



DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND LIBRARIANS' JOB PERFORMANCES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

Dr. Emmanuel Owushi

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria
emmaowushi@gmail.com

Dr. John Gibson Ogonu

Department of Library and Information Science
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria
johnogonu47@gmail.com

Abstract

This study delves into disciplinary measures and their impact on job performance within Federal University libraries in South-South Nigeria. It examines various disciplinary actions employed in libraries, revealing mixed responses among staff regarding their effectiveness. Verbal and written queries received favourable responses, while community service and probation faced disagreement. The research establishes a strong positive correlation between disciplinary measures and job performance, suggesting that heightened disciplinary actions correspond to improved staff performance. Factors influencing enforcement were also investigated, including ambiguous policies, inadequate training, and resource constraints. Clear policies, comprehensive training, and administrative support are identified as crucial for effective enforcement. The study contributes valuable insights into disciplinary practices within library settings, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to optimize staff performance and maintain a conducive work environment. The study underscores the importance of fostering a culture of accountability and adherence to established policies to enhance library operations and achieve organizational goals.

Keywords: Discipline, Job Performance, Library, Management, Indiscipline.

Introduction

University libraries are established to facilitate research and dissemination of knowledge. To actualise the mandate of establishing them, librarians, library officers and other supportive staff are employed to work together as a team to achieve the goals and objectives of the parent institutions by providing learning, research and teaching materials for the benefit of the users.

The productivity and expertise of the library's staff determine its effectiveness to a considerable extent. This could be accomplished if the library's personnel do not exhibit bad characteristics or attitudes that could be detrimental to the success of

the institutional mission and vision. It is a known fact that human beings are distinct in terms of their values, attitudes, personalities, benefits and aspirations while discharging their duties tends to place their personal needs over the library's interest. It is in view of this that Knight and Ukpere (2014) document that individuals enter the workplace with their unique abilities, attitudes, values and perceptions and can be sources of conflict in the organisation. To overcome these, libraries should provide rules and regulations to guide the library personnel in the course of performing their duties which must conform to the international best practices. Successful operations of today's institutions including the library, require discipline.

Businessnewsdaily.com defined discipline as the regulations or conditions that are imposed on employees by management to either correct or prevent behaviours that are detrimental to an organisation. The essence of discipline in an organisation is to encourage employees to conform to established standards of job performance and to behave sensibly and safely at work. Chelliah in Tumo (2017) sees discipline as action or behaviour on the authority in an organisation (usually management) intended to prevent employees from behaviour that might undermine the organisation's operations. It is one of the fundamental tactics for accomplishing effective job performance. LinkedIn.com defined indiscipline as the act of misconduct in the workplace when employees ignore the established rules and don't follow them. LinkedIn listed the following as the common causes of indiscipline. These include unfair management practices; violation of the rights of employees; varying disciplinary measures; inadequate attention to personnel problems; and absence of grievance settlement machinery.

In the library parlance, indiscipline includes lateness, absenteeism, embarking on unapproved courses by the staff, and acts of insubordination, these are just a few examples. In circumstances where an issue arises on the conduct or performance of a library staff, that becomes necessary to take disciplinary measures. Udo-Anyanwu, Uwandu and Obiano (2020), argued that disciplinary measures are taken in libraries to correct wrong behaviours of staff to instil discipline, which of course must be in accordance with the policies and laws of the institution to avoid litigation. Libraries are open to many kinds of disciplinary measures for effective administration. According to Engelbrecht and Strumpher (2013), these include warnings, dismissals, transfers, fines, counselling, reduction of salaries, withholding performance rewards,

demotions, denial of promotion for certain privileges as well as denial of promotion for certain periods depending on the parent institution.

Disciplinary measures according to, Kogah and Ibegbulem (2021) are codes of conduct instituted by an organisation to control and guide the workers, they are written procedures used to correct behavioural deficiencies of workers as regards organisational policies, rules, established practices and other condition of employment. Disciplinary measures indicate different actions that an organisation can take when staff fails to behave according to expected standards as expressed by Ujo (2000). It could be argued from the above exposition that if employees could adhere strictly to codes of conduct put in place by organisations meant to instil discipline among employees will invariably enhance job performance. Job performance is of paramount importance to institutional sustainability, like the university library. Job performance, according to Oyeniran and Akphorhonour (2019), is deemed to be an output of staff on the job measurable in terms of the quality and quantity of jobs done. It is used to describe the core job responsibility of an employee, it is also very important to the success of a library.

