



Influence of School Administrators' Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary School in Ebonyi State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of administrators' leadership styles on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all Physics teachers in the 233 public secondary schools across the three education zones: Abakaliki, Afikpo, and Onueke. A sample of 90 Physics teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire titled Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Physics Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (IPLSPTJPQ), validated by three experts from the Department of Science Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83 using test-retest. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that teachers are aware of their administrators' leadership styles, and that leadership styles significantly influence Physics teachers' job performance. Specifically, democratic leadership style enhanced job performance, while autocratic leadership style had adverse effects. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should be trained on effective use of democratic leadership styles and reduce autocratic tendencies to improve Physics teachers' job performance.

ARTICLE'S INFO

Article No.: 061326084

Type: Research

Full Text: [PDF](#), [PHP](#), [HTML](#), [EPUB](#), [MP3](#)

DOI: [10.15580/gjets.2025.1.061326085](https://doi.org/10.15580/gjets.2025.1.061326085)

Keywords: Autocratic leadership style, Democratic leadership, Physics teachers, Job performance, Secondary schools

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Article's QR code



INTRODUCTION

Physics is one of the fundamental branches of science, broadly described as the systematic investigation of the entire range of interactions between matter and energy. Omosewo (2013) described Physics as the science that deals with the study of matter, energy, motion, and force, emphasizing that its understanding is essential for technological advancement and national development. Serway & Jewett (2018) similarly characterized Physics as a scientific discipline that investigates the fundamental principles governing the universe through observation, experimentation, and mathematical modeling, while Young and Freedman (2020) described it as the branch of science concerned with the study of matter, energy, and their interactions, which helps explain natural phenomena ranging from the subatomic to the cosmic scale. Halliday, Resnick, & Walker (2021) further described Physics as the most fundamental of the natural sciences, providing the foundation for all other physical sciences and for technology through its laws, principles, and applications. Given this foundational status, Awokoya (2012) advocated for the development of a functional science curriculum in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Physics, arguing that the quality of a country's Physics education is a far better indicator of its technological potential than any other single index, including the size of its population. Ette (2012) similarly emphasized that no matter how much technical competence a nation imports or develops, a genuine technology culture cannot truly take root without a strong foundation in Physics. It is against this backdrop of Physics' centrality to national technological development that the quality of Physics teaching, and by extension the factors that shape Physics teachers' job performance, assumes considerable importance.

In Nigeria, education is regarded as a critical instrument for driving national development, as clearly articulated in the National Policy on Education, which outlines educational objectives addressing both individual and societal needs (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). To advance the nation's educational progress, this policy establishes specific goals and objectives that require effective implementation at the school level, and central to this implementation is the role of the school principal, whose administrative leadership is vital for the smooth running of secondary schools. Through effective leadership, principals create conditions that enable teachers to perform optimally on the job, which in turn contributes to improved student academic achievement (Ekeh et al., 2026). The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) therefore not only positions education as a tool for national development but also places direct responsibility on principals to provide leadership that enhances teacher effectiveness and learner outcomes (Eze et al., 2023). It is this direct linkage between principal leadership and teacher effectiveness, established at the policy level that provides the immediate context for examining how

principals' leadership styles specifically influence the job performance of Physics teachers.

The school principal, more than any other individual, is responsible for shaping the overall school climate and for the productivity and satisfaction attained by both students and staff. Ajayi & Ayodele (2022) opined that the type of leadership operating within an educational institution is one of the factors that plays a significant role in either enhancing the principal's managerial effectiveness or retarding the interest and commitment of individuals within the school system. Koontz (2019) argued that if school principals cannot rely on subordinates to contribute toward group goal accomplishment with zeal and confidence, there would be no need to develop the art of leadership in the first place, underscoring the necessity of leadership practices that boost teacher morale and enable them to serve at their maximum capability. Since the improvement of any educational system fundamentally depends on the promotion of effective teaching and learning, teachers are expected to be committed to facilitating the teaching process, and principals, in turn, must provide a conducive atmosphere that supports this commitment. Aghenta (2016) viewed the school principal as a leader who provides direction and expert advice on the development of teaching and learning within the school, with a duty to lead, guide, direct, and motivate both teaching and non-teaching staff toward the achievement of school goals and objectives. Without an appropriate leadership style, organizational growth and development would suffer, and teachers may become resentful, aggressive, insecure, and dissatisfied outcomes that bear directly on their willingness and capacity to perform effectively.

