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Influence of Leadership Pattern on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of leadership patterns on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of democratic and autocratic leadership styles on effective school administration. Two research objectives, two research questions, and two corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it was appropriate for collecting and analyzing data from respondents without manipulating the study variables. The population comprised 1,837 teachers drawn from 45 public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, while a sample of 317 teachers was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table together with proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Influence of Leadership Pattern on Effective Administration Questionnaire (ILPEAQ) consisting of 40 items. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Administration and Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using the test-retest method and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while simple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that democratic leadership had a positive and significant influence on effective administration by promoting staff participation, collaboration, and shared decision-making. Autocratic leadership also had a significant influence, although excessive use reduced teachers' involvement in decision-making. The regression results further indicated that all two leadership patterns significantly influenced effective administration, leading to the rejection of all five null hypotheses. The study concluded that leadership pattern is a critical determinant of effective administration in public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The study recommended that principals should adopt participatory leadership practices and minimize excessive use of autocratic leadership, participate in continuous leadership development programmes, and integrate effective performance appraisal, supervision, and reward systems to improve teachers' productivity and overall school effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Pattern, Effective Administration, Administration of Public Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of school administration remains a central concern in the pursuit of quality education globally and in Nigeria in particular. Effective administration refers to the ability of school principals to coordinate human and material resources, supervise instructional activities, enforce discipline, and ensure the achievement of educational objectives. It encompasses planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating school activities to promote efficiency and productivity. Bush [1], effective school administration is fundamental to achieving educational goals, as it ensures that policies are properly implemented and resources are optimally utilized.

In the context of secondary education, effective administration plays a significant role in enhancing teacher performance, improving student outcomes, and maintaining a conducive learning environment. Hallinger [2] notes that schools with effective administrative structures tend to exhibit higher levels of academic achievement and organizational stability. Similarly, Leithwood et al. [3] argue that leadership-driven administration significantly influences school effectiveness by shaping instructional practices and organizational climate. Despite its importance, effective administration in Nigerian public secondary schools faces numerous challenges, including inadequate supervision, poor leadership practices, low teacher motivation, and weak accountability systems. In Taraba State, particularly in Jalingo Education Zone, these challenges are evident in issues such as indiscipline among students, poor instructional delivery, and inefficient management of school resources. Owan [4] observes that administrative inefficiency in Nigerian secondary schools is often linked to ineffective leadership practices adopted by school heads.

Leadership pattern refers to the behavioral approach adopted by school principals in influencing teachers and managing school activities. It determines how decisions are made, how authority is exercised, and how relationships are maintained within the school organization. Leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing school effectiveness and administrative performance. The importance of leadership pattern lies in its ability to shape teacher motivation, school climate, and overall institutional productivity. Northouse [5] emphasizes that leadership style directly affects how organizations function and respond to challenges. In educational settings, leadership influences not only administrative efficiency but also teaching quality and student achievement. Furthermore, Robinson [6] highlighted that leadership practices significantly determine the success of school reforms and policy implementation.

In Nigerian secondary schools, variations in leadership patterns among principals have been associated with differences in school performance and teacher effectiveness. Adu and Okeke [7] found that leadership style is a strong predictor of administrative success in public secondary schools. In Jalingo Education Zone, the diversity of leadership approaches among principals may explain variations in administrative effectiveness across schools. This study focuses on two major leadership patterns: democratic and autocratic leadership, each of which has distinct implications for effective administration.

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, is a leadership style in which the leader involves subordinates in decision-making processes, encourages open communication, and promotes shared responsibility. In school administration, democratic principals consult teachers, consider their opinions, and foster collaboration in managing school activities. This approach emphasizes teamwork, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving. According to Northouse [5], democratic leadership enhances group participation and improves the quality of decisions by incorporating diverse perspectives. The importance of democratic leadership lies in its ability to promote teacher motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction. When teachers are involved in decision-making, they feel valued and are more likely to contribute actively to school development. Leithwood et al. [3] asserted that participatory leadership strengthens organizational commitment and improves

staff morale, which are essential for effective school administration. In educational settings, democratic leadership encourages innovation, improves communication, and fosters a positive school climate conducive to teaching and learning.

