JOURNAL OF ADVANCED MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (JAMS)
JAMS |Volume I Issue I August 2026 | DOI: 10.68050/JAMS

Measures Employed by School Administrators for Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures and Promotion of Ethical Standards for School Effectiveness

UGBEGORO, Carling,V & ASIYAI. Romina. I

Department of Educational Management and Foundations, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the measures adopted by school administrators for the enforcement of disciplinary procedures and the promotion of ethical standards to enhance school effectiveness. Guided by two research questions and two hypotheses, the study targeted a population of 35 secondary schools in the North Senatorial District of Delta State. A sample of 370 teachers was selected from ten schools using a simple random sampling technique. The study adopted a correlational research design. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the research questions, while the formulated hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that common administrative measures for enforcing discipline include punishing ethical violations and absenteeism, establishing clear disciplinary policies, and strictly adhering to due process. For promoting ethical standards, the utilized measures include providing orientation on professional ethics, admonishing staff regarding ethical benchmarks during meetings, and embedding ethical values into school policies. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school administrators organize regular workshops on professional ethics, display ethical codes at strategic locations within schools, and facilitate routine discussions on ethical dilemmas to optimize overall school effectiveness.

Keywords: Disciplinary procedures, ethical standards, school effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary schools serve as a critical bridge between primary education and higher academic pursuits, preparing students for future societal responsibilities and lifelong learning. These institutions are strategically positioned to develop the intellectual, moral, and social capacities of learners during a vital stage of human development. Teachers are central to realizing these institutional objectives, serving as the primary implementers of the curriculum and facilitators of student learning. Beyond classroom instruction, teachers transmit knowledge, mentor students, provide guidance, and model the behaviours, values, and attitudes that shape holistic student development (Okonkwo & Ajani, 2022).

Consequently, teaching effectiveness—defined as a teacher's capacity to facilitate meaningful, measurable academic achievement and personal growth—is paramount. It encompasses a broad spectrum of professional competencies, including subject mastery, pedagogical skills, classroom management, communication abilities, and the capacity to inspire learners.

Despite the critical importance of these competencies, recurring issues of staff misconduct point to a systemic decline in teaching effectiveness. This decline continues to hinder both the actualization of educational goals at the secondary level and overall school effectiveness within Delta State. Unchecked malfeasance tends to normalize unethical behaviour, erode staff morale, and severely diminish the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, school administrators play a pivotal role in maintaining institutional integrity, promoting a positive school culture, and establishing accountability mechanisms that curb misconduct (Ibrahim & Uche, 2022).

To ensure educational objectives are not undermined, there is a pressing need to examine the specific measures employed by school administrators for the enforcement of disciplinary procedures and the promotion of ethical standards. This study addresses this need by investigating how these administrative measures enhance overall school effectiveness in public secondary schools across Delta State, Nigeria.

Teaching effectiveness in the context of this study, is measured by a teacher's ability to maintain an orderly, safe, and respectful classroom environment that directly maximizes instructional time and student engagement. It is operationally defined by: communication of class rules, and ethical behaviours expected by students, disciplinary consistency and proactive management. In the context of this study, school effectiveness is measured by the institution's overall capacity to achieve its academic goals by creating a stable, high-performing organizational climate driven by shared values. Teachers and school administrators are critical in enhancing school effectiveness through ensuring low absenteeism, behavioural referrals, resource optimization and ethical accountability and support for school disciplinary framework.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the vital role of teachers play in the realization of secondary education objectives, there is a growing concern over the declining teaching effectiveness among teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Reports from the Delta State chapter of the National Union of Teachers revealed that over 45% of teachers in public secondary schools exhibit low professional commitment, poor instructional delivery, and a lack of innovation in teaching methods. Students have continually expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction, citing poor explanations of concepts, lack of teacher preparedness, and minimal engagement in the classroom. Principals also report cases of persistent lateness, absenteeism, and non-compliance with instructional schedules by teachers. This raises questions about the role of school administrators in enforcing discipline and promoting ethical standards among teachers for enhanced school effectiveness in Delta State.

