

**EMPIRICAL PAPER**

# Pathways to School Discipline: Modelling the Roles of Community Participation and Teacher Engagement in Private Secondary School using PLS-SEM

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examines the structural relationships among community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, with particular attention to the mediating role of teacher engagement.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used. Data were collected from 500 teachers selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Measurement and structural models were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.

**Findings:** The results indicate that community participation has no significant direct effect on school discipline. However, community participation significantly predicts teacher engagement, and teacher engagement has a strong positive effect on school discipline. Teacher engagement fully mediates the relationship between community participation and school discipline, indicating that community participation's influence on discipline operates primarily through teachers' psychological engagement.

**Practical Implications:** School proprietors and administrators should prioritise strategies that transform community participation into a supportive resource for teachers. Policies that strengthen teacher engagement may yield greater improvements in school discipline than direct disciplinary interventions alone.

**Novelty and Contribution:** This study contributes to the literature by integrating Social Capital Theory and the Job Demands–Resources model within the context of urban private secondary schools. It provides empirical evidence that teacher engagement is a critical mechanism linking community participation to disciplinary effectiveness in market-driven educational settings.

**Keywords:** Community Participation, Teacher Engagement, School Discipline, Private Secondary Schools

## 1 Introduction

The educational ecosystem in Nigeria, particularly in its sprawling economic nerve centre, Lagos State, has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. This transformation is characterised by the unprecedented expansion of the private education sector, which has emerged as a dominant force in secondary education. Current estimates indicate that private secondary schools now account for approximately 65% of total enrolment in Lagos, a figure that underscores a significant shift of public trust and resources away from the

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government-funded system (Lagos State Ministry of Education, 2023; National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This proliferation is largely a societal response to the well-documented challenges plaguing public education, including chronic underfunding, infrastructural decay, overcrowded classrooms, and frequent industrial disputes (Angwaomaodoko, 2024). Consequently, private schools are increasingly perceived not merely as alternatives but as essential institutions for delivering quality education and securing future socio-economic advantages.

In this competitive marketplace, a triad of factors coalesces into the cornerstone of a school's reputation and operational effectiveness: a disciplined environment, a highly engaged teaching workforce, and a supportive, participatory community. School discipline, conceptualised not as a retroactive punitive regime but as a proactive, holistic framework of norms, values, and relational structures that foster a safe and orderly climate for teaching and learning, is a primary determinant of institutional effectiveness (Ezeaku, 2025). For parents investing substantial financial resources in private education, the guarantee of a disciplined and secure environment is a non-negotiable expectation, directly linked to their child's academic performance and moral development (Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2025).

However, maintaining robust school discipline in Lagos's private schools is complex. These institutions operate at the nexus of competing pressures: they must enforce strict disciplinary codes to uphold their brand promise while simultaneously navigating the elevated, often demanding expectations of fee-paying parents. This dynamic can lead to a phenomenon where parental involvement, a theoretically positive force, sometimes morphs into disruptive interference, challenging school policies and undermining teacher authority in disciplinary matters (Adewale & Moyo, 2025). The very "community" the school serves, primarily parents, can thus become a significant source of operational strain.

This leads to the critical role of the teacher. Teacher engagement, defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2021), is a well-established catalyst for instructional quality, student achievement, and overall school improvement. Engaged teachers exhibit heightened enthusiasm, resilience, and a commitment to their students' holistic development. Conversely, teacher disengagement and attrition remain pressing concerns in the Nigerian educational landscape, with studies attributing them to factors such as perceived unfair remuneration, excessive workload, lack of professional autonomy, and stressful work environments (Adewale & Potokri, 2023; Okolie et al., 2021). In private schools specifically, these challenges are compounded by direct accountability to management and parents, creating a high-pressure environment in which teachers are expected to be both educators and customer service providers. The constant negotiation of disciplinary issues within this pressurised context can be a significant drain on a teacher's psychological resources, potentially leading to burnout and disengagement.

The third pillar of this study is community participation. Moving beyond simplistic notions of financial contributions or attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings, contemporary scholarship defines it as the active, multidimensional involvement of parents and local stakeholders in the educational process. This encompasses collaborative governance, voluntarism, supporting learning at home, and, crucially, reinforcing the school's values and disciplinary frameworks (Aryeh-adjei, 2021). In the socio-cultural context of Lagos, where communal values are strong, the potential for community participation to build social capital (trust, shared norms, and networks) is immense. When aligned, the school and its parent community can form a cohesive "closed network" that consistently monitors and reinforces positive student behaviour, thereby strengthening the school's disciplinary architecture.

