



Work Disciplinary Measures and Employee Performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The specific objectives are to determine the effect of oral/written reprimand, evaluate the effect of suspension, examine the effect of demotion, and to ascertain the effect of termination; on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research approach, using questionnaire administration for data generation from a sample of 321 employees of the three selected Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. While regression analysis was employed as tool to test the hypotheses using t-statistic from the regression (statistical package for social science, version 25.0) was used for test of hypothesis. Findings showed that oral/written reprimand ($t= 6.01$, $B= 0.798$, $p= .004$), suspension ($t= 5.39$, $B= 0.810$, $p= .011$), demotion ($t= 5.98$, $B= 0.809$, $p= .020$) and termination ($t= 4.78$, $B= 0.7866$, $p= .003$) had significant and positive effect on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study concludes that work disciplinary measure (oral/written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination) is an instrument that fosters employee performance (in terms of employee meeting deadlines, employee commitment, employee efficiency and employee capability) as it has potentials for enhancing the employees performance by creating an atmosphere of attitudes and behaviors capable of influencing adherence to rules, regulations and policies guiding their behaviors at work. The study recommended amongst others that, management of federal universities should emphasize more on comprehensive and strict oral/written and reprimand structure that projects a disciplined management culture and posture, as it will enhance capability of employees towards improved performance and sustain good attitudes in the workplace.*

Keywords: *work disciplinary measures, suspension, demotions, termination, employee performance, oral and written reprimand.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, over the years organizations have developed different mechanisms for providing employees with a formal opportunity to improve on acceptable performance. The first structured introduction of discipline into organizations was established in the United States of America in the 1930s in response to the trade unions' request eliminating summary terminations. It is in this place a progressive system of punishment was developed. It was envisaged that this process would provide a worker with protection against job loss. Every organization institute guidelines, administrative policies, rules and regulations and obey the extant laws in its operations. Without

disciplinary measures, all activities that will be carried out will produce unsatisfactory results and are not in accordance with expectations. This can result in a lack of achievement of organizational goals and objectives and can also hinder the running of the organization's programs (Iskamto *et al.*, 2020; Kogah and Ibegbulam, 2021; Subsbiyantoro *et al.*, 2022).

In the Nigerian work settings, work disciplinary measures are instituted in organizations with the intention to improve the future behaviour of the employee who has broken the rules and also to influence the behaviour of other staff. They have the ability to help in developing an attitude of co-operation amongst employees, maintaining good industrial relations in the workplace and increasing the efficiency and morale of the employees (Othman *et al.*, 2019). Discipline is essential for the smooth functioning of today's organizations including the university and it is one of the basic strategies of achieving effective job performance and the university's goals and objectives. The university is an organized institution that has standards and policies to be followed by each employee. Going contrary to these policies amounts to indiscipline. They may be in the form of lateness, absenteeism, going for unapproved studies, acts of insubordination, sexual abuse, and delays in results submission, among others. In circumstances where an issue arises about the conduct or performance of an academic staff, it may be necessary to take disciplinary measures.

Disciplinary measures are taken by universities to correct wrong behaviour and instill discipline. It is important to note that it has to be done in accordance with the law and the established disciplinary proceedings and must observe the rights to the academic staff who are subject to the measure. Disciplinary measures may teach workers what is expected of them and they are used to develop workers with knowledge and skills to help them function well in the organization. The goal of the disciplinary measures is not to punish the staff but it is to maintain effective job performance and achieve goals and objectives (Agbionu *et al.*, 2018; Yusuf, 2020). However, Knight and Ukpere (2014) stated that there has been a departure from the authoritarian disciplinary approach in favour of a more civilized employer-employee relationship to a modern method of work discipline such as oral and written reprimand, suspensions, demotions and termination; which are the hallmark of disciplinary measures today. Oral and written reprimand is a verbal warning that a manager or supervisor gives to an employee as a means of rectifying something wrong in an incident of inappropriate conduct or behavior (Achu *et al.*, 2020). Suspension as a disciplinary measure in the work place occurs when an employee is asked to temporarily stop carrying out work while investigation is ongoing over allegations of misconduct (Tantua and Wopara, 2019). Demotion is a change of an employee from one position to another position, which is in a class with a lower salary range maximum. In demotion, the employee is shifted to a job lower in status, grade and responsibilities (Sishi, 2022). Termination is the worst case scenario for every worker. Termination is the involuntary dismissal of an employee for disciplinary reasons, unsatisfactory job performance, or for failure to obtain or maintain necessary job related credentials (Adisa *et al.*, 2021).

