

Measures Employed by School Administrators for Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures and Promotion of Ethical Standards for School Effectiveness

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Abstract : *This study investigated measures adopted by school administrator for enforcement of disciplinary procedures and promotion of ethical standards for school effectiveness. Guided by two research questions and two hypotheses, the population comprised 35 secondary schools in North Senatorial District of Delta State. The study sample comprised 370 teachers selected using simple random sampling procedure ten schools. The study adopted correlational research design. Mean and Standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The formulated hypotheses were tested with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that some of the measures commonly employed by school administrators for enforcing discipline include among others, punishment for ethical violations and absenteeism, clear disciplinary policies, adherence to due process and for promotion of ethical standards the measures include, giving orientation on professional ethics, admonishing during staff meeting on ethical standards, inscribing ethical values in school policies, amongst others. The study recommended that school administrators should organize workshops on professional ethics, displaying ethical codes at strategic positions in the school and regular discussions on ethical dilemmas to improve school effectiveness.*

Keywords: Disciplinary procedures, enforcement, ethical standards, school administrators, school effectiveness,

Introduction

Secondary schools serve as the bridge between primary education and higher academic pursuits, preparing students for future responsibilities in society and further learning. These institutions are strategically positioned to develop the intellectual, moral, and social capacities of learners at a critical stage of their development. Teachers are central to the realization of the objectives of secondary schools, as they are the primary implementers of the curriculum and facilitators of student learning. Teachers not only transmit knowledge but also model behaviours, values, and attitudes that shape students' development (Okonkwo & Ajani, 2022). Their role extends beyond classroom instruction to include mentoring, counseling, and serving as role models, thereby reinforcing the holistic goals of secondary education. Teachers' teaching effectiveness refers to the extent to which teachers are able to facilitate learning in a way that leads to meaningful and measurable academic achievement and personal development in students. It encompasses a broad range of professional competencies, including subject mastery, pedagogical skills, classroom management, communication abilities, and the capacity to inspire and motivate learners. These recurring issues point to a systemic decline in teaching effectiveness, which continues to hinder the actualization of educational goals at the secondary school level and overall school effectiveness in Delta State. This leads to a pressing need to examine the measures employed by school administrators for enforcement of disciplinary procedures and promotion of ethical standards for enhanced school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

Effective management of such behaviours by school administrators is essential for maintaining institutional integrity, promoting a positive school culture, and ensuring that the educational objectives are not undermined by misconduct (Ibrahim & Uche, 2022). When malfeasance is left unchecked, it tends to normalize unethical behaviour, lower staff morale, and reduce the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. Thus, school administrators play a pivotal role in setting ethical standards and enforcing accountability mechanisms that discourage misconduct among staff, particularly teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the vital role of teachers play in the realization of secondary education objectives, there is a growing concern over the declining teaching effectiveness among teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Reports from the Delta State chapter of the National Union of Teachers revealed that over 45% of teachers in public secondary schools exhibit low professional commitment, poor instructional delivery, and a lack of innovation in teaching methods. Students have continually expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction, citing poor explanations of concepts, lack of teacher preparedness, and minimal engagement in the classroom. Principals also report cases of persistent lateness, absenteeism, and non-compliance with instructional

schedules by teachers. This raises questions about the role of school administrators in enforcing discipline and promoting ethical standards among teachers for enhanced school effectiveness in Delta State.

Research Questions

1. What measures do school administrators commonly employ for the enforcement of disciplinary procedures for school effectiveness?
2. What measures do school administrators apply for the promotion of ethical standards for school effectiveness?

Hypotheses

1. Measures employed by school administrators for enforcement of disciplinary procedures will not significantly correlate with school effectiveness.
2. Measures employed by school administrators for promotion of ethical will not significantly correlate with school effectiveness.

Literature Review

Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures and School Effectiveness

The enforcement of disciplinary procedures plays a crucial role in shaping the behavioural and professional conduct of teachers and other staff, which in turn significantly impacts the overall effectiveness in secondary schools. Disciplinary procedures refer to formal mechanisms and processes implemented by school authorities to maintain standards, correct misconduct, and ensure that all staff adhere to professional norms. In the context of public secondary schools, where diverse professional behaviours coexist, the enforcement of such procedures becomes an essential administrative function aimed at maintaining order, accountability, and instructional excellence. Recent scholarly investigations affirm a strong relationship between the strict implementation of disciplinary policies and enhanced teacher performance, asserting that where rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced, teachers are more likely to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and instructional competence (Uche & Abiodun, 2021). This is because a structured disciplinary framework serves as both a deterrent against unprofessional behaviour and a motivator for sustained instructional quality.

