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# EFFECT OF DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ON EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOUR IN OFFA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA COUNCIL

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**Abstract**
*Disciplinary measures are very crucial in an organization to shape employees' behaviour towards the achievement of its goals, but in a developing nation like Nigeria, it is the other way round. However, little research has been done on the effect of disciplinary measures on employee behaviour, especially on local government employees. Therefore, the key objective of this analysis was to examine the relationship of disciplinary measures with employees' behaviour in Offa Local Government, Kwara State. The study's data were generated through quantitative surveys from 126 employees of the Offa Local Government Area council of Kwara State. Data gathered from the survey were analyzed using SPSS version 22 and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The statistical result shows that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted since the P-value ($H_1 = 0.736$) is less than 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the study revealed a significant relationship between disciplinary measures and employees' attitude to work. Therefore, the study recommended that management should enforce discipline on workers with a particular aim of managing their behaviours and being productive in achieving the organizational goal.*

**Keywords**: Disciplinary Measures, Discipline, Employee Behaviour, local government, Nigeria.

## 1.0 Introduction

Organizations are composed of persons and clusters of individuals who function jointly and interdependently to ensure that organizational goals are accomplished. There is a sort of daily collaboration among persons and groups of persons to perform their responsibilities and contribute their quota to the establishment. Persons, having diverse interests, aspirations, orientations, and focus are employed in the organization, and most likely would result in conflict due to the discrepancy in interests (Knight & Ukpere, 2014). Due to the incompatible interests of workforces and the possessive/suspicious attitude of workforces, there is a tendency for behavioural attitudes to diverge/deviate from the conventional guidelines and procedures of the establishments (Idris & Alegbeleye, 2015).

A sensible degree of predictable behaviour is required from employees for the attainment of organizational purposes. Nevertheless, one of the methods of guaranteeing order and compliance with instituted rules in the place of work is through the establishment of disciplinary measures. Awodele-Fayomi (2015) perceives that the drive of disciplinary measures is to improve the performance of the worker by guaranteeing that employee behaviour is consistent with the establishment's aims. The inadequate disciplinary measure in an establishment inspires ineptitude and ineffectiveness on the part of such an establishment (Nwosu & Ugwuerua, 2015). Usually, a sensible degree of expectable behaviour is required from the employee(s) for the realization of organizational purposes. One of the methods in guaranteeing decorum, improvement and effectiveness in an institution is via the establishment of appropriate disciplinary measures (Okolie & Udom, 2019). Wherever there are

inappropriate disciplinary measures for erring and unscrupulous officers there would be a disruption of organizational efficiency and functionality. In addition, the effectiveness and efficiency of disciplinary measures lie in valuable rules and regulations, most periods rules are broken, decorum is jumped, and processes circumvented. This extremely destabilizes the success of disciplinary measures, particularly in public establishments where infringement of regulations is at the uppermost.

The Nigerian public service is characterized and bothered with an attitudinal problem, bribery and corruption, incompetence, economic disruption, discrimination and partiality, disregard for regulation and directive, narrow-mindedness, and others. The Local government council as a subgroup of the civic service is not safe also. This explains why there is deficient and unproductive guidance/direction and work administration, and regulation as certain officers/workers have "godfathers or political backings" that encourage indiscipline and endorse mediocrity as a substitute to meritocracy/excellence. This usually stemmed from a lack of personnel devotion to the aims and goals of the service. Inadequate delegation of power by many senior officers have similarly disrupted the efficiency of an organization.

The conducts of employees especially in local government tend to be indolent, their coffee breaks are lengthy, and their need for supervision should be persistent. Frequently, there is carelessness from one workplace to the other, instances of misplaced documents, absenteeism, an abnormality at the place of work, forgery of receipts, coming late to the workplace, parting the workplace before the closure periods, insubordination, embezzlement and broad non-performance of obligation on the scheduled period (Ameen, 2020). These are modes of impediments that indicates a lack of discipline and, in turn, affect performance/accomplishment and build room for ineffectiveness in service delivery. Addressing these weaknesses is vital to the effective performance (Alao & Alao, 2013) of local government.

The current situation of matters in the local government seems that the variables responsible for misconduct and misdeed in the local government have not been dealt with and thus the problem, nevertheless remains. A deeper look into the present local government challenges (e.g. unproductive occupation operations, dearth of capable leadership among others) (Magbadelo, 2016) and the existing literature in the management field signifies that employee good behaviour is crucial to effective local government service, because, establishment success significantly hinges on employee good attitude to work.