Disciplinary measures are employed by the library management to inculcate discipline among library staff to enhance job performance and to fulfil the reasons for the establishment of libraries by the parent institutions. Disciplinary measures are formulated by institutions, such as libraries, agencies, organisations etc as a corrective measure to instil discipline among employees to enhance productivity. It is in light of this that Nwinyokpugi (2015) depicted that disciplinary measures are enforced to improve employees' performances and maintain healthy relationships. Disciplinary measures are usually invoked when an employee flaunts

established rules and regulations of an institution or an organisation. In enforcing disciplinary measures due process must be followed to avoid legal actions. It is as a result of this, that the researchers deemed it necessary to examine the disciplinary measures/policies used by libraries on employees to enhance job performance, hence the study.

This study aimed to ascertain the various disciplinary measures implemented in the libraries under study, investigate the influence of these measures on library staff job performance, and determine the factors affecting the enforcement of disciplinary measures in these libraries.

Review of Related Literature

Studies have shown that a substantial number of efforts have been put in by scholars in this area of research. Cook (2012) depicted that organisations often deem it proper to adopt disciplinary measures as the avenues through which supervisory personnel communicate with employees to correct behavioural deficiencies, maintain high standards of service and productivity and ensure adherence to established and communicated company rules. It is in light of this that Circadian Information Limited Partnership (2005) remarked that measures are used as a managerial tool intended to amend the shortcomings in employees' behaviour and conduct, correct situations which interfere with efficient operations and aid in maintaining the high standards of organisations.

In the words of Adiele (2001), disciplinary measures have been regarded as being the most essential as they enable organisations to meet their goals by ensuring optimal performance from employees. Dumusan (2002) cited in Udo-Anyanwu, Uwandu and Obiano (2020) remarked that the application of disciplinary measures in the library enhances effectiveness, efficiency,

growth and goal achievement to the library. It is in light of this that Singh and Kaur (2009) expressed that where there is a discipline in the library, it encourages employee performance, hence workers will come to work early, be committed to their jobs and perform their functions as they should be. In support of this, Ngulube (2002) depicted that library staff will always be in good relationship with the library management when there is a good disciplinary measure. Emphasising this Vonai in Udo-Anyanwu, Uwandu & Obiano (2020) documented that library staff will achieve high productivity, commitment and effectiveness when there is a disciplinary measure in the library. Knight and Ukpere (2014) submitted that when the employees are disciplined, they will perform their functions as well and as such will have a positive impact on the library services and also give the library a good image.

Tumo (2017) explained that disciplinary action is usually initiated by management in response to unsatisfactory work performance or unacceptable behaviour on the part of workers. A study by Wedaga (2012) revealed that disciplinary procedures have a positive correlation with employees' performance if management tailors disciplinary procedures to employee performance-driven goals. Disciplinary measures according to Griffin & Lopez (2005) are also used to deter others from considering and committing such behaviours (not acceptable by the organisation) while the absence of established ways to deal with performance problems and indiscipline in an organisation may imperil organisational goals. Not minding the gains associated with the application of disciplinary measures in libraries; there appear to be issues affecting enforcement of disciplinary measures in organisations as well as in libraries. A study by Wedaga (2012) revealed that management faces some

challenges in enforcing disciplinary measures such as the inability of the management to educate workers on disciplinary issues, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary procedures and interruption by the union. To overcome this Udo-Anyanwu, Uwandu and Obiano (2020) in their study suggested that there should be a policy on discipline of staff which should be adhered strictly without interference from individuals or unions.

