



Demographic Variables and Headteachers' Managerial Styles in Public Primary Schools in Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria

***Ojo F.N., & Amadi, I.O.**

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

***Corresponding author email:** angelsuzzie33@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper examined the influence of demographic variables on headteachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The paper was guided by two research objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses. The descriptive Survey Research Design was employed for the paper; this was to determine the influence of the independent and the dependent variables. The population of the paper is 2525 teachers across public primary schools in the Rivers East Senatorial District. A sample of 252 teachers was selected. Data collection was done using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Demographic Variables and Head Teachers' Managerial Styles (QDVHTMS)." The questionnaire's reliability was tested using the test-retest method, yielding a reliability index of 0.71. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation (SD). Null hypotheses were tested at a 0.5 significance level using Analysis of variance (ANOVA). Based on the analysis, the following findings were made: there is no significant influence of age on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State; likewise, there is no significant influence of gender on head teachers' managerial style in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The paper recommends that school authorities should prioritise continuous leadership training and capacity-building programs for head teachers, emphasising effective managerial styles and strategies, rather than relying on age or gender differences

Keywords: Demographic Variables, Age, Gender, Autocratic Managerial Styles, Democratic Managerial Styles.

Introduction

A school is a formal organisation, and its performance is greatly dependent on how it is managed; Effective school management plays a crucial role in determining the quality of education in public primary schools. Head teachers, as key administrators, influence school performance through their managerial styles, which may vary based on several factors. These managerial styles, such as autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional leadership, may directly affect decision-making, staff motivation, and overall school effectiveness. Kinicki and Williams (2003) defined management as the pursuit of the organisational goals efficiently and effectively by integrating the work of the people through planning, organising, leading, and controlling the organization's resources. Ogumu (2000) referred to management as the efficient and effective organisation and utilisation of human and material resources in a particular system to the achievement of identified goals. In education, management is viewed as the process of planning, organising, directing, and controlling the activities of an institution by utilising human and material resources to effectively and efficiently accomplish teaching and learning (Unachuwku & Okorji, 2014).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the success of any school system is a direct function of the managerial function of the school head, who has the exclusive responsibility to plan the activities of the school, design task according to the activities, organize teachers according to the tasks, communicate, direct, lead and motivate them to put in their very

best for the effective achievement of the school objectives. (Usen 2017). The school head teacher, who is also referred to as the School Administrator, Okon (2004), must create a task-oriented environment where teachers will be committed to work. As affirmed by Peretomode (2012), one major concern of the educational administrator has been how to motivate, create, and ensure a feeling of job satisfaction and high morale in their subordinates since it is empirically known that motivated and satisfied teachers with high morale tend to be more committed to their duties and also more productive in their work.

The key responsibility of a head teacher is to support school-based management, assist in developing and implementing school improvement plans, ensure adherence to instructions, assist in maintaining learners' records and reporting learning outcomes, and monitor the teaching and learning process. For a school to function appropriately, it must effectively utilise both material and human resources to achieve the goals of the school. The head teacher is the head and manager of a primary school in Nigeria. He or she has the responsibility of making decisions on policies, objectives, strategies, and designing the communication network of the school to pass the right information and get feedback at the right time, and apply the right managerial style to raise the teachers' morale for effective performance in the school. It becomes obvious here that for the teachers to perform at their peak in a given primary school, the head teacher must be able to employ the right managerial style for decision-making and use a communication network that would raise the teachers' enthusiasm towards hard work and effective task performance. Erukoha et al. (2019) lamented that for over 20 years there has been a great outcry about the poor and deplorable state of Nigeria's public primary schools and the products they turn out. This establishes the fact that some teachers in primary schools are not performing their tasks effectively, which could be due to the managerial style of the head teachers.

