

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NGOR-OKPALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State. The study adopted a correlational research design. The area of the study comprised all public senior secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala. The population consisted of 2,146 senior secondary students across the twelve public secondary schools in the area. In determining the sample size, Taro Yamane's formula was applied at a 5% margin of error, which produced approximately 200 students as a representative sample. Five schools were randomly selected, and from each school, 40 students were proportionately drawn using a simple random sampling technique to ensure fairness and equal representation. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled School Management Practices and Students' Academic Discipline Questionnaire (SMPASADQ). The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and one from the Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency. Data were collected directly from the respondents and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the degree of relationship between the variables. The findings revealed a positive relationship between school management practices such as supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of school rules and students' academic discipline. It was recommended that school administrators should strengthen these management practices to sustain discipline and enhance effective learning. The study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence that effective school management practices foster students' discipline in public secondary schools.

Keywords: School management practices, students' academic discipline, supervision, communication, motivation.

Introduction

In many public secondary schools today, cases of student indiscipline such as truancy, disobedience, lateness to school, and examination malpractice have become issues of serious concern to educators, administrators, and parents. This persistent problem undermines the achievement of educational goals and raises a fundamental question about the effectiveness of existing school management practices. The researcher is particularly worried that, despite several efforts by school administrators to enforce discipline, students' behavioural standards in many public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State appear to be declining. School management practices represent the systematic ways through which school leaders plan, organize, direct, and control both human and material resources for the achievement of educational objectives. According to Nwankwo (2014), effective school management involves strategic supervision, open communication, motivation of staff, and enforcement of rules and regulations that promote order and discipline. In public secondary

schools, these practices ensure that teachers and students work harmoniously toward academic success within a well-structured environment.

However, when management practices are weak—such as poor supervision of teachers, inadequate monitoring of students, or inconsistent enforcement of school rules—disciplinary problems are likely to arise. Okeke (2016) noted that the success of any educational institution depends largely on the administrative competence of the school leadership and its ability to maintain discipline and fairness among students. In the same vein, Nworgu (2015) emphasized that effective management practices foster student self-control, moral development, and academic focus, which are essential components of discipline in schools. In Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State, many public secondary schools continue to experience behavioural challenges that disrupt learning and weaken academic performance. This situation calls for a critical examination of how school management practices contribute to or hinder students' academic discipline. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area, Imo State. Effective school management practices are central to achieving discipline and maintaining an orderly learning environment in public secondary schools. These practices serve as deliberate administrative actions and strategies adopted by school heads to ensure that teachers and students perform their duties responsibly. Prominent among such practices are supervision, communication, motivation, enforcement of rules, and record keeping, each playing a vital role in sustaining students' academic discipline.

Supervision is one of the most important management practices that help maintain discipline among students and teachers. Through supervision, principals monitor classroom instruction, attendance, punctuality, and general behaviour to ensure conformity to school standards. Oboegbulem (2018) noted that effective instructional supervision helps teachers to deliver lessons efficiently and encourages students to engage actively in their studies. When supervision is consistent, students are less likely to engage in acts of indiscipline such as absenteeism, lateness, or noise-making because they are aware that their behaviour is being observed. Similarly, Adeyemi (2016) found that regular supervision by school heads leads to improved student compliance with school rules and enhanced academic performance.

Communication represents another critical management practice that promotes discipline. Clear communication of school rules, expectations, and responsibilities helps prevent confusion and promotes a shared understanding of acceptable behaviour. Nnabuo (2015) asserted that effective communication within the school system enhances mutual respect, reduces conflicts, and strengthens students' moral development. When principals and teachers communicate openly with students, it becomes easier to address disciplinary issues early and promote responsible conduct. Likewise, Ofojebe (2017) discovered that transparent communication between school management and students reduces cases of misconduct because learners are guided by clear behavioural expectations and consistent feedback.

Motivation also plays a significant role in shaping students' discipline. When students are motivated through rewards, recognition, and encouragement, they develop positive attitudes toward learning and behave responsibly. Motivation can be intrinsic, such as praise or moral guidance, or extrinsic, such as prizes and academic incentives. Adeyemi (2016) emphasized that motivated students demonstrate better self-control, punctuality, and academic focus. Similarly, principals who motivate teachers indirectly foster discipline among students because satisfied teachers model responsible behaviour and commitment to their duties. Another essential practice is the enforcement of school rules and regulations. Discipline cannot thrive in an environment where rules are inconsistently applied or poorly enforced. Ofojebe (2017) maintained that firm and fair enforcement of school rules creates a sense of justice, accountability, and respect for authority. When students know that disobedience attracts appropriate consequences, they are more likely to conform to acceptable standards. However,

excessive punishment or bias in enforcing rules may provoke resistance, hence the need for balanced and humane disciplinary measures that correct without discouraging students.

