

commonalities across all types of resources while providing special instructions when there are different needs for types of resources, such as music, cartographic, legal, religious and rare materials and archives, for description of such materials. Libraries around the world are being encouraged to develop better systems that build on RDA. Once RDA is adopted, systems can be redesigned for today's technical environment, moving libraries into linked data information discovery and navigation systems in the internet environment and away from online public access catalogs (OPACs) with only linear displays of textual data. This is a transition period when libraries want and need to move bibliographic data to the web for use and re-use. RDA may not be the complete solution, but its role as a new kind of content standard may smooth the path in that direction.

RDA makes library bibliographic descriptions and access to data more internationally acceptable. Library administrators need to understand that the full benefits of investment in this component now will not be realized immediately, but the investment is critical to the future health and role of libraries. To this extent, it is recommended that cataloguers should invest consistently in self development and skills acquisition that is required of them to keep pace with these innovations and be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century information environment.

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## **D**ISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AS ANTIDOTE TO INDISCIPLINE AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

**T**his study assessed the extent the disciplinary procedures influence indiscipline in Nigerian universities with particular reference to the universities in the southwest. A descriptive survey design was used for this research. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select nine tertiary institutions. While simple random sampling was used to select three hundred and eighty-four (384) academic staff members from the total population of nine thousand six hundred and nineteen (9,619) academic staff members. Results revealed that formal proceedings and summary proceedings were the disciplinary procedures employed by the university authority. Results also showed that the implementation of transparent disciplinary procedures has a positive and significant relationship with abatement of indiscipline in Nigerian Universities. Furthermore, the

### **Introduction:**

The role of tertiary educational institutions in the provision and development of manpower for the social economic and technological advancement of any nation cannot be overemphasized. By their unique nature, tertiary educational institutions are expected to be a repository of the most specialized and skilled intellectuals. They serve as storehouses of knowledge for nurturing the manpower needs of the nation and for satisfying the aspirations of the

result revealed that personal interest, Lack of enough fact to about employee's problems, social problems, and political and top management interference are major challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian Universities. Subsequently, the study recommended that each and every academic staff should be given a copy of disciplinary procedures, and staff should be encouraged to read it regularly. Also, management should not be influenced by personal interests and politicians in taking appropriate actions.

**Keywords:** *Disciplinary Procedures, Commitment, Formal Proceeding, Summary Proceeding,*

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People for a good and humane society (Jane, Mike & Nanusonge, 2012). Okebukola, (2008) and Pienaar and Bester (2008) strongly argued that the academic profession is fundamental to the functioning of any tertiary institution. Contributions of tertiary institutions to the economic development of the nation have been documented in the literature. Tertiary institutions have the special role of initiating activities aimed at reducing poverty, intolerance, violence illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation, and disease. However, the aforementioned contributions above have not felt in Nigeria.

According to Nwakpa (2006), academic misconduct in Nigerian tertiary institutions has become a common thing that almost every staff both academic and non-academic is involved in. This evidenced by Aliyu (1991) and Bayo (2002) that academic misconduct committed by lecturers during lectures. These among others include persistent lateness to scheduled lectures or arbitrary postponement of scheduled lecturer, collecting money from students before accepting their take-home assignments, making the purchase of his course material compulsory, refusing to give course assessment, and returning grades for in-course assessment, and refusing to mark the submitted assignment, awarding marks in proportion to the amount of money paid by the students, sex for marks, and awarding marks without marking the scripts. According to Umeh (1996), academic

misconduct is any action principally committed by workers in educational institutions and examining bodies, which results in the compromise of academic standards.

For institutions to withstand and take on global competition, they must set higher standards for their academic and non-academic staff and must take measures to retain their rules, policy regulations and performance standard one of the most common tools for retaining committed employees is disciplinary procedures (Apalia, 2017). According to Chelliah (2010), the effectiveness and performance of the public service depend on the existence of a systematic and well-established disciplinary procedure. It involves sanctioning erring employee staff and rewarding conforming employees. Discipline is considered to be good when employees willingly conform to rules and regulations in the organization. In tertiary institutions in Nigeria, disciplinary issues are being used as punitive rather than corrective purpose. Consequently, this has created conflict and hatred in the institutions.