Empirical findings further suggest that disciplinary enforcement ensures the establishment of a school climate conducive to teaching and learning by reducing incidents of absenteeism, laxity, and unethical behaviours. According to Chidiebere and Ogbonna (2023), schools with a clearly defined disciplinary code witness lower rates of teacher absenteeism and higher levels of classroom engagement compared to schools where disciplinary measures are inconsistently applied. The presence of predictable consequences for professional misconduct creates a sense of responsibility among teachers, encouraging them to meet performance expectations. This consistency also fosters trust among staff, as teachers believe that the system treats all personnel fairly and transparently. As a result, teachers are more likely to be committed to their roles, leading to increased teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, such an environment facilitates student learning by minimizing disruptions caused by ineffective teaching or unprofessional teacher conduct.

The correlation between effective disciplinary enforcement and teaching performance is particularly evident when sanctions are coupled with developmental feedback and opportunities for improvement. Rather than merely punishing infractions, disciplinary procedures that include mechanisms for coaching, counseling, or professional development are more effective in rehabilitating erring teachers and improving instructional outcomes (Salami & Adeoye, 2022). In this sense, disciplinary enforcement is not only a corrective tool but also a strategic approach to enhancing human resource development within the educational sector. Teachers subjected to disciplinary measures, when treated fairly and supported professionally, often reflect on their practices and make deliberate efforts to improve their instructional delivery. This underscores the importance of integrating corrective and developmental strategies within disciplinary frameworks to promote continuous teaching improvement.

In addition, the enforcement of disciplinary measures serves as a signal to all teachers that the school leadership prioritizes instructional standards and professional ethics. This signaling effect, as described by Olayemi and Jimoh (2020), raises the level of organizational vigilance, with teachers internalizing the values and expectations of the institution. Consequently, teachers become more diligent in their lesson preparation, more punctual in reporting to duty, and more effective in managing classrooms. Such behavioural alignment with institutional goals enhances the overall effectiveness of the teaching staff. The enforcement process also

reinforces the authority and credibility of school administrators, empowering them to drive reforms, enforce policies, and support teachers in achieving pedagogical excellence.

Nevertheless, the relationship between disciplinary enforcement and teaching effectiveness is mediated by factors such as fairness, transparency, and consistency. Where disciplinary procedures are perceived as arbitrary, biased, or politically motivated, they may breed resentment, low morale, and resistance among teachers, thereby reducing teaching effectiveness (Ezeani & Nwachukwu, 2021). It is therefore essential that school administrators adopt a procedural justice framework in enforcing discipline, ensuring that teachers are informed of the rules, given an opportunity to be heard, and judged based on objective criteria. Such an approach promotes trust in the disciplinary system and encourages compliance with institutional policies. When teachers perceive the disciplinary system as fair and just, they are more likely to accept corrective feedback and adjust their behaviour in line with school expectations.

Moreover, the effectiveness of disciplinary enforcement also depends on the administrative capacity of school leaders to detect and address misconduct promptly. In many Nigerian public secondary schools, the lack of monitoring tools and institutional support undermines the enforcement of discipline. A study by Izuagba and Emeh (2022) revealed that the absence of functional disciplinary committees, poor documentation, and administrative bottlenecks often hinder the successful implementation of sanctions against erring teachers. This administrative gap contributes to a culture of impunity, where misconduct is either ignored or addressed selectively, thereby weakening the impact of disciplinary policies on teaching effectiveness. Strengthening the institutional capacity for disciplinary management, including training school heads on labor laws, record-keeping, and conflict resolution, is critical for promoting a disciplined and effective teaching workforce.

In some cases, fear of confrontation, union pressures, or political interference also prevents administrators from enforcing disciplinary procedures effectively. Teachers who are aware of such systemic weaknesses may exploit them by engaging in professional misconduct without fear of consequences. This undermines instructional quality and reduces overall teaching effectiveness. According to Ude and Okeke (2023), there is a pressing need for education authorities to protect school administrators from undue interference and to empower them legally and institutionally to enforce discipline without fear or favor. Establishing clear reporting lines, digital record systems, and external oversight bodies can help in this regard by increasing transparency and reducing administrative discretion.

