

Assessment of the Implementation of the Staff Discipline and Control Measures for Effective Administration of Universities in South East Nigeria

By

Eke N. Ukpai & Evelyn I. Ezepue

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This study which adopted an evaluative research design was aimed at assessing the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided this study which was carried out in the ten public universities in South East Nigeria. A structured questionnaire which underwent validity and reliability tests was used to collect data for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypothesis was tested with t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that some staff discipline and control measures such as taking disciplinary action against fighting, misappropriation of university funds, embezzlement of university funds and forging of documents are implemented in the studied universities to a very great extent whereas other staff discipline and control measures such as taking disciplinary action against lateness to work, absence from work, laziness to work and non-participation in university activities are, to a low extent, implemented in these universities. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made among which are that the leadership style of university administrators should be such that demonstrates firmness and strong commitment to effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures in their universities, and appropriate mechanisms for effective monitoring of staff's disciplinary problems should be established in universities.

Introduction

Essentially, universities all over the world play a catalytic role in a nation's socio-economic development and technological advancement by inculcating knowledge requisite for the development of high level manpower, conducting research for development and providing community service. Nwizu (2011) corroborated this assertion by noting that universities inculcate knowledge which provides practical solutions to the factors militating against development. Ukpai (2017) also lends credence to these views by observing that universities produce high level manpower that can respond positively to the nation's socio-economic development goals and aspirations.

However, it is pertinent to note that the accomplishment of the avowed goals of a university demands as of necessity the availability of university staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) and their maintenance of high standards of staff discipline and control requisite for effective administration of the university. Staff discipline and control have been defined in various ways by different authors. According to Onah (2008), staff discipline and control refer to the level to which the employees of an organization are able to conform and submit themselves to the rules and regulations governing their conduct in the workplace. In his own perspective, Chukwukere (2014) conceptualized staff discipline and control as administrative actions taken to ensure that the staff of educational institutions work in conformity with the rules and regulations governing their conduct in the institution. Furthermore, Alagbu (2008) had earlier viewed staff discipline and control as encompassing the methods of regulating, curbing and checking the excesses of organizational members in the performance of their organizational functions.

Based on the above definitions, one can deduce that staff discipline and control measures encapsulate administrative efforts aimed at ensuring that the work behaviour of universities' staff is in line with the universities' plans made and adopted, the instructions given and the principles and operational standards established. Consequently, in the context of this study, staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities refer to the actions taken by university administrators to ensure that their staff's actions are in conformity with the rules of conduct as defined by the university with a view to engendering effective administration of the university requisite for the realization of universities' goals.

The importance of staff discipline and control measures has been articulated in educational circles. According to Nnabuo (2001), it is staff discipline and control measures in educational institutions (universities inclusive) that enable the staff to work in alignment with the established rules, regulations, policies and work performance standards of the institution thereby achieving effective administration of the institution. In the view of Fatani (2010), the importance attached to staff discipline and control measures in universities is anchored on the fact that the attainment of a university's goals and the overall survival of the university system depend largely on the quality of its staff and the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in the university. It follows therefore that university administrators are expected to implement their staff discipline and control measures effectively in order to achieve effective administration of their universities and the ultimate realization of their universities' goals.

It is pertinent to note that the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities have been articulated by some authors. According to Oboegbulem (2004) and Chukwukere (2014), the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of educational institutions in Nigeria (universities inclusive) are taking disciplinary action against: lateness to work, absence from work, laziness to work, non-participation in university activities, misuse of university property, destruction of university property, quarrelling, fighting, misappropriation of university funds, embezzlement of university funds, falsification of figures, falsification of facts, forging of documents, and ensuring that there are measures that compel university staff to abide by the university's rules and regulations.

Regrettably, in spite of the invaluable role of staff discipline and control measures in facilitating effective administration of universities, allegations of poor implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities in South East Nigeria have, nevertheless, taken centre stage. To substantiate this claim, Nosiri (2012) observed that university administrators in Nigeria (South East Nigeria inclusive) have not been active in the implementation of many staff discipline and control measures in their institutions and that this worrisome situation can be improved through the application of a variety of strategies not yet known to the university administrators. Wali (2014) also remarked that there is poor implementation of some staff discipline and control measures in universities and that this has become the greatest impediment to effective administration of universities in Nigeria (South East Nigeria inclusive). The National Universities Commission (NUC) (2015) in its report on the state of university administration in Nigeria also cautioned university administrators in Nigeria to be proactive in the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities with a view to engendering effective administration of their universities. This is equally an indication of the fact that all is not well with the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in Nigerian universities including those in South East Nigeria.

