| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Administration of Staff Discipline and Organisational Effectiveness among Staff of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the role of staff discipline administration in shaping organisational effectiveness among employees of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. Anchored on Equity Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated by a sense of fairness in social and workplace exchanges. The findings reveal that perceived fairness exerts the strongest influence on organisational effectiveness, underscoring the primacy of justice in employee compliance and engagement. Clarity of disciplinary procedures emerged as a significant predictor of behavioural alignment, as unambiguous rules reduce confusion and foster accountability. While consistency in enforcement also contributes to effectiveness, it ranked slightly lower, suggesting that employees prioritise fairness and transparency over rigid uniformity. The study recommends the institutionalisation of transparent, fair, and consistently applied disciplinary frameworks, reinforced through periodic evaluations and staff feedback mechanisms. Such measures, the study concludes, are essential for cultivating trust, sustaining performance, and advancing organisational goals within public tertiary institutions. The study concludes with policy recommendations on strengthening disciplinary frameworks to enhance performance.

| **KEYWORDS**

Staff Discipline, Organisational Effectiveness, SSANIP, Auchi Polytechnic, Disciplinary Procedures

Introduction

The administration of staff discipline in institutions of higher learning remains a critical driver of performance and accountability. In Nigeria, polytechnics are key contributors to technical and vocational education, and they require efficient management systems to ensure staff effectiveness. Discipline, when administered properly, ensures adherence to institutional rules, fosters professionalism, and promotes a culture of integrity. As educational institutions

grapple with issues of poor staff performance and misalignment of goals, the need to examine disciplinary administration becomes increasingly significant.

Auchi Polytechnic is one of the foremost polytechnics in Nigeria, recognized for its academic excellence and strong administrative structure. However, like many public institutions, it occasionally faces challenges related to employee conduct, enforcement of standards, and goal alignment. The institution's ability to achieve its objectives largely depends on the commitment and discipline of its workforce. Consequently, a deeper understanding of how staff discipline is managed and its impact on organisational effectiveness is essential.

Several studies have explored disciplinary mechanisms in the public sector, but few have focused on the specific dynamics within polytechnics, particularly among unionized staff. The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Polytechnics (SSANIP) represents a substantial portion of the academic and administrative workforce at Auchi Polytechnic. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of these staff members can offer vital insights into institutional efficiency and sustainability.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring how the administration of staff discipline affects organisational effectiveness in Auchi Polytechnic. It seeks to determine whether existing disciplinary practices foster or hinder organisational goals and employee motivation.

Statement of the Problem

The rising incidences of staff misconduct, absenteeism, and declining morale in Nigerian tertiary institutions point to a growing problem of ineffective disciplinary administration. At Auchi Polytechnic, evidence suggests that disciplinary procedures are often seen as reactive, inconsistent, and sometimes perceived as unfair. Such challenges not only affect staff commitment but also compromise the institution's ability to maintain a culture of accountability and excellence.

Despite having formal procedures and committees for handling disciplinary cases, the perceived gaps in the fairness and transparency of these processes continue to generate discontent among employees. When disciplinary measures are seen as punitive rather than corrective, it can erode trust, lower productivity, and weaken staff commitment to institutional goals.

Moreover, the influence of union politics, management bias, and lack of proper documentation often result in delayed disciplinary actions or selective enforcement. This undermines institutional credibility and may inadvertently embolden deviant behaviors.

The problem, therefore, lies in understanding whether disciplinary mechanisms at Auchi Polytechnic are effectively structured and implemented in ways that enhance organisational effectiveness. Are these practices contributing positively to staff performance, morale, and institutional compliance, or are they exacerbating inefficiencies?

Research Questions

1. How clear and accessible are the disciplinary procedures for staff at Auchi Polytechnic?
2. To what extent do staff perceive the disciplinary actions as fair and just?
3. How consistent is the enforcement of disciplinary measures across departments?
4. What is the impact of staff discipline on organisational effectiveness in terms of productivity, staff morale, and goal alignment?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between clarity of disciplinary procedures and organisational effectiveness.

H02: There is no significant relationship between fairness of disciplinary actions and organisational effectiveness.