This study is justified for detail for academic staff to be more aware of public service regulations, what their management needs, or what the government expects of them.

### Research Questions

The following questions shall be the focus of this study.

- i. What are the disciplinary procedures used to ensure the commitment of academic staff in Nigerian Universities?
- ii. Can transparent disciplinary procedures abate indiscipline in Nigerian Universities?
- iii. What are the challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian Universities?

### Research objective

The main objectives of this study are;

- i. To examine the disciplinary procedures used to ensure the commitment of academic staff in Nigerian Universities.

- ii. To assess if transparent disciplinary procedures could abate indiscipline in Nigerian Universities.
- iii. To identify the challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian Universities.

### Literature Review

According to Chelliah (2010), the idea of discipline suggests punishments as a measure of deterring undesired behaviors. It also refers to training aimed at producing a specific character or pattern of behaviour and a systematic method of obtaining obedience. However, scholars in public administration have given a broader definition of the concept of discipline. Knight and Ukpere (2014) define discipline as a pattern of behavior that can be traced back to particular training. This behaviour is portrayed by a person in order to demonstrate his personal traits. An employee, for example, reflects a particular behaviour in a workplace situation and his behavior contributes towards attaining his or her goal at the organization. Dumisan, (2002) also defines discipline as a system of rules and mechanisms for ensuring that disciplinary codes are followed. This implies that every organization has its rules and regulations “dos and don’ts”. The observance of these sets of rules in itself is discipline. In the view of Rubin (2001), ‘discipline also refers to punitive actions or measures taken by an organization against erring worker, it is punishment for wrongdoing by an employee. Discipline has some purpose which includes correcting the erred employee, re-directing of staff to the set objectives, and to prevent future occurrence of such misdeed by either the affected staff or the prospective victim. It serves as a preventive and deterrent measure against diversion of attention and goals.

Disciplinary measures are guided by basic principles so as to accomplish their desired purposes in an organization. Basing on the author Singh (2005) in Industrial Relations (emerging paradigms) define discipline is the regulation and modulation of human activities to produce a controlled performance. The real purpose of discipline is quite simple; it is to encourage employees to conform to established standards of job

performance and to behave sensibly and safely at work. Discipline is essential to all organized group action. Relying on Pettinger (2001) in *Mastering Management Skills* argues that Staff Discipline is a reflection of the standards of attitudes, behavior, and performance required in a particular situation. Disciplinary procedures are present to ensure when there is any deviation from these standards; there is a proper, fair, and even way of resolving the matter. All disciplinary standards and procedures must state the circumstances in which they are to be conducted and applied. According to Gomez-Mejia (2010), discipline means orderliness or the absence of disorder, chaos, and confusion in human behavior and actions. It occurs when employees behave in an orderly and responsible manner.

### **What Is Disciplinary Procedure?**

A disciplinary procedure is a way that an employer can tell an employee that something is incorrect. It also allows the employer to clarify clearly what progress is needed and it should give the employees an opportunity to explain their side of a situation. It can lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal in more serious cases. Employers use disciplinary actions to tell employees that their performance or conduct is not up to the predictable standard and also to encourage them for improvement (Eby, 2005). Before taking formal disciplinary action or dismissing an employee, employers may try to raise the matter informally with the employee. This is often a good way of resolving a setback quickly. Sometimes the problem may be the result of a misunderstanding, and this may enable the employee to give evidence to clarify the issue. On the other hand, the employer can decide to go straight to their formal disciplinary or dismissal measures (Eby, 2005). Every institution has disciplinary procedures that provide basic practical guidance to employers, employees, and their representatives and set out principles for handling disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace. These guidelines provide a framework and regulate the activities of the workforce. According to Imel (2011), the aim of any disciplinary procedure is to correct unsatisfactory

behaviour, rather than to punish. It should, therefore, specify as fully as possible what constitutes „misconduct“ and what constitutes „gross misconduct“ which calls for a stricter application of the procedure..