Research Questions

1. What measures do school administrators commonly employ for the enforcement of disciplinary procedures for school effectiveness?
2. What measures do school administrators apply for the promotion of ethical standards for school effectiveness?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State
2. There is no significant relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures and School Effectiveness

The enforcement of disciplinary procedures plays a crucial role in shaping the behavioural and professional conduct of teachers and staff, which in turn significantly impacts overall effectiveness in secondary schools. Disciplinary procedures refer to formal administrative mechanisms and processes implemented by school authorities to maintain institutional standards, correct misconduct, and ensure adherence to professional norms. In public secondary schools, where diverse professional behaviours coexist, the enforcement of these procedures is an essential administrative function aimed at maintaining order, accountability, and instructional excellence. Recent scholarly investigations affirm a strong relationship between the strict implementation of disciplinary policies and enhanced teacher performance; when rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced, educators are more likely to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and instructional competence (Uche & Abiodun, 2021). A structured disciplinary framework thus serves as both a deterrent against unprofessional conduct and a catalyst for sustained instructional quality.

Empirical findings further suggest that disciplinary enforcement establishes a school climate conducive to teaching and learning by reducing incidents of absenteeism, negligence, and unethical behaviour. According to Chidiebere and Ogbonna (2023), schools with a clearly defined disciplinary code witness lower rates of teacher absenteeism and higher levels of classroom engagement compared to institutions where disciplinary

measures are inconsistently applied. The presence of predictable consequences for professional misconduct creates a sense of accountability among teachers, encouraging them to meet performance expectations. This consistency also fosters organizational trust, as educators perceive that the administrative system treats all personnel fairly and transparently. Consequently, teachers exhibit greater commitment to their roles, leading to increased instructional effectiveness, while minimizing classroom disruptions that undermine student learning.

The correlation between effective disciplinary enforcement and teaching performance is particularly evident when sanctions are coupled with developmental feedback and opportunities for professional growth. Rather than merely penalizing infractions, disciplinary procedures that integrate coaching, counseling, or targeted professional development are more effective in rehabilitating erring teachers and improving instructional outcomes (Salami & Adeoye, 2022). In this context, disciplinary enforcement operates not only as a corrective tool but also as a strategic approach to human resource development within the educational sector. When treated fairly and supported professionally, teachers subjected to disciplinary measures often reflect on their practices and make deliberate efforts to improve their instructional delivery. This underscores the necessity of balancing corrective and developmental strategies within institutional frameworks to promote continuous teaching improvement.

In addition, the enforcement of disciplinary measures serves as a signal to the entire teaching staff that school leadership prioritizes instructional standards and professional ethics. This signaling effect raises the level of organizational vigilance, prompting teachers to internalize the values and expectations of the institution (Olayemi & Jimoh, 2020). Consequently, educators become more diligent in lesson preparation, more punctual in reporting for duty, and more effective in classroom management. Such behavioural alignment with institutional goals enhances the collective effectiveness of the teaching staff while reinforcing the authority and credibility of school administrators to drive reforms and support pedagogical excellence.

Nevertheless, the relationship between disciplinary enforcement and teaching effectiveness is mediated by administrative fairness, transparency, and consistency. Where disciplinary procedures are perceived as arbitrary, biased, or politically motivated, they breed resentment, lower morale, and provoke resistance, thereby reducing overall teaching effectiveness (Ezeani & Nwachukwu, 2021). It is therefore essential that school administrators adopt a procedural justice framework, ensuring that teachers are informed of institutional rules, granted the opportunity to be heard, and evaluated based on objective criteria. This approach promotes systemic trust and encourages compliance. When teachers perceive the disciplinary system as just, they are more likely to accept corrective feedback and adjust their behaviour in line with institutional expectations.

Moreover, the impact of disciplinary enforcement depends heavily on the administrative capacity of school leaders to detect and address misconduct promptly. In many Nigerian public secondary schools, a lack of monitoring tools and institutional support undermines enforcement efforts. A study by Izuagba and Emeh (2022) revealed that the absence of functional disciplinary committees, poor documentation, and administrative bottlenecks often hinder the successful implementation of sanctions against erring teachers. This administrative gap contributes to a culture of impunity, where misconduct is either ignored or addressed selectively. Strengthening the institutional capacity for disciplinary management—including training school heads in labor laws, meticulous record-keeping, and conflict resolution—is critical to sustaining a disciplined and effective teaching workforce.

