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Assessing Work Rigidity among Secondary School Teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria: Development and Validation of a New Scale

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ABSTRACT

Work Rigidity (WR), defined as inflexibility in workplace rules, processes, and employee behaviour, poses significant challenges to teachers' effectiveness and well-being in Nigerian secondary schools. This study aimed to develop and validate a Work Rigidity Scale (WRS) for secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Scale development followed a three-stage process: item generation, expert content validation, and psychometric evaluation. An initial pool of 15 items was refined to 10 following expert review, reduced to 9 after pilot testing, and finalized as a 7-item scale through exploratory factor analysis. The 9-item version was piloted among 30 teachers and subsequently administered randomly to 379 secondary school teachers in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State. Exploratory Factor Analysis supported a unidimensional factor structure, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .818 and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, $\chi^2(21) = 619.012$, $p < .001$. The final 7-item scale had factor loadings ranging from .547 to .749 and explained 43.84% of the total variance. Confirmatory Factor Analysis indicated an acceptable model fit (CFI = .926, GFI = .908), although RMSEA (.095) suggested a marginal fit. Internal consistency was satisfactory ($\alpha = .78$). Divergent validity was supported by a non-significant correlation with the Influence at work scale ($r(377) = -.028$, $p > .05$), indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct. The WRS is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing work rigidity among secondary school teachers, with implications for educational policy and teacher well-being in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS Work rigidity • scale development • confirmatory factor analysis • teacher autonomy • secondary school teachers

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are seen as professionals who facilitate learning, impart knowledge, and shape students' skills and attitudes, often navigating resource constraints and societal expectations, ensuring learning among students. However, teachers may have difficulty in discharging their duties effectively when they experience limited control over their job. Teachers may experience work rigidity (WR) over time due to strict policies, rigid rules, and lack of autonomy in their job, leading to diverse negative implications on students' academic performance and teachers' wellbeing (Obineli, 2013). Secondary school teachers in Oyo State are guided by strict rules, norms and policies from school management and the Ministry of Education, giving teachers little or no control over their jobs, contributing to a reduction in job satisfaction among teachers, workplace frustration, burnout, lack of innovation, reduced motivation, etc. (Ukpabi, 2020; Okemakinde, 2025). To address these issues and propose solutions that will eliminate or reduce constraints such as rigid rules and policies limiting teachers' skills, innovation and autonomy, WR needs to be studied. This study is guided by Organisational Justice Theory (OJT) and Diathesis-Stress Theory (DST). OJT suggests that employees' perceptions of fairness in workplace rules, policies, and decision-making influence their attitudes and behaviours, while DST explains how prolonged exposure to workplace stressors may contribute to adverse psychological outcomes. Together, these theories provide a conceptual basis for understanding WR among secondary school teachers. Despite the growing relevance of WR among secondary school teachers in Oyo State, it remains underexplored. Currently, there is no quantitative instrument to measure WR among secondary school teachers. Therefore, this study aims to develop and validate a Work Rigidity Scale (WRS) that can serve as a reliable tool for assessing WR among secondary school teachers in Oyo State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nigerian educational system, particularly at the secondary school level, operates within a complex economic and socio-cultural context characterized by varying levels of teacher motivation, resource constraints, and centralized administrative control. Onwuneme (2023) observed that secondary school teachers in Nigeria function within rigid administrative structures governed by strict rules and institutional norms that limit flexibility and reduce opportunities for innovation in instructional practice. Ogunode et al. (2020) noted that teachers work within a highly centralized framework regulated by the Federal Ministry of Education and state-level agencies through standardized curricula and assessment procedures. Such bureaucratic structures restrict teachers' professional discretion and reduce their ability to adapt instructional methods to diverse classroom needs. Iroegbu and Ogbodo (2019) also reported that rigid bureaucratic systems diminish teachers' creativity, resulting in disengagement, reduced job satisfaction, and perceptions of work inflexibility or WR. Ume and Agha (2022) further described WR as the lack of flexibility and adaptability in workplace rules, processes, and employee behaviour, often resulting in resistance to change, reduced innovation, and lower employee engagement. Within educational settings, WR is reflected in rigid administrative procedures, mandatory adherence to prescribed curricula, and excessive monitoring that limit teachers' autonomy in classroom management and instructional delivery.