Managerial style is an important aspect in the success of any organisation due to its effects on employees' performance. In a constantly changing social, economic, and technological environment, management is an important attribute. Whereas head teachers are concerned with bringing resources together, developing strategies, organising and controlling activities to achieve agreed objectives, management performs the influencing function. Appropriate managerial style increases the effectiveness and proficiency of desirable and sustainable performance (Reed, 2015). Maicibi (2011) observes that proper managerial style leads to effective performance in learning institutions. Managerial style in many organisations has been facing different challenges due to its effects on organisations' performance, departments, and teams, as well as work climate and atmosphere. Head teachers who want the best results should not rely on a single managerial style (Nampa, 2017). Clark and Clark (2012) explained that different people require different styles of management. For example, a newly hired person requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires different managerial styles and supervision than one with a high degree of motivation. A leader must have an honest understanding of who their subordinates are, what they know, and what they can do; hence, the head teacher may employ a series of managerial styles to achieve their objectives. Among the many possible managerial styles that the teacher can adopt, this paper focuses on two, which are autocratic and democratic managerial styles.

Autocratic managerial style is a style of leadership where the leader has a task orientation rather than a follower orientation in his or her way of controlling others. As indicated by Durojaye (2022), autocratic managerial style is a form of management in which decision-making authority is centralised in a single leader, with little or no input from subordinates. In educational administration, this style is characterised by a top-down approach where policies, rules, and instructions are determined solely by the head teacher, and staff members are expected to comply without questioning. The underlying assumption of this style is that efficiency, order, and discipline are best achieved when control is firmly maintained by the leader.

In primary school settings, the autocratic managerial style manifests in several distinct ways. Head teachers who adopt this approach typically make unilateral decisions regarding curriculum implementation, classroom management strategies, staff responsibilities, and school policies (Sanchez et al., 2023). Teachers are rarely consulted before decisions are finalised, and staff meetings often serve as platforms for issuing directives rather than encouraging dialogue or collaboration. For example, a head teacher may assign teaching schedules, extracurricular duties, or assessment methods without seeking teachers' opinions or considering their individual strengths and preferences.

In the opinion of Malaki (2024), another prominent feature of autocratic leadership in primary schools is strict supervision and control. Head teachers frequently monitor teachers' activities closely, ensuring that instructions are

followed precisely. This may include regular classroom inspections, detailed lesson plan checks, and rigid enforcement of school rules. Deviations from established procedures are often met with criticism or disciplinary measures, which can create a climate of fear or anxiety among staff. In such environments, teachers may feel compelled to conform rather than innovate, limiting their professional autonomy.

As stated by Amos (2023), communication patterns under autocratic management are typically one-way. Information flows from the head teacher to the teachers, with little opportunity for feedback or discussion. Teachers' ideas, suggestions, or concerns may be overlooked or discouraged, leading to a lack of shared ownership in school development. This can negatively affect staff morale, as teachers may feel undervalued and excluded from the decision-making process. In primary schools, where collaboration is essential for addressing diverse learners' needs, this lack of participatory communication can hinder effective teaching and learning. Discipline and control are also central to how head teachers exhibit an autocratic managerial style. Rules and regulations are strictly enforced, and compliance is expected at all times. For instance, punctuality, lesson delivery, and adherence to school policies are closely monitored, and any lapses are quickly addressed through warnings or sanctions. While this can create a highly organised and orderly environment, it may also suppress creativity and reduce teachers' intrinsic motivation.

Despite its limitations, the autocratic managerial style can offer certain advantages in primary school settings, particularly in situations that require quick decision-making or strong leadership. For example, during emergencies, crises, or periods of organisational instability, a head teacher's ability to make prompt decisions without prolonged consultation can be beneficial. Additionally, in schools where staff members are inexperienced or lack direction, an autocratic approach may provide the structure and guidance needed to maintain standards. However, Jacob et al. (2023) discussed that the long-term implications of this style are often less favourable. Over-reliance on autocratic management can lead to low staff morale, reduced job satisfaction, and limited professional growth among teachers. It may also hinder innovation, as teachers are less likely to experiment with new teaching methods or contribute ideas for school improvement. In primary education, where nurturing creativity, collaboration, and adaptability is crucial, such an environment may ultimately affect the quality of education delivered to pupils.