The researchers had equally noted with dismay that the state of affairs in universities in South East Nigeria concerning the implementation of staff discipline and control measures has become so deplorable that Nwuzor (2017) bemoaned that:

Many universities' staff in South East Nigeria are now characterized by poor attitude to work as evidenced in their constant lateness, total absence from work based on flimsy excuses and show of laziness in the performance of their appointed duties. It has become a common practice to see some university staff coming to work by 10.00 am and then proceeding on school run by 1.00pm and in some cases without any intention of returning to the office until the next day when no disciplinary action will even be taken against this lackadaisical attitude to work (P. 5).

The above negative opinions actually put a question mark on the extent of implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria. Could it be that they are not effectively implemented as to engender effective administration of the universities because to the researchers' best of knowledge, no assessment study has been carried out in this perspective. Consequently, it was the problem of this study to fill this knowledge gap by empirically assessing the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria.

2. determine the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities implemented in universities in South East Nigeria?
2. What are the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The study was also guided by the following null hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀: There is no significant difference ($P < .05$) between the mean ratings of heads of units and senior administrative staff of universities on the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria.

Research Method

This study adopted an evaluative research design. Ballou (2010) conceptualized evaluative research design as a research design which seeks to evaluate, assess or appraise educational programmes, events or practices by providing reliable data concerning how they are organized, implemented, managed and their effectiveness in the achievement of their stated goals. Thus, this design was considered appropriate for this study as it sought to assess the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria. This study which was carried out in the ten public universities in South East Nigeria had a population of 831 subjects made up of 677 heads of units and 154 senior administrative staff who are at the rank of Senior Assistant Registrar and above and the entire population was used for the study because it was of a manageable size. This choice of population for the study was justified by the fact that these are the categories of universities' staff that are responsible for implementing staff discipline and control measures in the universities and, therefore, they were in a better position to provide all the information pertinent to this study.

The instrument for data collection was a researchers-developed structured questionnaire titled "Implementation of Staff Discipline and Control Measures Questionnaire (ISDCMQ). The questionnaire consisted of 22 items which were built into two clusters, Clusters A and B. The response mode of Cluster A of the research instrument was structured along a four-point rating scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), 4 points; Great Extent (GE), 3 points; Low Extent (LE), 2 points; and Very Low Extent (VLE), 1 point. Conversely, the response mode of Cluster B of the research instrument was structured along a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points; Agree (A), 3 points; Disagree (D), 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. Based on the four-point rating scale used for the research instrument, a mean score which falls between

3.50 and 4.00 was regarded as Very Great Extent or Strongly Agree; a mean score which falls between 2.50 and 3.49 was regarded as Great Extent or Agree; a mean score which falls between 1.50 and 2.49 indicated Low Extent or Disagree; while a mean score which falls between 0.50 and 1.49 was regarded as Very Low Extent or Strongly Disagree.

The validity of the research instrument was ascertained by subjecting its initial draft to face validation by three experts in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The opinions and suggestions of these experts were used to modify and produce the final draft of the instrument. The research instrument also underwent reliability test during which Cronbach Alpha method of estimating reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of the items and this generated an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.88. This high reliability index implied that the instrument was reliable in collecting the necessary data for the study. Data for the study were collected by the researchers and twelve research assistants using Direct Delivery and Retrieval Technique (DDRT). The research questions that guided the study were answered using descriptive statistics which include mean and standard deviation whereas the null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using inferential statistics of t-test statistic.

Results

The results of data analysis are presented on the tables below in relation to the research questions and hypothesis that guided the study:

Research Question One

To what extent are the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities implemented in universities in South East Nigeria?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Extent of Implementation of the Staff Discipline and Control Measures in Universities

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Heads of Units			Snr.Admin. Staff		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec.	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
1.	Taking disciplinary action against lateness to work.	2.41	1.08	LE	2.11	1.09	LE
2.	Taking disciplinary action against absence from work.	2.47	1.04	LE	2.03	1.11	LE
3.	Taking disciplinary action against laziness to work.	2.47	1.05	LE	2.02	1.11	LE
4.	Taking disciplinary action against non-participation in university activities.	2.45	1.06	LE	1.92	1.15	LE
5.	Taking disciplinary action against misuse of university property.	2.60	0.86	GE	2.54	0.93	GE
6.	Taking disciplinary action against destruction of university property.	2.57	0.91	GE	2.62	0.84	GE
7.	Disciplinary action being taken against quarrelling.	2.59	0.89	GE	2.86	0.70	GE
8.	Disciplinary action being taken against fighting.	3.60	0.57	VGE	3.56	0.62	VGE
9.	Disciplinary action being taken against misappropriation of university funds.	3.73	0.55	VGE	3.58	0.60	VGE
10.	Disciplinary action being taken against embezzlement of university funds.	3.70	0.57	VGE	3.61	0.58	VGE
11.	Taking disciplinary action against falsification of figures.	3.68	0.59	VGE	3.81	0.52	VGE

