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DISCIPLINARY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS' JOB EFFECTIVENESS IN YAKURR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords

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The study examined disciplinary management in public primary schools and teachers' job effectiveness in Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State. Three null hypotheses were formulated accordingly to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Census technique was adopted in selecting the entire population of 98 primary school managers which comprised of 49 head teachers and 49 deputy head teachers across 49 public primary schools available in the area. A questionnaire tagged: "Disciplinary Control in Public Primary Schools and Teachers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (DCPPSTJEQ)" designed and administered by the researcher was used as an instrument for data collection. The null hypotheses were all tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. Findings from the study revealed that warning, suspension, and dismissal have significant relationships respectively, to primary school teachers' job effectiveness. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that; there should be fairness in the administration of suspension to all teachers through well-documented procedures.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence on the relationship between disciplinary management variables and teachers job effectiveness. The uniqueness of this study is based on the variables: warning, suspension and dismissal that were used which seems to be rare in earlier studies, thus filling the gaps.

1. INTRODUCTION

The major personnel and actors are necessary to ensure the attainment primary education objectives are teachers. Teachers, therefore, must make efforts to be committed to the school and in the discharge of their instructional duties. Since teachers are human, and every human is a complex being, there must be times when some of them (teachers) will exhibit some behavior that is not necessary for the smooth running of the school. Such behaviors which are unacceptable must be managed by those with the powers and those saddled with the responsibility. In managing such behavior, the school headteacher needs to apply some disciplinary techniques to minimize or eliminate such behaviors.

Disciplinary management refers to those strategies that are used, coupled with the efforts made to reduce or prevent disciplinary problems in an organization. A disciplinary measure is a way that an employer can tell an employee that something is wrong. It also allows the employer to explain clearly what improvement is needed and

gives employees the opportunity to explain their side of a situation. According to Mintah (2011) disciplinary action is any action taken by the company in response to unsatisfactory employee performance or behavior. Employers use disciplinary procedures to tell employees that their performance or conduct is not up to the expected standard and to encourage them for improvement, Eby (2005).

According to Bacal (2002) disciplinary measures which can be used by the head teachers or employers to control the discipline of teachers include development of a code of conduct; warnings, reprimand, dismissal, suspension, deprivation of privileges, salary deductions, query, and demotion. Owan (2012) considered the following positive measures to be very effective in avoiding disciplinary problems in any organization. They include managers' self-discipline, promotion of workers, frequent and consistent payment of salaries, effective communication, prayers, praises, an involvement of staff in decision making, and proper conflict management. For the purpose of this study, the emphasis was placed on three disciplinary management techniques which include: warning, suspension, and dismissal.

The warning is a way of alerting a teacher of some misconduct or act of indiscipline found in his action, found inappropriate by the head teacher. It can be expressed in an oral or written form. Discipline is supposed to be constructive; its goal is to guide teachers to improve the performance or correct inappropriate behaviors and not to punish the teachers (Ewah, 2017).

A suspension is a disciplinary action taken against an erring teacher by way of relieving him of his duties for a period, as deemed by the management or school authorities. During this period, a teacher is not expected to carry out any activity or task within the school whether for the head teacher or not and does not receive compensation for that period. Sometimes, an employer will place the teacher on "paid administrative leave" while he investigates an allegation of wrongdoing (Ukpong, 2017).

A dismissal is an act of relieving a person of his duties, thereby making his services no longer needed in an organization. Dismissal can also be seen as a way of terminating a persons' employment appointment due to misconduct, violation of established rules and regulations or indiscipline to a profession. Dismissal of teachers is an act of treating teachers as unworthy of service consideration or rejection (Ukpong, 2017).

This study was designed to examine these three variables (warning, suspension, and dismissal) and their association with the dependent variable which is teachers' job effectiveness. Teachers' job effectiveness refers to the degree at which teachers discharge their primary duty of teaching and learning, as well their general attitude towards the teaching profession and her activities (Owan, 2012). An effective teacher can be judged based on punctuality, time management, academic performance of students, relationship with others, respect for rules and authority, adherence to school norms, effective communication, proper record keeping, and professional behavior (Owan, 2012).