Yet, a critical gap persists in the empirical literature. While numerous studies have examined teacher motivation in Nigeria (Ofojebe & Ezugoh, 2010; Oni & Soji-oni, 2022), and others have explored community involvement in rural public schools (Jailani et al., 2025), there is a dearth of research that systematically investigates the interrelationships among these three constructs within the unique, market-driven context of urban private secondary schools. The question of how the nature and quality of community participation directly influence school discipline, and how this relationship may be mediated or moderated by the level of teacher engagement, remains largely unanswered. It is unclear whether supportive community involvement acts as a resource that energises teachers and bolsters discipline, or if contentious involvement functions as a demand that depletes teachers and disrupts order.

Therefore, this study is motivated by the need to develop a comprehensive model that elucidates the structural relationships between community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline. By situating the inquiry within the vibrant and complex setting of private secondary schools in Lagos, this research aims to move beyond a siloed examination of these variables. It aims to provide actionable insights for school proprietors, administrators,

and policymakers on how to foster synergistic relationships between parents and teachers strategically. This will ultimately cultivate the disciplined, effective, and engaging learning environments that are the hallmark of successful educational institutions.

### **Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the nature and strength of the relationship between community participation and school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State?
- ii. To what extent does community participation significantly influence teacher engagement in private secondary schools in Lagos State?
- iii. What is the effect of teacher engagement on school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State?
- iv. Does teacher engagement mediate the relationship between community participation and school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State?

### **Theoretical Framework**

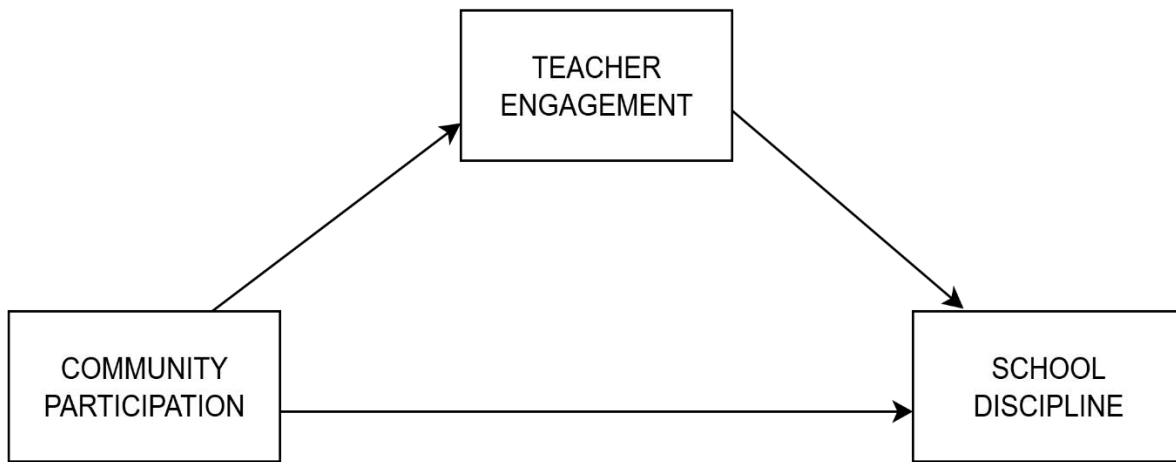
This study is underpinned by an integrated theoretical framework combining Social Capital Theory (Bakel & Horak, 2024), as modernised in educational research, and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

#### **Social Capital Theory**

The modern application of Social Capital Theory in education posits that the trust, networks, and shared norms existing among parents, teachers, and administrators constitute a valuable resource that facilitates collective action for school improvement (Coppe et al., 2022). Schools with high levels of relational trust between families and educators are better positioned to establish and maintain consistent behavioural expectations (Anazia et al., 2025). Community participation is the primary mechanism through which this social capital is built and mobilised. Supportive and collaborative involvement fosters a dense network of trust, creating a consensus around disciplinary norms and enabling consistent enforcement across school and home environments. Conversely, a deficit of trust or the presence of conflicting norms fractures this network, depleting social capital and leading to inconsistent discipline, in which school rules are undermined at home and teacher authority is challenged (Baxter & Ehren, 2023).