Furthermore, disciplinary action has been established to positively improve employee performances and behaviour (Tumo, 2017). Given the importance of disciplinary measures to organisations, a fundamental issue is how to stimulate employee behaviour. According to Dzimbiri (2016), effective disciplinary measures should be entrenched by the organization because it is a vital and appropriate method for supervisors to use when correcting employees' misdeeds and helping them attain performance levels that meet employers' expectations. Disciplinary measures are crucial to employees' teaching, improvement, and training that can mould behaviours and strengthen desirable conduct. Therefore, it can be asserted that disciplinary measures are a significant predictor of employee behaviour.

Moreover, several studies (Iheanacho, Edema & Ekpe. 2017; Olaitan, Mohammed & Ajibola, 2013; Knight & Ukpere, 2014) have been conducted on the disciplinary measures from different perspectives. Nevertheless, little statistical evidence has been found regarding the effects of disciplinary measures on employee behaviour, especially from the local government area council. Given the above discussion and the fact that there is a dearth of research on the effect of disciplinary

measures on employee behaviours in the context of the local government area council, the current study examines the relationship between disciplinary measures and employee behaviour of Offa local government council area of Kwara State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptualization of workplace discipline

There is no general standard definition of the concept of "discipline". Certain scholars see discipline as a "form of punishment which brings about fear and disdain when a person is involved in inappropriate acts". On the other hand, a variety of scholars examine discipline "as the behaviour of good conduct and adherence to established rules and regulations" (Idris & Alegbeleye, 2015, p. 320). Discipline in the office is the process by which supervisory employees modify behavioural shortcomings and guarantee obedience/strict to inaugurated guidelines. In the viewpoint of Decenzo and Robbins (2016, p. 37), discipline refers to "as the conditions in the organization where employees conduct themselves by the organization's rules and standards of acceptable behaviour". Discipline similarly refers to the conduct of employees that is consistent with the recognized rules and regulations. Dumisan (2012, p. 512), asserts that discipline is "observance and total compliance to the rules and regulations of a society, community or organization". In administration phrasing, worker discipline denotes those workforces that stick to the instructions and procedures instituted by an organization for proper behaviour (Ugwuja, 2017). Redeker (1983) elucidates that objective of discipline is to establish and uphold mutual regard and reliance between management and the workforces. He additional observes that discipline may have a lengthy period cost to the administration if not carefully administered.

According to Fagbadebo, Agunyai and Odeyemi (2014), discipline has been seen as punishing and corrective measures or arrangements engaged by an administration against erring workforce, it is a penalty for misconduct by a worker. Disciplinary measures have a certain drive that involves correcting the errant worker, guiding the workforce to the established aims and avoiding the upcoming incidence of such offence by either the affected workforce or the forthcoming victim. Therefore, it operates as a precautionary measure against nonconformity to the goals and drives. Disciplinary procedures are conducted and directed by fundamental principles to attain their anticipated goal in an establishment. Disciplinary procedures and measures are employed according to Bendix (2010) as a remedial measure in an establishment not to chastise the worker, but relatively to modify behaviour or an existing job standard to more suitable levels. Hence, it is significant to offer certain kinds of correction following undesirable reactions, to aid in eliminating that action or behaviour. If a disciplinary procedure is utilized as a way of punishment. Therefore, disciplinary measures here is any action carried out by local government authority in response to unacceptable employee performance or behaviour.

### *Employee Behaviour*

Employee behaviour is described as a worker's response to a certain situation at the office. Workforces demand to act rationally at work not simply to attain gratitude and admiration from others but likewise to sustain a good work attitude. One requires to stick to the instructions and guidelines of the establishment (Emmanuel, Agu, Onuoha & Etim, 2019). Therefore, employee behaviour is a method in which local government staff respond to particular/given conditions or circumstances in the workplace

### *Kinds of Disciplinary Measures undertaken in an organization*

Disciplinary measures are of different kinds, and the kinds lie in the functions it does. The kinds of disciplinary measures an organization can administer according to Quian (2018) could be range from

the minor to the harsh, depending on the violation. He argued further that these kinds of discipline range from "verbal warning to restricting employee privileges, disciplinary reviews and even termination". The drive, nevertheless, with these kinds of discipline is not to punish workforces, but it is to sustain a constructive and fruitful work culture. Invariably, the commonest kinds of discipline measures in an organization are "preventive, corrective and progressive" discipline.

**i). Preventive discipline:** This kind of discipline measure is imposed to prevent workforces from disrupting the rules and regulations of an establishment. The objective of preventive discipline is to discourage workforces from being involved in actions that are inconsistent with the guidelines and procedures of an establishment.

