

## STAFF CONDUCT IN RELATION TO STUDENTS AND MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTHEAST ZONE, NIGERIA

**ABUBAKAR MUSA<sup>1</sup>**

Department of Science Education,  
Faculty of Education, Federal University, Wukari, Nigeria  
E-Mail: [abubakarmusa@fuwukari.edu.ng](mailto:abubakarmusa@fuwukari.edu.ng)

**BALA BAKWAI KWASHABAWA<sup>2</sup>**

Department of Educational Foundation,  
Faculty of education and extension services,  
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria  
E-Mail: [bakwaiba@gmail.com](mailto:bakwaiba@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*Staff conduct in educational institutions is a very significant indicator of managerial effectiveness. Staff who have a significant influence in shaping students and directing their academic success, must exhibit appropriate conduct in order to accomplish their jobs effectively. This study investigates the relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The total population of the study comprises 669 staff which is made up of 79 management staff, 446 academic staff and 144 non-academic staff. Sample size of 234 staff were determined using Research Advisors (2006). The researchers employed purposive sampling technique in selecting the universities and random sampling technique was used in selecting the participants. The study utilized two instruments: Staff Conduct Questionnaire (SCQ) which was designed by the researchers and has reliability index of 0.82 and Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ) with reliability index of 0.79. The questionnaires were administered and data obtained were analysed using frequency, percentages, mean to answer the research questions while, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis. It was found that there was significant positive relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria. It was recommended that school management should ensure that the high level of staff conduct in relation to students is sustained and also improved upon by ensuring that staff and students avoid involvement in an unethical relationship with the opposite sex.*

**Keywords:** Staff conduct, students, Managerial Effectiveness, University, Education

### Introduction

Staff conduct within educational institutions stands as a pivotal indicator of managerial effectiveness, as highlighted by Nzulwa (2014). The influential role of staff in shaping student success demands their adherence to appropriate conduct to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Amadi and Amadi (2020) underscore the importance of teachers upholding sound professional conduct, fostering public trust in the teaching profession. Nonetheless, Nzulwa notes discrepancies between expected behavior and the actual conduct of lecturers or non-teaching staff in educational settings. The conduct exhibited by academic or non-academic staff in their interactions with students, colleagues, management, and the community could significantly impact managerial effectiveness within these institutions.

Emphasizing staff conduct is crucial for student success, as asserted by Barile (2023). Establishing strong connections with students plays a pivotal role in their academic and social development, contributing to a positive classroom atmosphere. Barile further delineates effective managerial traits that involve creating supportive work environments, motivating staff, and accomplishing organizational objectives. In this context, understanding the correlation between staff conduct concerning students and managerial effectiveness becomes paramount. Effective managers in federal universities within Nigeria's Northeast Zone must foster positive work environments, even amid challenges, to motivate staff and maintain the delivery of high-quality education.

Managerial effectiveness, in this context, encompasses several facets: the incorporation of civil rights violation issues in staff and student handbooks, the organization of frequent awareness programs on tortious liabilities, engagement of legal experts in disciplinary committees, review of staff handbooks, enforcement against those accountable for tortious liabilities, and fostering satisfactory relationships between staff, students, management, colleagues, and the community.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Staff misconducts in educational institutions have become very rampant, for example, Njoku (2021) reported that a senior lecturer from University of Nigeria, Nsukka was suspended for allegedly impregnating a student and threaten her life. This act is a gross misconduct. This ugly situation seems to be wide spread in Nigeria and Northeast in particular. Virtually no part of the world may be absolutely immune from staff misconduct.

Perhaps the numerous cases of gross misconduct kept reoccurring at different levels in Nigerian educational institutions due to poor staff conduct and managerial ineffectiveness? In view of the foregoing, this study examined the relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. The findings of this study will have important implications for policy makers and administrators in federal universities in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria. By understanding staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness, they can develop strategies to improve both student success and organizational performance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Specifically the objectives of the study are;

- i. To find out the level of staff conduct in relation to students in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria.
- ii. To find out the level of managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria.
- iii. To find out the relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

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## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the level of staff conduct in relation to students in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the level of managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria?

## Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis is as follows:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

This study was anchored in Human Relation Theory, notably Chester Barnard's theory expounded in 1938 in "The Functions of the Executive," stressing cooperation, communication, and worker satisfaction as pivotal for organizational success. This theory underscores the significance of valuing and respecting employees to bolster productivity and motivation (Manga & Ogundele, 2019). Human relations theorists assert that workers, with social and emotional needs, thrive in environments of respect, dignity, and supportive communities.

Barnard's human relations theory is founded on several assumptions outlined by Omodan, Tsetetsi, and Dube (2020, Para. 14). It posits organizations as social systems where individuals interact, influenced by each other's behavior. The theory emphasizes that people are motivated by both economic and social needs, seeking fair compensation while desiring recognition for their contributions to a team. Effective communication stands as a cornerstone for organizational success, building trust and acceptance—the foundation of managerial authority. Informal groups also wield an influence on employee behavior within an organization.

Manga and Ogundele expound on Barnard's principles within this theory, highlighting the significance of cooperation, trust-building through communication, and fostering a positive work environment to enhance productivity and motivation. In the context of this study, human relation theory holds relevance as it stresses effective communication and conducive working environments—key principles crucial for managerial effectiveness concerning staff conduct in relation to students within federal universities in the Northeast, Nigeria.

Related studies provide valuable insights. Wainaina, Mwisukha, and Rintaugu's (2015) study evaluating academic staff conduct in Kenyan public universities showcases varying behaviors observed by students, aligning with the present study's focus on staff conduct but differing in approach and location. Ahmad's (2021) investigation of Tafila Technical University professors' compliance with the Code of Ethics aligns with the current study's focus on staff conduct and ethical considerations. Similarly, Adekunle's (2020) research on academic staff ethical orientation in Nigerian public universities complements this study's focus on staff conduct, differing mainly in

location. Tyagi and Moses' (2017) evaluation of Organizational Justice, Organizational Culture, and Managerial Effectiveness correlates with this study's focus on managerial effectiveness, albeit differing in its scope, concentrating on organizational justice and culture.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a correlational research design and targeted the management staff of federal universities in Northeast Nigeria, alongside academic and non-academic staff from the faculties of education and law within these universities. The study encompassed a range of management positions such as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Provosts of medical colleges, Registrars, Bursars, Chief Librarians, Deans of students' affairs, Directors of various departments (Works, Physical Planning, Academic Planning, Research and Innovations, ICT), as well as Coordinators of remedial studies and Heads of Departments within the faculties of education and law. The total study population comprised 669 individuals, consisting of 79 management staff, 446 academic staff, and 144 non-academic staff.

The sample was summarized in Table 1 as follows:

**Table 1: Sample of the Study**

S/N	Educational Institutions	Management Staff	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	Total
1.	University of Maiduguri, Borno State	8	67	20	95
2.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, University, Bauchi, Bauchi State	6	37	11	54
3.	Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State	6	33	6	45
4.	Federal University Wukari, Taraba State	7	19	14	40
	Total	27	156	51	234

**Source:** From Various institutions on Table 1 (2023).

The researchers selected one federal university from each of the four states within the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. These states were categorized into clusters based on their historical associations: old Borno State (now Borno and Yobe States), old Bauchi State (now Bauchi and Gombe States), and old Gongola State (now Adamawa and Taraba States). One state was randomly chosen from each cluster, and an additional state was included based on the presence of universities offering education and law programs. The study focused on management staff, academic, and non-academic personnel within faculties of education and law, totaling 669 participants. A sample size of 234 was derived using Research Advisor (2006) from the total population. The selection of federal universities in the Northeast Zone for this research was purposive, employing a proportionate sampling technique to ensure equitable representation across institutions. Within each university, random sampling techniques were

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employed to select participants, ensuring unbiased and equal opportunities for all subjects to be part of the sample, thereby facilitating more generalizable findings.