Finally, record keeping contributes to discipline by ensuring accountability and transparency in school operations. Accurate records of attendance, behaviour, and academic performance enable administrators to monitor patterns of misconduct and intervene promptly when necessary. According to Nwankwo (2014), systematic record keeping helps principals identify habitual offenders and reward students who consistently exhibit good conduct. It also provides data for evaluating the effectiveness of disciplinary measures. Collectively, these school management practices when properly planned, implemented, and monitored create a stable learning environment that nurtures discipline, moral behaviour, and academic focus among students. Conversely, when management practices are weak or inconsistently applied, indiscipline tends to flourish, leading to poor academic outcomes and school disorder. Therefore, understanding the relationship between school management practices and students' academic discipline is essential for improving educational outcomes in public secondary schools.

Several empirical studies such as Adeyemi (2016) and Ofojebe (2017) have been conducted on school management practices and students' academic discipline in secondary schools. For instance, Adeyemi (2016) carried out a study titled: "Principals' Leadership Styles and Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria." The study adopted a correlational survey design with a population of 1,240 teachers across selected public secondary schools. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Principals' Leadership and Discipline Questionnaire (PLDQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, and the reliability coefficient was 0.84 using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data were collected through direct administration of questionnaires and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The study found that democratic supervision practices promoted discipline and punctuality among students, while weak monitoring systems encouraged indiscipline. It was also found that regular classroom supervision and feedback enhanced students' commitment to school rules. In a similar line, Nnabuo (2015) examined "Communication Practices and Students' Behavioural Adjustment in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State." The study employed a correlational survey design with a population of all principals and teachers in 50 public secondary schools, totaling 1,820 participants. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 364 respondents were selected. The instrument used was the Communication and Behavioural Adjustment Scale (CBAS), which was validated by three experts in Educational Psychology and Administration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.81 using the test-retest method. Data were collected through questionnaire administration and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The major findings showed that open communication between school management and students reduced incidences of disobedience and truancy. The study further revealed that teachers who communicated expectations clearly to students reported better classroom behaviour and adherence to rules.

Similarly, Ofojebe (2017) conducted a study titled "Management Strategies for Improving Discipline among Secondary School Students in Anambra State." The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved a population of teachers and principals in public secondary schools across three education zones. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 250 participants. Data were gathered through the School Discipline Management Questionnaire (SDMQ), validated by three experts in Educational Management and Statistics. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.88 determined through Cronbach's Alpha. Questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher, and data were analyzed using mean and t-test statistics. Findings indicated that consistent enforcement of school rules, coupled with fair disciplinary measures, improved students' obedience to authority. The study

also found that inconsistency in punishment and administrative bias often led to students' disrespect and indiscipline. In another related study, Oboegbulem (2018) examined "Motivational Practices and Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State." The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and covered a population of teachers and principals in 40 public secondary schools. Using a purposive sampling technique, 200 respondents were selected. The instrument used was the Motivation and Discipline Assessment Questionnaire (MDAQ), validated by specialists in Educational Measurement and Management. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86 using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were collected through the help of trained research assistants and analyzed using mean scores and Pearson correlation. The study revealed that when school administrators motivate teachers and students through recognition and moral support, levels of discipline and compliance with school rules improve significantly. It further found that neglect of motivational strategies often results in student apathy, lateness, and poor behavioural attitudes.

Across these studies, a common similarity is the use of descriptive survey designs and the reliance on questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument, demonstrating their appropriateness in investigating management-related issues. They all established a strong link between effective management practices—such as supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of rules and improved students' academic discipline. However, differences exist in sampling techniques, instruments, and analytical methods. For instance, while Adeyemi (2016) and Ofojebe (2017) employed simple and multi-stage sampling techniques respectively, Nnabuo (2015) used stratified random sampling, and Oboegbulem (2018) adopted purposive sampling. Similarly, data analysis varied from mean and standard deviation to correlation and t-test. Despite these methodological differences, all studies affirmed that proper school management practices contribute significantly to maintaining discipline, moral conduct, and academic order in public secondary schools.