12	Taking disciplinary action against falsification of facts.	2.68	0.78	GE	2.71	0.73	GE
13	Taking disciplinary action against forging of documents.	3.78	0.54	VGE	3.66	0.55	VGE
14	Ensuring that there are measures that compel university staff to abide by the university rules and regulations.	2.81	0.66	GE	2.76	0.68	GE
GRAND MEAN		2.97	0.82	GE	2.84	0.81	GE

Date presented on table 1 above show that items 8,9,10,11 and 13 of the research instrument are, to a very great extent, implemented in universities in South East Nigeria as staff discipline and control measures. This is in view of the fact that these items have their mean ratings ranging from 3.60 to 3.78 for the heads of units and 3.56 to 3.81 for the senior administrative staff. These universities also implement items 5,6, 7, 12 and 14 to a great extent because their mean ratings range from 2.57 to 2.81 for the heads of units and 2.54 to 2.86 for the senior administrative staff. Conversely, items 1,2,3 and 4 are, to a low extent, implemented in the universities as staff discipline and control measures. This is evidenced in the mean ratings of the respondents for these items which range from 2.41 to 2.47 for the heads of units and 1.92 to 2.11 for the senior administrative staff. Based on this result, it can be concluded that some of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are effectively implemented in universities in South East Nigeria while some are not effectively implemented in these universities.

Research Question Two

What are the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on table 2 below:

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Strategies for Improving the Implementation of the Staff Discipline and Control Measures in Universities

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Heads of Units			Snr.Admin. Staff		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
15.	University administrators being more determined to implement the staff discipline and control measures in their universities.	2.60	0.88	A	2.87	0.69	A
16.	Putting in place effective method of monitoring staff's disciplinary problems so as to be able to take disciplinary action where necessary.	3.71	0.56	SA	3.62	0.57	S A
17.	University administrators adopting proper leadership style that will enable them to implement the staff discipline and control measures effectively.	3.69	0.58	SA	3.82	0.51	S A
18.	Instituting a disciplinary committee to be charged with the responsibility of taking appropriate disciplinary action against all manner of breaches of university's rules and regulations.	3.74	0.54	SA	3.59	0.59	S A
19.	Further training of university administrators in the rudiments of effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures.	3.79	0.53	SA	3.67	0.54	S A
20.	Effective resolution of the problems such as favouritism and nepotism which hamper the effective	3.61	0.56	SA	3.57	0.61	S A

	implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities.						
21.	Establishment of effective channels of communication that will ensure free flow of information necessary for the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures.	2.69	0.77	A	2.72	0.72	A
22.	Removal of the political interference which often exists in the course of implementing staff discipline and control measures in universities.	2.83	0.64	A	2.77	0.67	A
Grand Mean		3.33	0.63	A	3.33	0.61	A

Data presented on table 2 above indicate that the two groups of respondents strongly agree that items 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the research instrument are the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities in South East Nigeria. This is in recognition of the mean ratings of the respondents for these items which fall between 3.61 and 3.79 for the heads of units, and between 3.57 and 3.82 for the senior administrative staff. On the other hand, both categories of respondents in accordance with their mean ratings for items 15,21, and 22 of the research instrument agree that these items are the strategies for improving the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities. This is as a result of their mean ratings for these items falling between 2.60 and 2.83 for the heads of units, and between 2.72 and 2.87 for the senior administrative staff. Based on the decision rule, items 15-22 of the research instrument are, therefore, the strategies for improving the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities because the mean ratings of the respondents for these items are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 which is the acceptance level of mean scores.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference (P<.05) between the mean ratings of heads of units and senior administrative staff of universities on the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of t-Test Analysis of the Difference Between the Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Extent of Implementation of Staff Discipline and Control Measures in Universities.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Level of Sig.	t-cal.	t-critic.	Decision.
Heads of Units	677	2.97	0.82	829	0.05	0.83	1.96	Not Significant
Snr. Admin. Staff	154	2.84	0.81					

$\alpha = 0.05$, NS = Not Significant

Data presented on table 3 above show that a calculated t-value of 0.83 was obtained at 829 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. In view of the fact that the calculated t-value of 0.83 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of this study is, therefore, accepted as formulated. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of heads of units and senior administrative staff of universities

on the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have exposed the fact that some of the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria to a very great extent. These include: taking disciplinary action against fighting, misappropriation of university funds, embezzlement of university funds, falsification of figures and forging of documents. The results of the study also showed that the staff discipline and control measures which are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria to a great extent are: taking disciplinary action against misuse of university property, destruction of university property, quarrelling, falsification of facts and ensuring that there are measures that compel university staff to abide by the university's rules and regulations. Conversely, the research findings equally indicated that taking disciplinary action against lateness to work, absence from work, laziness to work and non-participation in university activities are, to a low extent, implemented in universities in South East Nigeria as staff discipline and control measures.