Employee job performance is a concept that scholars have viewed as the degree to which a combination of duties (such as teaching, research and community service) are performed by academic staff of universities (Mbon *et al.*, 2019; Owan *et al.*, 2020). Academic staff performance

has also been defined as the association between teaching features and educational success in the classroom (Okoi and Odigwe, 2018; Akah *et al.*, 2022). Thus, the influence of work disciplinary measures on the performance of academic staff may be observed by their teaching effectiveness, meeting deadlines, showing commitment, satisfaction and motivation to perform, among others. Employee performance is viewed as how an employee fulfills their job duties and executes their required tasks (Adisa *et al.*, 2021). According to Razak *et al.* (2018), workplace disciplinary measures are tools used by the employer to improve employee performance, maintain workplace harmony and employment relationships. Workplace discipline is the “compliance and obedience with organizational rules and procedures to produce a controlled employee performance” (Nduka *et al.*, 2019; Surajiyo *et al.*, 2021). The mandate of tertiary institutions in Nigeria specifically is to develop the total man mentally, physically, morally, technologically in learning and in character to enable them function effectively in any environment they find themselves; hence the necessity for discipline of employees of these institutions, is paramount (Egwu, 2018).

Disciplinary actions may be regarded as constructive in nature when the primary aim is for the purpose of correcting inappropriate behaviour which may involve several actions to accomplish this objective (Dagogo, 2019). Discipline is essential for organizational growth, primarily to educate employees to comply with and enjoy existing regulations, procedures, and policies, to produce a good performance. Good discipline reflects a person's great sense of responsibility for their tasks; that encourages the passion of work, the spirit of work, and the realization of the organization's objectives (Indra *et al.*, 2021). One of the things that affect staff performance is discipline (Iskamto, 2020). Without discipline, all activities that will be carried out will produce unsatisfactory results and are not in accordance with expectations. Individuals enter the workplace with their own unique abilities, attitudes, values and perceptions, and this in itself can be a source of conflict/value in any organization (Norhidayah *et al.*, 2022). One of the means in ensuring decorum, progress and effectiveness in organization is discipline. Where there are no proper disciplinary procedures for erring employees, there will be a dislocation of effective organizational functionality. Since an organization is not set up in a vacuum but made up of people who have aspiration, and ambitions which they would also want to achieve while in the organization (Norhidayah *et al.*, 2022). Disciplinary measures have been regarded as being most essential as it enables organizations to meet its goals through ensuring optimal performance from employees, hence this study seeks to explore work discipline measures and employee performance of Federal Nigerian Universities in North Central, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Academic staff performance in the universities occupies strategic position in national development, as the university is central to social, political and economic development of a nation. For many years, Nigerian universities have used a fairly standardized disciplinary measures to handle familiar personnel problems such as absenteeism, poor performance, and other misconducts. This approach, usually called "employees' discipline," provides for an increasingly serious series of penalties - reprimands, warnings, suspensions without pay and even termination - when employees' fall out of step with the organization's expectations. When problems arise, the job of the management is to find the punishment that fits the crime. Even today, with a growing number of organization's moving away from using a criminal-justice mentality for

employee performance improvement through corrective action, yet there are series of negative effects in the abysmal behavior of academic staff. Despite all approaches of employees' disciplinary management, there are yet increasing cases from academic staff in Nigerian public universities. However, it is observed that the approaches such as reprimand, suspension, demotion, reassign or even terminating staff without due diligence, adopted in the management of disciplinary problems such as non-observance of due process, neglect of established disciplinary procedures, lack of adjudicatory process at the departmental and faculty or college levels in Nigerian universities in recent times, have become a source of concern to experts in school administration; because of its detrimental effect to nation building. These employees' are expected to render effective and efficient service delivery to their clients and members, show some commitment to duties as well as meeting deadlines in carrying out their duties. Unfortunately, this has not been so as a result of many factors which centers on poor employee performance management, lack of employees' discipline etc.

Employees' have complained of poor conditions of service, lack of transparent performance appraisal process, selective administration of disciplinary measures and lack of adequate support for training opportunities by some of their employers. All of which have resulted in undesirable labor management relations, hence negative work attitudes such as absenteeism, lateness to work, and general lack of commitment to duty have ensued. These disturbing issues in universities has resulted in management to taking disciplinary measures such as oral and written reprimand, suspensions, demotions, reassignments, and even termination; to erring staff. Observations are that the policies which a university has about discipline and the way they are implemented have far reaching effect on the discipline situation in the institution. More often than not educational administrators do not provide clear-cut policies on discipline for guidance of the staff, and if provided, employees yet find it difficult comprehending. Very often where such policies exist, no sustained effort is made to improve upon them in order to motivate workers to perform better. This may sometimes lead to misunderstanding resulting in staff misconduct and job dissatisfaction. Thus, this study seeks to examine the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of federal universities in North Central, Nigeria.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria. The specific objectives are: to

- i. determine the extent of effect oral and written reprimand have on employee performance of federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria.
- ii. evaluate the extent of effect suspension has on employee performance of federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria.
- iii. examine the extent of effect demotions has on employee performance of federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria.
- iv. ascertain the extent of effect termination has on employee performance of federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria.