Globally, the management of schools has evolved from traditional, authority-centered administration to a more participatory and data-driven approach that emphasizes collaboration, supervision, and accountability. Modern educational management now focuses on promoting inclusive learning environments, fostering effective communication, and ensuring moral and behavioural discipline among students. According to UNESCO (2022), current educational reforms across developing nations highlight the integration of evidence-based management practices, emphasizing that effective supervision, transparent communication, and student-centered motivation are vital for maintaining discipline and academic order in schools. This shift from control-oriented management to collaborative leadership has redefined the role of school heads from mere administrators to instructional leaders who guide behavioural and academic standards. In recent years, technology and policy innovations have also shaped school management practices worldwide. Schools now adopt digital tools for record keeping, supervision, and communication, enhancing transparency and accountability. For instance, the use of school management information systems (SMIS) has improved how administrators monitor attendance, track student behaviour, and evaluate staff performance (Okeke, 2023). These advancements have contributed to reducing cases of absenteeism, examination malpractice, and other forms of indiscipline that hinder learning. Moreover, educational policies at both national and state levels increasingly stress the importance of continuous professional development for school managers to strengthen their leadership capacity and maintain school discipline effectively.

In Nigeria, the concept of school management has also experienced significant transformation. The National Policy on Education (2020) emphasizes participatory leadership, supervision, and effective communication as essential tools for promoting discipline and moral values in schools. Current research in educational management has shown that schools managed with clear administrative structures, fair enforcement of rules, and motivation

strategies report higher levels of student compliance and academic discipline (Ofojebe, 2017; Oboegbulem, 2018). Recent studies further reveal a growing emphasis on emotional intelligence and ethical leadership in school administration, suggesting that effective management goes beyond rule enforcement to include empathy, counselling, and positive teacher–student relationships (Okorie, 2022). In Imo State, particularly in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area, educational stakeholders continue to face challenges related to maintaining student discipline despite various government interventions. The decentralization of school administration and the introduction of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) have attempted to foster accountability and community participation in school affairs. However, issues such as inconsistent supervision, poor communication flow, inadequate motivation of teachers and students, and selective enforcement of rules persist in many public schools. These challenges highlight the need for renewed empirical attention to how school management practices relate to students’ academic discipline at the local level. Therefore, the current study represents a contemporary effort to build upon existing knowledge by examining the relationship between school management practices specifically supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of rules—and students’ academic discipline in public secondary schools. By situating this investigation within Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area, the study aligns with current educational management trends emphasizing contextualized, evidence-based approaches to sustaining discipline and academic excellence in Nigerian schools.

Statement of the Problem

School management practices play a crucial role in promoting students’ academic discipline and maintaining an orderly learning environment. Ideally, the management of public secondary schools should ensure that supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of school rules are systematically carried out to guide students toward responsible behaviour and academic excellence. Principals and teachers, as key actors in school administration, are expected to create an environment where students understand behavioural expectations, obey school rules, attend classes punctually, and participate meaningfully in learning activities. When school management practices are effectively implemented, they foster discipline, moral values, and respect for authority, which in turn enhance students’ academic success and institutional stability. In reality, however, many public secondary schools in Nigeria, including those in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State, are faced with persistent issues of indiscipline such as lateness to school, truancy, vandalism, fighting, disrespect for teachers, and disregard for school regulations. These challenges often stem from poor supervision, inadequate communication of school rules, low staff and student motivation, and weak enforcement mechanisms. Reports from education authorities and local school boards indicate that some principals rarely conduct routine supervision of classes, while others apply disciplinary measures inconsistently or with bias. Similarly, many students receive little guidance and motivation, resulting in low commitment to school norms and academic responsibilities. These conditions have continued to undermine the efforts of the Ministry of Education to maintain discipline and academic quality in public secondary schools. Regardless of the recognition of the importance of effective school management practices in promoting discipline, there appears to be a gap between policy expectations and actual administrative practices in many schools. While existing studies have explored related issues in other regions, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on how supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of school rules relate to students’ academic discipline in public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State. Therefore, the problem of this study is that despite the presence of established administrative frameworks and school management policies, students’ academic discipline in public secondary schools in

Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area remains unsatisfactory, suggesting that current management practices may not be effectively implemented or sustained.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area, Imo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine the relationship between supervision practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools.
2. examine the relationship between communication practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools.
3. ascertain how motivation practices are connected to students' academic discipline in public secondary schools.
4. identify how enforcement of school rules relates to students' academic discipline in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the relationship between supervision practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools?
2. What is the relationship between communication practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools?
3. How is motivation practices connected to students' academic discipline in public secondary schools?
4. How does the enforcement of school rules relate to students' academic discipline in public secondary schools?