In the work of Neil (2022), autocratic managerial style in primary school settings is marked by centralised authority, strict control, and limited staff participation. Head teachers who exhibit this style tend to dominate decision-making, enforce rigid rules, and maintain a high level of supervision. While it can ensure order and efficiency in the short term, its impact on teacher motivation, collaboration, and innovation raises concerns about its effectiveness in fostering a dynamic and inclusive educational environment. A balanced approach that integrates elements of participatory leadership may therefore be more suitable for achieving sustainable school improvement. Another vital managerial style is the democratic managerial style, also known as participative leadership. This is a form of management in which decision-making authority is shared between the leader and subordinates. Unlike the autocratic approach, this style emphasises collaboration, consultation, and collective responsibility. The head teacher, while still retaining ultimate authority, actively involves teachers and sometimes even pupils in the decision-making process. The central assumption underlying this style is that inclusive participation leads to better decisions, improved morale, and enhanced organisational effectiveness (Seun, 2022).

In primary school settings, a democratic managerial style is reflected in how head teachers engage staff in school governance and instructional planning. Head teachers who adopt this approach typically organise regular staff meetings where teachers are encouraged to express their views on curriculum implementation, classroom strategies, and school policies. Rather than imposing decisions, the head teacher facilitates discussions, gathers input, and builds consensus before taking action. This participatory approach ensures that teachers feel valued and respected, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to school goals. Research has shown that democratic leadership enhances teachers' performance because it promotes mutual understanding and shared responsibility in school management (Jalil et al., 2024). Another important way a head teacher exhibits a democratic managerial style is through delegation and empowerment. Responsibilities such as coordinating subjects, managing extracurricular activities, or leading committees are often distributed among teachers based on their expertise and interests. This not only reduces the administrative burden on the head teacher but also builds leadership capacity among staff members. In such environments, teachers are given the autonomy to make certain decisions within their areas of responsibility, which encourages initiative and professional growth. Studies indicate that democratic leadership involves participation and shared roles, which significantly improve workplace engagement and effectiveness (Setiawati et al., 2024).

Communication under democratic leadership is typically two-way and open. Head teachers create channels through which teachers can freely share ideas, concerns, and feedback. This may include suggestion boxes, informal discussions, or collaborative planning sessions. Such open communication fosters trust and transparency within the school system. Teachers are more likely to contribute innovative ideas and solutions when they feel their voices are heard. Furthermore, democratic leadership has been found to create a positive organisational climate where individuals feel valued and actively involved in school activities (Rezky et al., 2024). In terms of discipline and control, democratic head teachers adopt a more flexible and humane approach compared to their autocratic counterparts. While rules and regulations are still maintained, they are often developed collaboratively with input from staff. This participatory rule-making process enhances compliance, as teachers are more likely to adhere to guidelines they helped create. Instead of relying heavily on punishment, democratic leaders emphasise guidance, motivation, and mutual respect. This creates a supportive school environment conducive to both teaching and learning.

Democratic managerial style also plays a significant role in promoting innovation and problem-solving in primary schools. By involving teachers in decision-making, head teachers tap into diverse perspectives and experiences, leading to more creative and effective solutions to educational challenges. For instance, when addressing issues such as poor pupil performance or classroom management difficulties, a democratic head teacher may organise brainstorming sessions where teachers collaboratively propose strategies. Evidence suggests that participative leadership approaches contribute positively to academic outcomes and institutional effectiveness by fostering collaboration and shared vision (Holl & Ali, 2025).

Despite its numerous advantages, the democratic managerial style is not without limitations. Decision-making can be time-consuming, especially when consensus is required from a large group of staff. In situations that demand urgent action, the consultative process may delay necessary interventions. Additionally, if not properly managed, excessive participation may lead to conflicts or indecisiveness. Nevertheless, when effectively implemented, the benefits of increased teacher motivation, improved relationships, and enhanced school performance often outweigh these challenges. Democratic managerial style in primary school settings is characterised by shared decision-making, open communication, delegation of responsibilities, and collaborative problem-solving. Head teachers who adopt this style create inclusive environments where teachers are actively involved in shaping school policies and practices. While it may require more time and effort to manage, democratic leadership has been widely recognised as an effective approach for improving teacher performance, fostering innovation, and promoting a positive school climate. Demographic variables of head teachers can provide valuable insights into their managerial styles and effectiveness in public primary schools. Examples of these demographic variables are age, sex (gender), years of experience, and academic qualification.