The study utilized two structured questionnaires as the instrument for data collection. The first instrument, titled: “Staff Conduct Questionnaire” (SCQ) which served as the instrument for collecting data on staff conduct in relation to students in federal universities in Northeast, Nigeria. The SCQ was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was structured on a 5–point Likert’s scale model ranging from 1 point = Very Unsatisfactory (VU = 0.00-1.49); 2 points = Unsatisfactory (U =1.50-2.99); 3 points = Satisfactory (S = 3.00-3.49); 4 points = Highly Satisfactory (HS =3.50-4.49); and 5 points = Extremely Satisfactory (ES =4.50-5.00). The mean score of 3.00 points and above on the scale of 5.0 was used as cut-off for satisfactory staff conduct while below 3.00 mean is unsatisfactory staff conduct in federal universities in Northeast, Nigeria.

The second questionnaire, Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ) was adapted from Ajewole (2017) which was used to collect data on managerial effectiveness in federal universities in North East, Nigeria. These questionnaire was structured on a 5–point Likert’s scale model ranging from 1 point = Very Ineffective (VI =0.00-1.49); 2 points = Ineffective (I =1.50-2.99); 3 points = Effective (E =3.00-3.49); 4 points = Highly Effective (HE = 3.50-4.49); and 5 points = Extremely Effective (EE = 4.50-5.00). The mean score of 3.00 points and above on the scale of 5.0 was used as cut-off for effective managerial effectiveness while below 3.00 points is managerial ineffectiveness.

The content validity of the SCQ was determined by validating the instrument by experts in the fields of education. The content validity of the MEQ was also determined by validating the instrument by experts in the fields of education. Thus, the validity of the two instruments were ensured.

The reliability of the Staff Conduct Questionnaire (SCQ) was assessed through a pilot test in a chosen tertiary educational institution in Yobe State, utilizing the test-retest method over a five-week interval. The obtained scores from the pilot study were subjected to a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis, resulting in a correlation coefficient of 0.82, affirming the SCQ's reliability.

Similarly, the Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ), adapted from Ajewole (2017) with an initial reliability index of 0.84, underwent a pilot test alongside the SCQ using the test-retest method. The computed scores from this pilot test, analyzed through PPMC, yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.79, validating the reliability of the MEQ.

Data collection involved the distribution of questionnaires, facilitated by four trained research assistants. These assistants were briefed on the study's objectives to effectively communicate them to participants, aiding in their comprehension and accurate response to the questionnaire. The questionnaires, totaling 234 each for SCQ and MEQ based on the sample size, were administered and collected directly to ensure a high return rate.

For data analysis, a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics was employed. Descriptive data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, utilizing percentage and mean calculations. Inferential analysis, specifically the hypothesis testing, was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

## Results

### Research Question One

What is the level of staff conduct in relation to students in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria? This is presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Level of staff conduct in relation to students in Federal Universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria**

S/N	Items Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Extent	Decision
1	Staff respect students' constitutional right of fair hearing	74%	3.70	HS	Satisfactory
2	Staff respect students' constitutional right of freedom of expression	75%	3.73	HS	Satisfactory
3	Staff respect students' constitutional right of freedom of association	77%	3.98	HS	Satisfactory
4	Staff do not engage in personal or sexual relationship with students	64%	3.20	S	Satisfactory
5	Staff avoid threatening students in anyway	71%	3.57	HS	Satisfactory
6	Staff avoid unethical physical contact with students of opposite sex	72%	3.10	S	Satisfactory
7	Staff avoid sharing students' confidential information with others	71%	3.55	HS	Satisfactory
Grand Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		71%	3.55	HS	Satisfactory