In some cases, fear of confrontation, union pressures, or external political interference prevents administrators from enforcing disciplinary procedures effectively. Teachers who are aware of these systemic weaknesses may exploit them, engaging in professional misconduct without fear of consequences, which ultimately degrades instructional quality. According to Ude and Okeke (2023), there is a pressing need for education authorities to shield school administrators from undue interference and to empower them legally and institutionally to enforce discipline without fear or favor. Establishing clear reporting lines, digital record systems, and external oversight bodies can mitigate these challenges by increasing transparency and minimizing subjective administrative discretion.

Promotion of Ethical Conduct and School Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools

The promotion of ethical conduct among teachers has emerged as a cornerstone of effective educational practice, particularly in public secondary schools where the quality of instruction significantly shapes student outcomes and institutional performance. Ethical conduct encompasses an educator's adherence to professional norms, integrity, accountability, fairness, and respect for both learners and colleagues. Recent literature emphasizes that the deliberate promotion of these ethical values by school administrators directly correlates with enhanced teaching effectiveness. Teachers operating within an environment that values and enforces ethical standards are more likely to exhibit high levels of professional commitment, trustworthiness, and responsiveness to student needs (Eze & Onwuka, 2021). Ethical environments foster a climate of transparency and mutual trust, which subsequently improves professional collaboration, lesson delivery, and pedagogical innovation.

In public secondary schools, promoting ethical conduct involves establishing clear codes of conduct, modeling ethical behavior by school leaders, providing continuous ethics training, and recognizing or rewarding exemplary professional integrity. When school administrators actively encourage ethical practices, they set a moral tone that trickles down to teachers and students alike. This proactive administrative stance transforms ethics from a passive set of rules into an active institutional culture. Ultimately, when ethical conduct is deeply embedded within a school's operational framework, it minimizes professional malfeasance, enhances teacher accountability, and drives the holistic development of the school environment, thereby optimizing overall school effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between the measures employed by school administrators for the enforcement of disciplinary procedures, the promotion of ethical standards, and overall school effectiveness in public secondary schools. A correlational design is appropriate as it allows the researchers to establish the direction and strength of relationships between the variables without direct experimental manipulation. The target population for this study comprised all public secondary school principals and teachers within Delta State. Utilizing a simple random sampling technique, a representative sample of 370 respondents (including teachers and principals) was selected from ten public secondary schools across the study area to ensure administrative and instructional representation.

Data collection was executed using a researchers-designed questionnaire divided into two primary sections. **Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures Scale (EDPS):** This section comprises 16 items structured to measure the extent to which school administrators implement and uphold formal sanctions to address staff misconduct. It evaluates whether disciplinary actions are policy-guided, consistently enforced, and fairly applied. The items specifically investigate the clarity of disciplinary rules, transparency of enforcement, and administrative responsiveness to infractions such as absenteeism, insubordination, and negligence of duty. **Promotion of Ethical Standards Scale (PESS):** This section consists of 16 items designed to assess the strategies employed by school administrators to foster moral, professional, and socially responsible behaviours among educators. It measures the integration of ethical standards into daily operations, staff orientation procedures, leadership modeling of integrity, and the embedding of ethical values within the school culture. Both scales are structured on a four-point Likert response format: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point).

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation scores, were used to answer the research questions. The inferential statistical tool, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), was employed to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What measures do principals of public secondary schools in Delta State employ to enforce discipline in schools

Table 2: Mean scores showing measures employed by principals to enforce discipline in school

