



# **School Discipline, Reward System and Administrative Efficacy of Principals in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The principal as an administrative officer has the duty of providing professional guidance and assistance to teachers for the improvement of their instructional delivery. The study seeks to ascertain the correlation between the discipline of schools, the system of rewards, and the efficacy of administrative practices implemented by principals in secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The chosen research design was a correlation research design. The population consisted of all 374 members of the teaching staff in 15 public secondary schools in the study area. A sample comprising 76 teachers was selected from three schools chosen at random. The technique employed for this purpose was simple random sampling.

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A researcher made instrument, titled "Principals Administrative Efficacy Questionnaire" (PAEQ), was employed for data collection. The reliability of the PAEQ was determined to be 0.89 through the use of Cronbach Alpha Statistics. To test the two hypotheses, Pearson product moment correlation statistics was employed at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that there exists a weak positive correlation between school discipline, the reward system, and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools. As a result, it was concluded that a relationship does exist between school discipline, the reward system, and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools. Based on the findings, it is recommended that principals of schools should give due consideration to matters pertaining to school discipline and actively promote the reward system as a means of achieving effective administration.

*Keywords: School discipline; reward system; administrative efficacy; principals.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discipline serves as a crucial tool in the implementation of school administration practices. The distinctive characteristics of the organizational framework within the secondary education system have rendered it arduous to attain excellence in the absence of a culture of discipline in secondary schools. School discipline entails behavior that aligns with the organization's rules and guidelines for administrative efficacy. Okorie [1] asserts that discipline is indispensable for coordinating actions that are predictable, reliable, and supportive within the organizational context. Maintaining a strong disciplinary rapport with the staff is among the primary responsibilities of the school principal.

According to Petersen and Rosser [2], grave violations of school discipline policy encompass physical assault perpetrated by students against both teachers and fellow students, verbal abuse, the use of offensive language directed towards teachers and fellow students, acts of sexual and other forms of harassment, threats and intimidation targeting teachers and fellow students, possession of offensive weapons, involvement in the distribution or consumption of illegal drugs, as well as unauthorized entry into the school premises or classrooms with the intent of confronting teachers. Olaitan [3] discovered that truancy, absenteeism, physical altercations, theft, and drug addiction, among other issues, are typical manifestations of disciplinary problems. This demonstrates that discipline within the school system plays a pivotal role in enabling teachers and students to maintain a focused approach towards their professional responsibilities and academic pursuits.

Okaforcha and Ifediorah [4] conducted a study to empirically investigate the disciplinary practices employed by principals in the administration of

public and private secondary schools in Anambra State. The study revealed a significant correlation between the discipline strategies employed by principals and the overall management of their respective schools. Curwin, Mendler, and Alexandria [5] proposed that the use of friendly disciplinary measures is more effective in maintaining order and discipline compared to the implementation of unfriendly measures, which can hinder positive relationships. Thus, discipline plays a crucial role in the learning process and is an integral component of education, as a conducive learning environment can only be established through orderliness. It promotes consistency, fairness, and follow-through, while minimizing disruptions within the school system.

Employees have varying preferences when it comes to rewards. Some employees may consider monetary compensation as sufficient to meet their needs, while others may desire material incentives such as cars or houses. Additionally, some employees may prefer vacation time, while others may value non-material incentives. In the context of secondary schools, the reward system serves as a means of acknowledging an individual's contributions to the organization. Manduku [6] defines the reward system as a facet of human resource management that focuses on establishing, maintaining, and developing a system aimed at recognizing the work performed by employees within an organization.

Principals have the authority to reward teachers or make recommendations that could potentially lead to their recognition. The implementation of such rewards can have an impact on the financial, physical, and psychological well-being of the teachers [7]. The reward system also encompasses the evaluation of job values, the design and maintenance of pay structures, performance-based compensation, the

recognition of competencies and skills, and the provision of employee benefits. Essentially, the manner in which rewards are distributed by principals in public secondary schools can either serve as a source of motivation or demotivation for the respective teachers. Inclusion of teachers in the planning and nomination process for candidates to be rewarded within the school can foster a sense of belonging [8]. This is achievable through the establishment of positive relationships between the principal and those involved.