Based on these indices of teachers' effectiveness identified by Owan above, it can be said that many primary school teachers in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State appear ineffective. Most teachers display unprofessional attitudes to work in the areas of punctuality, instruction, record keeping, time management, and discipline of learners. Other areas of primary school teachers' indiscipline include absenteeism, negligence to students, unethical behavior such as collection of bribes, giving bribes to external inspectors/supervisors, refusal to perform assigned duties, poor attitudes to writing notes of lessons, and so on. These poor attitudes of most teachers in the area are questionable and have contradicted the professional ethics of teaching and are also inimical to the attainment of school goals.

In the past, teachers' have attributed their ineffectiveness to poor salary structure, non-frequent payment of salaries, head teachers' strict leadership styles and so on. However, with the adoption of the minimum wage policy, coupled with improved efforts made by some head teachers to improve their leadership style, one expects to see a change in many teachers. Despite all these improvements in place, many teachers are still adamant to put in their best.

All these negative attitudes displayed by some teachers has made the researcher wonder whether teachers' ineffectiveness in primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area, is related to poor disciplinary management by primary school head teachers and other disciplinary agencies in the education sector of the state. It was based on this background that the researcher decided to examine the relationship between disciplinary management and teachers' job effectiveness in primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. □

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers in every primary school are the curriculum implementers of education at that level. They supposed to discharge their duties effectively and optimally so as to enable the school to achieve set goals. When teachers perform their pedagogical/instructional duties well, the academic performance of pupils will be raised, which further makes the primary school system more productive.

Unfortunately, many teachers are redundant in the discharge of their sole responsibilities in the school system. Many teachers have been found to display a high level of truant behavior, absenteeism, late coming, poor note writing, non-performance of teaching duties, and engagement in other unethical behaviors to the teaching profession. These poor behaviors identified have grossly affected many primary schools as evidenced in the inability of many primary school leavers to read and write, their poor performance in placement/common entrance examination, and the overall poor quality of pupils produced by primary schools who eventually transit to secondary schools.

Given the important role teachers play to any school system, couple with the status that they are foster parents under the doctrine of '*In Loco Parentis*', one will wonder why most of them display such unacceptable behavior in the workplace. This means that proper disciplinary management measures must be adopted by head teachers and other higher authorities to cushion these poor and ineffective work attitudes displayed by erring teachers. The major problem of this study led to this question: how does disciplinary management in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area, relate with teachers' job effectiveness? An attempt to answer this question made this study imminent.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between disciplinary management in public primary schools and teachers' job effectiveness in Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State. The specific purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between:

- i. Warning and teachers' job effectiveness
- ii. Suspension and teachers' job effectiveness
- iii. Dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness

4. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

- i. There is no significant relationship between warning and teachers' job effectiveness.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between suspension and teachers' job effectiveness.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents various opinions, findings, methodologies and facts that are related to this study. The section is presented under the following sub-headings:

5.1. Warning and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

This is a way of alerting teachers of some misconduct or act of indiscipline found in his action, found inappropriate by the head teacher. It can be expressed in an oral or written form. Discipline is supposed to be constructive; its goal is to guide teachers to improve the performance or correct inappropriate behaviors and not to punish the teachers (Ewah, 2017). According to Ground Report (2009), there are two types of warnings which include oral warning and written warnings. The oral warning is used when an offence is not that serious or when an offender is offending for the first time. The human resource person invites him, talks to him, cautions him and warns him to desist from such actions in the future. Written warning on the other hand, is used when the offence committed by the employee is not an offence that you can just warn him verbally and let him go, he is issued a query. He replies the query and explains reasons for his action. The query and his response are filed in the staff file for future references. After considering his response, a written warning also is issued to him and a copy of the warning letter also documented in the staff file.

A written warning should be clearly labelled so the nature of the document is fully understood. A warning letter generally describes: deficiencies, problems, or offenses, changes expected, immediate consequences, if applicable, future consequences if expected changes are not made and sustained, an evaluation date that allows the faculty member a reasonable amount of time to demonstrate an acceptable level of substantial change for performance concerns. Immediate correction is expected for misconduct. Specifics concerning complaints from any source will be addressed only insofar as they are helpful in bringing about a change and will be balanced against the confidences and expectations of other persons.