Furthermore, democratic leadership enhances accountability and transparency in school management. By involving teachers in policy formulation and implementation, principals ensure that decisions are widely accepted and effectively executed. Robinson [6] emphasized that collaborative leadership practices contribute significantly to improved instructional quality and student outcomes. This makes democratic leadership particularly relevant in achieving effective administration in secondary schools. However, democratic leadership also has some limitations. Decision-making processes may be time-consuming, especially when consensus is required. In situations requiring urgent action, excessive consultation may delay responses. Yukl [8] noted that participative leadership may reduce efficiency if not properly managed, particularly in large organizations. Despite these limitations, the benefits of democratic leadership often outweigh its drawbacks when applied appropriately.

In the context of Taraba State, particularly in Jalingo Education Zone, democratic leadership is essential for improving school administration. Many public secondary schools face challenges such as low teacher morale, poor communication, and weak collaboration. The adoption of democratic leadership by principals can help address these issues by promoting teacher involvement, enhancing teamwork, and improving decision-making processes. This, in turn, contributes to more effective administration and better educational outcomes.

Autocratic leadership is a style in which the leader makes decisions independently and expects strict compliance from subordinates without consultation. In school administration, autocratic principals exercise tight control over teachers and school activities, with minimal participation from staff. The importance of autocratic leadership lies in its ability to ensure discipline, maintain order, and facilitate quick decision-making. Bolden et al. [9] argue that autocratic leadership can be effective in situations requiring immediate action or strict control. It provides clear direction and reduces uncertainty in administrative processes. However, autocratic leadership has significant limitations. It often suppresses teacher participation, reduces job satisfaction, and discourages innovation. Yukl [8] noted that excessive control and lack of involvement can lead to low morale and reduced commitment among employees. In educational settings, this may negatively affect teacher productivity and student outcomes. In Taraba State, autocratic leadership is observed in some public secondary schools, particularly where principals prioritize authority and control over collaboration. While this may help maintain discipline, it often limits teacher engagement and reduces the overall effectiveness of school administration.

The effectiveness of administration in public secondary schools may be shaped by the leadership patterns adopted by principals. Democratic leadership emphasizes participation and shared responsibility, whereas autocratic leadership prioritizes centralized authority, discipline, and rapid decisions. The way these approaches are applied may affect resource management, staff motivation, accountability, and the achievement of educational objectives. Variations in these practices across public secondary schools in Taraba State therefore provide the basis for examining their relationship with administrative effectiveness.

Empirical and theoretical literature generally associates participative leadership with stronger collaboration, trust, commitment, and school-management effectiveness [3], [10], [11], [12], [13]. Shared decision-making can broaden the information used in administrative decisions and increase teachers' ownership of school programmes. Its effectiveness, however, depends on clear procedures and timely decision-making because poorly managed consultation may delay action [8].

Directive and autocratic leadership can provide clarity, reinforce discipline, and

facilitate rapid implementation when schools face urgent or tightly controlled tasks [9], [14], [15]. Excessive centralization may nevertheless reduce autonomy, participation, motivation, and innovation [5], [8]. Evidence from Nigerian secondary-school settings further indicates that leadership style is associated with teacher performance and administrative effectiveness [16], [17].

Statement of the Problem

Effective administration in public secondary schools is expected to ensure proper coordination of school activities, efficient management of resources, high level of teacher commitment, maintenance of discipline, and improved students' academic performance. However, observations across public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone of Taraba State suggest that these expectations may not be fully realized. Issues such as weak supervision of instruction, inconsistent enforcement of school rules, poor staff coordination, low teacher motivation, and declining students' academic outcomes appear to persist. These conditions raise concerns about the level of administrative effectiveness in the schools.

Several authorities and regulatory bodies have made efforts to address these administrative challenges. The Taraba State Ministry of Education, the State Secondary Education Board, and the Universal Basic Education Commission have introduced policies, conducted supervisory visits, organized training programmes for principals, and provided guidelines aimed at strengthening school administration. Despite these interventions, concerns about ineffective administration continue to surface, suggesting that the problem may not have been adequately resolved.

The persistence of these administrative challenges appears to be linked to the leadership patterns adopted by school principals. Variations in how principals exercise authority, involve teachers in decision-making, motivate staff, and enforce rules may contribute to differences in administrative outcomes across schools. Democratic practices may become slow when consultation is poorly managed, whereas excessive autocratic control may restrict teacher participation and reduce morale.