### **Measures used to improve disciplinary issues**

Measures advocated by Armstrong (2009) include that of creating an environment which could prevent other management problems. Effective and efficient communication is vital for interpersonal relations in working areas. Good interpersonal relations are essential for a healthy relationship. Misunderstanding or any other conflict between staff and supervisors may lead to a disagreement which may result in misconduct. It is vital to educate employees to understand the code of conduct in order to reduce disorderliness. If an employee is not aware of how he or she should conduct him/herself during the course of his/her employment or they even know what the organization wants for them, then it shall be unfair/unreasonable to discipline such an employee for something he or she does not know. Local authorities and central authorities may, however, put in place the best disciplinary preventative measures, but the fact remains that employees misbehave; therefore those misbehaving must be dealt with accordingly to put them in one direction. Eby (2005) argues that discipline is a pleasant responsibility. Doing it badly only compounds the offensiveness, doing it well reduces employee annoyance, increases employee morale, makes the dismissal of the worker rare, and reduces the danger of legal action by disgruntled former employees. He advocates three guidelines; taking effective preventive action, using successful techniques, and rewarding managers and employees.

### **Empirical Review**

The following previous studies are reviewed because they are relevant to this current study. For instance, Idris and Alegbeleye (2015) examined the role of discipline on organizational effectiveness in the public sector with specific reference to the Nigeria Customs Service. In order to achieve the research objectives, an in-depth literature review through content



analysis. The researcher employed the descriptive survey and case study design to examine the role of discipline as been practiced at the Nigeria Customs Service. A simple random sampling method was used to draw a sample of one hundred and fifty (130) respondents from Nigeria Customs Service Ikeja Command. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires. Similarly, the chi-square goodness of fit statistical technique was used with the aid of the excel spreadsheet. The findings revealed inter alia that, there is a need to keep a high standard of discipline in an organization. It also revealed that one of the causes of high disciplinary cases in the Nigeria Customs Service is blamed on godfatherism and favouritism.

Nwakpa (nd) investigated the causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions and administrative strategies to be adopted for controlling them. The questionnaire was used in the study to elicit the opinions of the respondents. The population for the study was 3809 academic staff in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions, while 450 academic staff formed the sample. The study was guided by two research questions. The research instrument was validated by five validators. Data collected were statistically analyzed using the mean statistics. The study found many causes of academic misconduct and discovered many administrative strategies for controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions.

Apalia (2017) investigated the effects of disciplinary management on employee performance in the County Education Office of Turkana County. Specifically, the study aimed; to determine the effects of code of discipline on performance, to determine the effects of disciplinary procedures on performance, to determine the effects of discipline systems on performance, and to assess the effects of disciplinary actions on performance. 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 employees. The study sample comprised 1 (one) District Education Officer, 4 (four) departmental managers, and 166 (one hundred and sixteen) employees in

the education office reflecting the ratio in the county office accessible sample staff size. The study employed purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used.. Data were tested for significance using regression. Test for significance was done using the Pearson product-moment of the correlation coefficient. The study found out that, respondents agreed that there was an increase in employees' knowledge; respondents agreed that disciplinary management led to the promotion of employees. The study also found out that, majority of the respondents rated employee performance, remuneration first, work environment, and management commitment as the first factors that affect employee performance also majority rated motivation, tools, equipment, and other resources second. Anyi (2017) examined the level of discipline among the universities Academic Staff as a Correlate of University Development in Nigeria. The study adopted a correlation design with a population of 2,301 academic staff purposively selected from four Universities in the North-Central Geo-Political zone of Nigeria. The Stratified Random Sampling Method was used to select 287 and 289 senior and junior academic staff respectively (giving a total of total 576). A four-point scale rating Discipline Inventory Questionnaire was used to collect data. Mean scores, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used in answering the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) and t-test were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that there is a low level of discipline among the academic staff of Nigerian universities; a positive relationship exists between the level of discipline among university academic staff and level of development of the universities; academic staff in universities located in urban areas had a higher level of discipline than their counterparts in universities located in the rural areas, and that junior academics have a better level of discipline than their senior counterparts.