The faculty member should sign and date the warning letter, signifying receipt of the warning. If no signature is provided, a note from the one delivering the letter with the time and date should be placed on the letter. A copy should be provided to the faculty member and the college dean. The original should be sent to the Associate Academic Vice President for Instruction (Rexburg, 2015).

Wedaga (2012) explored the effect of disciplinary procedures on employee punctuality and performance at Anglo Gold Ashanti (AGA), Obuasi Mine. In all, 211 self-administered questionnaires were sent out to employees. The study revealed that employees have knowledge of disciplinary procedures and how they can transform employees positively to fit into the working environment. Other findings indicated that the impact of disciplinary procedures on punctuality and performance is positive. The study also revealed that challenges such as inconsistency in the application of disciplinary procedures and above all unnecessary interruptions by the union, poor use of disciplinary measures like warnings, suspension or withdrawal are common. The findings of the study also revealed that many workers not dismissed after heavy wrongdoings, influenced the rate at which others performed their duties.

5.2. Suspension and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

A suspension is a disciplinary action taken against an erring teacher by way of relieving him of his duties for a period of time, as deemed by the management or school authorities. During this period, a teacher is not expected to carry out any activity or task within the school whether for the head teacher or not and does not receive compensation for that period. Sometimes, an employer will place the teacher on "paid administrative leave" while he investigates an allegation of wrongdoings (Ukpong, 2017). According to Rexburg (2015) suspension is generally appropriate during a period of investigation in a situation where a faculty member should not return to work until the investigation is concluded. The Academic Vice President makes suspension decisions. The length of suspension should be commensurate with the nature of the alleged offense, the length of the investigation, and the faculty member's past record. A faculty member is generally suspended with pay, depending on the nature and severity of the alleged problem, and the possible consequences of his or her continuing to work. Examples of problems which might merit suspension include, but are not limited to, allegations such as theft, inappropriate gender-based

behavior, threats, or conduct of a violent or disruptive nature. Suspension without pay is within the discretion of the Academic Vice President in those situations which are deemed severe.

Apalia (2017) investigated the effects of disciplinary management on teachers' performance in high schools in Turkana County, Tanzania. The study was conducted using a case study design. The target population for this study was employees from the county education office in Lodwar which composed a total population of 171 teachers. The study employed purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. Data were tested for significance using regression analysis. Test for significance was done using the Pearson product-moment of the correlation coefficient. The study found out that, respondents agreed that suspension was positive for boosting their performance; respondents also agreed that disciplinary management and policies led to the promotion of employees. The study also concluded that the effective use of suspension led to increased work performance of teachers. The study recommended based on the findings that suspension should be carefully meted out in commensurate terms with the nature of offence committed in order to increase teachers' performance. Agesa (2015) investigated the effectiveness of alternative strategies of discipline used in Starehe Division, Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population comprised of all principals, deputy principals, and teachers, of all 11 public secondary schools in Starehe Division, Nairobi County with 11 principals, 11 Deputy Principals, and 340 teachers. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires constructed by the researcher and the interview schedule which was administered to the principals. Piloting was done in one public school to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study revealed that, for minor indiscipline, manual punishment was effective while for major indiscipline alternative strategies include suspension, Exclusion, Guidance and counselling, peer mediation and teacher-student conferences. The findings of the study revealed a strong positive relationship between the effectiveness of suspension and teachers' disciplinary control in secondary schools in Starehe Division.

5.3. Dismissal and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

Dismissal is an act of relieving a person of his duties, thereby making his services no longer needed in an organization. Dismissal can also be seen as a way of terminating a persons' employment appointment due to misconduct, violation of established rules and regulations or indiscipline to a profession. Dismissal of teachers is an act of treating teachers as unworthy of service consideration or rejection (Ukpong, 2017).