From the perspective of OJT (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001), these organisational conditions influence how teachers evaluate the fairness of workplace rules, decision-making processes, and administrative practices. When teachers perceive school policies as overly restrictive, inconsistent, or excluding them from meaningful participation in decisions affecting their work, they are more likely to experience diminished autonomy, reduced motivation, and lower organisational commitment. The theory therefore suggests that rigid organisational rules, centralized decision-making, and restricted professional discretion are interconnected manifestations of a broader perception of workplace rigidity.

Consistent with this perspective, Chukwu, Agusi, and Jimba (2024) emphasized that employees perceive WR when organisations resist new ideas or alternative ways of performing tasks, thereby limiting employees' capacity and performance. Ndome et al. (2024) further argued that rigid organisational norms may reduce student engagement, academic achievement, and the quality of the learning environment while simultaneously undermining teachers' well-being and classroom effectiveness. In support, Hlaďo et al. (2020) elucidate that rigid work environments increase teachers' stress and burnout by reducing their sense of empowerment and control over their work.

DST (Meehl, 1962; Zubin & Spring, 1977) provides an additional explanation for these outcomes by proposing that adverse psychological consequences emerge when environmental stressors interact with individual vulnerabilities. Within school settings, rigid organisational policies, excessive bureaucratic demands, and limited professional autonomy constitute persistent workplace stressors. Teachers with fewer coping resources or lower institutional support may therefore be more susceptible to burnout, psychological

distress, and disengagement when exposed to prolonged WR. Because these organisational constraints originate in the same work environment and are experienced collectively as chronic stressors, the theory also supports the expectation that teachers' perceptions of WR will converge into a common latent construct that can be measured with a unidimensional scale.

Empirical studies among Nigerian teachers further support these theoretical propositions. Obimakinde et al. (2022) reported that rigid administrative rules and controls reduced teachers' autonomy and flexibility, leading to lower job satisfaction, increased burnout, and psychological distress. Conversely, flexible work conditions enable teachers to adapt to innovations, technological developments, and new instructional approaches, thereby improving work-life balance, reducing stress, and enhancing job satisfaction. However, rigid practices such as compulsory handwritten lesson notes, inflexible lesson delivery procedures, and time-consuming manual documentation continue to constrain teachers despite the availability of more efficient instructional alternatives (Osiesi et al., 2024). Adegoke (2022) further observed that limited flexibility among teachers in Oyo State negatively affects classroom management, student engagement, technology integration, and overall educational quality while contributing to reduced commitment, diminished creativity, increased stress, and poorer mental well-being. Similarly, Chidi et al. (2024) found that schools implementing flexible workplace practices reported more innovative, satisfied, and higher-performing teachers, highlighting work flexibility as a significant predictor of teachers' job performance.

Additional evidence demonstrates that rigid organisational rules undermine teachers' autonomy and motivation. Pepple et al. (2024), drawing on Self-Determination Theory, emphasized that autonomy is fundamental to teachers' intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Chukwu, Agusi, and Jimba (2024) further described lack of autonomy as employees' inability to make independent decisions due to excessive interference from higher authorities. In addition, Najjarpour (2025) reported that strict adherence to standardized procedures restricts teachers' opportunities to make meaningful professional decisions, thereby reducing motivation. According to Ezeh and Onodugo (2020), overly formalized organisational policies are associated with lower perceived autonomy, diminished job satisfaction, and weaker organisational citizenship behaviour. Likewise, Morris et al. (2025) observed that high job demands combined with rigid workplace rules increase helplessness and emotional exhaustion, particularly when teachers experience little autonomy. Omenyi and Emengini (2020) further demonstrated that perceived organisational support and teacher autonomy enhance commitment and performance, whereas restrictive policies weaken employees' trust in their organisations. Similarly, Oyedeji (2023) established that rigid school policies reduced teaching efficacy among teachers in Oyo State, while Abiodun-Oyebanji (2021) linked unfavourable teacher attitudes resulting from rigid work conditions with poorer student academic performance.