2.0

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section covers the theoretical framework, review of related literature/concepts and review of related empirical works.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is pegged on progressive discipline theory was developed by Brent (2010) through his research on implementation of disciplinary policies in UK firms. The term progressive discipline signifies an approach to modify undesirable employee behavior through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employee misconduct. These disciplinary actions often include verbal warnings, formal probationary notices, suspension without pay, demotion and termination (Brent, 2010). He further stated that most undesirable behavior does not result in immediate discharge, but rather imposition of some lesser sanctions. If the behavior is repeated, progressively more severe disciplinary action is taken ultimately leading to termination. Although, progressive discipline, as a practical matter is merely universal. The manner in which employers communicate and apply progressive discipline varies greatly at one end of the spectrum lays a very formal, written policy, in which exact sequences of progressive disciplinary action are mandatory for specific offences or categories of offences (Bragon, 2009). Employers generally follow at least informal procedural guidelines in disciplining and terminating employees, which can in turn suggest them to law suits for breach of implied contract, promissory estoppels and other claims. If carefully drafted, reviewed and implemented, progressive discipline policies can minimize employer's liability and improve employee performance. Employers who utilize progressive discipline may successfully correct a problem and enjoy many years of productivity from the employees (Brent, 2010)

Brent (2010) believed that using progressive discipline effectively should make punishment unnecessary; hence the study adopts this theory. According to Brent (2010), various issues in the organization can be resolved by applying psychological techniques. This study is grounded on Progressive Discipline theory because, according to Asadullah *et al.* (2019), rewarding desirable behavior progressively and disciplining undesirable behaviour progressively maintain an improved performance and discipline in the organization. Asadullah *et al.* (2019) argued that the constant use of progressive discipline to improve individual performance makes it become a reward. They further state that reward entails a fact that an employee is not punished for engaging in undesired behaviour but a progressive disciplined behaviour diminishes an undesired behaviour instead of truly attempting to upturn desirable behaviour. Progressive Discipline theory supports the study because, according to Kelly and Pohl (2018), rewarding employees for appropriate behaviour performed pleases them and encourages them to repeat a good behavioral pattern, hoping they will receive more rewards, which therefore improves workplace discipline, employee performance and organizational performance. Rafi *et al.* (2020) asserted that the basic type of learning described above is known as 'operant conditioning'. Moreover, Rafi *et al.* (2020) stated that behaviors' that are followed by positive consequences are more likely to occur frequently. Individuals, therefore, learn to operate in their environments to increase the probability of positive consequences.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.2 Work Disciplinary Measures

The concepts that make up the dependent and independent variables of this study are carefully reviewed below: Discipline comes from the word disciple, which means student, follower, and adherent; and means rules that must be followed, areas of knowledge studied, and teachings. From this description, it can be interpreted that work discipline is generally accepted norms, ethics and habits as well as procedures for behaving in an atmosphere and in relation to the organization (Mohammad and Elok, 2022). Discipline as a social science concept has not generally accepted definition. Scholars have defined it in line with their environment and school of thought. As for Bélanger *et al.* (2020), workplace discipline is defined as “the teaching which makes a man do something which he would not unless he had learnt that it was the right, the proper and the expedient thing to do”. A study conducted by Thompson *et al.* (2020) concluded that workplace discipline is the type of training and control which makes punishment unnecessary. As for Kuncorowati and Rokhmawati (2018), workplace discipline is a significant tool used to develop an employee’s personality characteristics such as confidence, responsibility and persistence in work and self-control. According to Otto and Ukpere (2020), workplace discipline is the correction of improper conduct at the workplace and is intended to alert employees of their behaviour and help them understand how these inhibit organizational performance.

2.2.2 Dimensions of Work Disciplinary Measures

According to Efendi *et al.* (2020) what indicates that a worker is disciplined are that: timeliness, responsibility, compliance with work rules etc. Accordingly, Efendi *et al.* (2020), Kogah and Ibegbulam (2021) indicated that dimensions of work disciplinary measures are as follows: oral and written reprimand/query, suspension, demotion and termination. These dimensions as used in this study, are carefully reviewed below.

(i) Oral and Written Reprimand

Oral reprimand means a formal disciplinary action consisting of a discussion with an employee by a supervisor in which the supervisor expresses dissatisfaction (Oluwatayo and Adetoro, 2020). Written reprimand is given for the same verbal warning given by a boss or manager to an employee as a way of correcting any instance of improper activity or behavior in the workplace. A reprimand is a written or oral reproach given as part of an employee’s disciplinary following an act of misconduct (Norhadayah *et al.*, 2022). They further notes that in most cases, organizations might consider written reprimand’s to be more formal or part of the employees’ file; or on the other hand, oral reproaches may not be so thoroughly noted. Oral reprimand is viewed as a supervisor’s or manager’s verbal warning to an employee for engaging in inappropriate conduct or behavior (Umoh, 2020).

(ii) Suspension

Suspension as a disciplinary measure in the work place occurs when an employee is asked to temporarily stop carrying out work while investigation is ongoing over allegations of misconduct (Tantua and Wopara, 2019). There is always a clear reason for suspension and the employee is

entitled to know why he is suspended. Suspension is often part of an organizations disciplinary procedure, to allow an investigation to take place. You remain an employee and your employment rights continue while you are suspended (Ubah *et al.*, 2019). Workplace suspension falls under two categories: administrative suspension and disciplinary suspension. Administrative suspensions are most common in circumstances where an employee is accused of workplace misconduct that requires further investigation. In order to properly investigate the incident, the employee is removed from the workplace (Isreal and Udoh, 2016).