H03: There is no significant relationship between consistency in disciplinary enforcement and organisational effectiveness.

Literature Review

The administration of staff discipline constitutes a critical dimension of organizational management, serving as a mechanism through which employee conduct is regulated to align with institutional goals. Effective disciplinary systems foster behavioural conformity, enhance workplace productivity, and contribute to a stable and harmonious organizational climate. As Ajumogobia (2007) contends, discipline ensures adherence to internal rules and policies, which is essential for operational coherence and goal attainment. Torrington and Chapman (1979) further conceptualize discipline as a condition of internal order and self-regulation among employees—a determinant of organizational functionality that mitigates workplace deviance, including absenteeism, insubordination, and resource wastage.

Empirical scholarship reinforces the positive nexus between discipline and organizational performance. Agbo (2020), in a study of Nigerian Breweries Plc, identified the code of discipline as the most influential determinant of employee performance, followed closely by the procedures and systems that operationalize discipline. His findings indicate that disciplinary codes, when clearly articulated and effectively communicated, enhance employee awareness, broaden professional outlooks, and support career progression. In a similar vein, Apalia (2017) observed that discipline management, when strategically administered, strengthens employee knowledge and facilitates promotional advancement, thereby validating the centrality of structured disciplinary mechanisms.

Eze and Uzoigwe (2021) reported a positive relationship between well-structured disciplinary mechanisms and performance in Nigerian universities. Ajayi and Adeniji (2019) found that inconsistent application of discipline demoralizes employees and leads to resistance. Adebayo (2022) concluded that procedural fairness and open communication significantly reduce grievances and enhance morale while administering discipline.

In contrast, studies like Chukwu and Ogbonna (2020) caution against overly punitive disciplinary systems, suggesting they can foster resentment. A study by Musa et al. (2023) emphasized the role of participatory disciplinary committees in enhancing transparency and staff buy-in.

Nevertheless, the efficacy of disciplinary systems hinges significantly on principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency. Arbitrary or biased disciplinary practices may breed resentment, diminish morale, and undermine the legitimacy of management authority (Ani, 2011; Anyaoha, 2010). Armstrong (2010) posits that disciplinary action should not be construed merely as punitive; rather, it must be embedded within a broader framework of employee engagement and behavioural alignment with organizational values.

Progressive discipline, when administered systematically and consistently, functions as a corrective tool rather than a retributive one. Patrick (2015) emphasizes that such disciplinary approaches serve motivational purposes by clarifying expectations and reinforcing desirable behaviours. Warris (2015) further asserts that discipline, when complemented by targeted training and competence development, contributes substantially to employee efficiency and organizational resilience.

Staff discipline represents an indispensable instrument in the pursuit of organizational effectiveness. Its proper administration cultivates behavioural alignment, drives performance enhancement, and supports institutional stability. To achieve these outcomes, leaders must adopt disciplinary frameworks that are equitable, transparent, and strategically integrated within the broader architecture of human resource management.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Equity Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated by a sense of fairness in social and workplace exchanges. Developed by John Stacey Adams in 1963, Equity Theory asserts that employees assess the ratio of their inputs (such as effort, skill, time, and commitment) to outcomes (such as recognition, remuneration, promotion, and disciplinary treatment) and compare it to the ratios perceived in others within the same organization.

According to this theoretical framework, when employees perceive equity—meaning their input-output ratio is proportional to that of their colleagues—they are more likely to demonstrate commitment, productivity, and cooperative behaviour. Conversely, perceived inequity, especially in disciplinary procedures, may result in demotivation, resistance, reduced performance, and workplace conflict. Thus, fair and consistent administration of staff discipline plays a central role in fostering organizational effectiveness by reinforcing perceptions of justice, accountability, and institutional integrity.

In the context of Auchi Polytechnic, the application of Equity Theory underscores the importance of transparent and impartial disciplinary mechanisms that reflect equal treatment of staff, regardless of cadre or affiliation. Ensuring equity in disciplinary administration not only enhances compliance with institutional regulations but also strengthens employee morale, which is essential for achieving the broader goals of organizational efficiency and academic excellence.