The style of leadership a manager chooses significantly influences their effectiveness as a leader (Olaleye, 2017). Lawal (2019) described leadership style as the method employed by a leader in governing the people under their charge to achieve organizational goals, while Idowu (2019) noted that the job of managing involves, among other things, the provision of leadership for staff and the coordination of both human and material resources to ensure the achievement of organizational goals. Within the school system specifically, the principal, as administrator, influences teachers toward the achievement of the school's goals and objectives. Okambe (2019) opined that leadership style represents a particular pattern of behavior applied by a leader to motivate subordinates toward organizational objectives. Adeyemi (2014) emphasized that leadership style occupies an important position in school administration, as the principal who controls school resources must deploy them toward the positive achievement of educational goals. Bush (2015) further argued that school leadership plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as shaping the broader school climate and environment. These perspectives collectively establish leadership style as a central and consequential variable in school administration, one

whose effects extend directly to the working conditions and performance of classroom teachers, including those teaching Physics.

Despite the policy mandate establishing principals' responsibility for fostering teacher effectiveness, concerns persist regarding principals' actual effectiveness in performing administrative and leadership functions, particularly in the domain of science education. The rapid expansion of the teaching workforce in Nigeria has heightened awareness across various sectors including universities, colleges, and secondary schools about the quality of school leadership (Ministry of Education, 2015). Principals are expected, through their daily conduct, to foster a school climate that promotes excellent teacher performance, with responsibilities encompassing the encouragement of leadership development, the empowerment of teams through responsible delegation, the building of professional rapport, the facilitation of instruction, the management of change, and the acceptance of ultimate accountability for school outcomes. Gardner (2016) asserted that leadership is "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the individual or leadership team." Northouse (2019) similarly defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal," emphasizing its interactive and goal-oriented character, while Yukl (2013) described leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives." Taken together, these definitions converge on the understanding that the leadership style adopted by a principal becomes a critical determinant of school effectiveness, staff relationships, and the achievement of organizational goals.

A principal's leadership style, more specifically, refers to the dominant behavioral pattern employed to influence teachers and direct school activities toward the attainment of academic objectives (Awoska, 2012). It represents the specific approach a school administrator uses to inspire, guide, and coordinate teachers, individually or in groups, in order to improve student learning, and it determines how principals interact with staff, make decisions, communicate expectations, and manage instructional processes. The underlying assumption is that the manner in which leadership is enacted directly shapes teacher motivation, job performance, and commitment to school goals (Awoska, 2012). Consequently, understanding and adopting appropriate leadership styles is essential for principals, especially in the context of science education, where effective leadership can help bridge persistent gaps in teacher quality, instructional delivery, and student achievement in subjects such as Physics. A leader's leadership style largely determines not only their overall effectiveness as a leader but also the quality of their relationships with people both within and outside the organization shaping how they plan to complete tasks, how they manage emergent crises, and how they mobilize community support when needed (Chrislip & Larson,

2015). Chrislip & Larson (2015) identified several distinct leadership philosophies, among which autocratic leaders insist on personally handling everything, maintaining complete control, making all decisions unilaterally, and rarely disclosing their reasoning to others. While multiple leadership styles exist in the broader literature, democratic and autocratic leadership philosophies are adopted as the focus of this study because they represent two of the most prevalent and diametrically opposed approaches encountered in school administration, and because the variety of administrative approaches employed across schools means that successful principals have consistently been characterized as effective leaders possessing distinctive and identifiable leadership qualities.