(iii) Demotions

Demotion is a compulsory reduction in an employee rank or job title within the organization hierarchy of the company or public service department (Udofia, 2016). The measure is most often used in cases of inadequate performance and when it is obvious that an employee cannot handle responsibilities at a particular level. It is also used to signal to all staff the serious view taken of the offence(s) by management (Udo-Anyanwu *et al.*, 2020). In addition, it could also be used in circumstances where dismissal could be justified but the measure is resorted to due to mitigating factors such as if the staff concerned has been a long time employee and has behaved satisfactorily for most of that length of time (Tantua and Wopara, 2019).

(iv) Termination

Termination is the involuntary dismissal of an employee for disciplinary reasons, unsatisfactory job performance, or for failure to obtain or maintain necessary job-related credentials (Udo-Anyanwu *et al.*, 2020). An employee termination is the process of ending an employee's relationship with an employer (Onah, 2008). This can be done for a variety of reasons, such as the employee quitting, being fired, or being laid off. When an employee is terminated, they may be given a severance package to help them transition to their next steps. The acceptable reasons for termination ranges from incompetence (including lack of productivity or poor quality of work), insubordination and related issues such as dishonesty and breaking organizational rules, attendance rules (such as frequent absence or chronic tardiness), theft or other criminal behavior including revealing trade secrets (Ubah *et al.*, 2019).

2.2.4 Employees Performance of Federal Universities

Employee performance is the result of the work performance of employees who are assessed in terms of quality and quantity based on work standards determined by the organization. Good performance is optimal performance, namely performance that is following organizational standards and supports the achievement of organizational goals. A good organization is an organization that seeks to improve the capabilities of its human resources because reliable human resources are a key factor to improve employee performance (Saputra *et al.*, 2018). Performance is a term that comes from the word job performance or actual performance (Iskamto *et al.*, 2020). Achu *et al.* (2020) says that performance is the implementation of a job and the improvement of the work according to its responsibilities so that it can achieve the results as expected. This definition shows that performance is more emphasized on the process, where during the implementation of the work improvements are made so that the achievement of a job or performance can be optimized (Iskamto *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that employee performance is the work performance or work results both in quality and quantity achieved by employees in carrying out their work tasks in accordance with the given responsibilities (Iskamto *et al.*, 2021).

2.2.5 Employee Performance Measures of Federal Universities

Measures to determine performance of academic staff in universities include teaching; research and publication; innovation and community service (Abdulkareem, Yusuf and Ogbudinkpa, 2017). While Norhidaya *et al.* (2022) notes that employees want feedback regarding their achievements. If performance does not meet the standards, then the assessment provides an opportunity to review employee progress and develop performance improvement plans. There are five indicators to measure employee performance individually by Robins in Iskanto *et al.* (2020): namely Quality; timeliness; Responsibility; engagement; commitment. According to Bohlander and Snell (2007) performance variables are summarized as follows,

i. Meeting Deadlines:

When you consider employee performance, meeting deadlines is important and does reflect on individual performance, but if what is being produced is of lower quality, meeting deadlines takes a back seat (Isaiah *et al.*, 2017). To Gallie (2003), there is a noticeable congruence in terms of aspects of works that is considered crucial for wellbeing. Dahi *et al.* in Iskanto *et al.* (2020) views meeting deadlines as finishing and submitting your work by or before the time and date assigned to you. Friedman (2013) notes that it is the date on or before which some work must be completed to avoid potential losses, financial penalties, termination of employment, or similar consequence.

ii. Employee Engagement:

Adkins (2016) defines employee engagement as it is the degree of involvement and passion about the job and adding value to organization. Moreover, Khan *et al.* (2015) defined employee engagement as an employee's loyalty toward an organization and unrestricted effort that they exert more than their essential job requirements. Another definition of employee engagement was suggested by Onoh *et al.* (2018) as it is the person's participation and satisfaction with passion for work. For the purpose of the present research, employee engagement is defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

iii. Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is defined as a strong desire to remain as employees of a particular organization, the desire to strive to suit the organization and to accept fully the values, perceptions and goals of the organization (Syukri and Heryanto, 2019). It is an attitude that reflects employee loyalty in the organization and an ongoing process whereby employees express concern to their organization. Commitment is specific type of psychological bond between an individual and a target (Abosede and Adesanya, 2017).

2.2.6 Nexus between Work Disciplinary Measures and Employee Performance

To achieve goals, discipline can be an important function for the organization because if employee discipline is good, it will improve work performance (Sishi, 2022). There are three advantages of a consistent disciplinary procedure. Firstly, it maintains the stability of the workforce. Secondly, there is reduced labour turnover and thirdly, it contributes to improved performance, which leads to more productivity (Obon and Beja, 2022). As for Ibrahim *et al.* (2021), organizations consist of

groups of people and independent individuals who work together to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Okolie and Udom (2019) argues that the ability of the organization to achieve its goals and standards effectively by using its resources, requires people in organizations to interact with one another daily to fulfill their job roles and contribute effectively to their organizations. According to Falcone (2019), managers and supervisors use disciplinary action to resolve the conflict between individuals and groups and to ensure harmonious employment relations.