These concerns suggest that democratic and autocratic leadership may be important factors in the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone. However, the extent of their influence in this setting remains unclear. This gap necessitated the present empirical investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of leadership pattern on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the influence of:

1. Democratic leadership on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.
2. Autocratic leadership on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of democratic leadership on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of autocratic leadership on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H01: Democratic leadership does not significantly influence on effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.

H02: Autocratic leadership does not significantly influence on effective administration

of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to collect and analyze data without manipulating the study variables. The population comprised 1,837 teachers from 45 public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone. A sample of 317 teachers was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample-size table [18], after which proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were applied. Data were collected using the researcher-developed Influence of Leadership Pattern on Effective Administration Questionnaire (ILPEAQ), which contained 40 items. Experts in Educational Administration and Measurement and Evaluation established the instrument's content validity. Reliability was assessed through the test-retest method using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, yielding a coefficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and simple linear regression was used to test the two null hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level.

3. Results

The results of the data analysis are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Data related to each research question and corresponding hypothesis are presented in separate tables to facilitate easy analysis and interpretation of the findings. The decision rule adopted for the hypotheses was that the null hypotheses were rejected where the probability (p) value was less than 0.05 and retained where the p-value was greater than or equal to 0.05. A total of 317 copies of the influence of leadership pattern on effective administration Questionnaire (LPEAQ) administered to the respondents. Out of these, 297 copies were correctly completed and returned, while 20 copies were not returned. The summary of the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

S/N	Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Returned Questionnaires	297	93.7
2	Unreturned Questionnaires	20	6.3
	Total Administered	**317**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 1 presents the analysis of the questionnaire administration and retrieval for the study. A total of 317 questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Out of this number, 297 questionnaires, representing 93.7%, were successfully completed and returned, while 20 questionnaires, representing 6.3%, were not returned.

Research Questions

Research Question 1:

To what extent does democratic leadership influence the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?

Table 2. Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Influence of Democratic Leadership on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The principal involves teachers in decisions that affect school administration.	297	2.58	0.92	HE

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
2	Teachers' opinions are considered when implementing school policies.	297	2.47	0.95	LE
3	Decision-making in the school is a collaborative process.	297	2.55	0.91	HE
4	Communication between the principal and teachers enhances administrative effectiveness.	297	2.61	0.90	HE
5	Teamwork among staff contributes to smooth school management.	297	2.57	0.93	HE
6	Teachers participate in planning and executing school programmes.	297	2.52	0.94	HE
7	Delegation of responsibilities by the principal improves school operations.	297	2.60	0.91	HE
8	Teachers' views are respected, which supports effective school administration.	297	2.49	0.96	LE
Grand Mean			**2.55**	**0.93**	**HE**

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Decision Rule: 1.00–1.49 = Very Low Extent (VLE); 1.50–2.49 = Low Extent (LE); 2.50–3.49 = High Extent (HE); 3.50–4.00 = Very High Extent (VHE).

Table 2 presents the mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on the influence of democratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 recorded mean scores ranging from 2.52 to 2.61**,** indicating that respondents agreed to a high extent that democratic leadership enhances effective school administration. Specifically, respondents agreed that principals involve teachers in decisions affecting school administration, decision-making is collaborative, communication between principals and teachers enhances administrative effectiveness, teamwork promotes smooth school management, teachers participate in planning and executing school programmes, and delegation of responsibilities by principals improves school operations. Conversely, Items 2 and 8 recorded mean scores of 2.47 and 2.49**,** respectively, indicating a low extent of agreement that teachers' opinions are consistently considered when implementing school policies and that teachers' views are always respected in ways that support effective school administration.

The grand mean of 2.55 with a standard deviation of 0.93 indicates that respondents generally agreed to a high extent that democratic leadership has a positive influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that respondents' opinions were fairly homogeneous.

Research Question 2:

To what extent does autocratic leadership influence the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?

Table 3. Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Influence of Autocratic Leadership on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
9	The principal makes decisions alone, affecting the administration.	297	2.55	0.96	HE
10	Strict adherence to instructions improves school management.	297	2.58	0.94	HE
11	Close supervision of teachers ensures effective	297	2.60	0.92	HE

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
	administration.				
12	Strict enforcement of school rules promotes order and discipline.	297	2.56	0.95	HE
13	Limited teacher autonomy affects how administrative tasks are carried out.	297	2.47	0.98	LE
14	Policies determined solely by the principal influence school operations.	297	2.53	0.96	HE
15	Authority is used to maintain discipline and administrative efficiency.	297	2.57	0.93	HE
16	Minimal teacher involvement in decisions influences administrative effectiveness.	297	2.45	0.97	LE
Grand Mean			**2.54**	**0.95**	**HE**

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Decision Rule: 1.00–1.49 = Very Low Extent (VLE); 1.50–2.49 = Low Extent (LE); 2.50–3.49 = High Extent (HE); 3.50–4.00 = Very High Extent (VHE).