#### **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model**

The refined JD-R Model (Bakker & de Vries, 2014) provides a powerful framework for understanding teacher engagement. The model categorises workplace factors into two groups: job demands (physical, social, or organisational aspects that require sustained effort and are associated with psychological costs) and job resources (aspects that reduce demands, aid goal achievement, and stimulate growth). In this study, the nature of community participation is theorised to function as either a critical job resource or a significant job demand. When parents are collaborative and trusting, their involvement serves as a powerful resource, providing teachers with social support, positive feedback, and a sense of shared mission, thereby fostering engagement. In contrast, adversarial, hostile, or excessively demanding parental involvement acts as a major psychosocial demand, depleting teachers' emotional energy and leading to cynicism, exhaustion, and disengagement (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Seiler et al., 2023). Teacher engagement subsequently has a direct causal impact on school discipline; an engaged teacher is more likely to be proactive, emotionally intelligent, and consistent in classroom management, thereby contributing to a more orderly and positive school climate.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework guiding the study. The model proposes direct relationships between community participation and school discipline, community participation and teacher engagement, and teacher engagement and school discipline. Teacher engagement is further conceptualised as a mediating variable in the relationship between community participation and school discipline. The framework integrates Social Capital Theory and the Job Demands–Resources model, positioning community participation as a contextual factor that influences both teacher engagement and disciplinary effectiveness within private secondary schools.

## 2 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Guided by the integrated theoretical framework of Social Capital Theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, this study proposes and tests the following hypotheses. These hypotheses articulate the expected direct and indirect relationships between community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline.

### **H1: There is a significant positive relationship between community participation and school discipline.**

This hypothesis is derived from the tenets of social capital theory. It posits that active, collaborative involvement from the school community, primarily parents, creates a network of trust and shared norms (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024; Ugobueze, 2024). When parents and school administrators align on behavioural expectations and consistently reinforce them, it establishes a cohesive disciplinary front. This closed network facilitates the monitoring and enforcement of school rules, leading to a more orderly and effective disciplinary climate. Supportive community participation thus functions as a form of social capital that directly strengthens school discipline (Pryor, 2010). We therefore expect that higher levels of constructive community participation will be directly associated with greater perceived school discipline.

### **H2: There is a significant positive relationship between community participation and teacher engagement.**

This hypothesis is grounded in the JD-R Model's conceptualisation of community participation as a critical psychosocial factor in the work environment. Collaborative and trusting community involvement is theorised to function as a key job resource (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). When teachers feel supported by parents, when their authority is respected, and when they receive positive feedback from the community, it fulfils their psychological needs for relatedness and competence. This support system buffers against stress and fosters a sense of professional efficacy, thereby enhancing vigour, dedication, and absorption in their work (Yusron, 2025). Consequently, we hypothesise that positive community participation will be a significant predictor of increased teacher engagement.

**H3: There is a significant positive relationship between teacher engagement and school discipline.**

This hypothesis proposes that an engaged teaching workforce is a direct antecedent to an effective disciplinary environment. According to the JD-R Model, engaged teachers exhibit high levels of energy, mental resilience, and commitment to their work (Van Wingerden & Poell, 2019). This proactive approach manifests in the classroom through consistent enforcement of rules, greater emotional intelligence in handling behavioural issues, and more innovative and engaging teaching methods that pre-emptively reduce disciplinary problems. Engaged teachers are more likely to invest the extra effort required to build strong, respectful relationships with students, which is a cornerstone of positive discipline (The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), 2023). Thus, we hypothesise that higher teacher engagement will be directly associated with a more disciplined school environment.

**H4: Teacher engagement mediates the relationship between community participation and school discipline.**

This hypothesis represents the core mediation model of the study, integrating social capital theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model to explain how community participation influences school discipline through teachers' psychological engagement with their work. Social capital theory posits that relationships, norms, and networks formed through community participation provide valuable resources that shape behaviours and outcomes within schools. These community resources include parental support, collaboration with local stakeholders, and inclusive school-community partnerships that reinforce shared goals and expectations for both teaching and student conduct. Empirical studies show that strong school-community partnerships are associated with enhanced teacher motivation, commitment, and effectiveness, and correlate with improved student outcomes, including attendance and discipline (Mohamedi & Amos, 2025). Community involvement strengthens the relational and normative context in which teachers operate, offering social support and recognition that are aligned with broader community values and expectations for learning environments.

From the perspective of the JD-R model, community participation can be conceptualised as an external job resource. The JD-R framework holds that job resources, such as social support and collaborative networks, enhance work engagement by enabling individuals to invest psychological energy, maintain motivation, and effectively manage job demands. When teachers perceive abundant resources in their work environment, they experience higher levels of engagement characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption in their professional roles (Ahmed, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Teacher engagement, in turn, has been linked to positive classroom practices that support both instructional quality and behavioural outcomes. Studies indicate that engaged teachers exhibit stronger commitment, adopt proactive classroom management approaches, and model constructive behavioural expectations, thereby fostering environments where discipline is regulated through relational and motivational strategies rather than solely through punitive measures. Research on teacher behaviour and classroom management underscores that teacher conduct and engagement directly influence student behaviour and self-regulation, contributing to sustained improvements in classroom discipline (Ibrahimova, 2025).