S/N	Items		Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	My school has clear disciplinary policies.	2.96	0.88	Agreed
2.	Teachers are held accountable for professional misconduct.	2.34	1.11	Disagreed
3.	Sanctions are not applied selectively in my school.	2.4	1	Disagreed
4.	There is due process in handling staff misconduct.	2.99	0.79	Agreed
5.	The disciplinary committee operates transparently.	2.59	0.55	Agreed
6.	Disciplinary actions are taken without unnecessary delay.	2.64	0.9	Agreed
7.	I am aware of the consequences of violating school rules.	2.54	0.81	Agreed
8.	Administrators do not tolerate indiscipline among staff.	2.88	0.62	Agreed
9.	I have witnessed appropriate punishment for absenteeism.	3.1	0.88	Agreed
10.	Enforcement of rules has improved staff punctuality.	2.74	0.39	Agreed
11.	There is minimal bias in the application of disciplinary actions.	2.55	0.82	Agreed
12.	Disciplinary policies are enforced consistently.	2.9	0.65	Agreed
13.	Ethical violations attract appropriate disciplinary punishments.	3.22	0.59	Agreed
14.	Disciplinary policies are reviewed regularly for effectiveness.	2.69	1	Agreed
15.	Sanctions are well-publicized to deter misconduct.	2.88	0.72	Agreed
16.	My principal calls on teachers who participate in unethical conduct and dialogue with them.	3.08	0.77	Agreed
	Average	2.78	0.78	

KEY: 2.50 is the bench mark for accepting or not accepting an item. Items having mean scores ranging from 2.50 to beyond represent Agree. Item whose mean scores fall below 2.50 downwards represent Disagree.

The data in Table 1 shows that the mean score of all the items except items 2 and 3, exceeded 2.50 the bench mark. Thus, these items except items 2 and 3 represent the measures principals employed for addressing disciplinary issues for school effectiveness in Delta State public secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What are the measures employed by school administrators to promote ethical standards for school effectiveness?

Table 2: Mean scores showing measures employed by school administrators for promotion of Ethical Standards

S/N	Items: In my school,		Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Ethical behaviour is promoted during staff meetings.	3.1	0.59	Agreed
2.	Teachers are expected to uphold high moral standards.	2.83	0.83	Agreed
3.	Regular training is organized on professional ethics.	2.4	1.2	Disagreed
4.	The principal model ethical conduct through punctuality	2.75	0.68	Agreed
5.	Ethical violations are discouraged through sensitization.	2.66	0.8	Agreed

6.	Integrity is emphasized in all school communications.	2.58	0.89	Agreed
7.	Professional ethics is part of induction for new staff.	2.99	0.54	Agreed
8.	Emphasizing zero tolerance of unethical behaviour.	2.59	0.94	Agreed
9.	Ethical values are integrated into school policies.	2.94	0.49	Agreed
10.	Staff and students are encouraged to act with honesty and integrity.	2.68	0.88	Agreed
11.	Discussions on ethical dilemmas are common among staff.	2.46	1.16	Disagreed
12.	My school rewards ethical leadership.	2.39	1.09	Disagreed
13.	The principal promotes a culture of transparency.	2.77	0.76	Agreed
14.	Awareness of where to report unethical conduct is published.	2.6	0.72	Agreed
15.	Character education is part of school curriculum	2.64	0.78	Agreed
16.	Ethical codes are visibly displayed around the school.	2.33	1.22	Disagreed
	Average	2.67	0.85	

KEY: 2.50 is the bench mark for accepting or not accepting an item. Items having mean scores ranging from 2.50 to beyond represent Agree. Item whose mean scores fall below 2.50 downwards represent Disagree.

From the data in Table 2, the mean score for items 1, 2, 4 to 10, 13 to 15 are above 2.50 the bench mark. The corresponding items represent the measures employed by Delta State secondary school principals to promote ethical conduct in schools. The average mean score of 2.67 shows that there is moderate level of promotion of ethical procedures by principals.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 3: Correlation analysis the relationship between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variable	***N***	***r***	***r²***	***r²%***	**p-value**	**Remark**
Enforcement of Discipline School Effectiveness	370	-0.194	0.038	3.8	<0.05	Significant

Table 3 shows a Pearson's correlation analysis of the relationship between enforcement of discipline and

school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) between enforcement of discipline and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State is -0.194, indicating a weak negative relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.038, meaning that only 3.8% of the variance in school effectiveness can be explained by enforcement of discipline. The p-value is 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 4: Correlation analysis the relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness

Variable	*N*	*r*	r^2	r^2%	p-value	Remark
Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures School Effectiveness	370	-0.187	0.035	3.5	<0.05	Significant

Table 4 shows a Pearson's correlation analysis of the relationship between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) between enforcement of disciplinary procedures and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State is -0.187, indicating a weak negative relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.035, meaning that only 3.5% of the variance in school effectiveness can be explained by enforcement of disciplinary procedures. The p-value is 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Measures Employed for the Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures

The first finding of this study revealed that school administrators commonly employ specific measures to enforce discipline. These measures include implementing sanctions for ethical violations, applying appropriate penalties for absenteeism, engaging in constructive dialogue with educators involved in misconduct, and strictly adhering to due process when handling staff malfeasance. Furthermore, administrators establish clear disciplinary policies, maintain a stance of zero tolerance toward staff indiscipline, publicise enforced sanctions, consistently apply school rules, routinely review disciplinary frameworks, and ensure that institutional disciplinary committees operate transparently.

This finding aligns with the assertions of Uche and Abiodun (2021), who noted that when organizational rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced, teachers are significantly more likely to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and instructional competence. Similarly, the result lends credence to the work of Asiyai (2019), who reported that establishing enforceable regulations and adhering to administrative standards foster effective school administration and the attainment of institutional goals. This finding also agrees with Okeke and Dibia (2022), who observed that school administrators who implement structured monitoring systems alongside robust accountability mechanisms record substantially higher levels of compliance with professional standards among teaching personnel.

Measures Applied for the Promotion of Ethical Standards

The second finding demonstrated that principals apply a diverse range of proactive measures to promote ethical standards within public secondary schools. These strategies include emphasizing ethical behavior during staff meetings, integrating professional ethics into induction lectures for newly recruited personnel, and embedding moral values into foundational school policies. Additionally, administrators consistently admonish educators to maintain high moral benchmarks, model punctuality and professional integrity, and foster an institutional culture rooted in transparency. Principals also ensure that both students and staff operate with honesty, discourage ethical violations through targeted sensitization campaigns, integrate character education into the school curriculum, and maintain a strict zero-tolerance policy against unethical practices. As school heads systematically apply these ethical frameworks, both staff and students become increasingly dedicated to institutional guidelines, thereby optimizing overall school effectiveness.

This outcome is consistent with the findings of Ogunode and Ibrahim (2024), who reported that ethical leadership and value-based administration positively influence teacher effectiveness, particularly when ethical promotion is systematically combined with professional mentoring and collaborative decision-making. Furthermore, the finding aligns with the empirical evidence provided by Eze and Nnamdi (2025), who concluded that ethical school climates enhance overall school effectiveness by fostering a deep sense of professional responsibility, transparency, and mutual respect among institutional staff.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the empirical findings of this study, it is concluded that administrative enforcement mechanisms and ethical promotion strategies are vital determinants of institutional success. School administrators in public secondary schools within Delta State actively employ a diverse matrix of strategies to manage staff malfeasance and encourage compliance. These methods encompass formal sanctioning, rigorous supervision, attendance monitoring, institutional recognition, policy regulation, ethical training, positive reinforcement, and strict adherence to due process. Ultimately, when school leaders consistently execute clear disciplinary procedures and model ethical benchmarks, they create an orderly, transparent, and high-performing institutional climate that directly drives overall school effectiveness.

To optimize and sustain school effectiveness across public secondary schools, the following recommendations are proffered based on the findings of this study:

1. **Organize Routine Professional Workshops:** School administrators, in partnership with post-primary education boards, should organize regular workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development programmes centered on administrative ethics and professional accountability for all teaching personnel.

2. **Deploy Visual Ethical Codes:** Institutional codes of conduct and ethical benchmarks should be prominently displayed at strategic locations within the school premises—such as staff rooms, administrative blocks, and notice boards—to serve as constant visual reminders of professional expectations.

3. **Facilitate Deliberate Discussions on Ethical Dilemmas:** School heads should introduce regular, structured interactive sessions during staff meetings to discuss realistic ethical dilemmas, thereby equipping educators with the critical decision-making skills needed to navigate professional challenges and maintain high moral standards.

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