Research has shown that effective leaders define positions and task roles in ways that remove barriers to performance, promote group cohesion and team effort, and increase individual opportunities for satisfaction and advancement clarifying and setting goals together with subordinates, communicating effectively with them, assigning duties according to their abilities, skills, knowledge, and experience, and helping subordinates identify the best pathways toward achieving desired goals (Bunmi, 2015). Ayodele (2014) opined that the behavior of a leader is acceptable to subordinates only insofar as subordinates continue to perceive the leader as a source of personal opportunities to improve performance and satisfaction — a perspective that aligns closely with the concept of democratic leadership, in which leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve their full potential, foster positive relationships through opportunities for growth and development, and thereby maintain their acceptance as a source of personal advancement among staff. These contrasting leadership orientations one centered on centralized control and the other on participation and empowerment set the stage for examining their differential effects on teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Teacher effectiveness is a measure of the success of a teacher in carrying out institutional and other specified duties demanded by the nature of their position, entailing the proficiency and competence to display, in different situations, the behaviors necessary for the successful achievement of the school's objectives. In the same vein, the attainment of educational goals as stated in the National Policy on Education (2014) relies on teachers being sound in their areas of specialization, serving as a means of developing desirable behavior in learners, demonstrating competence in guiding the learning process, and being able to understand and relate appropriately with younger people. This underscores the point that, for educational goals and objectives to be attained, teachers must be qualified and productive in discharging their duties, without which any planned policy or system will fail to achieve its intended outcomes. Moreover, the production of quality teachers relies substantially on the principal's ability to motivate and coordinate them in carrying out their responsibilities, as teacher motivation plays a vital role in determining the success of a secondary school

manifesting in adequate preparation of lesson plans, punctuality, accurate record-keeping, effective classroom management, the maintenance of discipline among students, and the prompt setting and marking of assignments and examinations. The secondary school as an organization therefore cannot exist meaningfully without the principal and teachers who together perform all expected school duties: the principal as head of the school's administrative unit, and the teacher as the individual who manages the classroom for effective teaching and learning.

Given the professional expectations placed on teachers, it becomes necessary that a congenial working environment, managed by a competent and understanding leader, be provided to ensure that educational objectives are realized and reflected in students' overall performance in school certificate examinations. School principals play a major role in influencing teachers to perform their duties effectively, and an otherwise effective teacher could be rendered ineffective if the principal's leadership style conflicts with the teacher's tasks or professional role. Where the principal's leadership approach is appropriate in terms of how they discipline staff, manage human relations, demonstrate consideration for staff members, and provide inspiration these factors are likely to positively affect teachers' effectiveness; where it is inappropriate, the reverse is likely to occur. It is this critical relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' effectiveness that has drawn the attention of the researcher to investigate the influence of principals' leadership styles on Physics teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous administrative challenges, with particular implications for teachers' job performance, have continued to confront the secondary school educational system in Nigeria in recent years, including in Ebonyi State. Observations suggest that quality principals' leadership styles are not being applied effectively in many public secondary schools, a situation that has contributed to generally poor teacher job performance. This problem manifests in various ways, including the prevalence of autocratic administrative behavior among some principals, the deteriorating condition of school buildings and surrounding infrastructure, the abundance of broken and unused equipment, rising levels of student indiscipline, and, in some cases, disciplinary and behavioral problems among students. Conflicts between teachers and principals, coupled with insufficient funding, inadequate facilities, and weak instructional supervision, have also been observed in various schools. Furthermore, the inadequate implementation of curriculum standards and continued reliance on outdated teaching methods contribute to an overall decline in the quality of science education, including Physics education, in secondary schools.