Obiekwe and Mbanefo [9] conducted an investigation to ascertain the association between teachers' perception of the reward system implemented by principals and the administration of secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings revealed a significant and positive correlation between teachers' perception of the reward system and the efficacy of school administration. Imhangbe, Okecha, and Obozuwa [10] conducted a similar study in the Edo Central Senatorial District of Nigeria to examine the relationship between the communication gap of principals regarding the reward system and the efficient administration of secondary schools. The results indicated that the communication gap of principals in relation to the reward system had a positive impact on the efficacy of school administration in the specified area of study.

Henry Fayol's Administrative Theory propounded in 1916 has it that all the activities occurring in an organization could be grouped into technical, commercial, financial security, accounting and administration. The principal assumes the role of the educational leader within both the school and the immediate community. Consequently, they are entrusted with the responsibility of managing the school and overseeing instructional supervision, as well as executing administrative functions [11]. Principals are accountable for implementing government education policies in accordance with established standards. Therefore, they possess leadership abilities and a clear understanding of the objectives that need to be accomplished. These abilities are acquired through their knowledge of the school system and their recognition of the measures required to enhance education for all students.

According to Brun and Summers (2020), the work of school administrators is intricate and demanding. They are required to have a comprehensive understanding of their schools

and communities, demonstrate effective leadership to achieve positive educational outcomes, and continually develop and enhance their professional expertise. A competent school administrator must possess knowledge of how students learn and possess the necessary leadership and management skills to support students' educational progress. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between school discipline, the reward system, and the administrative efficacy of principals.

**Statement of the Problem:** If and when the principals fail to fulfil their administrative duties in providing professional guidance and assistance to teachers for the improvement of their instructional delivery, it is inevitable that discipline issues will arise among both teachers and students. In the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, secondary school principals appear to allocate a significant portion of their official hours to other responsibilities, neglecting their primary role in school administration.

In an ideal situation, secondary school principals should implement disciplinary measures and reward systems that enhance the efficacy of school administration. The stakeholders in education, including the government, parents, and students, expect that quality education will be ensured through the implementation of such measures and systems by the principals. However, observations have indicated that there is a lack of effective administration in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, particularly in Uyo Local Government Area. One evident issue is the inadequate recognition of teachers, which can be attributed to the principals' inefficacy in administrative matters (Umoetuk, Boc-lfeobu, Kulo & Ekpor [12]. These circumstances have contributed to the observed inefficiency in school administration. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether there is a correlation between school discipline, reward systems, and the principals' administrative efficacy in secondary schools.

**Objective of the study:** The primary objective of this study was to ascertain the correlation that exists between school discipline, the reward system, and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools within the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria.

**Hypotheses:** The following null hypotheses are formulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between school discipline and principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state
2. There is no significant relationship between reward system and principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state

**Scope of the Study:** The scope of this study is to determine the relationship between school discipline, reward system and administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. The variables of study were delimited to School discipline, Reward System and principal's administrative efficacy. The teachers and principals in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state constituted the respondents for this study.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted a correlation research design in order to investigate the influence of School discipline and Reward System on principals' administrative efficacy. This design was deemed appropriate given the researchers' interest in determining this relationship. The study was conducted in Uyo Local Government Area, which serves as the state capital of Akwa Ibom. The population of interest consisted of all 374 teaching staff members in the 15 public secondary schools within Uyo Local Government Area during the 2022/2023 academic year, as reported by the Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, Uyo.

For this study, a sample size of 76 and Administrators: consisting of 67 teachers and 9 Principals (3 Principals and 6 Vice Principals) from three randomly selected schools. The 6 Vice Principals made up of 2 Vice Principals on academics, 2 Vice Principals on administration and 2 Vice Principals on special duties. Simple random sampling technique was used.

The researchers developed and utilized the "Principals Administrative Efficacy Questionnaire" (PAEQ) as the data collection instrument. This questionnaire comprised two sections, namely Section A and Section B. Section A focused on gathering demographic information from the respondents, while Section B consisted of 20 items related to School discipline, Reward System, and administrative

efficacy. To score the questionnaire, a four-point rating scale was employed, ranging from "strongly agreed" (SA) with a value of 4 points, to "strongly disagreed" (SD) with a value of 1 point. Face validity of the instrument was established through the input of three experts, two from the field of Educational Management and Planning and one from the Department of Science Education at Akwa Ibom State University. The experts' suggestions and comments were taken into consideration and incorporated into the final version of the instrument used for data collection.

