organization’s hierarchy leading to an actual or perceived loss of authority and/or responsibility (Carson & Carson, 2007), either with or without a decrease in salary (Ng, Sorensen, Eby, & Feldman, 2007). Demotion is a compulsory reduction in an employees’ rank or job title within the organization hierarchy of the company, public service department or other bodies. Green, (2009) opine that demotion may also lead to the loss of other privileges’ associated with a more senior rank and/or a reduction in salary or benefits. An employee may be demoted for violating the rules of the organization by behaviors such as but not limited to excessive lateness, misconduct, or negligence. Albert (2003) assert that in some cases, an employee may be demoted as an alternative to being laid off, if the employee has poor job performance or if the company is facing a financial crisis.

Studies on workplace discipline include; Owele (2007) studied employees’ perception of disciplinary procedures in the Kenya Civil Service: a study of selected ministries. Maikara (2012) studied the effects of disciplinary procedures on employees’ performance in Postal Corporation of Kenya. Apalia (2017) established the effects of discipline management on employee performance in an organization: the case of County Education Office Human Resource Department, Turkana County. Yvonne (2010) studied the challenges faced by teacher’s service commission in transferring teachers on disciplinary grounds. However, none of the studies focused on workplace demotion as it affects workers’ productivity. It is against this realization that this study seeks to examine the relationship between demotion and workers’ productivity in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

The specific objectives for the study are as follows:

- i To examine the nature of relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- ii To determine the nature of relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- iii To investigate the relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1:** Relationship between Demotion and Workers’ Productivity

**Source:** From the Researcher's Desk (2025) with measures of Workers' Productivity were adapted from the work of Lau (2011).

### **Research questions**

In the effort to accomplish the objectives of this research work, the following research questions were put forward to help the researcher achieve its set goals.

- i What is the nature of relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State?
- ii What is the relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State?
- iii What is the relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were given in null form so as to arrive at a logical conclusion and to achieve its stated objectives.

- Ho:1** There is no significant relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- Ho:2** There is no significant relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- Ho:3** There is no significant relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

This research work was anchored on Bureaucratic Theory and Theory X and Y. The Max Weber's work about bureaucracy, translated into English in 1946, was one of the major contributions that have influenced the literature of public administration. The word bureaucracy is derived from two words; "bureau" and "Kratos." While the word "bureau" refers to the office the Greek suffix "kratia or kratos" means power or rule. Thus we use the word "bureaucracy" to refer to the power of the office. "Bureaucracy" is rule conducted from a desk or office, i.e. by the preparation and dispatch of written documents and electronic ones. Weber (1946) presents bureaucracy as both a scientific and generic model that can work in both the public and private sectors. One of the points of argument of this theory was evident in Max Weber's rational-legal authority, which became the defining feature of organizational structures, especially government bureaucracies, to this day. It steered organizational setups to rational based considerations, which are in line with the science of administration idea. In other words, Weber's bureaucracy consists of the traditional way of thinking in public administration that relied on the same "ingredients" to reform public administration based on the science of administration.

According to Weber, bureaucracy "is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally that most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings. The theory holds that the evolution of societies is facilitated by three types of authority identified as traditional, charismatic and legal rational authority. It is the legal-rational type of authority that constitutes the basis of Weber's concept of bureaucracy and the foundation of modern civilization as it is premised on "a belief in

the legitimacy of the pattern of normative rules and the rights of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands. The theory was relevant to the present study as it provide the basis for organizations to operate in a rational way instead of following the “arbitrary whims” or irrational emotions and intentions of owners and managers.

### **Theory X and Y**

Theory X and Y was propounded by McGregor (1960). McGregor terms Theory X as ‘Management by Direction and Control’ and describes Theory X managers as authoritarian with little regard for their subordinate employees. They believe subordinates see work as a form of punishment, are unwilling to take responsibility, are intransigent, uncreative, uncooperative and cannot be trusted. According to Aithal & Kumar (2016) Theory X managers believe their employees are less intelligent than managers, lazier than managers are or work solely for a sustainable income. Comments which are much more controversial today than when McGregor originally stated the Theory in 1960. Gurbuz, Sahin and Koksal (2014) suggest that Theory X is a somewhat pessimistic view; however a Theory X manager will apply this approach with an optimistic belief that it is the most effective method to achieve business performance and success in a particular situation.