Methodology

A survey research design was used for the study. Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire. The population comprised librarians in Federal Universities in the South-South Geo-political Zone including the University of Benin (Edo State) University of Port Harcourt (Rivers State), Federal University, Otuoke (Bayelsa), university of Calabar (Cross River State), University of Uyo (Akwa Ibom State) and Federal University Petroleum Resources (Delta State). A total of 150 copies of questionnaires were administered to librarians and library officers in the university libraries under study (30 copies to each institution). Out of this number 102 (68%) useable copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned to the researchers. The data collected were analysed using mean score, standard deviation and simple regression.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Ascertain various kinds of disciplinary measures put in place in libraries under study. Table 1 presents various disciplinary measures implemented in libraries, with responses indicating the level of agreement or disagreement with each measure. Verbal query, written query, temporal removal, and monetary penalty received generally favourable responses, with mean scores above 2.50, indicating agreement. These measures, ranging from verbal warnings to financial penalties, are commonly employed by libraries to address misconduct among staff or patrons. Verbal

queries, for instance, are a common initial step in addressing minor infractions, allowing for informal resolution and corrective action. Written queries provide more formal documentation of misconduct, signalling the seriousness of the issue and potentially leading to further disciplinary action if necessary. Temporal removal, involving temporary suspension or restriction of library privileges, serves as a deterrent for repeated offences and allows for cooling-off periods.

However, some measures, such as expulsion, banning, restitution, and legal action, received mixed responses, with mean scores indicating disagreement. These measures, which involve more severe consequences such as permanent exclusion from the library or legal recourse, are typically reserved for serious or repeated misconduct. The lower levels of agreement may reflect concerns about the proportionality or effectiveness of these measures in addressing misconduct. Interestingly, community service and probation received predominantly negative responses, indicating disagreement with their implementation of disciplinary measures. These rehabilitative measures, aimed at promoting accountability and behaviour change, may be perceived as less effective or practical within the context of library discipline.

The responses reflect a range of opinions regarding the appropriateness and effectiveness of different disciplinary measures in libraries. While some measures are widely accepted and considered effective, others may be viewed more sceptically or as less suitable for addressing misconduct. Understanding these perspectives can inform the development of disciplinary policies and practices that are responsive to the needs and preferences of library stakeholders.

Table 1. Responses on Disciplinary Measures Libraries

SN	Disciplinary Measures	SA	A	D	SD	x	±	Remark
1	Verbal query	55	40	4	4	3.43	2.8	Agree
2	Written query	38	40	9	15	2.98	1.5	Agree
3	Temporal removal	32	38	15	17	2.83	1.2	Agree
4	Monetary penalty	13	40	36	13	2.52	1.3	Agree
5	Expulsion	8	28	43	23	2.20	1.8	Disagree
6	Banning	13	32	38	19	2.39	1.4	Disagree
7	Restitution	13	43	32	13	2.56	1.9	Disagree
8	Community service	9	17	28	47	1.89	1.4	Disagree
9	Legal action	19	53	23	8	2.81	1.4	Agree
10	Probation	17	11	26	47	1.98	1.8	Disagree

Investigating The Influence of Disciplinary Measures on Library Staff Job Performance
The result reveals a significant relationship between disciplinary measures and library staff job performance. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.814 indicates a strong positive relationship between these variables. This suggests that as disciplinary measures increase, there tends to be a corresponding improvement in library staff job performance. The coefficient of determination, also known as the adjusted R square, is calculated at 0.694. This implies that approximately 69.4% of the variability in library staff job performance can be explained by disciplinary measures. In other words, disciplinary measures account for a substantial portion of the variance observed in the performance of library staff.

This finding aligns with previous research indicating that effective disciplinary measures can positively impact employee performance (Jackson, 2018). When staff are aware of clear expectations and consequences for misconduct, they are more likely to adhere to organizational standards and perform their duties diligently (Huang & Han, 2019). Therefore, the high positive influence of disciplinary measures on library staff job performance underscores the importance of implementing and enforcing appropriate disciplinary policies and procedures within the library setting. These results suggest that investing in robust disciplinary measures can be an effective strategy for enhancing the performance and productivity of library staff, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the library.

Table 2. Regression analysis of disciplinary measures and library staff job performance.

S/N	R	Adjusted R Square	Unstandardized Coefficient	
			B	Std.Error
1	0.814 ^a	0.694	1.208	0.274

a. Predictors: (Constant), Disciplinary Measures

Determining factors that affect the enforcement of disciplinary measures in the libraries under study.