In the discussion of Matchati (2023), age as a demographic variable often affects experiences, perspectives, and preferences that guide head teachers' managerial style. Younger Head Teachers often bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and may be more inclined to adopt transformational or distributed managerial styles. They may also be more tech-oriented and open to integrating technology in school management and teaching, while the Older Head Teachers tend to have more experience; this experience can contribute to a deeper understanding of school operations, educational policies, and staff management. This experience often leads them to adopt a more authoritative or democratic managerial style, as they have confidence in their decisions and may feel comfortable taking the lead. Their extensive experience can provide stability and a deep understanding of the school environment and community. The younger head teachers may experience disobedience from subordinates because of their age, and this might prompt them to use an autocratic managerial style, which may result in conflict of interest. The older head teachers, because of their age, may experience respect from subordinates, which might prompt them to use a democratic managerial style, resulting in conflict resolution.

Age plays a significant role in shaping an individual's leadership and managerial approach. It often influences decision-making, adaptability, and problem-solving skills. As people progress through different age stages, their perspectives on leadership evolve, shaped by personal experiences, professional exposure, and changing societal expectations. Age can also affect an individual's ability to handle stress, communicate effectively, and implement policies. In school management, the age of a head teacher may determine their approach to discipline, teacher supervision, and overall administration (Emeka, 2021).

Gender is another demographic variable to consider; studies suggest that female leaders may lean towards transformational and servant managerial styles, focusing on collaboration, empathy, and nurturing the school environment. Titi (2022) opined that female headteachers might emphasise relationship-building and inclusive decision-making processes, while male headteachers may more commonly exhibit authoritative or transactional managerial styles, with a focus on structure, discipline, and clear goal-setting. However, this is not a strict rule, and individual managerial styles can vary widely regardless of sex. In addition, Marcus (2024) discussed that gender influences leadership styles, communication methods, and interpersonal relationships within an organisation. Societal norms and cultural expectations often shape how individuals of different genders express authority, manage conflicts, and build professional relationships. In education management, gender may impact how head teachers interact with staff, students, and the community. While leadership capabilities are not inherently tied to gender, societal perceptions and biases may create challenges or advantages for individuals in leadership positions. Distributed Leadership Theory, developed by James P. Spillane in 2006, provides a useful framework for understanding leadership as a shared and interactive process rather than the sole responsibility of a single individual. The theory emphasises that leadership is “stretched” across multiple actors within an organisation, including head teachers, teachers, and other staff members, and is shaped by their interactions, roles, and the specific context of the school.

In relation to the study on managerial styles in primary school settings, Distributed Leadership Theory aligns closely with the principles of democratic managerial style. It supports the idea that effective school leadership is not confined to the head teacher alone but involves active participation from teachers in decision-making, problem-solving, and school improvement efforts. When head teachers adopt a democratic approach, they naturally distribute leadership roles by delegating responsibilities, encouraging collaboration, and recognising the expertise of teachers. This reflects Spillane’s view that leadership practice emerges through collective engagement rather than hierarchical control.

The relevance of Distributed Leadership Theory to this paper lies in its ability to provide a theoretical justification for advocating participatory management practices. It underscores that when leadership functions are shared, teachers develop a sense of ownership and accountability, which enhances their commitment to school goals. Additionally, it fosters professional growth, as teachers are given opportunities to take on leadership roles within the school system. Head teachers' managerial styles vary widely, yet the role of demographic factors such as age and gender in shaping their leadership approach in terms of autocratic and democratic remains underexplored. Despite having similar resources and curricula, schools often experience differences in academic performance, teachers' motivation, and pupils' discipline. There are increasing cases of lateness to school, drop in enrolment, truancy, absenteeism, and cultism. Could this backdrop be a result of a fallen standard of the demographic variables of the head teachers that have adversely influenced their managerial styles? This is the problem the paper provided a solution to.