**Source:** Field Survey, (2023).  
n=231

**Key:**

*VU = Very Unsatisfactory*

*U = Unsatisfactory*

*S = Satisfactory*

*HS = Highly Satisfactory*

*ES = Extremely Satisfactory*

The analysis of data presented in Table 2 demonstrates that items one, two, three, five, and seven exhibit high mean scores, specifically scoring 3.70, 3.73, 3.98, 3.57, and 3.55 respectively. Conversely, items four and six display moderate scores of 3.20 and 3.10 respectively. Additionally, Table 2 indicates a grand mean rating of 71% for staff conduct in relation to students, portraying an overall mean score of 3.55. This signifies a highly satisfactory level of staff conduct concerning interactions with students within federal universities in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What is the level of managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria? This is presented on Table 3

**Table 3: Level of Managerial Effectiveness in Federal Universities in Northeast, Nigeria**

S/N	Items Statement	Rate	$\bar{X}$	Level	Decision
1	Issues of tortious liabilities are adequately and clearly spelt out and documented in staff and students handbooks	51%	2.56	I	Unsatisfactory
2	Legal experts are involved in drafting and reviewing school handbooks to ensure that tortious liabilities are adequately captured	75%	3.74	HE	Satisfactory
3	Enlightenment programmes such as workshop and seminars are organized to create awareness on matters of tortious liabilities in schools	66%	3.30	E	Satisfactory
4	School administration created an open door leadership climate which allows staff and students to freely report cases of tortious liabilities they are subjected to	66%	3.31	E	Satisfactory
5	School administrators have appointed a standing disciplinary committee to promptly investigate cases of tortious liabilities and make recommendations	75%	3.74	HE	Satisfactory
6	Legal experts are appointed as members of the disciplinary committee to ensure legality is adhered to in tortious liabilities decisions	77%	3.84	HE	Satisfactory
7	Recommendations and decisions of the disciplinary committee on tortious liability cases are promptly implemented or executed	71%	3.55	HE	Satisfactory
8	Staff who are convicted of tortious liabilities are promptly punished without fear or favour	62%	3.09	E	Satisfactory
9	School employs multimedia approach in awareness creation on tortious liabilities	47%	2.35	I	Unsatisfactory
10	School administrator championed multi-ministerial approach to curriculum change to accommodate tortious liabilities in teacher education programmes	50%	2.49	I	Unsatisfactory
11	Staff satisfactorily relate with students	79%	3.94	HE	Satisfactory
12	Staff satisfactorily relate with school management	81%	4.06	HE	Satisfactory
13	Staff satisfactorily relate with colleagues	72%	3.58	HE	Satisfactory
14	Staff satisfactorily relate with the community	77%	3.85	HE	Satisfactory
Grand Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		68%	3.38	E	Satisfactory

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

n=231

Key:

VI = *Very Ineffective*

I = *Ineffective*

*E = Effective*

*HE = Highly Effective*

*EE = Extremely Effective*

The data analysis from Table 3 highlights that items two, five, six, seven, 11, 12, 13, and 14 exhibit high mean scores, specifically scoring 3.74, 3.74, 3.55, 3.94, 4.06, 3.58, and 3.85 respectively. On the other hand, items three, four, and eight demonstrate moderate mean scores, scoring 3.30, 3.31, and 3.09 respectively. Conversely, items one, nine, and 10 display low mean scores, obtaining scores of 2.56, 2.35, and 2.49 respectively. Moreover, Table 3 indicates a grand mean rating of 68% for the level of managerial effectiveness, representing an overall mean score of 3.38. This suggests a moderately satisfactory level of managerial effectiveness within federal universities in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

### **Hypothesis One (Ho<sub>1</sub>)**

There is no significant relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested and presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Relationship between staff conduct in relation to students and Managerial Effectiveness in Federal Universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>r-Cal</b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Staff conduct in relation to students	231	3.5473	.9080	229	0.385	0.000	Rejected
Managerial Effectiveness	231	3.3850	.5456				

**Source:** Field Survey, (2023).

Table 3 exhibits the number of participants (n) = 231, and a correlation value (r) = 0.385 and P-value of 0.000. The null hypothesis will be rejected when the P-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Testing the hypothesis at alpha level = 0.05, the P-value is less than the alpha value, 0.000 < 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between staff cordial relationship with students and managerial effectiveness. This means that staff conduct in relation to students increases as well as the level of managerial effectiveness also increases in federal universities in Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Based on the results and analysis, the key findings can be summarized as follows:

1. A significantly high level of staff conduct in relation to students was observed in federal universities within the Northeast Zone, Nigeria.
2. The study identified a moderately satisfactory level of managerial effectiveness within these federal universities.