Promotion of Ethical Conduct and School Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools

The promotion of ethical conduct among teachers has emerged as a cornerstone of effective educational practice, particularly in public secondary schools where the quality of teaching significantly shapes student outcomes and overall school performance. Ethical conduct encompasses a teacher's adherence to professional norms, integrity, accountability, fairness, and respect for learners and colleagues. Recent literature emphasizes that the deliberate promotion of these ethical values by school administrators directly correlates with enhanced teaching effectiveness. Teachers who operate within an environment that values and enforces ethical standards are more likely to be committed, trustworthy, and responsive to students' learning needs, all of which are critical indicators of teaching effectiveness (Eze & Onwuka, 2021). Ethical environments promote transparency and trust, which in turn improve professional collaboration, lesson delivery, and pedagogical innovation.

In public secondary schools, promoting ethical conduct includes setting clear codes of conduct, modeling ethical behaviour by school leaders, providing ethics training, and recognizing or rewarding ethical behaviour. When school administrators actively encourage ethical practices, they set a tone that fosters responsibility and professionalism among staff. Teachers working in such climates are more inclined to exhibit dependable behaviours such as timely lesson preparation, fair assessment practices, and equitable treatment of students, which are central to effective teaching (Ogundele & Aina, 2022). Conversely, when ethical promotion is absent, schools may witness an increase in professional misconduct, favoritism, and laxity, which adversely affect the quality of instruction and the school climate. The creation of an ethical culture thus becomes not only a moral imperative but also a strategic tool for achieving instructional excellence.

Scholars have argued that ethical behaviour among teachers is often a function of administrative guidance and institutional reinforcement. For instance, Adewale and Nwachukwu (2023) found that schools that integrate ethical discussions into staff meetings, provide ethics-related professional development, and involve teachers in decision-making processes report higher levels of teaching quality and teacher satisfaction. These initiatives create a sense of ownership and accountability among teachers, motivating them to align their practices with institutional values and student success. Furthermore, such ethical orientation discourages malpractices such as absenteeism, examination misconduct, and emotional abuse of students, all of which impair teaching effectiveness.

Moreover, ethical conduct enhances the relational aspect of teaching. Effective teaching requires mutual respect, trust, and fairness between teachers and students, and ethical teachers are better positioned to build such relationships. As Umeh and Ofoegbu (2020) noted, ethical behaviour strengthens teachers' emotional connection to their students and heightens sensitivity to individual learning differences, leading to more inclusive and effective pedagogical approaches. Teachers who demonstrate respect, integrity, and fairness are more likely to command student respect, reduce classroom misbehaviour, and foster a positive learning environment that enhances instructional outcomes. Therefore, ethical conduct is not only a matter of compliance but a pedagogical strategy that supports student engagement and academic achievement.

Research also underscores that promoting ethical conduct serves as a buffer against professional burnout and job dissatisfaction, which often undermine teaching effectiveness. When teachers perceive their work environment as ethically sound and morally supportive, they are more resilient in the face of occupational stress and more motivated to maintain instructional standards (Yakubu & Salihu, 2022). On the contrary, ethical lapses, such as favoritism in teacher promotions, corruption in administrative decisions, and tolerance of incompetence, breed cynicism and demotivation, ultimately lowering teachers' willingness to put forth their best effort in classroom instruction. School administrators, therefore, have a duty to not only define ethical norms but to ensure their consistent application through transparent and participatory governance.

Another dimension to the relationship between ethical conduct and teaching effectiveness lies in professional modeling. Teachers serve as role models to their students, and their ethical disposition significantly influences students' moral development. Promoting ethical conduct among teachers reinforces the moral tone of the school and nurtures students' character development alongside academic achievement. According to Ibrahim and Adebayo (2021), students taught by ethically grounded teachers tend to be more disciplined, academically motivated, and socially responsible, attributes that are critical for educational success. As such, the impact of ethical teaching transcends classroom instruction and contributes to the holistic development of learners, which is a core objective of teaching effectiveness.

Furthermore, the institutional promotion of ethics supports a reflective teaching practice, wherein teachers continuously evaluate the moral dimensions of their instructional decisions. This reflection leads to more thoughtful curriculum planning, unbiased student assessment, and equitable disciplinary practices. As affirmed by Daramola and Ifedili (2023), teachers who engage in ethical reflection are more likely to adopt student-centered teaching strategies and demonstrate higher instructional clarity and empathy. This aligns with global educational goals that emphasize not only academic instruction but the cultivation of values and critical thinking among learners. Promoting ethical conduct thus enhances the moral reasoning capacities of teachers, enabling them to make contextually appropriate instructional choices that advance both cognitive and affective learning goals.