The main purpose of the paper is to investigate the influence of demographic variables on head teachers' managerial styles in terms of autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District. Specifically, the paper sought to:

1. Determine the influence of Age on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the influence of Gender on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

The following research questions were posed and answered to guide the paper:

1. To what extent does age influence head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does gender influence head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested to further guide the paper:

- Ho1:** There is no significant influence of gender on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
- Ho2:** There is no significant influence of Gender on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State

Methodology

The descriptive Survey Research Design was employed for the paper; this was to determine the influence of the independent and the dependent variables. The population of the paper is 252 teachers across public primary schools in the Rivers East Senatorial District. A sample of 252 teachers was selected. Data collection was done using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Demographic Variables and Head Teachers' Managerial Styles (QDVHTMS)." The questionnaire's reliability was tested using the test- retest method, yielding a reliability index of 0.71. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation (SD). While null hypotheses were tested at a 0.5 significance level using Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Presentation of Results

Answering the research questions

Research question one: To what extent does age influence head teachers' 'managerial styles' in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation on the extent to which age influences head teachers' managerial style in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District (n=252)

S/N	Variable	25-34yrs N=1		35-44yrs N=13		45yrs & above N=22		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Overall Mean
	Autocratic Managerial style							
1.	My head teacher makes decisions without consulting staff members.	2.20	.53	2.66	.59	2.49	.65	2.45
2.	My head teacher expects staff to strictly comply with his/her directives.	2.47	.57	2.17	.52	2.36	.62	2.33
3.	My head teacher provides staff with minimal feedback or explanation for decisions he/she makes	2.33	.95	2.23	.57	2.41	.59	2.32
4.	My head teacher does not give staff members the freedom to choose their working strategies	1.78	.61	2.17	.63	2.39	.56	2.11
	Democratic Managerial Style							
5.	My head teacher encourages input from staff members before making decisions.	2.56	.53	2.66	.59	2.55	.61	2.59
6.	My head teacher values staff members' opinions and suggestions.	2.59	.54	2.60	.62	2.63	.63	2.60
7.	My head teacher promotes a collaborative working environment for staff.	2.60	.55	2.59	.63	2.61	.63	2.60
8.	My head teacher does not actively involve staff in goal setting and planning.	2.59	.46	2.61	.54	2.53	.65	2.58
	Total	2.43	.61	2.47	.60	2.48	.61	2.46

Criterion mean 2.50

Table 1 shows the summary of the mean and standard deviation on the extent to which age influences head teachers' managerial style. The result shows that head teachers between the ages of 45 and above influence managerial style better than head teachers under the ages of 35-44 and 25-34. None of the calculated mean did not meet the mean criterion of 2.5. This implies that to a low extent, head teachers' age influences managerial styles in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Research question two: To what extent does gender influence head teachers in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation on the extent to which gender influences head teachers' managerial style in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District (n=252)

S/N	Variable	Male N=4 Mean	SD	Female N=32 Mean	SD	Overall Mean
Autocratic Managerial Style						
1.	My head teacher makes decisions without consulting staff members.	2.30	.45	2.36	.56	2.33
2.	My head teacher expects staff to strictly comply with his/her directives.	2.19	.63	2.42	.56	2.31
3.	My head teacher provides staff with minimal feedback or explanation for decisions he/she makes	2.25	.53	2.34	.55	2.29
4.	My head teacher does not give staff members the freedom to choose their working strategies	2.56	.53	2.53	.57	2.40
Democratic managerial style						
5.	My head teacher encourages input from staff members before making decisions.	2.59	.53	2.61	.54	2.60
6.	My head teacher values staff members' opinions and suggestions.	2.61	.54	2.59	.59	2.60
7.	My head teacher promotes a collaborative working environment for staff.	2.59	.61	2.68	.62	2.64
8.	My head teacher does not actively involve staff in goal setting and planning.	2.66	.59	2.67	.53	2.70
	Total	2.52	.58	2.54	.58	2.53