Taken together, the integrated model suggests that community participation not only has a direct relationship with school discipline but also generates indirect effects by enhancing teachers' psychological engagement. The mechanism is that when community participation serves as a supportive job resource, teachers feel more motivated and committed to their work, and this heightened engagement equips them with the psychological capacity to implement and sustain effective disciplinary practices. Therefore, it is hypothesised that teacher engagement significantly mediates the relationship between community participation and school discipline, meaning that a substantial portion of the influence of community participation on discipline is transmitted through its positive effect on teachers' engagement.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative research design, specifically a cross-sectional survey, to collect data at a single point in time. This design is appropriate for examining the relationships between the latent constructs in the

proposed model and for testing the developed hypotheses (Hair et al., 2022). The study follows a positivist paradigm, seeking to measure the variables objectively and analyse their interrelationships through a rigorous statistical approach.

### **Population and Sampling**

The target population encompasses all teachers employed in private secondary schools across Lagos State, Nigeria. To ensure a representative sample, a multi-stage sampling technique was implemented. Initially, the state was stratified into its five educational districts to ensure adequate geographical coverage. Subsequently, ten private secondary schools were purposively selected from each district, ensuring variation in school size and fee structure to capture a diverse institutional profile. Finally, within each of the fifty selected schools, ten full-time teachers were randomly selected to participate. This procedure yielded a total sample size of 500 teachers. This sample size is considered robust for the planned analytical technique, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), as it exceeds the minimum requirements for statistical power and ensures the stability and reliability of model estimates (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

### **Data Collection Instrument**

Data were collected using a self-developed structured questionnaire. The instrument comprised four sections: (A) demographic information; (B) a 5-item scale measuring community participation (e.g., "Parents in this school actively support the school's disciplinary policies"); (C) a 5-item scale measuring teacher engagement across the dimensions of vigour, dedication, and absorption (e.g., "At my work, I feel bursting with energy"); and (D) a 7-item scale assessing school discipline (e.g., "The school rules are applied consistently to all students"). All items in sections B, C, and D were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was validated by a panel of three experts in educational management and measurement. A pilot study involving 50 teachers (not part of the main sample) was conducted to assess reliability and clarity; results are reported below.

Pilot study results showed acceptable internal consistency: community participation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.82$ ), teacher engagement ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ), and school discipline ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). No items were deleted, but minor wording changes were made to three items for clarity based on teacher feedback.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

After obtaining ethical approval and school permissions, the questionnaire was administered in person to the sampled teachers during regular school hours. Participants completed the survey in approximately 15 minutes. All responses were anonymous and sealed drop-boxes were used to ensure confidentiality. Data collection took place over four weeks.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. This analytical method was selected for its suitability for predictive application and theory development, as well as its robustness with complex models that include mediating variables (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis proceeded in two key stages. First, the measurement model was rigorously assessed to confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs. This involves evaluating internal consistency using Composite Reliability, convergent validity via Average Variance Extracted, and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio to ensure that the scales accurately measure what they are intended to measure and that the constructs are distinct from one another (Henseler et al., 2015). Second, the structural model was evaluated to test the study's hypotheses. This stage involves examining the significance and strength of the path coefficients using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples, assessing the model's explanatory power ( $R^2$  values), and specifically testing the mediating role of teacher engagement in the relationship between community participation and school discipline (Hair et al., 2022).

## Ethical Considerations

We obtained ethical approval for our study from the Lagos State University Ethical Committee. Written informed consent forms were given to all participants, detailing their rights and stressing voluntary involvement. We assured participants that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous and used solely for research. The consent to participate was included in the questionnaire and explicitly explained. Throughout the process, ethical standards were upheld to ensure the study respected all participants' privacy, rights, and dignity. This ethical commitment reinforced the integrity and trustworthiness of our research.