To assess the internal consistency of the instrument, the researchers randomly selected 25 teachers from secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area who were not part of the sampled population. The data obtained from this sample was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Statistics, revealing a reliability coefficient of .89.

With the assistance of three research assistants, the researchers obtained permission from the respective Principals and administered the instruments to the selected schools. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents during break periods, and the data collection process lasted for a duration of two weeks. The researchers achieved a 100% return rate for the questionnaires. The collected data was then analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation statistics.

### 2.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### 2.1.1 Testing of null hypotheses

**Null Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between school discipline and Principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state.

From the result in Table 1, it is showed that the p-val value of .001 is less than the .05 alpha level of significance at the 74 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis one that there is no significant relationship between school discipline and principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state was rejected.

**Null Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between reward system and principal's administrative efficacy in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state.

**Table 1. Result of simple correlation between school discipline and principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	n	p-cal	p-crit	Decision at .05 alpha level
School Discipline	76	.001	.05	Significant. Reject Ho3
Administrative Efficacy	76			

df=74

**Table 2. Result of simple correlation between reward system and administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	n	p-cal	p-val	Decision at .05 alpha level
Reward System	76	.004	05	Significant. Reject Ho2
Administrative Efficacy	76			

df=74

From the result in Table 2, it is showed that the p-val value of .004 is less than the .05 alpha level of significance at the 74 degrees of freedom. This indicates that the formulated null hypothesis two that there is no significant relationship between reward system and principal's administrative efficacy in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state was rejected.

### 3. RESULTS OF DISCUSSION

The results also indicate that there exists a weak positive correlation between school discipline and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools located in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. This discovery suggests that administrative efficacy would experience a slight increase as principals prioritize matters pertaining to school discipline. It is imperative for principals to consistently communicate the rules and regulations of the school, as well as the corresponding penalties for any violations, to both students and teachers. The level of discipline demonstrated by both students and staff serves as a reflection of the principal's administrative efficacy. These findings align with Obiekwe and Mbanefo's [9] research, which revealed a substantial positive and significant relationship between teachers' perception of principals' school discipline and administrative efficacy. Additionally, the findings of this study concur with the findings of Okaforcha and Ifediorah [4], who discovered a significant relationship between principals' discipline strategies and school administration within their respective schools.

Furthermore, the findings also demonstrate a significantly weak positive correlation between

the reward system and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools located in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. This discovery suggests that administrative efficacy would experience a slight increase as principals effectively implement a good reward system. It is crucial for principals to prioritize timely rewards for teachers, as this will serve as motivation for them to perform at a higher level, thereby positively impacting the principal's administrative efficacy. These findings are consistent with the findings of Obiekwe and Mbanefo [9], among others which revealed a substantial positive and significant relationship between teachers' perception of principals' reward system and administrative efficacy. Additionally, these findings align with Imhangbe, Okecha, and Obozuwa's [10] research, which found that the communication gap between principals and teachers regarding the reward system positively influences school administrative efficacy.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discoveries, it has been deduced that there exists a correlation between the implementation of school discipline, reward system, and the efficacy of the principal's administrative duties within secondary schools situated in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. The utilization and implementation of school discipline and reward system by principals is highly correlated and significantly linked to the efficacy of the principal's administrative role. Hence, in order for a principal to establish a harmonious rapport with the staff and students, it is imperative for them to appropriately apply disciplinary measures and rewards within the school setting.

## 5. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that:

1. Ministries of Education should establish comprehensive initiatives focused on contemporary worldwide patterns and arrange for the participation of secondary school principals in training and retraining programs that aim to enhance administrative efficacy.
2. School principals should prioritize matters pertaining to school discipline and foster a system of recognition that promotes effective administration.
3. Principals should actively advocate for and support the appropriate exercise of authority, emphasizing the importance of rewarding staff members in order to consistently enhance the overall functioning of the school administration.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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