2.3 Review of Related Empirical Studies

Muhammad *et al.* (2022) study determined the effect of emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, discipline, and how work stress moderates its effect on employee performance at Prima Indonesia University. This research was conducted at the University of Prima Indonesia with a population of 60 employees in the non-health sector. This research method uses a quantitative method with an associative approach that uses an analytical model of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. Data were collected by using a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. The results showed that partially Emotional Intelligence, Intellectual Intelligence, and Discipline had a positive effect on employee performance. Then work stress significantly moderates the influence of Economic Intelligence and Intellectual Intelligence on Performance, but does not significantly moderate work discipline on Performance of University of Prima Indonesia employees either directly or indirectly. This study shares similarity with the current study as one of its independent variable (work discipline) is same with the independent variable, also that the dependent variable of employee performance, is same with current study, and likewise the sector (that is the University environment). The differences exist in geographical location, in the tool of analysis and also in the choice of employees.

Sishi (2022) examined the impact of workplace disciplinary measures on organizational performance in KwaZulu-Natal. The study adopted descriptive and exploratory research to describe and provide in-depth knowledge about the subject. The mixed methods approach was employed to collect and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 291 participants from a population of approximately 1200 Sappi Saiccor, Umkomaas employees in KwaZulu Natal. An online questionnaire and structured interview grid were used to collect the data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 27.0) was used to analyze the quantitative data while the qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo (version 12.0). The quantitative results revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between workplace disciplinary measure and organizational performance. Similarly, the qualitative findings affirmed that workplace discipline positively impacted organizational performance at Sappi Saiccor. Additionally, the quantitative and qualitative findings revealed a positive relationship between workplace discipline and employee relationships. This study shares similarity with the current study as its independent variable is same with the independent variable of the current study, also that the dependent variable, is similar with current study. The differences exist in geographical location, the dependent variable is wider in scope and the choice of sector is different from the current one.

Kogah and Ibegbulam (2021) examined the influence of query and demotion as disciplinary measures on librarians' job performance in university in South Eastern Nigeria. Correlational research design was adopted for the study while the instrument for data collection was a rating scale. The population consisted of 156 librarians in the university libraries in the South Eastern States of Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) which was also used as sample. Data collected were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Findings show that; query as a disciplinary measure has significant influence on the job performance of librarians while demotion has a very low negative and non-significant influence on the job performance of librarians. This study relates with the current study as the dimensions used (query and demotion) is same as been used in the current study. Also that the dependent variable are similar, the study domiciles in the university as same as the current study. The differences exist in the respondents under study; where the current one is on the academic staff, this study is on the librarians alone hence the scope differs. Also the difference exist in the geographical location.

Aji (2021) study explores the impact of promotion/demotion on academic staff development in the State higher educational institutions of Borno State. The study raised one questions to determine: The impact of promotion/demotion on academic staff development. Hypotheses was formulated and tested in line with the objectives of the study. Related literatures were reviewed based on the stated objective. Survey method was employed for the study. The population of the study was all academic staffs of the State higher educational institutions (1410). The sample of the study comprised all academic staff from the four selected institutions (938) using closed questionnaires. The collected data was presented by the use of simple frequency and percentages, and later analyzed using Chi-square statistical technique. The finding reveals that since 2015-to date the State government offer paper promotion with no monetary increment to salary to academic staff in the state higher education. The study also reveals that there is a significant relationship between promotion and academic staff development. This study relates with the current study as the dimension used (demotion) is one among those as been used in the current study. Also, the study domiciles in the tertiary institution as same as the current study. The differences exist in the dependent variable, the number of institution hence the scope differs. Also the difference exists in the geographical location.

Teye (2021) examined the effect of discipline management on employee performance at the Ghana Institute of Languages in Accra. A survey was done using questionnaire to select information from respondents. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 72 respondents from a population of 130 respondents. The gathered data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Chi Square (χ^2) was used to test the stated hypotheses. The findings established that employees had knowledge of the existence of disciplinary matters, and the use of discipline as punishment tool, were among some of the challenges identified with disciplinary procedures in the institute. This study shares similarity with the current study as its independent variable is same with the independent variable of the current study, also that the dependent variable, is similar with current study. The differences exist in geographical location, differs in scope from the current one.