Juma and Moronge (2015) established the influence of employee reprimand system, employee code of conduct, employee disciplinary

procedures, and employee rules and regulations on employee performance in Kenya with a case of Mukurwe-ini Wakulima Dairy in Nyeri County. The study reviewed several pieces of literature in line with the area of study and employed descriptive research design so as to carry out an in-depth study of the organization in order to come up with relevant data for analysis. The study targeted 130 employees of mukurwe-ini wakulima dairy Ltd 50% of the population that is 65 respondents were sampled using a simple random sampling method. The primary data was collected by the use of questionnaires as the data collection instruments. The data were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (spss) version 21, and presented in the report in form of tables, pie charts, and graphs to represent frequencies and percentages. The study adopted inferential statistics and variables were regressed at a 5% level of significance to determine the strength and direction of their relationship and the study established that all independent variables statistically and significantly influenced the dependent variable. The analysis showed that codes of conduct had the strongest positive (Pearson correlation coefficient =.603) influence on employee performance. In addition, employee reprimand, employee disciplinary procedures, and rules, and regulations are positively correlated to employee performance (Pearson correlation coefficient =.506, .559, and .622). The code of conduct was the most significant factor.

Danku, Apelety, Aboagye, and Benyebaar (2015) assessed the knowledge level of educational service employees concerning discipline and grievance handling procedures. Questionnaires were administered randomly to 540 educational service employees in various educational sectors and ranks. The result indicated that conflict of interest and disobedience are the main forms of indiscipline among the educational service workers sampled. The result further indicated that educational workers had adequate knowledge about the disciplinary actions stipulated in the educational service statutes for corresponding offences. Knight and Ukpere (2014) examined how employees perceive the application of disciplinary action in the organisation and whether they felt that leaders were following correct

procedures in this regard. A closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to a sample group of employees, where after focus group interviews were held to elaborate on answers given. The results revealed that employees felt disciplinary procedures were inconsistently applied and that not all employees received the same treatment for similar actions.

### **Methodology**

the descriptive survey design was used for this research. the purposive random sampling technique was used to select nine tertiary institutions (University of Ibadan, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti; University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Federal University of Technology, Akure) in South-Western Nigeria. The assumption is that since the institutions are first established tertiary educational institutions in Southwest Nigeria, some degree of uniformity is expected to exist in their human resource management, and other relations policies and practices. While simple random sampling was used to select three hundred and eighty-four (384) academic staff members from the total population of nine thousand six hundred and nineteen (9, 619) academic staff members. The sample size was determined by the formula recommended by Slovincs (1963). Data were collected by the researcher with the aid of a personal interview and a structured questionnaire. Simple percentages and ordinary least square were employed to analyze the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Disciplinary procedures used to ensure the commitment of academic staff in Nigerian Universities**

The first objective of this study was to identify the disciplinary procedures used in Nigerian Universities as a means of shaping both academic and non-academic staff behaviors so as to ensure their commitment. Through interviews as a method of data collection used, the researcher revealed that the management of selected tertiary institutions uses two kinds of disciplinary procedures such as formal proceedings and summary proceedings.

**Formal proceedings :** The first disciplinary procedure is formal proceeding which involves all kind of big offences like engage in physical combat of any kind with any person; involvement in cultism, absent from duty, nor engage in lock-outs, sit-ins, picketing, disclose the contents of a confidential document, inciting students against the university authority, sale of handouts, sexual gratification, holding another full time appointment with any other organization, ascribing to title, position or office which he/she has not legitimately acquired, traveling out of the country without prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor, poor work performance, theft, corruption, taking of alcohol during working hours, failure to disclose information, failure to comply with order, engaging with other duties outside the office which may cause distraction of other duties within the organization and like, of which it resulted to punishment such as dismissal, reduction of salary increment, reduction of job rank.

**Summary proceeding:** This is a kind of proceeding that involves lower offences. The following kinds of offences follow under summary proceeding; absence from work for 1 day, failure to complete the task, absence from work during working hours, negligent to perform other duties and failure to follow instruction. The following are the procedures followed for disciplinary procedures as mentioned by the respondents which are be adhered before administering punishing to employees:

**Verbal warning:** This is the first step for the Head of Department, where the staff is given this warning so as to correct an issue in the first instances. Generally staff receives a verbal warning for first transgression. At this stage, the principle of natural justice and fair procedures are always applied.

**First warning (Written warning):** This is the second stages after verbal warning provided if there is no improvement in conduct or performance. The written warning letter should clearly state out the nature of the problems, give suggestions and solutions, and advise on the possible sanctions if no improvement within the specified period. The findings from the study have also revealed that the employer at this stage has always afforded reasonable assistance to employees to improve his or her conduct.