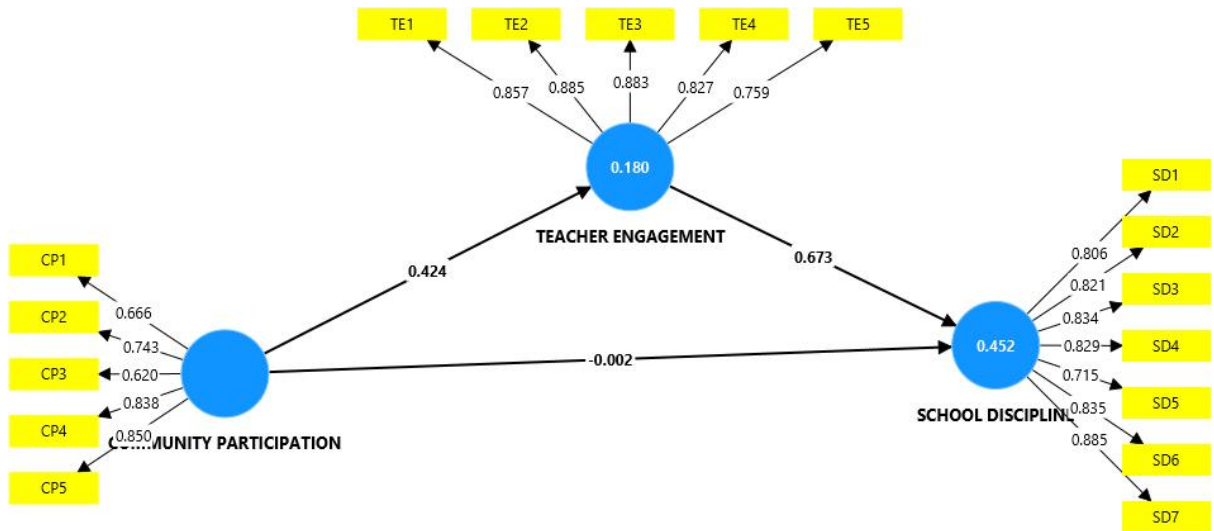
## 4 Results

Table 1: Participants' Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	184	36.8%
	Female	316	63.2%
Years of Work Experience	1–5 years	152	30.4%
	6–10 years	131	26.2%
	11–15 years	83	16.6%
	16–20 years	78	15.6%
	21–25 years	28	5.6%
	26–30 years	21	4.2%
	31 years and above	7	1.4%
Higher Qualification	NCE	68	13.6%
	HND + PGDE	36	7.2%
	B.A./B.Sc. + PGDE	58	11.6%
	B.Ed./B.Sc. (Ed)	184	36.8%
	SABA (ED)	25	5.0%
	M.A./M.Sc./M.Ed.	105	21.0%
	PhD	24	4.8%

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 500 teachers sampled from private secondary schools in Lagos State. Female teachers constituted the majority of respondents (63.2%), while males accounted for 36.8%, indicating a predominantly female teaching workforce. Regarding years of work experience, the largest group of teachers had 1–5 years (30.4%), followed by those with 6–10 years (26.2%). Teachers with more than 20 years of experience represented a relatively small proportion of the sample, suggesting that most respondents were early- to mid-career professionals.

Regarding academic qualifications, the majority of participants possessed professional teaching credentials. Teachers holding a Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Science (Education) degree formed the largest category (36.8%), followed by those with master's degrees (21.0%). Respondents with doctoral qualifications constituted 4.8% of the sample. Overall, the demographic distribution indicates that the participants were adequately qualified and sufficiently experienced to provide reliable responses regarding community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline.



**Figure 2** Hypothetical Measurement Model

Figure 2 illustrates the hypothetical measurement model, showing the relationships between the latent constructs and their observed indicators. Each construct: community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline, is represented by multiple indicators, demonstrating reflective measurement. The figure provides a visual confirmation of how the constructs were operationalised prior to structural model testing.

**Table 2** Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Indicator	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Community participation	CP1	0.666	0.816	0.863	0.561
	CP2	0.743			
	CP3	0.620			
	CP4	0.838			
	CP5	0.850			
School Discipline	SD1	0.806	0.918	0.934	0.671
	SD2	0.821			
	SD3	0.834			
	SD4	0.829			
	SD5	0.715			
	SD6	0.835			
	SD7	0.885			
Teacher engagement	TE1	0.857	0.898	0.925	0.712
	TE2	0.885			
	TE3	0.883			
	TE4	0.827			
	TE5	0.759			

Table 2 reports the assessment of construct reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from .816 to .918, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 and indicating strong internal consistency across all constructs. Composite reliability values were also above .70, further confirming the reliability of the measurement scales. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from .561 to .712, demonstrating that each construct accounted for more than half of the variance in its indicators. Indicator loadings were high, supporting adequate item representation. Collectively, these results confirm that the measures of community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline were reliable and demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity.

**Table 3** Discriminant validity- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio HTMT

	Community Participation	School Discipline	Teacher Engagement
Community participation			
School discipline	0.279		
Teacher engagement	0.440	0.735	

Table 3 shows the results of the discriminant validity assessment using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT values between community participation and school discipline (.279), community participation and teacher engagement (.440), and teacher engagement and school discipline (.735) were all below the recommended threshold of .85. These results indicate that the constructs are empirically distinct and measure different underlying concepts, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity.