Chewe and Taylor (2021) assess the effect of disciplinary procedures on employee punctuality and performance at Ndola City Council. The research questions were: What is the relationship between disciplinary procedures, employee punctuality and performance? How have the institution's disciplinary procedures influenced employees on their punctuality? In what ways have the institution's disciplinary procedures influence employees' performance? Four hypotheses, i.e., disciplinary procedures positively affect employee performance; disciplinary procedures positively affect employee punctuality; employee punctuality positively affects employee performance; disciplinary procedures and employee performance was moderated by employee punctuality were tested. The hypothesis, disciplinary procedures positively affect employee performance was supported. It was concluded that factors including organizational culture, public institutional entity, and delayed payment of employees' motivational remunerations could possibly affect employee performance, hence punctuality not being a moderator. This study shares similarity with the current study as its independent variable is same with the independent variable of the current study, also that the dependent variable, is similar with current study. The differences exist in geographical location, differs in scope from the current one.

Okolocha *et al.* (2021) studied the effect of institutional policy on employee performance of the academic staff of public universities in South-East, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. Sample of the study comprises of one thousand seven hundred and eighty Academic Staff of the ten selected Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Data was obtained from questionnaire administered on the sampled population. Data obtained was analyzed with the aid of SPSS version 20.0 that involved a regression analysis. The study findings revealed that institutional policy has positive significant effect on employee performance of the academic staff of public universities in Nigeria. Based on this, the researchers recommended that there is need for government and university authorities to formulate and implement institutional policies that are employee driven and recognizes the peculiarities of academic staff in terms of their physical and psychological needs. This study is similar in the dependent variable and the respondents under study. The difference may be viewed that the institutional policy slightly differs from disciplinary measures even though one may argue that institutional policies are a part of disciplinary issues. Also differences exist in geographical location.

2.4 Summary of Literature Reviewed

The qualitative aspect of the work has been given a comprehensive insight via reviewing literatures relevant to the topic under study. Accordingly, the work done here involves theoretical review, conceptual review and empirical reviewed. Major theories related to the topic under study were x-rayed. The empirical review centered on bringing to the fore results of previous studies carried out on related topic in Nigeria and outside Nigeria; the outcome of the review shows that there is a mixed findings (such that some studies were done in foreign and developed economies (such as Ferdinandos, 2020; Teye, 2021), and the ones done within Nigeria, were done outside the confines of the current study (such as Agbo, 2020; Iheanacho *et al.*, 2017), which create gap in literature. This will help to assess the outcome of this study

and conclusion will be drawn. Subsequently, conceptual issues centered on relevant concepts of work disciplinary measures, dimensions of work disciplinary measures, connectivity between work disciplinary measures and employee performance, concept of employee performance and dimensions of employee performance were reviewed.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methods used in carrying out the study. This study utilized the survey research design. The data were collected in order to establish the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The reason for the choice of survey research design is that it helps the researcher to collect data from respondents regarding their views and knowledge concerning the study variables in order to achieve the study objectives. The study area is North Central Nigeria, comprising of Benue State, Kogi State, Kwara State, Nasarawa State, Niger State, Plateau State and the Federal Capital Territory. The study is on the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of university staff in North Central Nigeria. The north central stretches across the whole width of the country, from the border with Cameroon to that with Benin. The region is one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria representing the majority of the country's middle belt, endowed with fertile land for agriculture as well as solid minerals, which makes it an agrarian rich region. The region boast of several tertiary institutions spread in the different states, with the federal university equally spread (having one each in the states). The population of this study comprise of 2,431 academic staff on full time appointment with the various federal universities in three states. They include Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (Benue State), Federal University Lokoja (Kogi State) and University of Ilorin (Kwara State). The population breakdown is on Table 1.

Table 1: Population Breakdown of Academic Staff Strength of Each University under Investigation in North Central Nigeria

S/No	University	Teaching Staff
1.	Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi	756
2	Federal University Lokoja	186
3.	University of Ilorin	1489
	Total	2431

Source; Education.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/Academic staff strength, 2021

However, the researcher used the Taro Yamane formula, as cited in Ahiazu and Asawo (2016) in determining the suitable sample size for this study. Hence, the sample size for this study is 344. To get the individual sample size for each of the chosen state the Bourley proportion allocation formula of 1964 (as cited in Onodugo *et al.*, 2010) for individual sample size determination, was used. Simple random sampling was applied to ensure that all elements of the population have equal chances of being selected, and is most appropriate when all the members of the population under study share relatively homogenous characteristics. The data for this study was collected through questionnaire administration. Structured questionnaire is designed to collect responses from the respondents. The questionnaire is divided into two

sections (Section A and section B) for ease of administration and convenience. Section A is based on personal data of the respondents while section B contains questions on the study variables using five-point Likert-scale which constitutes strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). A validity index of 0.808 was gotten, while that of reliability index stood at 0.908. Primary sources of data for this study shall be obtained mainly by means of questionnaire.