**ii). Corrective discipline:** This kind of disciplinary measure is imposed to punish workforces that breached the laws and orders of an establishment. According to Idris and Alegbeleye (2015), the drive of corrective discipline is to enforce penalties on errand workforces and prevent an upcoming repetition of undesirable attitudes among other workforces. Usually, the corrective disciplinary measure is employed as a restrictive for workforces planning/preparing to involve in such undesirable conduct. However, the difference between preventive and corrective discipline measures is that the "tool of the former is a threat while that of the latter is punishment".

**iii). Progressive discipline:** This brand of disciplinary measure encompasses the imposition of heavy/severe punishments on misconducts that are constantly committed. As a workforce continue committing the same wrongdoing, the punishments become severe and heavier.

***Effect and Effectiveness of disciplinary action and measures***

One important method to enhance the employee performance behaviour is to apply an appropriate disciplinary measure to correct their misconduct. Employee behfaviour is typically to be the actions of an individual that play a role in the accomplishment of the establishment's goals (Ameen & Baharom, 2019). Discipline procedures are essential on numerous occasions. Draft (2000) opines that supervisor must dispense it prudently to prevent the workforces involved from giving up on conduct of great performance. This is strengthened by Blanchad et al. (1985) who emphasize that "how well managers manage corporation is dependent on how well they manage the workers and work". The workforce's behaviour is extremely affected, or an exact reflection of the supervisors' conduct.

A study accomplished by Patrick (2013) indicates a "positive relationship between workplace discipline and organizational productivity of selected manufacturing firms". Studies have also revealed that workplace discipline has a positive influence on employee behaviour (Heru & Heru, 2018; Warris, 2015). Crete (1995) argued that there is a synergy between discipline and corporation performance. He noted that performance feedback is of great influence on the discipline as it holds employees accountable for their actions. In addition, Zheng et al. (2016) attest that workers' performance has a positive effect on employee discipline. Similarly, Apalia (2017) declares that disciplining workforces has a positive impact on performance.

The effectiveness of disciplinary action depends to a large extent, on the reasons and circumstances for its implementation (Knight & Ukpere, 2014). Lewis, Thornhill and Saunders (2003, p.283) note that discipline is necessary where it is an "action instigated by management against an employee who fails to meet reasonable and legitimate expectations in terms of performance, conduct and adherence to rules". It can thus be said that an employer is justified in instituting this action as a measure to protect its interests and ensure that an employee carries out the duties expected of him\her in terms of the contract of employment. However, certain rules and processes also have to be followed by both employer and employee to ensure that the action yields the desired results for both parties. "It is clear

that the disciplinary procedure is there to protect the employee from unfair and unreasonable treatment, as well as to afford the employer the opportunity of dispensing with the unsatisfactory employee" (Lewis et al., 2003, p.301). Long gone are the days when employers could simply dismiss an employee for any reason, proper rules and processes have to be followed in modernized times. Another aspect that influences the effectiveness of disciplinary action and procedures is the consistency with which these measures are undertaken.

## 2.1 Empirical Framework

Patrick (2013) assessed the "relationship between workplace discipline and organizational productivity of 15 manufacturing firms in the South-south zone of Nigeria". The research embraced survey research design. This was led to the use of a structured questionnaire that offered primary data that were statistically analyzed. The research sample was comprised of two hundred and fifty (250) randomly selected from workforces of ten (10) manufacturing organizations in cross river state. Purposive sampling method was adopted in selecting sample and Pearson product movement coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses: $r = n\sum$. The outcomes showed a significant and positive association between workplace discipline and organizational output of chosen manufacturing companies.

In addition, Heru and Heru (2018) did a study on the "influence of communication and work discipline on employee performance with empirical evidence from DwiArsaPersada Foundation in Indonesia". This research was done employing a case study strategy. The research target population was drawn from employees working in the county education office in Lodwar. The research population comprises seven hundred and seventy-one (171) workforces. Stratified, purposive and simple random sampling methods were utilized by the researcher. Primary data was gathered via the aid of a questionnaire. Questionnaire distributed were coded and summarized employing descriptive statistics, distribution of frequency and percentage, and measures of variability. The statistical package used for the research was SPSS version 20. The outcome indicated that work discipline and communication considerably projected employee performance.

In another study, Tumo (2017) researched on the "perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government in Kenya". A survey research method was adopted. The research sample comprises five hundred (500) purposively chosen employees of Kenya, Baringo County Government. Employed structured questionnaire in obtaining information from sampled personnel. The researcher analysed the data collected with the use of descriptive statistics and Pearson. The outcomes indicated that disciplinary actions strongly drive the workforce to consist of a verbal warning, written warning, suspension awaiting inspection/inquiry and discharge.