In the Nigerian context, where public secondary schools often grapple with systemic issues such as corruption, political interference, and limited resources, the promotion of ethical conduct becomes particularly vital. By institutionalizing ethical standards and reinforcing them through administrative practices, school leaders can build a resilient and morally upright teaching workforce capable of delivering high-quality education despite external challenges. As Nwankwo and Ali (2020) contend, ethical reforms in school leadership are essential for improving not just teacher behaviour but the credibility and effectiveness of the entire education system. School administrators must, therefore, prioritize ethical conduct as a foundational element of school improvement strategies.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design. It examines Measures Employed by School Administrators for Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures and Promotion of Ethical Standards for School Effectiveness in Public Secondary School. The target population for the study comprised 370 teachers and principals selected from 48 schools in 12 local government areas in Delta State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted, in the sampling. Questionnaire was used for collection of data from the subjects. It was divided into two. The first part was tagged Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures Scale (EDPS). The scale was constructed by the researchers to measure the extent to which school administrators implemented and uphold formal sanctions or disciplinary measures to address misconduct among teaching staff. It assesses whether disciplinary actions are guided by policy, enforced consistently, applied fairly, and effective in deterring unethical or unprofessional behaviour. This construct includes items that investigate the clarity of disciplinary rules, the transparency of enforcement, and the responsiveness of administrators in dealing with infractions such as absenteeism, insubordination, and negligence of duty, which can adversely affect teaching effectiveness and overall school effectiveness. It contains 16 items. The second part was tagged School Promotion of Ethical Standards Scale (PESS) contained 16 items. The scale was constructed by the researchers to measure the strategies used by school administrators to encourage moral, professional, and socially responsible behaviours among teachers. It includes the integration of ethical standards into school operations, staff orientation, and leadership modelling of integrity and fairness. The scale assesses how ethics are promoted in staff interactions, rewarded or recognized, and embedded in school culture. Both items were structured along a four-point scale format

ranging from Strongly Agree (4 point) to Strongly Disagree (1 point). The data collected was analyzed and the research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation while the formulated hypotheses were tested with Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What measures do principals of public secondary schools in Delta State employ to enforce discipline in schools

Table 2: Mean scores showing measures employed by principals to enforce discipline in school

S/N	Items		Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	My school has clear disciplinary policies.	2.96	0.88	Agreed
2.	Teachers are held accountable for professional misconduct.	2.34	1.11	Disagreed
3.	Sanctions are not applied selectively in my school.	2.40	1.00	Disagreed
4.	There is due process in handling staff misconduct.	2.99	0.79	Agreed
5.	The disciplinary committee operates transparently.	2.59	0.55	Agreed
6.	Disciplinary actions are taken without unnecessary delay.	2.64	0.90	Agreed
7.	I am aware of the consequences of violating school rules.	2.54	0.81	Agreed
8.	Administrators do not tolerate indiscipline among staff.	2.88	0.62	Agreed
9.	I have witnessed appropriate punishment for absenteeism.	3.10	0.88	Agreed
10.	Enforcement of rules has improved staff punctuality.	2.74	0.39	Agreed
11.	There is minimal bias in the application of disciplinary actions.	2.55	0.82	Agreed
12.	Disciplinary policies are enforced consistently.	2.90	0.65	Agreed
13.	Ethical violations attract appropriate disciplinary punishments.	3.22	0.59	Agreed
14.	Disciplinary policies are reviewed regularly for effectiveness.	2.69	1.00	Agreed
15.	Sanctions are well-publicized to deter misconduct.	2.88	0.72	Agreed
16.	My principal calls on teachers who participate in unethical conduct and dialogue with them.	3.08	0.77	Agreed
	Average	2.78	0.78	

KEY: 2.50 is the bench mark for accepting or not accepting an item. Items having mean scores ranging from 2.50 to beyond represent Agree. Item whose mean scores fall below 2.50 downwards represent Disagree.

The data in Table 1 shows that the mean score of all the items except items 2 and 3, exceeded 2.50 the bench mark. Thus, these items except items 2 and 3 represent the measures principals employed for addressing disciplinary issues for school effectiveness in Delta State public secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What are the measures employed by school administrators to promote ethical standards for school effectiveness?