It has been argued that under Theory X assumptions self-motivation is not possible and that employees will require constant supervision, persuasion, punishment and rewards to achieve organizational goals. In the authors experience Theory X traits are more apparent in manufacturing environments where time served workers apply their trade with union affiliation. This does not mean that people are lazy or adverse to work, on the contrary, skilled workers take genuine pride in their work and are often motivated to put in additional effort or time in order to ensure a task is completed satisfactorily, largely driven by a personal desire to do a good job rather than additional remuneration. This theory is relevant to the present study because an organization which enforce discipline and treats their employees as customers can achieve higher employee’s productivity. Enhancing employees’ productivity can retain good employees and improve organization’s performance through taking full use of disciplinary strategies. Ultimately, the organization can achieve performance through their employees.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Demotion**

Demotion implies a downward movement. In an organizational context, it means the move of an employee to a less important position (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2009) or to a position with a lower occupational status. Employers and employees alike have long regarded demotion as a kind of failure, as something one should only turn to as a last resort. Moving downwards was assumed to lead to despair and depression. More recently, however, demotion has been promoted as a useful instrument for extending older workers’ labor force participation.

Demotion can be defined as a downward movement within an organization’s hierarchy leading to an actual or perceived loss of authority and/or responsibility (Carson & Carson, 2007), either with or without a decrease in salary (Ng, Sorensen, Eby, & Feldman, 2007). Demotion is just opposite to promotion. In demotion, the employee is shifted to a job lower in status, grade and responsibilities. “Demotion refers to the lowering down of the status, salary and responsibilities of an employee.” In the words of Dale Yoder, “Demotion is a shift to a position in which

responsibilities are decreased. Promotion is, in a sense, an increase in rank and demotion is decrease in rank.” When an employee is demoted, his pride suffers a more severe jolt than it does when he is superseded by his junior. Some managers hesitate to demote a man. They prefer to discharge him rather than to demote him on the lower job because he will not accept the lower job and will turn to be a disgruntled employee and his position will not be good for better industrial relations.

### **Workers’ Productivity**

Productivity can be referred to as the quantity of work that is attained in a unit of time by means of the factors of production. These factors include technology, capital, entrepreneurship, land and labour. It is the link between inputs and outputs and increases when an increase in output occurs with a lesser than comparative increase in input. It also occurs when equal amount of output is generated using fewer inputs (ILO, 2005). According to Elliot (2009), workers productivity is basically related to performance in terms of individual goals. These performances are measured through efficiency and quantity of output produced productivity has been described by Herti, (2011) as the level of an individual’s work achievement after having exerted effort. They believe that productivity is an individual phenomenon. However, certain environmental factors will have a significant bearing on individual performance.

Worker’s productivity indicates the effectiveness and efficiency of workers regarding the production and sale of the output (Huselid, 2014). Workers’ productivity reflects the productivity of labour in terms of the individual’s capacity to work and the intensity of their effort (Kane, 2014). Employees’ productivity varies as a function of other input components and the efficiency with which the factor of production is used (Kerr, 2011). Increased productivity can be facilitated by innovation and technological advancement, skills or improvement in efficiency. Workers’ productivity which tends to improve on the long run, are considered to be the main catalyst to higher productive results, profitability, earning and rising living (Rogers & Hunter, 2011). According to Kerr (2011) workers productivity can be used by organizations as a competitive advantage to redirect workers effort towards the common goal of improving productivity. McNamara (2003) asserted that productivity can be measured in terms of quality, quantity, time, and cost, among other metrics. As a result, he argued that analyzing productivity is concerned with determining the amount of time it takes an average individual to produce a specific level of production. This study utilized two indicators to measure workers’ productivity. They include; efficiency, quality output and resource utilization.

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency is the ability to do something or produce something with a minimum amount of effort. It is the ability to do something or produce something without wasting materials, time or energy. It is competency in performance. Employee efficiency is a complex measurable parameter which characterizes an output produced by efforts and by achievements of an employee. Employees are assets for the organization. Organizations have learned the importance of the people in the organization in that without them, the organizations objectives could not be accomplished.

Vanbruaenene (2004) asserted that, efficiency refers to how an organization uses its resources to achieve organization objectives. Efficiency measures include, per unit costs which refers to a measure of per unit cost and reveals how many resources are consumed in producing a unit of service. Cycle time: Measures the amount of time it takes for a process to be completed.

Efficiency is all about resource allocation across alternative uses (Kumar & Gulati, 2010). Efficiency measures relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs (Low, 2000). According to Pinprayong & Siengthai (2012) there is a difference between business efficiency and organizational efficiency.