Methods

This study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was considered appropriate because it sought to describe and analyze the relationship between school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools without manipulating any variables. The design enabled the researcher to collect data from a sample of students and generalize the findings to the larger population. The study was conducted in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State, located in the southeastern part of Nigeria. The area has several public senior secondary schools under the supervision of the Imo State Ministry of Education. The population of the study consisted of 2,146 senior secondary students drawn from twelve public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area. This population was chosen because students are directly affected by school management practices and could provide valid and reliable information concerning discipline and administrative practices. To determine the sample size, Taro Yamane's formula was applied at a 5% margin of error, which yielded approximately 200 students as a representative and manageable sample. Five schools were randomly selected from the twelve public schools in the area, and from each school, 40 students were chosen through a simple random sampling technique to ensure fairness and equal representation. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled School Management Practices and Students' Academic Discipline Questionnaire (SMPASADQ). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to obtain data from students on their perceptions of supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of school rules as dimensions of school management practices. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all in the Faculty of Education,

Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. To ensure reliability, the instrument was trial-tested with 30 students outside the study area, and the data were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The researcher, assisted by two trained research assistants, personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents and retrieved the completed copies on the spot to ensure a high rate of return and accuracy of data. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A decision mean of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for interpretation. Mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated agreement with the item statements, while mean scores below 2.50 indicated disagreement. The results were presented in tables with

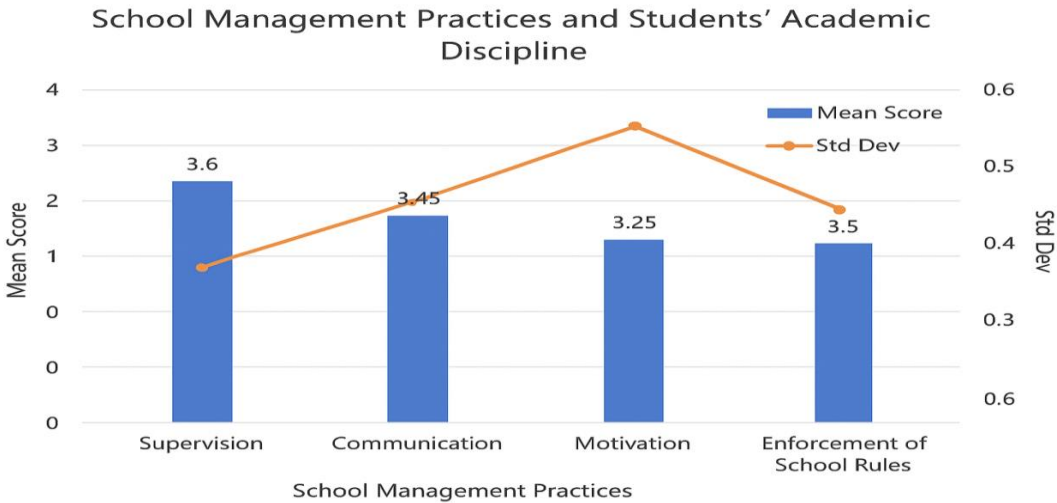


Figure 1: The framework illustrates how key school management practices supervision, communication, motivation, and rule enforcement collectively promote students’ academic discipline. Effective management fosters a structured, communicative, and motivating environment that encourages students to obey rules, attend classes regularly, respect school authorities, and display responsible behaviour.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students’ Responses on Supervision Practices and Their Academic Discipline

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X̄)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Our principal and teachers regularly supervise our classroom activities.	3.36	0.78	1	A
2	Regular supervision helps us to be punctual and attentive during lessons.	3.28	0.82	2	A
3	When teachers are monitored, we become more serious with our studies.	3.21	0.80	3	A
4	Supervision helps to reduce lateness and noise-making	3.17	0.83	4	A
5	We behave better when our principal monitor us.	3.10	0.85	5	A