**Table 4** Model Fit Indices

	Saturated model	Estimated model
d_ULS	0.801	0.801
d_G	0.324	0.324
SRMR	0.072	0.072
NFI	0.834	0.834
Chi-square	920.312	920.312

Table 4 reports the goodness-of-fit indices for both the saturated and estimated models. The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) value of .072 indicates an acceptable model fit. Other indices, including d\_ULS, d\_G, normed fit index (NFI), and chi-square values, were identical for both models, suggesting stability and adequacy of the proposed structural model.

**Table 5** Collinearity

Indicator	VIF
CP1	1.580
CP2	1.803
CP3	1.522
CP4	1.755
CP5	1.935
SD1	2.228
SD2	2.484
SD3	2.845

SD4	2.590
SD5	2.015
SD6	2.754
SD7	3.500
TE1	3.042
TE2	3.023
TE3	3.053
TE4	2.146
TE5	1.854

Table 5 presents the variance inflation factor (VIF) values for all indicators. All VIF values were below the recommended cutoff of 5, ranging from 1.52 to 3.50. These results indicate that multicollinearity was not a concern and that the predictor variables contributed uniquely to the model.

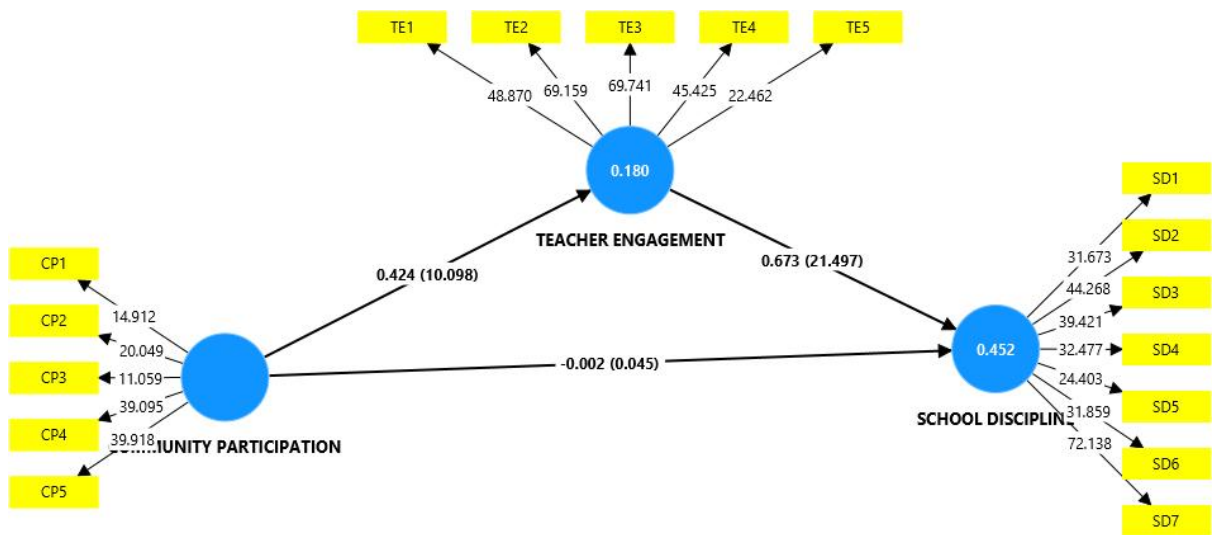


Figure 3 Structural model

Figure 3 displays the estimated structural model with standardised path coefficients. The model illustrates the direct effects among community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline, as well as the mediating role of teacher engagement.

Table 6 Direct, indirect, and total effects from PLS-SEM analysis

Path	B	SD	t	p	Decision
CP -> SD	-0.002	0.035	0.045	0.964	Not Supported
CP -> TE	0.424	0.042	10.098	0.000	Supported
TE -> SD	0.673	0.031	21.497	0.000	Supported
CP->TE->SD	0.286	0.034	8.347	0.000	Supported

Table 6 presents the results of the direct, indirect, and total effects among community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline as estimated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

The table reports standardised path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), standard deviations, t-values, p-values, and hypothesis decisions, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed structural relationships.

The direct path from community participation to school discipline ( $\beta = -.002$ ,  $t = 0.045$ ,  $p = .964$ ) was not statistically significant. This finding indicates that community participation, when considered in isolation, does not directly predict the effectiveness of school discipline in private secondary schools. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, increased parental or community involvement alone does not automatically translate into improved disciplinary outcomes. This result suggests that the influence of community participation on discipline is more complex and may depend on intervening psychological or organisational mechanisms within the school system.