3. Notably, there was a significant positive correlation between staff conduct concerning students and the level of managerial effectiveness in the federal universities within the Northeast Zone of Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings section sequentially presents the study's findings alongside previous research. The initial finding indicates a significantly high level of staff conduct concerning students in federal universities within the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. This aligns with Ahmad's (2021) observations on professors' adherence to ethical standards in their interactions with students. However, Wainaina, Mwisukha, and Rintaugu (2015) reported varying moral standards among academic staff, revealing areas of acceptable behavior and shortcomings. Notably, Table 1's items 4 and 6 highlight moderate ratings in staff avoidance of unethical physical contact and involvement in sexual relationships with students of the opposite sex.

The second finding illustrates a moderately satisfactory level of managerial effectiveness within federal universities in the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. This finding resonates with Tyagi and Moses's (2017) work. Nonetheless, Table 2's items 9 and 10 depict low mean scores, indicating less utilization of multimedia approaches in awareness creation on tortious liabilities and the limited use of a multi-ministerial approach to integrate tortious liabilities into teacher education programs.

The third finding underscores a positive correlation between staff conduct toward students and managerial effectiveness in federal universities in the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. As staff conduct improves, so does managerial effectiveness. This correlation aligns with Adekunle's (2020) discovery of a significant relationship between ethical orientation and academic staff's professional conduct. Plausible explanations for this association include the creation of a positive learning environment through respectful interactions, resulting in heightened student engagement and better academic outcomes. Moreover, staff committed to delivering quality education tend to support colleagues and engage more in their professional growth, ultimately enhancing institutional managerial effectiveness. The consistency in these findings likely stems from their common focus on educational institutions.

These findings hold critical implications for federal universities in the Northeast Zone of Nigeria. University administrators should prioritize fostering a culture of positive staff conduct toward students. This could be achieved by providing staff with training on student rights and responsibilities, instituting clear and concise policies related to staff conduct, and establishing recognition systems for staff exhibiting consistent positive conduct toward students.

### **Limitations and Future Direction**

This study, while contributing to the knowledge base on staff conduct and managerial effectiveness in education, faces several limitations. Primarily, it focused solely on federal universities in Nigeria's Northeast Zone, omitting state-owned and private institutions. Future studies might benefit from including these other types of universities for a more comprehensive view. Secondly, being a cross-sectional study, it might have been influenced by common technique biases. To address this, future

research could employ longitudinal designs to gather more extensive and potentially more reliable data. Lastly, although this study utilized a quantitative approach, future research might consider a mixed-method approach, integrating interview data and Focus Group Discussions to enrich the depth of understanding.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this study sought to investigate the correlation between staff conduct concerning students and managerial effectiveness within federal universities. The findings highlight a satisfactorily high level of staff-student relationship alongside a moderately satisfactory level of managerial effectiveness across federal universities in Nigeria's Northeast Zone. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was observed between staff-student relations and managerial effectiveness. However, it's important to note that the study, limited to exploring correlations, does not establish causation between these variables.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were offered:

1. School management should ensure that the high level of staff conduct in relation to students is sustained and also improved upon by ensuring that staff and students avoid involvement in an unethical relationship with the opposite sex. This can be done by creating awareness on the legal implications of engaging in sexual relations between staff and students among other strategies of enhancing healthy staff-students relationship in schools.
2. Government should employ multimedia in awareness creation regarding staff conduct and as well initiate inter-ministerial campaign to include tortious liabilities management in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.
3. Federal universities management should develop management strategies to improve staff conduct in the federal universities in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria.

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