Collectively, the empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives indicate that rigid organisational rules, bureaucratic control, limited autonomy, and restricted professional discretion consistently represent different expressions of the broader construct of WR. OJT explains these experiences as teachers' perceptions of procedural and organisational unfairness, whereas DST explains how prolonged exposure to such organisational constraints contributes to psychological strain and diminished well-being. Together, these theories provide a coherent conceptual framework for expecting WR to function as a single measurable construct among secondary school teachers. Despite growing evidence regarding teacher workload, autonomy, flexibility, job satisfaction, and work performance, no validated instrument currently exists to specifically measure WR among Nigerian secondary school teachers. The absence of such an instrument highlights the need to develop and validate the Work Rigidity Scale (WRS) to provide a psychometrically sound measure of this construct within Oyo State secondary schools.

3. METHODS

This section outlines the procedures undertaken to ensure the validity and reliability of WRS. The methodologies applied at each stage are described in detail below.

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design within an instrument development and validation framework to develop and validate the Work Rigidity Scale (WRS) for secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The cross-sectional design was appropriate because data were collected from participants at a single point in time to evaluate the psychometric properties of the newly developed instrument.

Item Generation

The development of the Work Rigidity Scale (WRS) began with an extensive review of literature on teacher autonomy, workplace flexibility, organisational policies, bureaucratic control, and work-related constraints in educational settings. Based on this review, an initial pool of 15 items was generated to reflect key dimensions of work rigidity among secondary school teachers. The preliminary items were then screened by the researchers to eliminate conceptual overlap, remove redundant statements, improve clarity of wording, and ensure contextual relevance to Nigerian secondary schools. Following this review, 10 items were retained and submitted to experts in psychology, education, and special education for content validation.

Content Expert Validity

This study employed the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) proposed by Lawshe (1975) to identify valid statements as screened and identified by the experts. Seventeen experts were invited; eleven responded. The language of the scale (10 items) was simplified for better understanding and clarity. They were asked to rate the statements using a dichotomous scale (1 = Yes, 2 = No). An online survey tool was used to collect the data, and the experts were also given a brief about the context of the research. The adapted Lawshe formula, CVR = (Ne - N/2) / (N/2), was used to calculate the responses of the experts, and item 7 ("I have little autonomy in assessing student progress and assigning grades") was eliminated because its CVR value (0) fell below Lawshe's (1975) minimum threshold of 0.59 for 11 experts. The score obtained (0) for item 7 did not meet the standard set by Lawshe (1975); the item received a low rating, and one of the experts commented that the item was a leading question. However, items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10 were calculated to be 0.83, while items 4, 8, and 9 were calculated to be +1. The CVR formula used yields values from -1 to +1, making the results of 0.83 plausible.

Administration of the Items

The researchers obtained approval from the management of secondary schools in Oyo State to gain access to teachers for the study. The preliminary version was administered to a pilot sample of 30 teachers, followed by the main validation sample of 379 secondary school teachers in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State, respectively, after formal consent was granted by the school management board.

In addition, two research assistants with existing links to teachers were engaged to assist in the administration of the paper-based questionnaires. These were distributed at the teachers' workplaces, ensuring that the settings were conducive and free from extraneous influences that could cause distractions.

All respondents were assured of confidentiality and were provided with opportunities to seek clarification on any ambiguous items through personal contact, phone calls or text messages. Furthermore, no time limit was imposed for the completion of the instrument, thereby allowing respondents adequate time to respond thoughtfully to all items.

Instrument

The Influence at Work subscale of the Danish Psychosocial Work Environment Questionnaire (DPQ) developed by Clausen et al. (2019) was used to assess the divergent validity of the newly developed Work Rigidity Scale (WRS). The subscale consists of four items that measure employees' perceived influence over how they carry out their work tasks. Sample items include: "Do you have any influence on how you carry out your tasks at work?" Responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (To a very large extent) to 5 (To a very low extent). The DPQ demonstrated good internal consistency, with the Influence at Work subscale reporting a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87.

Participants Characteristics

Participants include both male and female teachers who teach secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo. The participants in this study were 156 (41.2%), while female participants were 223 (58.8%). 131 (34.6%) of the participants were single, 236 (62.3%) were married, 6 (1.6%) were divorced, and 6 (1.6%) were separated. 81 (21.4%) were 21-30 years old, 182 (48%) were 31-40 years old, 97 (25.6%) were 41-50 years old, and 19 (5.0%) were 51-60 years old. Based on religion, 243 (64.1%) of the participants were practicing Islam, 124 (32.7%) were traditional, 12 (3.2%) were practicing other religions, and 0 (0%) were practicing none. Based on ethnicity, 301 (79.4%) of the participants were Yoruba, 61 (16.1%) were Igbo, 12 (3.2%) were Hausa, while 5 (1.3%) chose others. 111 (29.3%) of the participants had National Diploma (ND) or Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), 199 (52.5%) had Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's degree (BSc/B.Ed.), 65 (17.2%) had a Master's degree (MSc), and 4 (1.1%) had a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). 227 (59.9%) had 1-10

years' work experience, 107 (28.2%) had 11-20 years, 39 (10.3%) had 21- 30 years, and 6 (1.6%) had 31 years and above work experience.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Table 1. *The 9-item Reliability Analysis*