In contrast, the direct path from community participation to teacher engagement was positive and statistically significant ( $\beta = .424$ ,  $t = 10.098$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This result demonstrates that supportive and collaborative community involvement is a strong predictor of higher levels of teacher engagement. Teachers who perceive parents and community members as cooperative, respectful, and aligned with school goals are more likely to exhibit greater vigour, dedication, and absorption in their work.

Teacher engagement also showed a strong and significant direct effect on school discipline ( $\beta = .673$ ,  $t = 21.497$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding indicates that engaged teachers play a central role in maintaining effective disciplinary environments. Higher engagement levels are associated with consistent rule enforcement, proactive classroom management, and positive teacher–student relationships, all of which contribute to orderly school climates.

Crucially, the indirect effect of community participation on school discipline through teacher engagement was statistically significant ( $\beta = .286$ ,  $t = 8.347$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Given that the direct effect was non-significant while the indirect effect was significant, the results provide evidence of full mediation. This means that community participation influences school discipline entirely through its effect on teacher engagement. In practical terms, community participation improves discipline only when it enhances teachers’ psychological engagement with their work.

Overall, Table 6 confirms the central mediating role of teacher engagement and underscores its importance as the mechanism through which community participation translates into effective school discipline.

**Table 7** Effect Size  $f^2$

Predictor	$f^2$	Effect Sizes
CP	0.220	Moderate
TE	0.679	Large

Table 7 reports the effect size ( $f^2$ ) of the predictor variables. Community participation had a moderate effect on the model ( $f^2 = .220$ ), while teacher engagement demonstrated a large effect ( $f^2 = .679$ ). These results indicate that teacher engagement was the most influential predictor of school discipline.

**Table 8** Model Explanatory and Predictive Power

Endogenous	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q2	Predictive Power
School discipline	0.452	0.449	0.298	Moderate
Teacher engagement	0.180	0.179	0.125	Weak

Table 8 presents the model's explanatory and predictive power. The  $R^2$  value for school discipline was .452, indicating that 45.2% of the variance was explained by the predictors. Teacher engagement had an  $R^2$  value of .180.  $Q^2$  values for school discipline (.298) and teacher engagement (.125) indicate adequate predictive relevance.

**Table 9** PLS-Predict Results for School Discipline and Teacher Engagement

Indicator	Q <sup>2</sup> predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	LM_RMSE
SD1	0.051	0.761	1.025
SD2	0.046	0.822	1.054
SD3	0.076	0.636	0.854
SD4	0.053	0.708	0.961
SD5	0.012	0.975	1.231
SD6	0.038	0.768	0.995
SD7	0.062	0.752	0.980
TE1	0.073	0.975	1.183
TE2	0.170	0.765	0.976
TE3	0.136	0.942	1.144
TE4	0.134	0.884	1.081
TE5	0.086	0.704	0.943

Table 9 presents the PLS-predict results for school discipline and teacher engagement indicators. All Q<sup>2</sup>predict values were greater than zero, and the PLS-SEM RMSE values were consistently lower than the linear model RMSE values. These findings indicate that the model demonstrates strong out-of-sample predictive performance.

## 5 Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the relationships among community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State, drawing on Social Capital Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. The findings provide important insights into how external stakeholder involvement interacts with internal human resource dynamics to shape disciplinary outcomes in fee-paying school contexts.

Contrary to expectations, the findings indicate that community participation did not exert a significant direct effect on school discipline. This result suggests that, within private secondary schools, strengthening disciplinary structures directly may be beyond the scope of parental and community involvement alone. From an educational management perspective, this finding underscores the complex nature of stakeholder relationships in market-oriented school environments, where parents often play dual roles as partners and clients.

While earlier studies conducted in public or rural schools have reported positive direct effects of community involvement on school order and behavioural norms (Aryeh-adjei, 2021; Pryor, 2010), more recent international research highlights the conditional nature of this relationship. Adewale and Moyo (2025) and Baxter and Ehren (2023) observed that parental involvement can undermine disciplinary coherence when it challenges professional authority or introduces conflicting expectations. In private schools, managerial autonomy over discipline may be constrained by parental pressure linked to fee payment and school choice.

For school leaders, this finding underscores that community participation must be strategically managed, rather than assumed to be inherently beneficial. Clear governance structures, well-defined disciplinary policies, and consistent communication channels are essential to prevent community involvement from diluting institutional authority.

The results demonstrate a strong positive relationship between community participation and teacher engagement, supporting the JD-R model's assertion that supportive social environments function as key job resources. When parents collaborate constructively with schools, respect teacher professionalism, and reinforce school norms, teachers experience greater psychological safety, motivation, and commitment.