An employee who has committed an infraction is verbally warned and informed that if the same infraction is repeated (within some specified time period), the degree of disciplinary action will be increased. If the employee commits the same or a similar violation (or possibly an unrelated infraction) within the specified period, the employee will then be given a written warning, which will be placed in her or his personnel file (Bratton and Gold, 2011). According to GR (2009) dismissal is the strongest action that can be carried out on an offender. When an employee gets involved in fraud, stealing, illegal business etc. the firm may have no other option left than to dismiss him out rightly. Disciplinary action is always carried out in sequence. For instance, if one is a first offender, and the offence is not so bad, he can be warned verbally. Then if he commits another offence, he is queried and probably suspended from duty without pay. If another offence is committed by the same staff, his appointment may be terminated. On the other hand, when a staff commits a grievous offence like fraud, the punishment in summary is dismissal. In an empirical study, conducted by Bratton (2003) on teachers' dismissal status and its social implication on commitment to work in Osun State secondary schools. One research hypothesis was formulated to determine whether teachers' dismissal status had implication to commitment of work. The mean and standard deviation showed that the value was far below the acceptable mean score of 2.50. This result debunked the assumption that teachers' job performance is adequately affected by teachers' dismissal status and its social implication.

5.4. Summary of Literature Review

The section was vital because it gave insights to the researchers concerning the topic especially in terms of the variables used. The review also revealed several instruments, methods of data collection and analysis that have been employed by other researchers and scholars. These provided a basis and guideline for the present study.

From the foregoing generally, it was observed that several studies have already been conducted which tried to explain the relationship or which tried to find the effect of discipline management on students' academic performance. Some studies have also been conducted to examine disciplinary control measures and organizational goal attainment. Majority of these studies were conducted outside Cross River State. However, no study was observed within Yakurr Local Government Area which examined disciplinary management and teachers job effectiveness, the focus has been on students.

The focus of earlier studies has also been on secondary schools and tertiary institutions. It seems that only a little or no attention has been paid to the primary schools which is the foundation upon which all educational levels are built. This means that there are still gaps in the literature that must be filled. A study that will examine specifically, some disciplinary management techniques such as warning, suspension and dismissal and their relationships with primary school teachers' effectiveness is highly necessary. An attempt to fill this gap necessitated this study.

6. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of this study comprised all the head and deputy head teachers in all the public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. Thus, the population of this include all the 98 primary school managers comprising of 49 head and 49 deputy head teachers distributed across the 49 public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. Census technique was employed by the researchers in selecting the entire population of 98 primary school administrators in the area of study. Census technique is used in situations where the population to be studied is small or manageable such that, all the elements in it could be studied in its entirety. This approach was considered appropriate due to the manageable number of head and deputy head teachers available in all the public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: "Disciplinary Control in Public Primary Schools and Teachers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire" (DCPPSTJEQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A elicited demographic variables of the respondents, while Section B elicited information with respect to disciplinary control and teachers' job effectiveness. Five (5) items each were used to measure the five variables of the study respectively, resulting in a total of twenty-five (25) items organized on a four-point Likert-scale. The instrument received its face, content and construct validity through the assistance of two experts in measurement and evaluation unit, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha, and reliability estimates of .86, .94, .89, and .93 were obtained respectively for warning, suspension, dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness. These coefficients indicated that the instrument was internally consistent in measuring what it was purported to measure.

The instruments were administered to the respondents in the respective schools by the researchers. On arrival at the various sampled schools, permission was obtained from the various primary school head teachers respectively before the administration of the instruments. The respondents were duly informed of the importance of the exercise and the need to provide honest responses to the instruments. The respondents were also assured that the data requested would be treated with total confidentiality and hence, were advised to personally respond to the items there-in and not to share opinion with anyone. At the end of the process, copies of the instruments were retrieved from the respondents for analysis without any loss. This indicated a 100 percent return rate.

The collected data were prepared on a person by item matrix using a computer spreadsheet program (Microsoft Excel version 2016). The scoring of the questionnaire was done differently for positively worded and negatively worded items. Before analyzing the data, the null hypotheses were re-stated, both the independent and dependent variables were identified. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical technique was adopted for data analysis and in testing all the null hypotheses. The results from the analysis of data is presented in the following section.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between warning and teachers' job effectiveness. The result of the analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics is presented on [Table 1](#).

Table-1. Summary of Correlation analysis of the relationship between warning and teachers' job effectiveness.

N = 98

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Warning	1293	19199		
			17681	0.758
Teachers' job effectiveness.	1215	17277		

d.f= 96; critical-r = 0.200

The results presented in [Table 1](#) shows that the calculated r value of .78 is greater than then critical r values of .200 at .05 level of significance and 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that; there is significant relationship between warning and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. The results also revealed that, there was a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.758$) between warning and teachers job effectiveness.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between suspension and teachers' job effectiveness. The result of the analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics is presented on [Table 2](#).