Moreover, Ignatius and Rulivanto (2017). Carried out research on "competence, training and work discipline as predictors of employee performance in Krakatua Argo Logistics Limited, Indonesia". The outcome of the research shows that there is a significant influence of training, competence and work discipline on employee performance. the most influential variable that emerged in the research was competence with the contribution of fifty-four-point two percent (54.2%) followed by training with 20.3% and work discipline with 16.3% respectively. In a similar vein, Warris (2015) carried out a study that outcome disclosed that the "individual effect of competence, training, and discipline is significant on employee performance." Job discipline emerged as the most influential predictor of employee performance followed by competence and training".

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is supported by the theory of "Just Cause" in Employee Discipline Cases. According to Roger and Dennis (1985), the theory of just cause was developed as a preliminary effort toward the development and establishment of "fundamental understanding" that forms the basis of every individual employee in organization disciplinary measures. It then explains how labour representatives approve and amend this fundamental understanding in collective bargaining agreements, most essentially by adopting the just cause standard for discipline erring staff in an organization. Just cause theory is the standard that management particularly local government in Kwara state must adhere to when disciplining or discharging an employee. It means that in union settings, the employer must have a reason to act in disciplining an employee and the reason must be just and fair. With the application of this theory, employees' behaviour will change positively which will, in turn, enhance public sector performance.

## 3.0 Methodology

This paper adopted a descriptive research design, which led to the utilization of a structured questionnaire that provided primary data that were statistically analyzed. The design attempts to provide an accurate description or a picture of a particular situation or a phenomenon at one point in time (Hershey, Hassan & Yarlagadda, 1995). The target population of this study consisted of the employees under the Offa local government area council of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study used Offa Local government council for convenience purposes because it is thought that information concerning the study would be gotten easily. The scale for all the constructs ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (disagree). However, a demographical variable was measured as a categorical variable.

### Sampling Technique and Sample Size

This study considered Taro Yamane's formula on sample size determination. The population of this research covers 184 employees of the Offa local government area council of Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study is one hundred and twenty-six (126) according to Yamane's formula. Stratified sampling techniques were used to group the employee of Offa local government area council of Kwara state into different strata which represents the organizational department/cadre and thereby simple random sampling techniques was used to sample out the respondents. Thus, this was achieved by using Taro Yamane's formula. The formula is stated has:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{184}{1 + 184(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{184}{1+0.46}$$

$$= \frac{184}{1.46}$$

$$n = 126$$

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

Analysis of data and the results were offered here. The analysis of data required descriptive analysis using SPSS version 22 and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient respectively. Out of one hundred and twenty-six (126) questionnaires which were dispersed to the focus respondents, one hundred and eleven (111) were reverted representing a useable response rate of eighty-eight percent (88%) but only one hundred and six (106) were utilisable while five (5) were unfinished, then they were eliminated. In Creswell's (2012) perspective, which asserted that a response rate of Fifty percent (50%) is appropriate for analysis, it could be surely affirmed that a response of eighty-eight (88%) is acceptable for analysis. The descriptive information of the respondents was shown, and this indicates that the substantial number of the respondents in this research are male, representing 56 (52.8%) while 50 (47.2%) are female respondents. Nevertheless, there is not much disparity amongst the total of males and females. This outcome is symbolic of the population of Offa local government council in Kwara state, Nigeria, which displays no considerable gap concerning males and females.

With respect to the respondents' age, a substantial number of the respondents are 26-35 years of age, representing forty-five (45) (42.4%) of the entire respondents. This is followed by thirty-four (34) (32.2%) respondents, who are around the ages of 36-45 years. 11.4.2% (12) are between the ages of 46-55 years while 8.4% (9) are between the ages of 18-25 years. Finally, 6 (5.6%) respondents are between the ages of 56 years and above. This distribution might be a replication of the fact that young adults are more in the Offa local government council in Kwara state, Nigeria than old people. Concerning the marital status of the respondents, the majority of the respondents are married representing seventy-eight (78) (73.6%). Followed by the respondents who are single with a frequency of Twenty-two (22) (20.7%). The divorced respondents are just six (6) (5.6%) while widow respondents are only Three (3) (0.8%). From the distribution, it has been shown that most of the respondents are mature and responsible.