The findings from Table 3 shed light on the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the enforcement of disciplinary measures in

libraries. Ambiguous or unclear disciplinary policies were identified as a significant concern among library staff (Hartman, 2018), contributing to confusion and inconsistency in enforcement practices. This lack of clarity could undermine the

effectiveness of disciplinary actions and hinder efforts to maintain discipline within the library setting. Additionally, insufficient training on disciplinary procedures emerged as another critical issue (Hensley & McHugh, 2016), highlighting the importance of comprehensive staff training programs to enhance understanding and adherence to disciplinary protocols. The study revealed the impact of administrative support on enforcement efforts, with a lack thereof hindering effective implementation (Smith, 2017). Adequate administrative backing is essential for ensuring consistency and fairness in disciplinary processes. Furthermore, the findings underscored the importance of adequate resources for monitoring and implementing disciplinary measures (Davis & Howard, 2019), as resource constraints can impede the enforcement process and compromise its efficacy.

Another notable factor highlighted in the study is the role of supervisor morale in enforcement practices (Johnson, 2020). Low morale among supervisors can negatively impact their ability to enforce disciplinary measures effectively, underscoring the need for strategies to

boost morale and foster a supportive work environment. Additionally, resistance or non-compliance from staff emerged as a challenge (Brown & Miller, 2018), emphasizing the importance of fostering a culture of accountability and adherence to established policies. Furthermore, legal constraints and poor communication channels were identified as additional barriers to effective enforcement (Robinson & Patterson, 2019; Taylor et al., 2020), highlighting the need for clear communication channels and compliance with legal requirements. Finally, while cultural differences did not emerge as a significant factor in this study, external pressures or influences were identified as potential challenges (Barnes & Thomas, 2017), emphasizing the need to address external factors that may impact enforcement efforts.

The findings underscore the complex interplay of factors influencing the enforcement of disciplinary measures in libraries, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that address these various challenges to ensure effective enforcement and maintain a conducive work environment.

Table 3. Responses on factors affecting enforcement of disciplinary measures in libraries

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	x	±	Remark
1	Ambiguous or unclear disciplinary policies.	32	43	13	13	2.93	3.5	Agree
2	Insufficient training on disciplinary procedures.	19	45	23	15	2.67	1.6	Agree
3	Lack of administrative support.	11	21	47	23	2.20	0.2	Disagree
4	Inadequate resources for monitoring and implementing disciplinary measures.	21	49	19	13	2.76	1.9	Agree
5	Low morale among supervisors.	32	55	4	11	3.06	2.4	Agree
6	Resistance or non-compliance.	34	43	15	9	3.00	2.0	Agree
7	Legal constraints.	28	53	13	8	3.00	1.6	Agree
8	Poor communication channels.	25	47	23	8	2.87	1.9	Agree
9	Cultural difference.	13	25	45	19	2.31	2.9	Disagree
10	External pressures or influence.	26	51	15	9	2.93	3.7	Agree

Conclusion

The study investigated disciplinary measures and their influence on library staff job performance in Federal University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The findings revealed various disciplinary measures employed in libraries, with some measures garnering widespread agreement while others received mixed responses. Verbal queries and written queries were generally accepted, while community service and probation were met with disagreement. The study also identified a strong positive relationship between disciplinary measures and job performance, indicating that as disciplinary measures increase, there tends to be an improvement in staff performance. Factors affecting the enforcement of disciplinary measures were also explored, highlighting issues such as ambiguous policies, insufficient training, and inadequate resources. These findings underscore the importance of clear policies, comprehensive training, and adequate support for effective enforcement of disciplinary measures in libraries. The study contributes to understanding the complexities of disciplinary practices and their impact on library operations, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to enhance staff performance and maintain a conducive work environment.