Table 2: Mean scores showing measures employed by school administrators for promotion of Ethical Standards

S/N	Items: In my school,		Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Ethical behaviour is promoted during staff meetings.	3.10	0.59	Agreed
2.	Teachers are expected to uphold high moral standards.	2.83	0.83	Agreed
3.	Regular training is organized on professional ethics.	2.40	1.20	Disagreed
4.	The principal model ethical conduct through punctuality	2.75	0.68	Agreed
5.	Ethical violations are discouraged through sensitization.	2.66	0.80	Agreed
6.	Integrity is emphasized in all school communications.	2.58	0.89	Agreed

7.	Professional ethics is part of induction for new staff.	2.99	0.54	Agreed
8.	Emphasizing zero tolerance of unethical behaviour.	2.59	0.94	Agreed
9.	Ethical values are integrated into school policies.	2.94	0.49	Agreed
10.	Staff and students are encouraged to act with honesty and integrity.	2.68	0.88	Agreed
11.	Discussions on ethical dilemmas are common among staff.	2.46	1.16	Disagreed
12.	My school rewards ethical leadership.	2.39	1.09	Disagreed
13.	The principal promotes a culture of transparency.	2.77	0.76	Agreed
14.	Awareness of where to report unethical conduct is published.	2.60	0.72	Agreed
15.	Character education is part of school curriculum	2.64	0.78	Agreed
16.	Ethical codes are visibly displayed around the school.	2.33	1.22	Disagreed
	Average	2.67	0.85	

KEY: 2.50 is the bench mark for accepting or not accepting an item. Items having mean scores ranging from 2.50 to beyond represent Agree. Item whose mean scores fall below 2.50 downwards represent Disagree.

From the data in Table 2, the mean score for items 1, 2, 4 to 10, 13 to 15 are above 2.50 the bench mark. The corresponding items represent the measures employed by Delta State secondary school principals to promote ethical conduct in schools. The average mean score of 2.67 shows that there is moderate level of promotion of ethical procedures by principals.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State

Table 3: Correlation analysis the relationship between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variable	N	r	r ²	r ² %	p-value	Remark
Enforcement of Discipline School Effectiveness	370	-0.194	0.038	3.8	<0.05	Significant

Table 3 shows a Pearson's correlation analysis of the relationship between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State is -0.194, indicating a weak negative relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.038, meaning that only 3.8% of the variance in school effectiveness can be explained by enforcement of discipline. The p-value is 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 4: Correlation analysis the relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness

Variable	N	r	r ²	r ² %	p-value	Remark
Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures School Effectiveness	370	-0.187	0.035	3.5	<0.05	Significant

Table 4 shows a Pearson's correlation analysis of the relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State is -0.187, indicating a weak negative relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.035, meaning that only 3.5% of the variance in school effectiveness can be explained by enforcement of disciplinary procedures. The p-value is 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The measures employed for the enforcement of discipline by principals are punishments to ethical violations, giving appropriate punishments to absenteeism, dialoguing with teachers involved in unethical practices, adherence to due process in handling staff misconduct, setting up clear disciplinary policies, non-tolerance of indiscipline among staff and publicizing sanctions, enforcement of school rules, regular review of disciplinary policies and disciplinary Committee operating transparently. Supporting this findings, Uche & Abiodun (2021) noted that where rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced, teachers are more likely to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and instructional competence. Furthermore, this finding lends credence with Asiyai (2019) who reported that setting up enforceable rules and adherence of ethical standards fostered the effective administration of school for the attainment of goals. The finding also agrees with Okeke and Dibia (2022), who found that administrators who applied structured monitoring systems alongside ethical reinforcement mechanisms recorded improved compliance with professional standards among teachers.

The second finding revealed that the measures employed by principals to promote ethical procedures in schools include: emphasizing ethical behaviour during staff meetings, making professional ethics part of induction lecture for new staff, making ethical values an integral part of school policy, admonishing teachers to be of high moral standards, principals being role models of punctuality, promoting a culture of transparency by principals, ensuring that students and staff act with honesty and integrity, discouraging violation of ethical standards through sensitization, inscribing character education in school curriculum, violation, and emphasis on zero tolerance of unethical practices. As heads of school apply disciplinary measures, students and staff become eager, and dedicated to the policies for better school effectiveness.

The finding aligns with the findings of Ogunode and Ibrahim (2024) who reported that ethical leadership and value-based administration positively influenced teachers' effectiveness when ethical promotion was combined with mentoring and collaborative decision-making. The finding is also in line with Eze and Nnamdi (2025), who found that ethical school climates enhanced school effectiveness by fostering professional responsibility and mutual respect among staff.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that although school administrators in public secondary schools in Delta State actively employed diverse strategies to manage malfeasance, including sanctioning, supervision, attendance-monitoring, recognition, regulation, training, reinforcement, due process, use of school rules which promoted school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. It is recommended that school administrators should school administrators should organize workshops on professional ethics, displaying ethical codes at strategic positions in the school and regular discussions on ethical dilemmas to improve school effectiveness.

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