Likewise, sixty-three (63) (59.4%) respondents, who happened to be the majority, have a diploma and below as their level of educational qualification. This is followed by Thirty (30) (28.3%) respondents, who have a degree. Thirteen (13) (12.3%) respondents have masters' degrees. The outcomes specify that majority of the respondents have a diploma and below certificates. As far as the years of working experience of the respondents are concerned, a considerable number of the respondents are between 6-10 years' experience representing forty-three (43) (40.6%). This is followed by respondents who are between 11-15 years' work experience representing thirty (30) (28.3%). 19.8% (21) are respondents between 1-5 years of work experience while the respondents between 16-20-year work experience are six (6) (5.6%). Finally, six (6) (5.6%) are respondents between 21 years and above.

**Table 1: showing the frequency distribution of respondents on items how disciplinary measures improves employees' attitude to work**

| S/N | ITEM | S/A | A | N | S/D | D | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sound and unbiased judgement in disciplinary procedures helps to increases employee's commitment | 39 (36.8) | 54 (50.9) | 5 (4.7) | 2 (1.9) | 6 (5.7) | 106 (100) |
| 2 | An effective disciplinary program enables employees to correct any shortcomings that will affect the organizational goal | 49 (46.2) | 40 (37.7) | 11 (10.4) | 1 (0.9) | 5 (4.7) | 106 (100) |
| 3 | Disciplinary measures enable employees to know what standard behaviour is expected from them | 28 (26.4) | 70 (66.0) | 4 (3.8) | 1 (0.9) | 3 (2.8) | 106 (100) |
| 4 | Disciplinary reviews and corrective policies provide healthy work environment | 36 (34.0) | 56 (52.8) | 9 (8.5) | 1 (0.9) | 4 (3.8) | 106 (100) |

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2021**

Item 1 from Table 1 above shows that 36.8% of the respondents marked Strongly agree, 50.9% of the respondents marked agree, 4.7% marked undecided, 1.9% of the respondent marked strongly disagree and 5.7% marked disagree. It thus shows that the majority of the respondents believe that Sound and unbiased judgement in disciplinary procedures helps to increases employee commitment. Item 2 shows that 46.2% of the respondents marked Strongly agree, 37.7% of the respondents marked agree, 10.4% marked undecided, 0.9% of the respondent marked strongly disagree and 4.7% marked disagree. It thus shows that the majority of the respondents believe that an effective disciplinary program enables employees to correct any shortcomings that will affect the organizational goal.

Item 3 shows that 26.4% of the respondents marked Strongly agree, 66.0% of the respondents marked agree, 3.8% marked undecided, 0.9% of the respondent marked Strongly disagree and 2.8% marked disagree. It thus implies that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that Disciplinary measures enable employees to know what standard behaviour is expected from them. Item 4 shows that 34.0% of the respondents marked Strongly agree, 52.8% of the respondents marked agree, 8.5% marked undecided, 0.9% of the respondent marked strongly disagree and 3.8% marked disagree. It thus implies that the majority of the respondents think that Disciplinary reviews and corrective policies provide a healthy work environment.

***Test of Hypothesis***

$H_{01}$: there is no significant impact of disciplinary measures on employees' attitude to work

| Table 2: Correlation Matrix | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient | | | |
| | | Disciplinary Measures | Employee's Attitude to Work |
| Disciplinary Measures | Correlation coefficient | 1 | .736** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 106 | 106 |
| Employee's Attitude to Work | Correlation coefficient | .736** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 106 | 106 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 presents the result of correlation analysis for hypothesis tested which depicts the relationship between disciplinary measures and employees' attitude to work. As shown in Table 2, since the correlation significance of .000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicates that disciplinary measures have a significant effect on employees' attitudes to work. This implies that disciplinary measures will certainly result in a large amount of employees' attitude to work. Also, the correlation coefficient of .736 reveals that there is a strong positive relationship between disciplinary measures and employees' attitude to work.

***Discussion of Finding***

The hypothesis result of the study indicates that disciplinary measures have a significant effect on employees' attitudes to work. This study corroborates the previous studies such as Ignatius and Ruliyanto (2017), Crete (1995), and Tumo (2017) who perceived that work discipline significantly projects employee performance/behaviour. In addition, disciplinary measures that strongly drive employee performance and behaviour include preventive, corrective and progressive. Thus, disciplinary measures regulate and serve as a means of improving employee behaviour. Therefore, work discipline has a significant relationship with employee performance/behaviour.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has examined disciplinary measures and how it regulates employees' behaviour. From the result of the research, it can be concluded that disciplinary measures, if properly adopted by organizations, will help improve employees' attitudes to work effectively and efficiently. Therefore, based on the finding, it is recommended that management should enforce discipline on workers with a particular aim of managing their behaviours and being productive in achieving the organizational goal. Also, employers are indulged to use good disciplinary measures to improve employees' attitude to work.

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