### **Resource Utilization**

According to organizational research, resource utilization is the efficient and effective utilization of an organization's resources when they are needed. It is the measure of how effectively team member's work. The term "resource utilization" refers to the process of efficiently organizing and assigning employees and equipment for various projects or services while avoiding idle resources. Having knowledge about the availability of resources and when they will be available for the activity is critical for controlling costs and executing project activities smoothly. Resource utilization is always a priority metric for service businesses since how and where the resources are allocated will directly impact the overall performance of projects. Resource utilization rate offers real-time visibility and transparency into your projects, which means you are less likely to miss any important details and be more active towards catching errors before they develop into significant issues. According to Surbhi (2022), effective resource utilization rate provides managers with a comprehensive understanding of proactive capacity planning. It means that if a project demands the involvement of any other resource, then managers get ample time to procure another resource via internal or external channels.

### **Quality Output**

Output refers to the total production of goods and services of a whole country over a given period – its gross domestic product. The term may refer to all the work, energy, goods, or services produced by an individual, company, factory or machine. In contracting, the term means the desired result from a contractor or project. According to the European Statistics Code of Practice, Output quality is assessed in terms of the following quality criteria: (i) Relevance: Outputs, i.e. European Statistics meet the needs of users; (ii) Accuracy and Reliability: Outputs accurately and reliably portray reality; (iii) Timeliness and Punctuality: Outputs are released in a timely and punctual manner; (iv) Coherence and Comparability: Outputs are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources; (v) Accessibility and Clarity: Outputs are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Bayu, Surati and Sri (2020) analyzed the effect of demotion on the work motivation of the West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police personnel. The study objective was to analyze the effect of work motivation on personnel performance. This research adopted a causal associative design. The data collection method is the census method. Respondents in this study were all personnel performance of West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police who had rotated positions as many as 60 people. The data collection tool used is a questionnaire. The data analysis tool uses SEM-PLS analysis. The study's conclusions are (1) Promotion has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation. (2) Transfer has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation. (3) Demotions have a negative and significant effect on Work Motivation. (4) Motivation has a positive and significant effect on performance. This study is different from the present study as it is carried out in private secondary school in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. However, the present

study utilized the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $R^0$ ) in testing the relationship between the dimensions of demotion and measures of workers' productivity.

Idris and Alegbeleye (2015) examine the role of discipline on organizational effectiveness in the public sector with specific reference to Nigeria Customs Service. The study was guided by four (4) objectives and research questions. In order to achieve the research objectives, an in-depth literature review through content analysis. The researcher employed the descriptive survey and case study design to examine the role of discipline as been practiced at the Nigeria Customs Service. A simple random sampling method was used to draw a sample of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents from Nigeria Customs Service Ikeja Command. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires. Similarly, the chi-square goodness of fit statistical technique was used with the aid of excel spread sheet. The findings revealed inter alia that, there is a need to keep high standard of discipline in an organization. It also revealed that one of the causes of high disciplinary cases in the Nigeria Customs Service is blamed on godfatherism and favouritism. The study recommends that the organizations should maintain records of disciplinary cases, new employees should know the objectives and goal of the organization and should also be acquainted with the rules and regulations governing the organization. The study therefore, concludes that discipline should start by having self discipline and discipline should not be seen as punitive measure but also as a means to correct and enforcement of standards in the organization. This study is different from the present study as it is carried out in private secondary school in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. However, the present study utilized the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $R^0$ ) in testing the relationship between the dimensions of demotion and measures of workers' productivity.

Idongesit (2018) investigated staff disciplinary methods on employees' performances in business organizations. The study objectives was to determine how the use of verbal warnings affecting employees' performances in a business organization, and to examine how the use of demotion affect employees' performances in a business organization. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, while random sampling techniques was used to select the respondents. The instrument for data collection was administered to 344 respondents and the responses used for the study. The instrument was vetted by the supervisor in the Department of Test and Measurement. Data collected was analyzed using independent t-test analysis. The result of the data analyzed were all significant and from the result of the analysis, it was concluded that staff disciplinary method like the use of verbal warnings and demotion affects employee's performances in business organizations. This study is different from the present study as it is carried out in private secondary school in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. However, the present study utilized the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $R^0$ ) in testing the relationship between the dimensions of demotion and measures of workers' productivity.