Aggregate (M & SD)	3.22	0.82	A
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Data in Table 1 show that all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with an aggregate mean of 3.22 and standard deviation of 0.82. This indicates that students agreed that supervision practices contribute positively to their academic discipline. The result implies that when school principals and teachers consistently supervise classroom activities, monitor attendance, and provide feedback, students tend to be more punctual, focused, and compliant with school rules. Therefore, effective supervision by school management enhances students' discipline and overall academic behaviour.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Communication Practices and Their Academic Discipline

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev	Rank	Decision
1	Our principal and teachers clearly explain school rules and expectations to us.	3.42	0.76	1	A
2	Important information about discipline and school activities is well communicated to students.	3.35	0.80	2	A
3	We are allowed to express our concerns freely to teachers or the principal.	3.20	0.83	3	A
4	Communication between students and school authorities helps to reduce misunderstanding.	3.16	0.84	4	A
5	When teachers discuss disciplinary issues with us, we learn to behave better.	3.09	0.87	5	A
Aggregate (M & SD)		3.24	0.82		A

Data in Table 2 reveal that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with an aggregate mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.82. This shows that students agreed that effective communication practices enhance their academic discipline. The result suggests that when school authorities provide clear information about school rules, maintain open communication channels, and listen to students' concerns, it promotes understanding, cooperation, and obedience. Hence, good communication within the school community contributes significantly to students' self-control and compliance with school regulations.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Motivation Practices and Their Academic Discipline

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Our teachers and principal praise students who behave well and perform excellently.	3.38	0.79	1	A
2	Rewards and recognition encourage us to obey school rules.	3.31	0.81	2	A
3	When we are appreciated for good behaviour, we are more serious with our studies.	3.25	0.84	3	A

4	Motivated students are more disciplined in class and during school activities.	3.17	0.83	4	A
5	The school gives prizes or awards to students who show good conduct.	3.09	0.86	5	A
Aggregate (M & SD)		3.24	0.83		A

Data in Table 3 show that all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with an aggregate mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.83. This indicates that students agreed that motivation practices are positively connected to their academic discipline. The result suggests that when schools recognize and reward students for good behaviour and academic performance, it encourages them to remain obedient, punctual, and hardworking. Thus, motivation serves as an important management strategy for promoting discipline and academic focus among students in public secondary schools.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Enforcement of School Rules and Their Academic Discipline

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Our school has clear rules and regulations that guide students' behaviour.	3.41	0.77	1	A
2	Students who break school rules are disciplined appropriately.	3.34	0.81	2	A
3	Enforcement of rules helps students to behave well in school.	3.27	0.82	3	A
4	Teachers and prefects monitor students to ensure rules are obeyed.	3.20	0.84	4	A
5	When school rules are applied fairly, students respect authority.	3.16	0.86	5	A
Aggregate (M & SD)		3.28	0.82		A

Data in Table 4 reveal that all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with an aggregate mean of 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.82. This indicates that students agreed that enforcement of school rules is closely related to their academic discipline. The result suggests that when school rules are clearly stated, fairly enforced, and consistently applied, students become more respectful, obedient, and focused on their studies. Therefore, fair and firm enforcement of school rules serves as a strong mechanism for maintaining discipline and order in public secondary schools.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that supervision practices have a significant positive relationship with students' academic discipline in public secondary schools. This implies that when school administrators and principals carry out regular supervision of classroom instruction, teachers' punctuality, and students' conduct, it helps maintain orderliness, punctuality, and adherence to school rules. Effective supervision fosters accountability among teachers and students and promotes an atmosphere of discipline conducive to learning. The findings are in consonance with the study of Adeyemi (2016), who posited that principals' supervisory activities and leadership practices significantly enhance students' discipline and moral conduct in schools. Similarly, Oboegbulem (2018) affirmed that consistent supervision improves teacher performance and students' adherence to school norms, thereby strengthening

academic discipline. These studies collectively highlight that supervision is a management tool through which administrators ensure that school operations align with institutional objectives and behavioural expectations.

The findings of the study revealed that effective communication practices are strongly associated with students' academic discipline in public secondary schools. The results indicate that open channels of communication between school management, teachers, and students promote understanding of school policies and behavioural expectations. When school rules are clearly communicated and feedback mechanisms are maintained, students are more likely to internalize acceptable conduct and demonstrate greater respect for authority. The findings are in consonance with the study of Nnabuo (2015), who posited that clear communication practices in schools enhance students' behavioural adjustment and reduce cases of indiscipline. Similarly, Okeke (2016) reported that when principals communicate effectively with teachers and students, it fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and commitment to school norms. These studies affirm that communication is a vital aspect of management that shapes students' attitudes, clarifies expectations, and sustains academic discipline.