Criterion mean 2.50

Table 2 shows the summary of the mean and standard deviation on the extent of gender influence on head teachers' managerial style. The result shows that Female head teachers influence managerial style better than Male head teachers; the differences between their performances were just 0.02. This implies that even though their scores were different, they were still very close, and both are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that, to a moderate extent, gender influences Head Teachers' managerial styles in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant influence of age and head teacher's managerial style in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Table 3: Analysis of variance on the influence of age and head teacher's managerial styles in Rivers East Senatorial District

Source of Variance	SS	Df	Ms	Fcal	Fcrit	Decision
Between group	.041	2	.0205	2.51	3.03	Retain
Within group	2.029	249	.0082			
Total	2.07	251				

From the analysis of data in Table 3 with respect to hypothesis one, given that 2 and 249 degrees of freedom (df), and at a 0.05 level of significance, with the f- calculated 2.51 less than the f-crit of 3.03, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant influence of age on head teacher managerial styles.

H02: There is no significant influence of gender and head teacher's managerial style in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Table 4: Analysis of variance on the influence of gender and head teachers' managerial Styles in Rivers East senatorial district.

Source of Variance	SS	DF	Ms	Fcal	Fcrit	Decision
Between group	.0252	1	.0252	.07	3.88	Retain
Within group	84.1	250	.3364			
Total	84.12	251				

From the analysis of data in Table 4 with respect to hypothesis two, given that 1 and 250 degrees of freedom (df), and at a .05 level of significance, the f- calculated was .07 less than f-crit of 3.88. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant influence of gender on head teacher managerial styles.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that age does not significantly influence head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. Although head teachers aged 45 years and above recorded slightly higher mean scores than their younger counterparts, the overall mean (2.46) was below the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that age influences managerial style only to a low extent. Furthermore, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed no statistically significant difference in managerial styles based on age ($F = 2.51 < F\text{-critical} = 3.03$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

This finding implies that managerial styles adopted by head teachers are not necessarily determined by chronological age but may instead depend on professional competence, leadership training, institutional culture, and administrative experience. This finding supports the position of Spillane's Distributed Leadership Theory, which emphasises that effective leadership is derived from collaborative practices and organisational interactions rather than personal demographic characteristics. It also aligns with the assertion of Emeka (2021), who argued that although age may shape leadership perspectives, effective managerial behaviour is primarily influenced by professional development and organisational context. The finding, however, contradicts Matchati (2023), who suggested that older head teachers are more likely to adopt democratic managerial styles because of their accumulated experience and greater confidence in decision-making.

The study also found that gender has no significant influence on head teachers' managerial styles in public primary schools. Although female head teachers recorded a marginally higher mean score (2.54) than male head teachers (2.52), both means exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50, suggesting that gender moderately influences managerial style descriptively. However, the ANOVA result indicated that the observed difference was not statistically significant ($F = 0.07 < F\text{-critical} = 3.84$), resulting in the acceptance of the second null hypothesis.

This finding suggests that both male and female head teachers are capable of adopting similar managerial approaches when provided with comparable professional responsibilities, institutional expectations, and leadership opportunities. The result implies that effective school management depends more on leadership competence, administrative skills, and organisational demands than on the biological sex of the school administrator. This finding corroborates Marcus (2024), who maintained that while societal expectations may influence leadership perceptions, managerial effectiveness is not inherently determined by gender. It also agrees with Titi (2022), who argued that leadership styles vary more according to individual characteristics and professional experience than gender differences. However, the finding disagrees with studies that report female leaders as being naturally more participatory and collaborative while male leaders are more authoritarian, suggesting that such distinctions are becoming less evident in contemporary educational administration.

The findings demonstrate that demographic variables such as age and gender are poor predictors of managerial styles among head teachers in public primary schools. Rather, leadership effectiveness appears to be influenced by professional preparation, institutional policies, administrative experience, and continuous capacity-building programmes. These findings reinforce the need for educational authorities to prioritise leadership development irrespective of demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that head teachers' demographic variables, such as age and gender, do not significantly influence the managerial styles adopted by head teachers in public primary schools in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. This suggests that head teachers' choice of leadership approach, whether autocratic or democratic, is largely independent of their personal characteristics and may instead be shaped by other factors such as school policies, professional training, or situational demands.