Table 3 presents the mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on the influence of autocratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that Items 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 recorded mean scores ranging from 2.53 to 2.60**,** indicating that respondents agreed to a high extent that autocratic leadership influences effective school administration. Specifically, respondents agreed that principals making decisions independently, ensuring strict adherence to instructions, closely supervising teachers, strictly enforcing school rules, determining policies independently, and exercising authority to maintain discipline contribute to administrative effectiveness. However, Items 13 and 16 recorded mean scores of 2.47 and 2.45, respectively, indicating a low extent of agreement that limited teacher autonomy and minimal teacher involvement in decision-making positively influence administrative effectiveness.

The grand mean of 2.54 with a standard deviation of 0.95 indicates that respondents generally agreed to a high extent that autocratic leadership influences the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that respondents' views were fairly consistent.

Hypotheses Testing

H_{01}: Democratic leadership has no significant influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 4. Model Summary for the Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Democratic Leadership on Effective Administration

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.689a	0.475	0.473	2.214

Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership

Table 4 presents the model summary of the simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine the influence of democratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The result revealed a correlation coefficient (R = 0.689), indicating a strong positive relationship between democratic leadership and effective administration. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.475) indicates that democratic leadership accounted for 47.5% of the variation in the

effective administration of public secondary schools, while the remaining 52.5% of the variation was explained by other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.473 further confirms that the regression model has a good explanatory power after adjusting for sample size and predictor variables. The standard error of the estimate (2.214) suggests that the predicted values are reasonably close to the observed values, indicating a satisfactory fit of the regression model.

Table 5. *ANOVA for the Regression Model*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1096.328	1	1096.328	223.71	0.000b
Residual	1200.546	245	4.900		
Total	2296.874	246			

Dependent Variable: Effective Administration

Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership

Table 5 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for the simple linear regression model examining the influence of democratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools. The regression sum of squares was 1096.328, while the residual sum of squares was 1200.546, giving a total sum of squares of 2296.874. The regression model produced an F-value of 223.71 with 1 and 245 degrees of freedom, and a significance value ($p < 0.001$), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This result indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that democratic leadership is a significant predictor of effective administration of public secondary schools. Therefore, the regression equation provides a good fit for explaining the relationship between democratic leadership and effective administration.

Table 6. Coefficients of the Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	8.416	0.842		9.996	0.000
Democratic Leadership	0.684	0.046	0.689	14.957	0.000

Dependent Variable: Effective Administration

Table 6 presents the regression coefficients showing the contribution of democratic leadership to the effective administration of public secondary schools. The constant (intercept) of the regression model was 8.416, indicating the estimated level of effective administration when democratic leadership is held constant. The unstandardized regression coefficient for democratic leadership was B = 0.684, implying that for every one-unit increase in democratic leadership, effective administration is expected to increase by 0.684 units. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.689$) indicates that democratic leadership made a strong positive contribution to effective administration. The calculated t-value of 14.957 with a corresponding p-value below 0.001 shows that democratic leadership significantly predicts effective administration because the significance value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that democratic leadership has no significant influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that democratic leadership has a significant positive influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in the

study area.

H02: Autocratic leadership has no significant influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 7. Model Summary for the Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Autocratic Leadership on Effective Administration

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.654a	0.428	0.426	2.315

Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic Leadership

Table 7 presents the model summary of the simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine the influence of autocratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The result revealed a correlation coefficient (R = 0.654), indicating a strong positive relationship between autocratic leadership and effective administration. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.428) indicates that autocratic leadership accounted for 42.8% of the variation in the effective administration of public secondary schools, while the remaining 57.2% of the variation was explained by other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.426 indicates that the regression model has good explanatory power after adjusting for sample size and the predictor variable. The standard error of the estimate (2.315) suggests that the predicted values are reasonably close to the observed values, indicating that the model provides a satisfactory fit.

