



Principals' Perception of Staff Discipline on Personnel Management in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the principals' perception of staff discipline on personnel management in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the extent of discipline among staff and its influence on personnel management in Borno State, Nigeria. This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. It also helps to describe, explain and interpret the current status of phenomena without manipulating any variables. The population of the study comprised all principals in public senior secondary schools within Borno State. As of the 2025 academic session, the Borno State has 509 public senior secondary schools, with an estimated population of 509 principals comprising of both male and female. A total of 226 respondents were selected as the sample size for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The sample was in line with Krejcieff and Morgan (1970). The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Principals' Discipline Strategy on Teachers Job Performance (PDSTJP)". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was computed, yielding a value of 0.83, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviations. The finding indicates that 69% of the principals believed that staff in Senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria were disciplined. The finding further revealed that 93% of the respondents believed that discipline has a significant influence on personnel management in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that

discipline is an important tool for personnel management and organisational growth in Senior Secondary Schools, Borno State, Nigeria. It can be deduced that effective discipline in an organization leads to effective management of personnel.

Keywords: Principals' Perception, Personnel Management, Staff Discipline

1. Introduction

Discipline is a fundamental element in the management of human resources within any educational institution. In the school system, discipline refers to the observance of rules, norms and standards of behaviour by both Staff and students, which ensures order, responsibility and accountability. Effective human resource management (HRM) in schools depends mainly on the ability of the school management to maintain discipline among personnel such as principals, vice principals, teachers and administrative Staff. When discipline is enforced appropriately, it enhances productivity, commitment and professional conduct among school personnel, which are critical to achieving educational objectives (John, 2024).

The principal, who is the human resource manager in the schools, is saddled with a wide range of activities such as allocation of responsibilities, sharing of resources, managing students' records, discipline of both staff and students, capacity building, staff development, performance evaluation and motivation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). A Principal's Discipline Strategy refers to the structured approach a school leader uses to promote

positive behaviour, prevent misconduct and handle disciplinary issues among students and Staff. An effective strategy is proactive, consistent, fair and aligned with school policies and educational goals. However, the presence or absence of discipline among Staff significantly influences these processes. Indiscipline in the workplace can result in lateness, absenteeism, poor job performance, insubordination and conflict, all of which undermine the efficiency of the educational system. Discipline is a tool for organizational productivity. It fosters adherence to school policies, promotes professional ethics and contributes to a stable and productive working environment (Okumbe, 2001).

In the context of Nigeria, especially in Borno State, the issue of indiscipline in senior secondary schools has gained attention due to the numerous challenges affecting educational operation and management. Borno State, being the capital of Borno State, has witnessed the adverse effects of insecurity, displacement and infrastructural decay, all of which have complicated the administration of schools and affected staff discipline. As noted by Olatunji and Akinlolu (2022), poor supervision, inadequate enforcement of rules and lack of incentives for teachers contribute to the erosion of indiscipline in public schools.

The researcher has observed that many senior secondary schools within the Borno State faced such as issues of teacher absenteeism, lateness to school, poor work attitude and non-compliance with administrative directives have become commonplace. These behaviours reflect deeper issues of indiscipline that pose serious threats to effective human resources management. Despite existing policies and guidelines on teacher conduct and performance, many schools struggle to enforce disciplinary measures, often due to inadequate supervisory mechanisms or a lack of institutional will. These may be as results of ineffective discipline strategy to curtail the menace in most of the secondary schools in Borno State, Borno State. The researchers also observed that, the inability to maintain discipline among Staff may negatively affects planning, instructional delivery and general school administration. Perhaps it could also reduce the morale of committed teachers and undermines efforts to promote quality education. It is against this background that the researchers investigated the principals' perception of staff discipline on personnel job performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to examine:

- the extent of indiscipline among Staff in senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria.
- the influence of staff discipline on personnel management in Borno State, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

- What is the level of indiscipline Staff in senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria?
- What are the influence of staff discipline on personnel management in Borno State, Nigeria?

2. Literature Review

Discipline in educational institutions refers to the system of rules, codes of conduct and behavioural standards designed to maintain order and ensure the effective functioning of the school. It involves both proactive strategies for guiding behaviour and corrective measures for addressing misconduct. In the school environment, discipline is essential not only for students' behaviour but also for maintaining professional ethics among teaching staff, students, and non-teaching Staff (Edem, 2020).

According to Yusuf and Adigun (2022), discipline among school personnel encompasses punctuality, compliance with school regulations, proper communication, and responsibility in the discharge of duties. It is an indicator of professionalism and contributes to the overall effectiveness of school administration. Where discipline is maintained, schools are likely to function more efficiently and achieve their goals.