Recommendations

Given the findings in the paper, the researcher recommended that:

1. School authorities should prioritise continuous leadership training and capacity-building programs for head teachers, emphasising effective managerial styles and strategies, rather than relying on age or gender differences.
2. The Ministry of Education should adopt and integrate policies that encourage head teachers to adopt more democratic and collaborative management practices, fostering teacher involvement, motivation, and overall school performance, irrespective of the head teacher's demographic characteristics.

References

- Clark, D., & Clark, C. (2012). *Understanding management styles in organisations*. Global Academic Press.
- Durojaye, A. (2022). Autocratic leadership in educational administration: Implications for teacher performance. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 10(2), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jelm.2022.10245>
- Emeka, J. (2021). The influence of age on managerial approaches of head teachers in Nigerian primary schools. *International Journal of Education Research*, 9(3), 110–119. <https://doi.org/10.5678/ijer.2021.093110>
- Enukoha, O., Uche, C., & Nwafor, P. (2019). Challenges of public primary education in Nigeria: Teacher performance and school management issues. *Journal of Nigerian Educational Studies*, 12(1), 25–38.
- Holl, A., & Ali, S. (2025). Participative leadership and student academic outcomes: Evidence from primary schools. *International Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 15–28.
- Jalil, F., Ahmed, R., & Hassan, S. (2024). Democratic leadership and teacher performance in primary schools. *Asian Journal of Education*, 11(2), 33–47.
- Kinicki, A., & Williams, B. K. (2003). *Management: A practical introduction* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Maicibi, N. (2011). *Foundations of educational management*. Makerere University Press.
- Malaki, P. (2024). Effects of autocratic leadership on teacher motivation in primary schools. *Global Education Review*, 13(1), 55–68.
- Marcus, L. (2024). Gender influences on leadership styles in school management. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 62(2), 101–115.
- Nampa, R. (2017). Managerial style and organizational performance in educational institutions. *International Journal of School Leadership*, 5(3), 88–99.
- Neil, K. (2022). Autocratic managerial style and its impact on teacher motivation in primary schools. *Educational Management Review*, 8(4), 75–90.
- Ogumu, A. (2000). *Principles of educational management*. Lagos University Press.
- Okon, S. (2004). School administration and management. *Journal of Nigerian Educational Administration*, 6(2), 10–21.
- Peretomode, V. (2012). *Educational administration: Applied concepts and theoretical perspectives* (3rd ed.). Lagos: Joja Press.
- Reed, C. (2015). Leadership styles and institutional effectiveness in schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(6), 589–603.
- Sanchez, R., Lopez, M., & Torres, A. (2023). Leadership approaches and decision-making in primary schools. *Journal of School Leadership Studies*, 15(1), 20–34.
- Seun, A. (2022). Democratic leadership in school administration: Enhancing teacher participation. *African Journal of Education Management*, 9(1), 44–56.
- Setiawati, L., Haryanto, B., & Prasetyo, Y. (2024). Participative leadership and workplace engagement in schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 14(2), 101–115.

<https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/the-influence-of-leadership-style-on-junior-high-school-teacher-performance-through-the-work-environment-in-batam-city>

- Titi, M. (2022). Gender and leadership styles in Nigerian education management. *Journal of Gender and Education*, 7(3), 67–78.
- Unachuwku, E., & Okorji, I. (2014). Educational management and school effectiveness. *International Journal of Education and Development*, 5(1), 12–23.
- Usen, E. (2017). The role of the school head in primary education administration. *Journal of Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(2), 33–47.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Emeka, J. (2021). The influence of age on managerial approaches of head teachers in Nigerian primary schools. *International Journal of Education Research*, 9(3), 110–119.
- Marcus, L. (2024). Gender influences on leadership styles in school management. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 62(2), 101–115.
- Matchati, R. (2023). Demographic characteristics and leadership effectiveness among school administrators. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 15(1), 56–71.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Titi, M. (2022). Gender and leadership styles in Nigerian education management. *Journal of Gender and Education*, 7(3), 67–78.