Smith *et al.* (2021) carried out a study on the role of employee demotion in affecting employee productivity in South African public sector organizations. The study used a quantitative research design with survey methodology. The population of interest consisted of public sector employees working in South African government departments and agencies. A total of 448 public sector employees from 22 South African government departments and agencies were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using an online questionnaire that assessed public sector employees' experiences with employee demotion and perceived

productivity. The questionnaire included items adapted from previous studies, such as the Demotion Experience Scale (DES) and the Employee Productivity Scale (EPS). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between employee demotion and employee productivity, while multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effects of employee demotion on employee productivity after controlling for potential confounding variables. The study found that employee demotion negatively affected employee productivity in South African public sector organizations. The findings suggested that employees who experienced employee demotion reported lower job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, resulting in decreased productivity, innovation, and team collaboration. In addition, the study found that the reasons for employee demotion, such as poor performance, misconduct, or organizational restructuring, influenced the extent of negative impact on employee productivity. Moreover, the study found that effective communication and support during and after employee demotion could mitigate the negative effects on employee productivity.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the researcher utilized the correlational research design. The target population of this study consisted of 510 staff of ten (10) private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA, Rivers State. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The primary source includes the use of structured questionnaire and personal interviews to interact with some of the respondents. The researcher achieved validity of the data instrument by submitting a copy of the questionnaire to the supervisors who are experts in the field of Management. The researcher adopted the Cronbach alpha co-efficient method in measuring the reliability of the research instrument for the study. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested with Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient ( $R^0$ ) technique. All analyses were done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 27.0).

### **Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

The following results were obtained from the study:

### Relationship between Demotion and the Measures of Workers' Productivity

**Table 1: Correlations Matrix for Demotion and the Measures of Demotion and the Measures of Workers' Productivity**

			Demotio n	Efficiency	Resource utilization	Quality output
Spearman's rho	Demotion	Correlation	1.000	.563**	.583**	.371**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.192	.000 192	.000 192	.000 192
	Efficiency	Correlation	.563**	1.000	.680**	.669**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000 192	.192	.000 192	.000 192
	Resource utilization	Correlation	.583**	.680**	1.000	.750**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000 192	.000 192	.192	.000 192
	Quality output	Correlation	.371**	.669**	.750**	1.000
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000 192	.000 192	.000 192	.192
N						

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2025 and SPSS Output version 27.0

Table 1 illustrates the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results are stated below:

**H<sub>0:1</sub>** There is no significant relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is significantly associated with efficiency (where  $\rho = .563$  and  $P < 0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion enhances workers' productivity which is measured in terms of efficiency. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

**H<sub>0:2</sub>** There is no significant relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is significantly associated with resource utilization (where  $\rho=.583$  and  $P<0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion enhances workers' productivity which is measured in terms of resource utilization. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

**Ho:3** There is no significant relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a weak and positive relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is not significantly associated with quality output (where  $\rho=.371$  and  $P<0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion does not enhance workers' productivity which is measured in terms of quality output. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) is accepted and the alternate rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

The result as depicted in table 4.16 revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between demotion and efficiency in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is significantly associated with efficiency (where  $\rho=.563$  and  $P<0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion enhances workers' productivity which is measured in terms of efficiency. The result revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between demotion and resource utilization in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is significantly associated with resource utilization (where  $\rho=.583$  and  $P<0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion enhances workers' productivity which is measured in terms of resource utilization. The result also revealed that there is a weak and positive relationship between demotion and quality output in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The data indicates that demotion is not significantly associated with quality output (where  $\rho=.371$  and  $P<0.05$ ). The finding suggests that demotion does not enhance workers' productivity which is measured in terms of quality output. This result is in line with the study of Idongesit (2018) who investigated staff disciplinary methods on employees' performances in business organizations. The result of the data analyzed were all significant and from the result of the analysis, it was concluded that staff disciplinary method like the use of verbal warnings and demotion affects employee's performances in business organizations. Also, Bayu, Surati and Sri (2020) analyzed the effect of demotion on the work motivation of the West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police personnel and to analyze the effect of work motivation on personnel performance. Respondents in this study were all personnel performance of West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police who had rotated positions as many as 60 people. The study's conclusions are (1) Promotion has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation. (2) Transfer has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation. (3) Demotions have a negative and significant effect on Work Motivation. (4) Motivation has a positive and significant effect on performance.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concluded that demotion significantly influence workers' productivity in private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study further established that demotion moderately lead to improved workers' productivity. This implies that demotion can act as a spur to work hard to recapture former status, resulting in *increased effort and output*. Therefore, the study recommends that management of private secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State should instill proper workplace disciplinary measures such as demotion, suspension and dismissal so as to enhance workers' productivity in the organization.

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