In the Nigerian context, school administrators face challenges such as teacher absenteeism, late coming, non-compliance with directives, and neglect of duty, all of which are rooted in poor staff discipline (Eze, 2021). Effective disciplinary measures must therefore be embedded in the school's human resource practices to ensure accountability and performance.

Human resources management (HRM) in schools refers to the strategic planning and administration of tasks related to recruitment, staff development, motivation, performance

management, and employee relations. In the education sector, HRM ensures that schools are staffed with competent personnel who can deliver quality instruction and support services (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). For HRM to be effective, it must align with the values of discipline, responsibility and integrity. School heads are expected to manage both teaching and non-teaching Staff by applying principles of fairness, accountability and professional growth. HRM also involves mechanisms for staff appraisal, capacity building and conflict resolution (Okoye & Ogbonnaya, 2022).

A study conducted by Abubakar and Lawan (2022) explored the influence of staff discipline on human resources management in public senior secondary schools in Borno State, Borno State. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design and used a sample of 210 teaching and 90 non-teaching staff drawn from 15 senior secondary schools using stratified random sampling. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Staff Discipline and Human Resource Management Questionnaire (SDHRMQ)". Data were analysed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The study revealed a significant positive relationship between staff discipline and effective human resources management practices. The study concluded that staff indiscipline in the form of absenteeism and lateness undermines HR planning and affects overall productivity.

Yusuf and Hassan (2021) investigated the impact of disciplinary measures on the management of human resources in senior secondary schools in Borno State. The study involved a sample of 300 staff members (comprising both teaching and administrative personnel) selected using simple random sampling. The researchers employed a questionnaire titled the Discipline and School Management Questionnaire (DSMQ) for data collection. Analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis. The results show that effective disciplinary policies significantly influenced staff performance, record-keeping accuracy and employee retention. The study recommended that consistent enforcement of rules enhances accountability and reduces cases of professional misconduct.

Mohammed and Tanko (2023) examined the role of discipline in shaping human resource functions in secondary schools within Maiduguri metropolis. The population of 1986 was used for the study, out of which 250

respondents were sampled, comprising principals, teachers, and administrative Staff. The researchers applied a mixed-method approach that included questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The instrument, Human Resource and Discipline Interface Scale (HRDIS), was validated through expert review. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, as well as chi-square tests. The findings showed that schools with well-established disciplinary supporting structures experienced better coordination of human resource functions such as workload distribution, performance appraisal and grievance management. The study further revealed that improved teamwork can reduce interpersonal conflicts in schools with strict but fair discipline systems.

Bukar and Ibrahim (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between staff discipline and administrative effectiveness in Maiduguri's public secondary schools. The study adopted a correlational survey design involving 180 teachers and 60 non-teaching staff. The data collection instrument, Staff Discipline and Administrative Efficiency Questionnaire (SDAEQ), was administered and analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation. The findings of the study revealed a strong positive correlation between Staff disciplinary compliance and the efficiency of HR management processes, particularly in areas like time management, staff development, and conflict resolution.

The review of literature has established that discipline is a cornerstone of effective human resources management in secondary schools. It influences key human resource activities such as supervision, performance appraisal, staff motivation and professional development. Several challenges affect the enforcement of discipline in schools, including insecurity, poor working conditions and administrative limitations, particularly in conflict-affected areas like Maiduguri. However, strategic interventions such as clear codes of conduct, capacity building, and participatory leadership can ameliorate the situation. Research has validated the strong correlation between discipline and human resource management findings, emphasizing the need for structured and context-sensitive disciplinary approaches in schools.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. Surveys allow for gathering data from vast populations. They are also well-suited for capturing demographic information about the sample's composition (McIntyre, 1999). Surveys are inclusive in terms of the sorts and amount of variables that may be researched, involve little cost to construct and run, and are reasonably simple to generalize from (Bell, 1996). Surveys can also provide information about attitudes that are difficult to quantify using observational approaches (McIntyre, 1999). However, surveys only provide estimates for the actual population, not exact measurements (Salant & Dillman, 1994). The design was relevant because it allows the researcher to systematically collect and analyse data from a sample population. It also helps to describe, explain and interpret the current status of phenomena without manipulating any variables. Specifically, the study examined the principals' perception of staff discipline on personnel job performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all teaching and non-

teaching Staff in public senior secondary schools within Borno State. As of the 2025 academic session, the Borno State has 509 public senior secondary schools, with an estimated population of 509 principals comprises of both male and female. A total of 226 respondents were selected as the sample size for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Principals' Discipline Strategy on Teachers Job Performance (PDSTJP)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: Sought demographic information of respondents (gender, years of experience, job category). Section B: Contained 20 items designed to elicit responses on various aspects of discipline. Responses were based on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was computed, yielding a value of 0.83, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviations.