This finding aligns with recent international evidence emphasising the role of stakeholder support in sustaining teacher engagement. Coppe et al. (2022) and Yusron (2025) found that positive parent–teacher relations enhance teachers' sense of professional value and organisational belonging. In private school contexts, Ucheagwu-Okoye

(2025) similarly reported that parental trust and cooperation reduced emotional strain and increased teachers' willingness to invest discretionary effort.

Teacher engagement emerged as a strong and significant predictor of school discipline, confirming its central role in shaping effective school climates. Engaged teachers are more proactive in classroom management, more consistent in enforcing rules, and better equipped emotionally to manage student behaviour constructively.

This finding is consistent with international research linking teacher engagement to organisational effectiveness and climate management. Madigan and Kim (2021) and Seiler et al. (2023) found that disengaged teachers were more likely to withdraw from disciplinary responsibilities, leading to inconsistency and weakened norms. Within African private school settings, Adewale and Potokri (2023) similarly identified low engagement as a precursor to disciplinary breakdowns.

The mediation analysis revealed that teacher engagement fully mediated the relationship between community participation and school discipline. This indicates that community participation contributes to improved disciplinary outcomes only when it enhances teachers' engagement. In managerial terms, teachers act as the critical conduit through which external stakeholder inputs are translated into internal organisational performance.

This finding aligns with recent international studies emphasising indirect pathways in school effectiveness models. Baxter and Ehren (2023) and Jailani et al. (2025) similarly reported that stakeholder trust and involvement influenced school outcomes primarily through staff motivation and commitment. The result strengthens the integrated application of Social Capital Theory and the JD-R model by demonstrating how external social resources affect internal human capital.

While the model explained 45.2% of the variance in school discipline, it accounted for only 18.0% of the variance in teacher engagement. This low explanatory power indicates that community participation, although a significant predictor, is only one of many factors shaping teacher engagement in private secondary schools. Other job resources, such as leadership support, remuneration, workload management, and professional autonomy, likely play substantial roles (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Okolie et al., 2021). Future research should incorporate these additional predictors to better understand teacher engagement in market-driven school contexts.

## **6 Conclusions**

This study examined the structural relationships among community participation, teacher engagement, and school discipline in private secondary schools in Lagos State using an integrated Social Capital and Job Demands–Resources framework. The findings demonstrate that community participation does not directly enhance school discipline; rather, its influence operates entirely through teacher engagement. Teacher engagement emerged as the strongest predictor of effective school discipline, highlighting teachers as the central mechanism through which external stakeholder inputs are translated into internal organisational outcomes.

By empirically validating the mediating role of teacher engagement, the study advances educational management literature by clarifying how community–school relationships function within market-driven private education systems. The results suggest that disciplinary effectiveness in private schools depends less on the volume of parental involvement and more on how such involvement supports teachers' psychological resources, professional authority, and commitment. Overall, the study underscores the importance of strategically aligning stakeholder participation with internal human resource practices to achieve sustainable disciplinary and organisational outcomes.

## **Practical and Social Implication**

The findings have several important implications for school leaders, proprietors, and policymakers. First, community participation should be strategically governed, not informally encouraged. Private school administrators should establish clear policies that define parental roles, protect teacher authority in disciplinary matters, and promote constructive collaboration rather than interference.

Second, teacher engagement should be treated as a core managerial outcome rather than an individual teacher attribute. Investment in supportive leadership, fair workload distribution, professional recognition, and transparent communication with parents is critical for sustaining teacher engagement and, by extension, school discipline.

Third, stakeholder engagement initiatives should be designed with an explicit focus on their impact on teachers. Programmes that strengthen trust, clarify expectations, and align parental involvement with school values are more likely to yield positive organisational outcomes. These insights are particularly relevant for private schools operating in competitive environments where parental pressure and accountability demands are high.

### Limitations and Directions for Further Research

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how community participation and teacher engagement evolve over time. Second, data were collected exclusively from teachers, which may introduce perceptual bias. Future studies should incorporate perspectives from school leaders, parents, and students to provide a more holistic view.

Third, the study focused on private secondary schools in Lagos State, which may limit generalisability to public schools or other cultural contexts. Comparative studies across public and private sectors or across different countries would enhance external validity. Finally, future research could explore moderating variables such as leadership style, school ownership structure, or fee levels to further unpack the conditions under which community participation positively or negatively affects teacher engagement and discipline.

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### Availability statement

Data will be made available on request

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### Declaration of generative AI use

Generative AI was used solely for grammar, clarity, and formatting and did not contribute to the study's design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or conclusions. The authors accept full responsibility for the authenticity, accuracy, and integrity of the study.

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