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.775	9

Table 2. *The 9-Item-Total Statistics*

Item-Total Statistics	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
My lesson plans are heavily dictated by the school's curriculum guidelines	28.90	30.371	.275	.776
I have limited flexibility in choosing teaching methods and materials	29.85	26.821	.531	.743
My teaching schedule is rigid and rarely adjusted	29.99	25.608	.538	.741
I am expected to strictly follow the school policies and procedures	29.26	30.208	.263	.778
Changes to my lesson plans are rarely accommodated due to school constraints	29.71	25.078	.620	.727
My classroom activities are heavily monitored and evaluated	29.54	27.699	.431	.758
The school's rules and regulations dictate most of my teaching practices	29.62	26.770	.490	.749
I am encouraged to adhere to traditional teaching methods rather than innovate	30.10	26.831	.421	.760
My teaching style is heavily influenced by external standards and benchmarks	29.66	26.246	.522	.744

The analysis revealed a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of α = .775 for the 9-item scale. According to conventional benchmarks, alpha values above .70 indicate acceptable reliability. The corrected item–total correlation coefficients ranged from .263 to .620. Although two items (Items 1 and 4) fell slightly below the recommended .30 threshold.

Table 3. *Exploratory Factor Analysis (9 items)*

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.813
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	714.50
	df	36
	Sig.	.000 (p < .001)

The suitability of the data for factor analysis was confirmed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO value of .813 indicates adequate sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(36) = 714.50$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. A KMO value above 0.80 is considered "meritorious" (Kaiser, 1974). The significant Bartlett's test confirms that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, validating the suitability of factor analysis.

Table 4. *Factor Loadings (1-Factor PCA Solution)*

Item	Variable	Statement	Loading (λ)	Communality (h^2)
1	V008	My lesson plans are heavily dictated by the school's curriculum guidelines	.384	.147
2	V009	I have limited flexibility in choosing teaching methods and materials	**.674**	.454
3	V010	My teaching schedule is rigid and rarely adjusted	**.678**	.460
4	V011	I am expected to strictly follow the school's policies and procedures	.363	.132
5	V012	Changes to my lesson plans are rarely accommodated due to school constraints	**.749**	.560
6	V013	My classroom activities are heavily monitored and evaluated	.566	.321
7	V014	The school's rules and regulations dictate most of my teaching practices	**.630**	.397
8	V015	I am encouraged to adhere to traditional teaching methods rather than innovate	.580	.336
9	V016	My teaching style is heavily influenced by external standards and benchmarks	**.671**	.451

Extraction method: principal component analysis. Factor loadings showed the correlation between each item and the extracted factor. All loadings exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of .30 (Hair et al., 2006; Büyüköztürk, 2009). Items loaded ($\lambda \geq .60$) are considered strong indicators of the construct. Item 1 (V008, $\lambda = .384$) and Item 4 (V011, $\lambda = .363$) factor loadings are likely dragging down model fit. Removing them and re-running the CFA with a 7-item model may significantly improve the fit indices.

Table 5. *Exploratory Factor Analysis (7 items)*

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items		
.784	7		
KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.818
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square	619.012
		df	21
		Sig.	**.000 (p < .001)**

The KMO value of .818 indicates adequate sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(21) = 619.012$, $p < .001$. A KMO value above .80 is considered "meritorious" (Kaiser, 1974).