As a consequence of poor administrative leadership styles, some teachers have become increasingly indifferent toward the execution of their

professional duties, with many viewing their teaching positions merely as temporary placements while awaiting better employment opportunities elsewhere. This general decline in teacher commitment and performance has, in turn, adversely affected students' academic outcomes, particularly in external examinations in Physics a subject whose effective teaching, as established earlier, is foundational to Nigeria's technological and national development aspirations. Despite the considerable body of literature establishing the theoretical relationship between leadership style and employee performance, there remains limited context-specific empirical evidence on how principals' leadership styles particularly autocratic and democratic approaches specifically influence the job performance of Physics teachers in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. It is against this troubling background, and in light of this empirical gap, that the researcher embarked on this study to investigate the influence of principals' leadership styles on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of school administrators' leadership styles on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the influence of autocratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
2. Determine the influence of democratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what does autocratic leadership style influence Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. To what way does democratic leadership style influence Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

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

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the influence of autocratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State based on gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of democratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State based on teaching experience.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to obtain the opinions of Physics teachers regarding the influence of school administrators' leadership styles on their job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The study was conducted in Ebonyi State, which comprises three education zones: Abakaliki, Afikpo, and Onueke. The population of the study consisted of all Physics teachers in the 233 public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. According to records obtained from the State Secondary Education Board (SEB), the population comprised 207 Physics teachers. A sample of 90 Physics teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. First, simple random sampling was used to select schools from the three education zones. Thereafter, purposive sampling was used to select Physics teachers from the sampled schools.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Physics Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (IPLSPTJPQ). The

instrument consisted of two sections. Section A elicited demographic information from respondents, while Section B contained 20 items on autocratic and democratic leadership styles and their influence on teachers' job performance. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, comprising two experts in Science Education and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for decision making.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does autocratic leadership style influence Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings on the Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance (N = 90)

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Administrators pay attention to individual teachers' interests	2.96	0.82	Accepted
2	Administrators are overly concerned about group performance rather than individual effort	2.83	0.77	Accepted
3	Administrators closely monitor staff activities at all times	3.42	0.71	Accepted
4	Administrators allow teachers to work without interference	1.87	0.89	Rejected
5	Administrators supervise teachers' teaching regularly and strictly	1.38	0.91	Rejected
6	Administrators interfere with teachers' personal methods of work	2.99	0.74	Accepted
7	Administrators believe teachers require constant direction to perform	3.49	0.69	Accepted
8	Administrators make decisions without consulting teachers	3.21	0.73	Accepted
9	Administrators discourage teachers from expressing independent opinions	2.88	0.80	Accepted
10	Administrators use threats or sanctions to enforce compliance with instructions	2.65	0.85	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.77	0.79	Accepted

The result in Table 1 shows a grand mean score of 2.77, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that Physics teachers agreed that autocratic leadership style influences their job performance. Items reflecting close monitoring of staff (3.42), insistence on constant direction (3.49), and unilateral decision-making (3.21) recorded the highest mean scores, suggesting that controlling and directive behaviors are the most prominent features of autocratic leadership experienced by teachers. Only items 4 and 5, which described non-interference and regular supervision, were rejected, indicating that teachers do not perceive their administrators as either hands-off or consistently

supportive in their supervision. Overall, the findings suggest that autocratic leadership, characterized by excessive control, interference, and centralized decision-making, restricts teachers' professional autonomy and creativity and is perceived as exerting a generally negative influence on Physics teachers' job performance.

Research Question Two: In what ways does democratic leadership style influence Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance (N = 90)

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Involving teachers in decision-making improves their morale	3.89	0.64	Accepted
12	Delegation of duties by administrators enhances teachers' job performance	2.98	0.75	Accepted
13	Democratic leadership encourages teachers to work harder	2.87	0.71	Accepted
14	Democratic leadership promotes collaboration among teachers	3.01	0.72	Accepted
15	Administrators do not impose decisions on teachers without consultation	3.88	0.68	Accepted
16	Administrators encourage teachers to share ideas and suggestions freely	3.45	0.66	Accepted
17	Administrators provide constructive feedback that helps teachers improve	3.27	0.70	Accepted
18	Administrators recognize and appreciate teachers' efforts and contributions	3.52	0.63	Accepted
19	Administrators create an open and friendly working environment	3.30	0.69	Accepted
20	Administrators support teachers' professional growth and development	3.13	0.74	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.33	0.69	Accepted