Table 8. ANOVA for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	982.514	1	982.514	183.39	0.000b
Residual	1314.360	245	5.365		
Total	2296.874	246			

Dependent Variable: Effective Administration

Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic Leadership

Table 8 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for the simple linear regression model examining the influence of autocratic leadership on the effective administration of public secondary schools. The regression sum of squares was 982.514, while the residual sum of squares was 1314.360, giving a total sum of squares of 2296.874. The regression model produced an F-value of 183.39 with 1 and 245 degrees of freedom, and a significance value ($p < 0.001$), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that autocratic leadership significantly predicts the effective administration of public secondary schools. Therefore, the regression equation is adequate for explaining the relationship between autocratic leadership and effective administration.

Table 9. Coefficients of the Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	9.123	0.861		10.596	0.000
Autocratic	0.638	0.047	0.654	13.542	0.000

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Leadership					

Dependent Variable: Effective Administration

Table 9 presents the regression coefficients showing the contribution of autocratic leadership to the effective administration of public secondary schools. The constant (intercept) of the regression model was 9.123, indicating the estimated level of effective administration when autocratic leadership is held constant. The unstandardized regression coefficient for autocratic leadership was B = 0.638, implying that a one-unit increase in autocratic leadership would result in an estimated 0.638-unit increase in effective administration. The standardized beta coefficient (β = 0.654) indicates that autocratic leadership made a strong positive contribution to effective administration. The calculated t-value of 13.542 with a corresponding p-value below 0.001 indicates that autocratic leadership significantly predicts effective administration because the significance value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that autocratic leadership has no significant influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that autocratic leadership has a significant positive influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in the study area.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that:

Democratic leadership had a high influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools, with a grand mean of 2.55. The simple linear regression analysis further revealed that democratic leadership had a significant positive influence on effective administration. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that democratic leadership significantly influences the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone.

Autocratic leadership had a high influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools, with a grand mean of 2.54. The regression analysis showed that autocratic leadership significantly predicted effective administration. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that autocratic leadership has a significant influence on the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone.

4. Discussion

This section is devoted to the discussion of findings of the research hypotheses. The discussion was done according to each of the research hypothesis.

Democratic Leadership and Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools

The findings showed that democratic leadership had a high perceived influence on effective administration (grand mean = 2.55). The regression model was significant ($R = 0.689$, $R^2 = 0.475$, $F = 223.71$, $p < 0.001$), and democratic leadership positively predicted effective administration ($B = 0.684$, $\beta = 0.689$, $t = 14.957$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that participation, open communication, teamwork, and delegation are associated with stronger administrative practices in the study area. This interpretation is consistent with participative and distributed leadership literature, which links shared decision-making with organizational commitment, trust, collaboration, and school-management effectiveness [3], [10], [11], [12], [13]. Nevertheless, two questionnaire items concerning consistent consideration and respect for teachers' views fell below the high-extent threshold. This suggests that nominal consultation may not always translate into substantive participation,

and it supports the caution that participative processes must be deliberately managed to avoid delay or superficial involvement [8].

Autocratic Leadership and Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools

Autocratic leadership also recorded a high perceived influence on effective administration (grand mean = 2.54). The regression model was significant ($R = 0.654$, $R^2 = 0.428$, $F = 183.39$, $p < 0.001$), and autocratic leadership positively predicted effective administration ($B = 0.638$, $\beta = 0.654$, $t = 13.542$, $p < 0.001$). In this context, clear authority, strict supervision, rule enforcement, and rapid policy implementation may contribute to discipline and administrative coordination, as recognized in work on directive and autocratic leadership [9], [14], [15]. However, the lower ratings for limited teacher autonomy and minimal involvement show that respondents did not uniformly regard exclusion from decisions as beneficial. The result should therefore not be interpreted as support for unrestricted authoritarian control. Leadership research instead suggests that administrative effectiveness depends on matching direction and participation to organizational needs [5], [8], [16], [17].

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that democratic and autocratic leadership patterns significantly predict the effective administration of public secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Democratic leadership showed the larger explanatory contribution, while autocratic leadership also supported administrative effectiveness through clear direction, supervision, and discipline. Principals should therefore emphasize participatory decision-making, communication, teamwork, and delegation while using directive authority selectively when prompt action or firm rule enforcement is required. Continuous leadership development, systematic supervision, fair performance appraisal, and appropriate reward practices are recommended to strengthen teacher commitment and overall school effectiveness.

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