Table 6. *7 items Factor Loadings — 1-Factor Solution*

Items	Var.	Item Statement	Loading	h^2	Item-total r
1	V009	I have limited flexibility in choosing teaching methods and materials	.682	.465	.530
2	V010	My teaching schedule is rigid and rarely adjusted	.684	.467	.535
3	V012	Changes to my lesson plans are rarely ★accommodated due to school constraints	.749	.561	.609
4	V013	My classroom activities are heavily monitored and evaluated	.547	.299	.399
5	V014	The school's rules and regulations dictate most of my teaching practices	.639	.408	.492
6	V015	I am encouraged to adhere to traditional teaching methods rather than innovate	.624	.389	.462
7	V016	My teaching style is heavily influenced by external standards and benchmarks	.692	.479	.540

Note. h^2 *= communality. Item-total r = corrected item-total correlation. All factor loadings exceed the minimum threshold of .30 (Büyüköztürk, 2009). ★ = highest loading item. Eigenvalue = 3.069.*

The new factor loading showed improvement after Item 1 (V008, λ = .384) and Item 4 (V011, λ = .363) were removed. The KMO increased from .813 to .818, and Cronbach's alpha increased from .775 to .784; variance explained = 43.84%, which is slightly below the conventional 50% threshold. However, it is acceptable for a unidimensional scale at the validation stage (Floyd & Widaman, 1995).

Table 7. *Comparison: 9-item vs 7-item Model*

Metric	9-item Original	7-item Revised + Modified ★
Items	9	7 (removed V008, V011)
KMO	0.813	0.818 ↑
Variance explained	36.21%	43.84% ↑
Cronbach's α	0.775	0.784 ↑
Weakest EFA loading	.363 (V011)	.547 (V013) ↑
CFA CFI	0.865	**0.926 ↑ ✓**
CFA TLI	0.820	0.881 ↑
CFA RMSEA	0.095	0.095
CFA GFI	0.834	**0.908 ↑ ✓**
Indices ≥ .90	0 of 4	2 of 4 ↑

Note: ★ = model with correlated error (V013~~V014)

5. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted using the maximum likelihood (ML) estimator in semopy to validate the unidimensional factor structure identified in the EFA. Two models were tested: (1) a base model with all 7 items loading on a single latent factor, and (2) a modified model with a correlated error term added between Items 4 (V013) and 5 (V014), which both reflect the theme of institutional surveillance and control.

Table 8. *Model Fit Indices*

Index	Base Model	Modified Model	Status
χ^2	74.008	**57.499**	—
Df	14	**13**	—
χ^2/df	5.286	**4.423**	Marginal
CFI	0.865	**0.926**	✓ **Modified**
TLI	0.851	**0.881**	Marginal
RMSEA	0.106	**0.095**	Marginal
GFI	0.882	**0.908**	✓ **Modified**

Note. Base model: WorkRigidity =~ I1+I2+I3+I4+I5+I6+I7. Modified model: adds correlated error I4~~I5 (V013~~V014). ΔCFI = +0.061; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 16.509 (Δdf = 1). CFI = .926 and GFI = .908 meet the ≥.90 threshold in the modified model. Although CFI and GFI indicate acceptable model fit, the TLI (.881) and RMSEA (.095) suggest that the model fit remains marginal and that further refinement of the scale may improve its psychometric performance.

Table 9. *Standardised Factor Loadings (Modified Model)*

Item	Var.	Statement	Std. λ	Error	h^2	Note
I1	V009	Limited flexibility in teaching methods	0.619	0.617	0.383	
I2	V010	Rigid teaching schedule	0.592	0.650	0.350	
I3	V012	Changes to lesson plans rarely accommodated	0.711	0.495	0.505	Highest ★
I4	V013	Classroom activities heavily monitored	0.690	0.524	0.476	e4↔e5
I5	V014	Rules and regulations dictate teaching	0.518	0.732	0.268	e4↔e5
I6	V015	Encouraged to follow traditional methods	0.583	0.660	0.340	
I7	V016	Teaching influenced by external standards	0.620	0.616	0.384	

Note. λ = standardised factor loading. Error = residual variance ($1-\lambda^2$). h^2 = communality. e4↔e5 = correlated error term between Items 4 and 5. ★ = highest loading item.