The model that shall be employed for this study is multiple regression analysis model which involves the independent variable (work disciplinary measures), and the dependent variable (employee performance). Therefore the following model specifications to test the formulated hypotheses are as follows:

The model for this research is given as

$$\text{EMP} = f(\text{WDM}) = (\text{OWR}, \text{SUS}, \text{DEM}, \text{TER})$$

Where

EMP = Employee Performance

WDM = Work Disciplinary Measures

OWR= Oral and Written Reprimand

SUS = Suspension

DEM = Demotion

TER = Termination

The regression model, thus is given as

$$\text{FG} = x + \beta_1 \text{OWR} + \beta_2 \text{SUS} + \beta_3 \text{DEM} + \beta_4 \text{TER} + e \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where

x = Intercept of the regression

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = parameter estimates

e = error term

A priori expectations are: $\beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0, \beta_3 > 0, \beta_4 > 0$: it is expected that the analysis based on the model in question will help to test hypothesis H_{01} to H_{04} , answer the four research question for this study and achieve the four objectives.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data to evaluating the effect among the variables. Inferential statistics used is regression analysis, to analyze data in order to determine the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of Universities in North Central Nigeria. The hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using student t-statistics generated from the regression model. The level of significance for the study is 5%, for a two-tailed test. The decision rule was that we accept the null hypothesis if the critical/t-value (± 1.96) is greater than the calculated value, otherwise, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, using the student t-test (t-statistic), we say that a variable is statistically significant if t^* (t-calculated) is greater than the tabulated value of ± 1.96 under 95% (or 5%) confidence levels and it was statistically insignificant if the t^* is less than the tabulated value of ± 1.96 under 95 % (or 5%) confidence levels. Thus;

$H_0: \beta_0 = 0$ (Null hypothesis)

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$ (Alternative hypothesis).

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data analysis, test of hypotheses and discussion of findings based on the objectives of the study, the corresponding research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. A total of three hundred and forty four (344) questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the selected federal universities chosen for this study, out of which three hundred and twenty one (321) were successfully filled and returned, giving a response rate of 93.5%. The test for normality was examined using the graphical method approach as shown in the Figure 1. The results in the figure indicate that the residuals are normally distributed. Further, Skewness/Kurtosis used to check for normality tests. Results of the tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Test for Normality using Skewness/Kurtosis

Variable	Obs	Pr(Skewness)	Pr(Kurtosis)	adj chi2(2)	Prob>chi2
Emp. Perf.	320	0.3302	0.8333	1.97	0.3389
Oral/Written	320	0.3390	0.8798	2.04	0.3770
Suspension	320	0.3410	0.5858	1.88	0.2790
Demotion	320	0.4412	0.5209	2.01	0.3012
Termination	320	0.3678	0.4990	1.96	0.3430

Source Author's Computation from SPSS printout

Considering regression analysis was the principal inferential statistics to show the causal relationship between selected factors and employee performance, normality test was paramount owing to that regression analysis is based on normality of variables under investigation. According to Baltangi (2005 as cited in Tantua and Wopara, 2019) the data is normally distributed if the p value is greater than 0.05 otherwise there is some departure from normality. Results in table 2 revealed that all the variables were normally distributed. Multicollinearity was assessed in this study using the variance inflation factors (VIF). According to Field (2009) VIF values in excess of 10 and tolerance value less than 0.2 are an indication of the presence of Multicollinearity.

Table 3: Test for Multicolonearity using Tolerance and Variance Inflation

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Oral/Written Rep.	0.595	4.011
Suspension	0.747	4.786
Demotion	0.666	5.009
Termination	0.701	3.343

Source: Authors' Computation, from SPSS printout.

Results in Table 3 shows that all the tolerance values were above 0.2 and VIF less than 10 and thus, there were no collinearity among the independent variables.

4.2 Regression Analysis

The model used to test the hypotheses designed for this study, explores the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of academic staff of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj.R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.889 ^a	.790	.785	0.9001	2.00

a: Predictors (constant), Oral/ Written Reprimand, Suspension, Demotion, Termination.

b. Dependent variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS printout (Version 25.0 for windows output), 2023

Table 5: Regression Coefficient Result

Model	Beta	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	1.1109	10.09	.000
Oral/Written Rep.	.798	6.01	.004
Suspension	.810	5.39	.011
Demotion	.809	5.98	.020
Termination	.786	4.78	.003

Dependent variable: Employee Performance

Source: SPSS regression print out (version 25.0 for windows output), 2023.

Table 6: ANOVA^b for the overall significance of the model

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	160.036	4	40.009	19.07	.001 ^a
Residual	174.116	316	0.5510		
Total	334.152	320			

a. Predictors: (constant); OWR, SUS, DEM, TER

Dependent variable: EMP

In the model, oral/ written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination; were used to predict the employee performance. The F-statistics of regression model showed that the result is significant, as indicated by a value of the *F*-statistic, 19.07 and it is significant at the 5.0 percent level. The coefficient of determination (R-square) which is 0.790, indicates that the model is reasonably fit in prediction, that is, 79.0 % change in employee performance of federal university academic staff was jointly due to oral/ written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination, while 21.0 % unaccounted variations was captured by the white noise error term. It showed that oral/ written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination had significant effect on employee performance of academic staff of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