The above findings agree with the views of Wali (2014) and the National Universities Commission (2015) that some staff discipline and control measures are poorly implemented in Nigerian universities including those in South East Nigeria. No wonder it has been claimed that many staff of universities have poor attitude to work. Regrettably, the poor implementation of some staff discipline and control measures in universities do not augur well for the effective administration of the universities visualizing the fact that Nnabuo (2001) and Fatani (2010) conceptualized staff discipline and control measures in universities as the recipe for effective administration of universities and the ultimate realization of their established goals. Consequently, it is expedient that university administrators have to effectively implement all the identified staff discipline and control measures in their universities and on the basis of which they can accomplish effective administration of their universities for goal attainment.

The results of the study have also revealed that there are strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures in universities in South East Nigeria. These strategies are: University administrators being more determined to implement the staff discipline and control measures, putting in place effective method of monitoring staff's disciplinary problems so as to be able to take disciplinary action where necessary, university administrators adopting proper leadership style that will enable them to implement the staff discipline and control measures effectively, instituting a disciplinary committee responsible for taking appropriate disciplinary action against all manner of breaches of university's rules and regulations, and further training of university administrators in the rudiments of effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures. Furthermore, effective resolution of the problems which hamper the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures, establishment of effective channels of communication that will ensure free flow of information necessary for the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures and removal of the political interference which often exists in the course of implementing staff discipline

and control measures in universities are also the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures in universities.

The research findings articulated above are in alignment with the view of Nosiri (2012) that there is a variety of strategies that can be adopted to improve the poor implementation of many staff discipline and control measures in universities. Incidentally, these findings have exposed the fact that if the strategies for improving the implementation of the staff discipline and control measures in universities identified in this study are adopted by university administrators, effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures will then be actualized in universities in South East Nigeria for the benefit of effective administration of the universities. This viewpoint is consistent with the view of NUC (2015) that it is through effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities that effective administration of the universities can be attained. Here lies the imperative of university administrators to adopt the identified strategies for improving the implementation of their staff discipline and control measures for the benefit of effective administration of their universities and the ultimate realization of their stated goals.

Furthermore, the t-test analysis of the null hypothesis that guided the study showed that the null hypothesis was accepted as formulated, meaning that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of heads of units and senior administrative staff of universities on the extent to which the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are implemented in universities in South East Nigeria. This finding is not surprising considering the fact that the two groups of respondents are directly involved in the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in their universities. Consequently, they are bound to share similar views and opinions regarding the extent of implementation of the staff discipline and control measures in their universities.

Implication of the Findings

Essentially, the findings of this study are indicative of the fact that all the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities are not effectively implemented in universities in South East Nigeria. This is true of the fact that while some staff discipline and control measures are implemented to a very great extent in the studied universities, some are implemented to a great extent while others are implemented to a low extent. The implication of this finding is that effective implementation of all the staff discipline and control measures for effective administration of universities can only be achieved through the holistic application of the identified strategies for improving their implementation. Therefore, the onus of responsibility is now on the university administrators to adopt the identified strategies for improving the implementation of their staff discipline and control measures as a vehicle for engendering effective administration of their universities.

Conclusion

In universities, effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures is a catalyst for the attainment of effective university administration. Unfortunately, some staff discipline and control measures necessary for effective administration of universities are actually not effectively implemented in the universities in South East Nigeria. These

include: taking disciplinary action against lateness to work, absence from work, laziness to work and non-participation in university activities.

However, there are some strategies which can be used to improve the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities. These strategies are: University administrators being more determined to implement the staff discipline and control measures, putting in place effective method of monitoring staff's disciplinary problems, university administrators adopting proper leadership style that will enable them to implement the staff discipline and control measures effectively, instituting a disciplinary committee responsible for taking appropriate disciplinary action where necessary, further training of university administrators in the rudiments of effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures, effective resolution of the problems which hamper the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures, establishment of effective channels of communication that will ensure free flow of information necessary for the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures, and removal of political interference in the implementations of staff discipline and control measures in universities.

Recommendations

With reference to the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The leadership style of university administrators should be such that demonstrates firmness and strong commitment to effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures in their universities.
2. Appropriate mechanisms for effective monitoring of staff's disciplinary problems should be established in universities.
3. Effective channels of communication should be established in universities to aid free flow of information necessary for the effective implementation of staff discipline and control measures.
4. Further training of university administrators in the rudiments of staff discipline and control is imperative.
5. There should be no political interference in the course of implementing staff discipline and control measures in universities.
6. Finally, the National Universities Commission which is the regulatory agency for all universities in Nigeria should formulate relevant policies that will ensure the purposeful adoption of the identified strategies for improving the implementation of staff discipline and control measures in universities for the benefit of effective university administration.

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