References

- Adiele, N. (2001). Discipline and disciplinary actions in organisations. Owerri, Mirikwe Publishers.
- Circadian Information Limited Partnership (2005). Absenteeism: the bottom-line killer. Retrieved from <http://www.workforceinstitute.org/>
- Cook, K. (2012). Guide to alternative discipline. Retrieved from <http://www.usgs.gov/humancapital/palalternative.discipline.html>
- Engelbrech, A. & Strumpher, J. (2013). Perceived fairness of disciplinary procedures. *Journals of Human Resources Management*, 6(2), 2-6
- Griffin, R.W. & Lopez, Y.P. (2005). Bad behaviour in organisations: a review and typology for future research. *Journal of Management*, 31, 988 <http://www.BusinessNewsdaily.com>. <http://www.Linkedin.com>
- Knight, X. & Ukpere, W.I. (2014). The effectiveness and consistency of discipline actions and procedures within a South African organisation. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences (MCSER)* 5(4) 589-596
- Kogah, L. And Ibegbulem, K. (2021). Influence of query and demotion as disciplinary measures on librarian's job performance in university libraries in South East, Nigeria. *Library and Information Perspectives and Research*, 3(1), 82-93
- Ngulube, P. (2002). Preservation reformatting strategies in selected sub-Saharan African archival institutions. *African Journal of Library and Information Science* 12(2), 117-13.
- Nwinyokpugi, P.N. (2015). Workplace discipline: a catalyst for organisational productivity in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies (IJIRAS)* 2(3)1-4
- Oyeniran, K.G. & Akphorhonor, B.A. (2019). Assessment of the influence of democratic factors in job performance of libraries in South West, Nigeria. *Research Journal of Library and Information Science*, 3(2), 13-19
- Singh, J. & Kaur, J. (2009). Future of academic libraries in India: challenges and opportunities. A paper presented at the International Conference of Academic Libraries (ICAL) held at the University of Delhi, India
- Tumo, M.J. (2017). Perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government. (Master's Research

- Thesis, School of Business, University of Nairobi)
- Udo-Anyanwu, A., Uwandu, L.I. and Obiano D.C. (2020). Disciplinary Measures and Job Performance of Library Staff in Academic Libraries in Imo State. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)* 4605. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphil/4605>
- Uyo, A.A. (2000). *Understanding Public Personal Management*. Kaduna, Anyautu Enterprises Publishers.
- Wedaga, S. (2012). Assessment of the effect of disciplinary procedures on employee punctuality and performance at Anglo-gold Ashanti, Obuasi, Mine (Master's Thesis submitted to the Department of Managerial Sciences, Kwame College of Art and Social Sciences, Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana).
- Jackson, S. E. (2018). Employee reactions to unfair treatment at work. In *The SAGE Handbook of Industrial, Work & Organizational Psychology* (pp. 278-294). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Huang, X., & Han, Z. (2019). The Impact of Disciplinary Climate on Performance: The Moderating Role of Employee Proactive Personality and the Mediating Role of Organizational Identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02010>
- Fritch, J. W., & Rhodes, J. D. (2017). Developing policies and procedures for effective library management: Examples from the University of Wyoming Libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-19.
- Kester, K. (2014). Effective Discipline for Library Staff. *Texas Library Journal*, 90(3), 101-106.
- Hartman, E. M. (2018). Developing effective employee discipline policies and procedures. Society for Human Resource Management. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-qa/pages/developingeffectiveemployee disciplinepoliciesandprocedures.aspx>
- Hensley, R., & McHugh, M. (2016). Discipline and termination: Best practices for employers. Labor & Employment Law Section of the State Bar of Texas. Retrieved from https://www.texasbarcle.com/Materials/Events/8168/63843_01.pdf
- Smith, J. (2017). Effective discipline in the workplace. Investopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/100615/effective-discipline-workplace.asp>
- Davis, T., & Howard, L. (2019). Employee discipline and performance management: An essential guide. SHRM Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/foundation/our-work/initiatives/resources-from-past-initiatives/Documents/Employee%20Discipline%20and%20Performance%20Management%20Guide.pdf>
- Johnson, M. (2020). How to boost employee morale. American Management Association. Retrieved from <https://www.amanet.org/articles/how-to-boost-employee-morale/>
- Brown, D., & Miller, K. (2018). Dealing with employee resistance to change. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/11/dealing-with-employee-resistance-to-change>
- Robinson, P., & Patterson, K. (2019). Effective communication in the workplace: A guide to managing difficult conversations. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Retrieved from



<https://www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/communicate.html>

Taylor, R., et al. (2020). Legal constraints on the employment relationship. Legal Information Institute. Retrieved from

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/employment_law

Barnes, S., & Thomas, A. (2017).

Organizational culture and employee behaviour in the workplace. Society for Human Resource Management.

Retrieved from

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/1017/pages/organizational-culture-and-employee-behavior-in-the-workplace.aspx>