4. Data Analysis and Results

What is the extent of discipline among Staff in senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Extent of Discipline among Staff in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria

Items	Agree (Freq)	Agree (%)	Not Agree (Freq)	Not Agree (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
Teaching staff in my school report to duty on time.	106	47%	120	53%	2.8274	1.40518	Negative
Staff carry out their responsibilities diligently without frequent reminders.	45	19%	181	81%	2.2434	1.07830	Negative
Staff comply with rules and regulations guiding school operations.	106	47%	120	53%	2.8938	1.43519	Negative
Cases of absenteeism without valid reasons are rare among staff.	56	25%	170	75%	2.3186	1.15674	Negative
Staff members demonstrate ethical behavior in carrying out their duties	185	82%	41	18%	3.7699	0.89947	Positive
Disciplined staff are easier to supervise and require less follow-up.	206	91%	20	09%	4.0885	0.78381	Positive
Staff discipline enhances the accuracy of performance appraisal outcomes.	211	92%	15	08%	4.0221	0.74503	Positive
Regular attendance and punctuality contribute positively to staff evaluations.	196	87%	30	13%	3.8673	0.95689	Positive
Disciplined employees are more likely to benefit from professional development opportunities.	226	100%	00	00%	4.5310	0.50015	Positive
A disciplined workforce improves overall school human resource management efficiency.	226	100%	00	00%	4.2655	0.44257	Positive
GRAND TOTAL	1563	69%	697	31%	3.48275	0.94033	

Table 1 indicates that 69% of the principals believed that staff has discipline while 31% of the respondents disagree with the finding in Senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria. This implies that majority of the respondents (principals) has positive perception on staff discipline in Senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria.

What are the influence of staff discipline on personnel management in senior secondary schools, Borno State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Influence of Staff Discipline on Personnel Management in Senior Secondary Schools, Borno State, Nigeria

Variable	Agree (Freq)	Agree (%)	Not Agree (Freq)	Not Agree (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
Lack of support from higher authorities makes it difficult to enforce discipline.	221	98%	05	02%	4.3982	0.61159	Positive
Staff unions often interfere with disciplinary actions taken by school management.	216	96%	10	04%	4.2655	0.57376	Positive
Fear of conflict or retaliation discourages school heads from taking disciplinary measures.	196	87%	30	13%	3.9336	0.99779	Positive
Some disciplinary procedures are time-consuming and bureaucratic.	196	87%	30	13%	4.0708	0.99970	Positive
Personal relationships between staff and administrators affect enforcement of rules.	211	94%	15	06%	4.1770	0.90165	Positive
Regular in-service training on discipline should be organized for staff.	205	91%	21	09%	4.1681	0.83695	Positive
Clear and consistent disciplinary policies should be established and communicated.	211	94%	15	06%	4.1770	0.73913	Positive
Rewarding disciplined behavior can motivate others to comply with rules.	211	94%	15	06%	4.2478	0.76630	Positive
School leaders should lead by example in maintaining discipline.	216	96%	10	04%	4.3319	0.69956	Positive
Regular staff meetings can be used to address behavioral issues and promote accountability.	216	96%	10	04%	4.1770	0.64263	Positive
GRAND TOTAL	2099	93%	161	07%	4.18869	0.77670	Positive

Table 2 indicates that 93% of the respondents believed that discipline has a significant influence on personnel management in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria. In the other hand 07% of the respondents disagree and conclude that discipline has no influence on personnel management. This implies that majority of the respondents believed that staff disciplines significantly influence the management of personnel in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria.

5. Discussion

The finding of the study in respect to the first research question which on what is the extent of discipline among Staff in senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria. This shows that majority of the respondents (principals) has positive perception on staff discipline in Senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria. This

finding is in consistence with that of Abubakar and Lawan (2022), Bukar and Ibrahim (2020) and Mohammed and Tanko (2023) who reported that there was a positive perception on staff discipline across the senior secondary schoolss in Nigeria.

The findings of the study with respect to the second research questions which say what is influence of staff discipline on personnel management in senior secondary schools, Borno State, Nigeria? The findings revealed that majority of the respondents believed that staff disciplines significantly influence the management of personnel in Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria. The finding is consonance with Yusuf and Adigun (2022), Eze, (2021), Abubakar and Lawan (2022) and Yusuf and Hassan (2021) that report a strong positive correlation between Staff disciplinary

compliance and the efficiency of personnel management processes.

6. Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that discipline is an important tool for personnel management and organisational growth in Senior Secondary Schools, Borno State, Nigeria. It can be deduced that effective discipline in an organization lead to effective management of personnel.

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