The result in Table 2 shows a grand mean score of 3.33, which is well above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that Physics teachers strongly agreed that democratic leadership style positively influences their job performance. All ten items were accepted, with the highest mean scores recorded for involving teachers in decision-making (3.89), non-imposition of decisions (3.88), and recognition and appreciation of teachers' efforts (3.52), suggesting that participatory and affirming leadership practices are particularly valued by teachers. The relatively high means across items addressing collaboration, open communication, feedback, and professional support indicate that

democratic leadership fosters a holistic environment of teacher empowerment. Overall, the findings reveal that democratic leadership style, through participation, delegation, recognition, and collaborative engagement, substantially enhances Physics teachers' motivation, commitment, and job performance.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the influence of autocratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State based on gender.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit
Male	52	2.84	0.76	88	3.84	1.96
Female	38	2.66	0.81			

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 3.84 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance with 88 degrees of freedom; therefore, the null hypothesis H₀₁ is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Physics teachers on the influence of autocratic leadership style on their job performance. The mean rating for male teachers (2.84) was higher than that of female teachers (2.66), suggesting that male teachers perceive the influence of autocratic leadership on their

job performance more strongly than their female counterparts. This implies that gender significantly shapes how Physics teachers experience and are affected by autocratic administrative leadership in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of democratic leadership style on Physics teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State based on teaching experience.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance Based on Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit
Less Experienced (1–10 years)	48	3.46	0.63	88	5.27	1.96
More Experienced (Above 10 years)	42	3.18	0.74			

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 5.27 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance with 88 degrees of freedom; therefore, the null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of less experienced and more experienced Physics teachers on the influence of democratic leadership style on their job performance. The mean rating for less experienced teachers (3.46) was higher than that of more experienced teachers (3.18), suggesting that less experienced Physics teachers respond more positively to democratic leadership practices than their more experienced colleagues. This implies that teaching experience significantly influences how Physics teachers perceive and benefit from democratic leadership style in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding that autocratic leadership style significantly influences Physics teachers' job performance, with teachers reporting that their administrators exercise close monitoring of staff activities, interfere with teachers' personal methods of work, insist on constant direction, and make decisions without consultation, is consistent with the position of Ezeuwa (2015), who argued that autocratic leadership in its extreme form does not allow staff to make meaningful input into management decisions and consequently exerts adverse effects on job performance. This finding is further corroborated by Chrislip and Larson (2015), who identified autocratic leaders as those who insist on handling everything themselves, maintain complete control, make all decisions unilaterally, and rarely divulge their reasoning to subordinates — behaviors that closely mirror the highest-rated items in the present study, particularly the belief that teachers require constant direction (mean = 3.49) and the practice of making decisions without consultation (mean = 3.21). Bunmi (2015) similarly observed that an employee's level of job performance depends not only on their personal competencies but significantly on the leadership style employed by their administrative superiors, a position that lends additional weight to the present study's finding that the prevalence of controlling, directive, and non-collaborative administrative behaviors among school principals has a measurable and statistically significant influence on Physics teachers' professional performance. Taken together, these findings reinforce the conclusion that autocratic leadership, through its characteristic emphasis on centralized control, restricted teacher autonomy, and limited professional trust, constitutes a significant barrier to optimal job performance among Physics teachers in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State, and that this influence is experienced differently by male and female teachers, with male teachers reporting a stronger perceived effect.