**Second written warning:** This is also the third stage that occurs if there is no improvement in employees' conduct within the specified period given after the first warning letter is given.

**Final written warning:** This is the fourth stage which occurs when improvement does not occur within the specified period of time (or during the monitoring period). After this letter, if there is no improvement or bad behavior continues or poor performance is repeated then the dismissal will follow. This warning letter is final before dismissal.

**Dismissal:** This is the last stage whereby if there is no improvement after the final written warning the dismissal will finally occur. At this stage, a meeting should be called and the employer representatives should be invited. Also the employer should be given the opportunity of appeal within the specified period. At this stage the employer should give a letter to confirm dismissal and the right to appeal and the specific period of time for appeal and where to appeal.

**The second objective was to examine whether transparent disciplinary procedures can abate indiscipline in Nigerian Universities.**

Table 1. Relationship between the transparent disciplinary procedures and abatement of indiscipline.

| Explanatory variable      | B      | Std error | t value | p-value | Remarks |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Constant                  | 19.450 | 0.899     | 21.051  | 0.000   |         |
| Abatement of indiscipline | 0.389  | 0.256     | 3.296*  | 0.022   | S       |
| R                         | 0.609  |           |         |         |         |
| R <sup>2</sup>            | 0.372  |           |         |         |         |

S= Significant; \*= significant at 5% level

Source: Authors' Data Analysis

Table 1 indicates that the implementation of transparent disciplinary procedures ( $t = 3.296$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ) has a positive and significant relationship

with the abatement of indiscipline with an R-value of 0.609. Result also indicates that the implementation of transparent disciplinary procedures has a 37.2% decisive influence on the abatement of indiscipline among academic staff. This implies that implementation of transparent disciplinary procedures is a major predictor of abatement of indiscipline among academic staff in Nigerian universities.

**The third objective was to identify the challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian Universities.**

Table 2. Challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Osun State University.

| Statement  | N   | Mean | Remark   |
|--|-----|------|----------|
| Personal Interest  | 384 | 4.09 | Accepted |
| Lack of enough fact to about employee's problems               | 384 | 3.89 | Accepted |
| Lack of awareness of laws and regulations among the management | 384 | 2.11 | Rejected |
| Social problems  | 384 | 4.01 | Accepted |
| Political and top management interference                      | 384 | 3.99 | Accepted |
| Financial problems   | 384 | 2.70 | Rejected |

From table 2 above, most of the respondents confirmed that personal interest is one of the challenges management faces to institute disciplinary procedures because some of HODs and Deans have bias over staff members' matter such that they take staff members' offences for granted by not taking action against other staff members who have committed the offence in accordance with the laws. It was also revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that social problems, and political and top management interference are also major challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in our tertiary institutions, while financial problem, lack of awareness of laws and regulations among the management are never regarded as challenges to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian universities.

This finding is an agreement with Cole (2008), who affirmed that it's difficult for the managers to achieve consistency in disciplinary practice because they are also employees and they are employed. It is difficult to punish themselves if they face some problems. In another study, Kashoza (2017), observed that politicians have the power to influence disciplinary procedures and this has contributed to a great violation of disciplinary procedures.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

This study assessed the extent the disciplinary procedures influence indiscipline in Nigerian universities with particular reference to the universities in the southwest. A descriptive survey design was used for this research. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select nine tertiary institutions While simple random sampling was used to select three hundred and eighty-four (384) academic staff members from the total population of nine thousand six hundred and nineteen (9, 619) academic staff members. Results revealed that formal proceedings and summary proceedings were the disciplinary procedures employed by the university authority. Results also showed that the implementation of transparent disciplinary procedures has a positive and significant relationship with the abatement of indiscipline in Nigerian Universities. Furthermore, the result revealed that personal interest, Lack of enough fact to about employee's problems, social problems, and political and top management interference are major challenges management face to institute disciplinary procedures in Nigerian Universities. Subsequently, the study recommended that each and every academic staff should be given a copy of disciplinary procedures, and staff should be encouraged to read it regularly. Also, management should not be influenced by personal interests and politicians in taking appropriate actions.

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