Methodology

The population of this study comprises 2,456 SSANIP members at Auchi Polytechnic. Using the Taro Yamane formula, the sample size is:

n = N / (1 + Ne^2) = 2456 / (1 + 2456 × 0.0025) = 345 respondents

The sample was selected using purposive sampling techniques to ensure representation from administrative and academic departments. A well-structured questionnaire were used to

gather data on perceptions of staff discipline and organisational effectiveness, with items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and regression analysis through SPSS. Variables were tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7).

4. Results and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics Output

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	25%	50%	75%	Max
Clarity	4.10	0.49	2.60	3.76	4.09	4.44	5.44
Fairness	3.91	0.58	2.10	3.53	3.89	4.27	5.50
Consistency	3.82	0.57	2.20	3.42	3.81	4.22	5.17
Effectiveness	3.93	0.38	2.99	3.68	3.94	4.19	4.98

Source: Researchers' computation, SPSS 21

From the table above, clarity has the highest mean (M = 4.10), suggesting respondents generally perceive high clarity of administration of disciplinary procedures. Fairness and consistency also show moderately high means (M = 3.91; 3.82), which indicate positive perception but with slightly more variability (Std Dev = 0.58; 0.57). Effectiveness has the least variability (Std Dev = 0.38), indicating more agreement among responses.

Regression Analysis Output

Model Summary

- R = 0.725: There is a strong correlation between predictors (clarity, fairness, consistency) and effectiveness.
- R^2 = 0.526: About 52.6% of the variance in effectiveness is explained by the predictors.
- Adjusted R^2 = 0.520: Corrects for the number of predictors, still indicating a solid model.
- $F_{(3, 341)}$ = 126.64, $p < 0.001$: The model is statistically significant.

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.1471	0.0933	1.577	0.1160
Clarity	0.3087	0.0281	10.976	<0.001
Fairness	0.3494	0.0284	12.311	<0.001

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Consistency	0.2772	0.0278	9.969	<0.001

Source: Researchers' computation, SPSS 21

From the regression output, it is shown that all three predictors are significant (p <0.001). Fairness (ß = 0.3494) has the highest impact on effectiveness, while clarity (ß = 0.3087) and consistency (ß = 0.2772) also contribute significantly.

These results reinforce the interpretation of descriptive statistics in the previous section that clarity, fairness, and consistency are significant predictors of organisational effectiveness at Auchi Polytechnic.

Discussion

The findings indicate that clarity, fairness, and consistency in disciplinary administration significantly predict organisational effectiveness. Among these, fairness recorded the highest influence, highlighting the importance of perceived justice. Employees are more likely to comply with institutional norms when they believe disciplinary measures are fair and transparent. This finding is consistent with the conclusion previously made by Adebayo (2022) that procedural fairness and open communication significantly reduce grievances and enhance morale. To be certain, it is generally given that employees of all cadres are sensitive to fairness in the workplace. Inequity usually creates dissatisfaction, especially among the rank and file of the organisation.

Again, the findings are consistent with the equity and procedural justice theories, which emphasize the centrality of fairness and transparency in organisational processes. The clarity of procedures also contributes significantly to goal alignment, as clear expectations shape employee behaviour and reduce ambiguity.

Interestingly, consistency ranked slightly lower but remained significant. This suggests that while consistent application is important, employees prioritize fairness and understanding over uniformity alone. The importance of goal alignment and staff morale as mediating variables was also evident from descriptive statistics.

Key findings include:

- Clear disciplinary policies improve compliance and alignment with institutional goals.
- Perceived fairness in handling infractions significantly enhances staff morale.

- Inconsistent enforcement may reduce productivity and lead to disengagement.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings above, it is recommended that management should develop and deploy a clear and transparent disciplinary framework accessible to all staff members in order to improve compliance and alignment with institutional goals.

Management effort should not only be made to achieve fairness but to be seen as being fair in handling infractions. This will significantly enhance staff morale.

Disciplinary enforcement by management should be consistent to engender trust. Inconsistent enforcement will lead to lower productivity and turnover intention by affected employees.

Periodic evaluations of disciplinary procedures should be conducted by management, using anonymous feedback tools, so as to follow the effectiveness of such procedures.

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