The findings of the study revealed that motivation practices are significantly linked to students' academic discipline in public secondary schools. This indicates that when teachers and students receive encouragement, recognition, and incentives for positive behaviour and academic performance, they tend to maintain discipline and focus on achieving educational goals. Motivation practices, such as verbal praise, awards, or leadership opportunities, inspire learners to comply with school rules and take responsibility for their actions. The findings are in consonance with the study of Oboegbulem (2018), who posited that motivational practices contribute to students' commitment to discipline and improved performance in schools. Similarly, Ofojebe (2017) emphasized that schools that implement effective motivational strategies, such as recognition of punctuality and academic excellence, experience fewer cases of indiscipline. These studies underscore that motivation enhances students' self-regulation and aligns their behaviour with institutional standards.

The findings of the study revealed that enforcement of school rules has a significant relationship with students' academic discipline in public secondary schools. The results suggest that consistent and fair application of school rules helps maintain discipline, as students understand that inappropriate behaviour attracts corresponding consequences. When enforcement is transparent and impartial, it strengthens the authority of school management and fosters compliance with institutional regulations. The findings are in consonance with the study of Kaweesi, Wamiti, Nabitula, and Muweesi (2023), who posited that consistent enforcement of discipline policies reduces cases of misconduct and improves students' behavioural outcomes. Similarly, Lumadi (2024) observed that schools that apply disciplinary measures fairly and consistently maintain higher levels of student discipline and academic commitment. These findings highlight that the enforcement of school rules serves as a behavioural control mechanism, ensuring that students respect authority and contribute to a harmonious learning environment.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of this study imply that effective school management practices are essential for maintaining students' academic discipline. Regular supervision ensures accountability among teachers and learners, while clear communication fosters understanding of school rules. Motivation encourages positive behaviour, and fair enforcement of school regulations promotes respect for authority. Therefore, principals, teachers, and policymakers must recognize that disciplined learning environments depend largely on how well these management practices are implemented to enhance students' moral and academic growth.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has contributed to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools, particularly within Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State. It has demonstrated that supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement of school rules are key management components that collectively promote discipline and responsible behaviour among students. The study has also expanded the understanding of how administrative efficiency influences behavioural outcomes in secondary education. Furthermore, it fills a contextual gap by offering localized insights into how school management practices operate in rural public schools, thereby serving as a useful reference for educational planners, administrators, and researchers who seek to strengthen school discipline through effective management strategies.

Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between school management practices and students' academic discipline in public secondary schools in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area, Imo State. Based on the findings, it was concluded that effective management practices play a crucial role in promoting students' academic discipline. Specifically, regular supervision, effective communication, motivation, and consistent enforcement of school rules collectively contribute to maintaining order, encouraging punctuality, and ensuring compliance with school regulations. The study further established that when supervision is properly carried out, teachers and students demonstrate greater accountability, leading to improved discipline. Similarly, open communication channels between principals, teachers, and students promote understanding and adherence to institutional norms. Motivational practices that recognize and reward positive behaviour strengthen students' commitment to discipline, while the fair and consistent enforcement of school rules reinforces acceptable conduct and deters misconduct. Therefore, it can be concluded that a disciplined learning environment in public secondary schools depends largely on the extent to which school management effectively implements these administrative practices. A strong culture of supervision, communication, motivation, and enforcement provides the foundation for academic success and moral development among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should strengthen supervision practices by ensuring regular classroom visits, monitoring of teacher punctuality, and observation of student behaviour to promote accountability and discipline across the school.
2. School authorities should enhance communication channels within schools through regular meetings, notice boards, student forums, and feedback mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders understand school rules and behavioural expectations.
3. Motivational strategies should be integrated into school administration by recognizing both teachers and students who exhibit good conduct, punctuality, and academic excellence. This can be done through awards, commendations, and public acknowledgment to encourage others to emulate such behaviour.
4. Principals should enforce school rules consistently and fairly, without bias or favouritism, to sustain respect for authority and foster a sense of justice and discipline among students.
5. The Ministry of Education should organize regular capacity-building workshops for school administrators and teachers on effective management strategies for promoting discipline and creating supportive learning environments.

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