Table-2. Summary of Correlation analysis of the relationship between suspension and teachers' job effectiveness.

N= 98

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Suspension	1187	16455		
			15833	0.521
Teachers' job effectiveness.	1215	17277		

d.f= 96; critical-r = 0.200

The results presented in [Table 2](#) shows that the calculated r value of .521 is greater than the critical r value of .200 at .05 level of significance and 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that; there is a significant relationship between suspension and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. However, there was a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.521$) between the two variables (suspension and teachers job effectiveness).

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness. The result of the analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics is presented on [Table 3](#).

Table-3. Summary of Correlation analysis of the relationship between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness.

N = 98

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Dismissal	1198	17000		
			16657	0.790
Teachers' job effectiveness	1215	17277		

d.f= 96; critical-r = 0.200

The results presented in [Table 3](#), shows the calculated r value of .790 is greater than the critical r value of .200 at .05 level of significance and 96 degrees of freedom. On this basis, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that; there is a significant relationship between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. The results also revealed a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.790$) between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study established that; there is moderate positive relationship which is statistically significant between warning and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding may have been so, since many teachers are usually issued the letter of queries when they misbehave, some head teachers openly frown at underperforming and rebukes erring teachers, and many teachers are not left to do what they like without any sign of warning. The practical implication of this result is that; an improvement in the administration of warning will lead to an improvement in the quality of teachers' job effectiveness and vice versa. This finding supports that of [Wedaga \(2012\)](#) which indicated that; the impact of disciplinary procedures on punctuality and performance is positive. The study also revealed that challenges such as inconsistency in the application of disciplinary procedures and above all unnecessary interruptions by the union, poor use of disciplinary measures like warnings, suspension or withdrawal are common. The findings of the study also revealed that many workers not dismissed after heavy wrong doings, influenced the rate at which others performed their duties.

Secondly, it was established through this study that; there is moderate positive relationship which is statistically significant between suspension and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding may be due to the fact that, in most public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area, there are laid down the procedure for suspending erring teachers, and many head teachers were fair in the administration of suspension. The practical implication of this result is that; an improvement in the quality of suspension administered will lead to an improvement in the quality of teachers' job effectiveness and vice versa. This finding supports the finding of [Apalia \(2017\)](#) which disclosed that suspension was positive for boosting employee performance. This made the researcher conclude that the effective use of suspension led to increased work performance of teachers. The study recommended based on the findings that suspension should be carefully meted out in commensurate terms with the nature of offence committed in order to increase teachers' performance.

Lastly, this study revealed a moderate positive relationship which is statistically significant between dismissal and teachers' job effectiveness in public primary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding may be due to the fact that; Some teachers are usually dismissed from duties for gross misconducted; many teachers revealed that they learnt from the dismissal of others through improved performance, dismissal is usually done after a series of warnings have been meted. However, it was also revealed that; there are no measurable standards for determining when to dismiss teachers and many teachers are dismissed wrongfully for minor wrongdoings. The practical implication of this result is that; where there is effectiveness in the dismissal of teachers, it will lead to an improvement in the quality of teachers' job effectiveness and vice versa. This finding negates the

findings of Bratton (2003) which debunked the assumption that teachers' job performance is adequately affected by teachers' dismissal status and its social implication.

9. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that; there is a significant relationship between disciplinary control in public primary schools and teachers' job effectiveness in Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State. The rate at which head teachers in primary schools discipline their staff can be used to predict the extent to which teachers will perform their duties effectively. There is a significant relationship between warning, suspension, and dismissal respectively, with primary school teachers' job effectiveness. However, the direction and strength of the relationship vary between the sub-variables of the study.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- i. Teachers should be warned verbally for minor offences or queried through writing in order to eliminate unacceptable behaviors from recurring and ensure that only acceptable practices are allowed.
- ii. There should be fairness in the administration of suspension to all teachers through well-documented procedures.
- iii. Dismissal should only be used only in severe cases, and in cases where all other measures such as verbal warning, written queries, and suspension have been administered to erring teachers and they refuse to change.

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Contributors/Acknowledgement: Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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