4.3 Discussion of Findings/Hypotheses Testing

The discussion revolved around the objectives of the study as presented in chapter one. The findings made in this present study were compared with empirical evidence made in other related previous studies, as to whether the present research findings support or refute the theoretical postulation reviewed in this study. The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of oral and written reprimand on employee performance of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. From table 16, the (R^2) statistic was 0.790. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in employee performance, from table 17, the beta value for oral and written reprimand was 0.798. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of oral and written reprimand had a positive effect on employee performance (t -computed 6.01 > t -critical 1.960, $p=0.004 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation agree with Mohammad *et al.* (2022), Kogah and Ibegbulam (2021), Okolocha *et al.* (2021), Umoh (2020), Tantua and Wopara (2019), Udofia (2016) amongst others; who all avers that the purpose of this disciplinary action is to notify an employee that there is an opportunity for improved performance, designed to instill good employee conduct to achieve desired performance and success. They also argue that regardless of the size of the indiscipline, formal written reprimand can make the employee adjust his attitudes and behaviors and conform to the norms of the organization to run effectively. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of oral and written reprimand on employee performance of academic staff of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

The analysis of research question two was to evaluate the effect of suspension on employee performance of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. From table 16, the (R^2) statistic was 0.790. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in employee performance, from table 17, the beta value for suspension was 0.810. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of suspension had a positive effect on employee performance (t -computed 5.39 > t -critical 1.960, $p=0.011 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with Sishi (2022), Teye (2021), Agbo (2020), Mohammed and Charles (2019), Iheanacho *et al.* (2017), Ukertor (2011) amongst others; who all avers that a suspension approach to discipline could use counseling in relation to discipline rather than being penalized for the first breaches of organizational rules and standard, serving also as a fact-finding approach and a positive approach in guiding the employee to

improve conduct rather than to punish him to discourage misconduct. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of suspension on employee performance of academic staff of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

The analysis of research question three was to examine the effect of demotion on employee performance of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. From table 16, the (R^2) statistic was 0.790. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in employee performance, from table 17, the beta value for demotion was 0.809. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of demotion had a positive effect on employee performance (t -computed 5.98 > t -critical 1.960, $p=0.020 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with Mohammad *et al.* (2022), Kogah and Ibegbulam (2021), Aji (2021), Chewe and Taylor (2021), Fatwa *et al.* (2020), Udofia (2016), amongst others; who all avers that demotion is a disciplinary action manages employees in a way that prevents conduct that needs to be disciplined. In their submissions, they avers that a working environment that considers a demotion as a disciplinary approach, is to create in the organization effective procedures to regulate employee behaviour, provides constructive feedback regarding their performance, encourages employer-employee support groups and an open-door policy to address challenges on the job to prevent a repeat of such by erring staff and other staff. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of demotion on employee performance of academic staff of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

The analysis of research question four was to ascertain the effect of termination on employee performance of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. From table 16, the (R^2) statistic was 0.790. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in employee performance, from table 17, the beta value for termination was 0.786. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of termination had a positive effect on employee performance (t -computed 4.78 > t -critical 1.960, $p=0.003 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with Muhammad *et al.* (2022), Udo-Anyanwu *et al.* (2020), Ferdinandus (2020), Ezeabaogu *et al.* (2019), Ubah *et al.* (2019), Agbionu *et al.* (2018), amongst others; who all avers that terminating an employee has a way of putting in the minds of other employees that organization requires nothing short of strict adherence to laid down rules and regulations, geared towards delivering quality service on time and in the desired form. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of termination on employee performance of academic staff of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study contributed to the literature pertaining to the effect of work disciplinary measures on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study provided the broad overview on the potential pattern of the relationships between the variables such as oral/written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination and employee performance. Work disciplinary measures has been identified as an important factor that significantly affects universities employee performance among Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study concludes that work disciplinary measure (oral/written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and termination) can be considered an effective and viable available instrument for Federal

universities employee performance (in terms of employee meeting deadlines, employee commitment, employee efficiency and employee capability) as they have potentials for enhancing the employees performance through creating an atmosphere of attitudes and behaviours capable of influencing adherence to rules, regulations and policies guiding their behaviors at work. Hence, work disciplinary measures have positive and significant effect on employee performance of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

Sequel to the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations are made: Management of federal universities should emphasize a more comprehensive and strict oral/written reprimand structure that projects a disciplined management culture and posture, as it will enhance capability of employees towards improved performance and sustain good attitudes in the workplace. Management of federal universities should focus more on developing clear and comprehensively detailed suspension as a part of progressive discipline measure within the organization, as this will help discourage act of misconduct and enhance employees' commitment to organizations goals thus improving employees' performance. Federal universities management should improve their capacity to enforcing demotion as a disciplinary measure to discourage acts of misconduct, as this will assist in maintain a culture of employees adhering to meeting deadlines in their duties hence enhancing employee performance. Management of federal universities should invoke the culture of termination of appointments due to poor job performance and inability to perform job responsibilities, as this will assist in inculcating a culture of capabilities enhancement by employees and efficiency, thereby improving performance.

The study revealed that termination as a dimension of work disciplinary measure with a P value of 0.003 has the most positive effect on employee performance in federal universities in North Central Nigeria as against oral and written reprimand, suspension and demotion, with P values of .004, .011 and .020 respectively.

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