The finding that democratic leadership style significantly and positively influences Physics teachers' job performance, particularly through teacher involvement in decision-making, delegation of duties, recognition of teachers' efforts, open communication, and collaborative engagement, is strongly supported by the findings of Chrislip and Larson (2015), who established that democratic leadership style influences teacher job performance positively through the mechanism of collective decision-making and shared responsibility. This finding is further reinforced by Akan (2016), who similarly found that the democratic leadership style of school principals encourages workers to perform at higher levels and produces positive organizational outcomes, a conclusion that aligns closely with the present study's finding that the highest-rated democratic leadership items involving teachers in decision-making (mean = 3.89) and not imposing decisions without consultation (mean = 3.88) were associated with the greatest perceived improvements in teacher morale and commitment. Ayodele (2014) further opined that the behavior of a leader is accepted by subordinates only insofar as subordinates continue to perceive the leader as a source of personal opportunities for improved performance and satisfaction, a perspective that helps explain why teachers in the present study rated recognition and appreciation of their contributions (mean = 3.52) and support for professional growth (mean = 3.13) so highly under democratic leadership. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that democratic leadership, through its emphasis on participation, delegation, recognition, and collaborative relationships, substantially enhances Physics teachers' motivation, commitment, and overall job performance, and that this positive influence is particularly pronounced among less experienced teachers, who may derive greater benefit from the guidance, inclusion, and supportive structures that democratic leadership provides.

CONCLUSION

This study has established that the leadership styles employed by school administrators exert a significant and measurable influence on the job performance of Physics teachers in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The findings revealed that autocratic leadership, characterized by close monitoring of staff, interference in teachers' professional methods, unilateral decision-making, and an underlying assumption that teachers require constant direction, was perceived by teachers as a prevalent administrative practice that significantly and adversely influences their job performance, with this influence being experienced more strongly by male teachers than by female teachers. In contrast, democratic leadership, characterized by teacher involvement in decision-making, delegation of responsibilities, recognition of teachers' contributions, open communication, and support for professional growth, was overwhelmingly endorsed by teachers as

a positive and significant influence on their job performance, with this positive influence being more pronounced among less experienced teachers than among their more experienced colleagues. The statistically significant differences observed across gender and teaching experience further indicate that the influence of leadership style on job performance is not uniform across all categories of teachers, but is shaped by individual and professional characteristics that school administrators must take into account when designing and implementing their leadership approaches. Taken together, these findings underscore the central importance of leadership style as a determinant of teacher job performance and highlight the urgent need for school administrators in Ebonyi State to move away from autocratic tendencies toward more participatory, collaborative, and democratic approaches to school administration, as such approaches have been clearly demonstrated to foster greater motivation, commitment, and effectiveness among Physics teachers, with potential downstream benefits for the quality of Physics instruction and, ultimately, for students' academic achievement in the subject.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The Ebonyi State Ministry of Education and the Secondary Schools Board should organize regular workshops, seminars, and structured training programs for school principals, focusing specifically on the principles and practical application of democratic leadership.
- 2) School principals should be specifically guided, monitored, and supported to minimize autocratic tendencies such as excessive monitoring of staff, interference in teachers' personal instructional methods, and unilateral decision-making without consultation.
- 3) School administrators should establish formal structures through which Physics teachers can meaningfully participate in decisions affecting curriculum implementation, resource allocation, and school policy.
- 4) School administrators, with support from the Ministry of Education, should develop and implement formal mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding the efforts and contributions of Physics teachers.
- 5) School administrators should adopt leadership approaches that are responsive to the differentiated needs, preferences, and professional experiences of teachers across gender, thereby ensuring that administrative practices do not disproportionately disadvantage any group of teachers.
- 6) School administrators should establish structured mentorship programs, induction support, and inclusive decision-making opportunities specifically designed to integrate early-career

teachers into the professional community of the school.

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Cite this Article: Mbamalu, OJ; Dike, OC (2025). Influence of School Administrators' Leadership Style on Physics Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary School in Ebonyi State. *Greener Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 8(1): 28-36, <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjets.2025.1.061326085>.