CFA Path Diagram

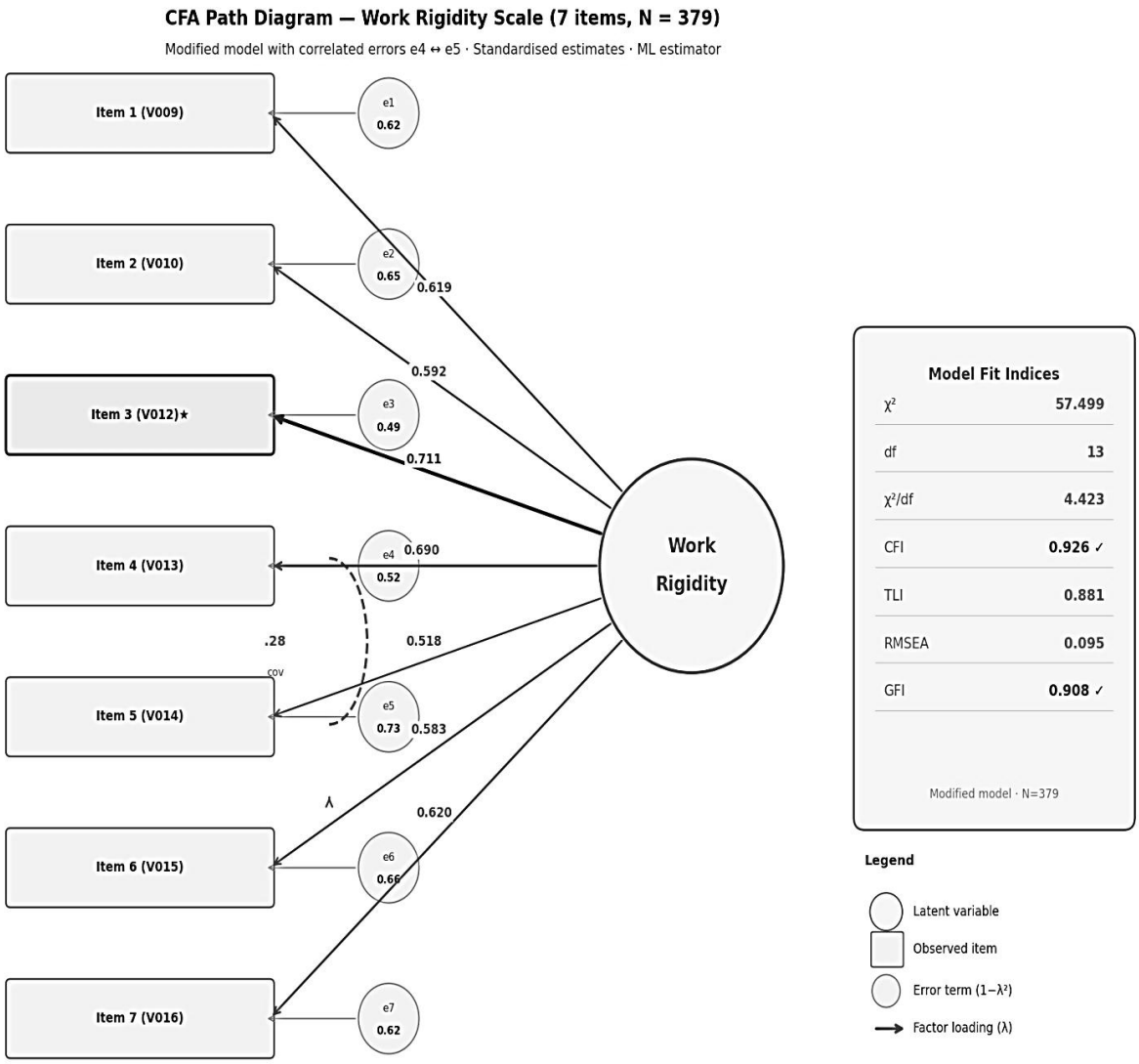


Figure 1. *CFA path diagram for the 7-item WR Scale (modified model). Path coefficients are standardised factor loadings (λ). Values inside error circles represent residual variance (1–λ²). The dashed curved arrow indicates the correlated error term between e4 (V013) and e5 (V014).*

Divergent Validity

Table 10. *Correlation Table Showing the Relationship between WR and Influence at Work Scale*

Variables	x̄	S.D	*df*	*R*	*p*
Influence at work	12.272	4.856			
			377	-.028	.587
Work Rigidity	33.329	5.796			

The table above revealed the relationship between the proposed scale (WRS) and the Influence at work scale. The result revealed a weak, non-significant correlation ($r_{(377)}$= -.028, p > .05). Employees who report greater influence over how they perform their work are expected to perceive lower levels of WR because increased influence reflects greater autonomy and flexibility, whereas WR reflects restrictions on professional discretion. Therefore, a modest negative correlation between the two constructs was anticipated. However, the observed non-significant correlation suggests that WR captures organisational constraints that are conceptually distinct from perceived influence at work, thereby supporting divergent validity.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study focused on the development and validation of a WRS for assessing WR among secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the growing concern that rigid administrative structures, centralized policies, excessive monitoring, and limited professional autonomy characterize the Nigerian secondary school system, yet no standardized quantitative instrument exists to specifically measure WR within this context. Guided by the DST and OJT, the study conceptualized WR as both a structural and psychological constraint that interacts with teachers' vulnerabilities and perceptions of fairness to influence their well-being, motivation, and work outcomes. Drawing from empirical literature on teacher autonomy, flexibility, and bureaucratic control, an initial pool of 15 items was generated. Following rigorous content validation using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and expert review, the scale was refined to a 9-item instrument and later to 7-items after factor loading was taken into consideration. Psychometric evaluation of the WRS demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's $\alpha = .784$ indicating that the scale is reliable. Exploratory factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis confirmed a one-dimensional structure. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (.818) further established the suitability of the data for factor analysis, while strong factor loadings across all items indicated that the scale adequately captures the construct of WR. In addition, divergent validity was established, and this confirmed that WRS is empirically distinct from influence at work, a subscale of DPQ.

The unidimensional structure of the WRS aligns with both DST and OJT (Meehl, 1962; Zubin & Spring, 1977; Greenberg, 1987), suggesting teachers perceive rigid policies and limited autonomy as a single, combined stressor. This supports the view that teachers do not experience rigid administrative structures, curriculum constraints, excessive monitoring, and limited autonomy as separate stressors; rather, these institutional demands converge into a unified burden that, when interacting with individual vulnerabilities such as low coping resources or high workload sensitivity, amplifies the risk of stress, burnout, and disengagement among teachers. This suggests that WR, as experienced by Nigerian secondary school teachers, represents a singular perception of unjust and inflexible working conditions. It is worth noting that this finding may also reflect the centralised governance structure of the Nigerian secondary school system, where uniformly enforced bureaucratic controls cause all dimensions of rigidity to be closely related.

In conclusion, the findings provide compelling evidence that the WR Scale is a valid, reliable, and contextually appropriate instrument for assessing WR among secondary school teachers in Nigeria. The unidimensional nature of the scale suggests that teachers perceive WR as a holistic experience arising from interconnected administrative, policy, and organisational constraints. By providing a standardized measure of WR, this study fills an important gap in Nigerian educational research and offers a practical tool for researchers, school administrators, and policymakers. The WRS can facilitate evidence-based assessment of institutional practices, inform policy reforms aimed at enhancing flexibility and autonomy, and support interventions designed to improve teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the strength of this study, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, capturing teachers' perceptions at a single point in time. Reliance on self-report measures during the data collection stage may introduce response biases such as social desirability, which may influence the results of the study. Furthermore, the study was limited to Oyo State, thereby reducing the generalizability to other regions. The study focused on construct and divergent validity, indicating the need for further validation. While the scale is psychometrically sound, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) yielded an RMSEA value of .095, suggesting a mediocre fit. It falls above the threshold of $\leq .08$ recommended for good model fit, and this suggests that the current factor structure of the WRS, though acceptable at this early stage of scale development, may benefit from further refinement, such as the collection of a larger and more diverse sample, the review of item wording, or the testing of alternative model specifications in future studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers should employ longitudinal designs to track changes in WR over time and use larger or more representative samples for CFA to confirm the scale's structure. Studies should replicate the validation across different states, educational levels, and African countries with similar systems. Examining predictive and criterion-related validity with outcomes like job satisfaction, burnout, and teaching effectiveness is recommended. Mixed-methods approaches could provide deeper insights into teachers' experiences. Additionally, intervention-based studies assessing policy flexibility and autonomy-supportive practices using the WR Scale are encouraged. On the divergent analysis, the finding strengthens the construct validity of the WRS and supports its theoretical grounding. The expected modest negative

correlation was not observed, suggesting that either the WRS captures a different facet of rigidity or the DPQ subscale measures a distinct aspect of autonomy. Hence, further validation is recommended.

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