

## MANAGEMENT STYLES AND FUNDING PRACTICES OF PROPRIETORS OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to examine the management styles and funding practices of private proprietors of secondary schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria. Three specific research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated for the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all private secondary schools in AMAC, while a homogeneous purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire titled Management Styles, Funding and Challenges Questionnaire (MSFCQ), with a reliability coefficient of 0.80. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant relationship between the management styles and funding practices of private school proprietors. The study concluded that the management approach adopted by proprietors influences the financial practices and overall operation of the schools. It recommended that public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education be strengthened to enhance access to quality education and improve funding efficiency in private schools.*

**Keywords:** Management styles, funding practices, proprietors.

### Introduction

The education sector in Nigeria has witnessed significant changes over the years, with private senior secondary schools playing a pivotal role in providing quality education. These schools are operated by private proprietors who adopt distinct management styles and funding practices. Understanding these practices is essential for enhancing the quality of education and ensuring the sustainability of these institutions.

The management and funding practices of private proprietors are critical factors in shaping the quality of education and overall development of students (Smith, 2018; Adeyemi & Ogunkola, 2016). In many educational systems globally, private schools provide alternatives to public education and cater to the diverse needs of learners (Oduro, 2017). In Nigeria, particularly in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), the growing prominence of private schools is driven by limited access to quality public education and the desire of parents to secure better educational opportunities for their children (UNESCO, 2015; Kabanda & Mokomane, 2017).

Management styles refer to the approaches and methods utilized by private school proprietors to govern and administer their institutions. These styles—ranging from democratic to laissez-faire—have direct impacts on teaching methodologies, teacher-student relationships, and overall school culture (Holdford, 2013; Adeyemi, 2011). The democratic management style, in particular, is often

characterized by involving teachers in decision-making, promoting teamwork, and encouraging professional growth (Muijs & Harris, 2020).

Funding practices encompass the strategies employed by private school proprietors to secure, manage, and allocate financial resources. These include tuition and school fees, philanthropic donations, sales of educational materials, and support from Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) (Kabanda & Mokomane, 2017; Oduro, 2017).

Understanding these practices is crucial for evaluating the extent to which private schools are fulfilling their educational responsibilities and meeting the needs of students in the region. By examining the management styles and funding practices, policymakers, educators, and parents can gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the private education sector and develop strategies to improve its functioning.

The assessment focused on several key aspects. Firstly, the management styles and funding practices of private school proprietors was examined. This includes analyzing the proprietors' ability to create a conducive leadership environment, and their adherence to educational policies and guidelines (Kalu, 2018). According to Isa and Okwelle (2019), financial resources are essential for maintaining quality education, providing necessary infrastructure, and ensuring the welfare of students and staff. Moreover, the sustainability and transparency of financial systems significantly influence school performance (Hartwell, Mukama, & Ndaruhuts, 2016).

These private institutions are primarily sustained through diverse sources of income, which significantly influence their developmental strides and operational sustainability. Common funding sources include tuition and school fees, sales of learning materials, and proceeds from graduation ceremonies. Other channels such as donations and philanthropic contributions, developmental fees, income from school bus services, and investments by the schools themselves also serve as crucial financial streams. Additionally, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), sports and club activities, and other income-generating ventures support the financial needs of these schools. These funds are used to maintain infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, and science laboratories, and to ensure access to quality teaching materials and ICT tools, thereby enhancing the teaching and learning environment. As observed by Isa and Okwelle (2019), financial resources are indispensable for providing necessary infrastructure and supporting the welfare of staff and students. The proper management and allocation of these funds directly impact the overall quality of education offered in private schools, enabling them to attract and retain qualified teachers, invest in curriculum enrichment, and offer essential student support services.

The management styles adopted by private school proprietors further determine how effectively these resources are utilized to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Democratic management styles, which are widely observed in AMAC, involve inclusive decision-making processes where teachers participate in shaping institutional goals, thus promoting a positive working environment and enhancing professional development (Adeyemi, 2011). This inclusive approach fosters team building, transparency, and mutual respect, all of which are conducive to teacher satisfaction and student performance. On the other hand, autocratic styles, though efficient in enforcing discipline, may stifle creativity and discourage initiative among staff, while laissez-faire approaches often result in poor coordination and weak administrative control, ultimately affecting service delivery. The effectiveness of these management styles is reflected in how well resources are distributed and utilized for staff welfare, teaching activities, and student support systems. As noted by Kalu (2018), the leadership environment created by school proprietors greatly influences institutional adherence to educational policies and goals. Thus, assessing and improving management styles in conjunction with financial practices is critical for ensuring that

private senior secondary schools in AMAC can sustainably provide high-quality education that meets the developmental needs of their students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This paper aimed to assess the management styles and funding practices of proprietors of private senior secondary schools in AMAC, Nigeria. Despite the increasing number and importance of private secondary schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria, there are persistent challenges in the management styles and funding practices adopted by private proprietors, which pose significant concerns for educational quality and sustainability. From the researcher's field experience and interactions with various stakeholders in the education sector, it has been observed that one major issue is the over-centralized decision-making processes in many schools. While some proprietors adopt democratic styles, a significant number still operate under autocratic or inconsistent management models, which stifle teacher creativity, weaken collaborative planning, and discourage teacher participation in decision-making. Secondly, many proprietors lack formal training in educational leadership, leading to poor administrative coordination, weak supervision, and irregular staff evaluation practices. This situation often results in low staff morale, poor discipline among students, and ineffective instructional supervision. Thirdly, there is widespread financial instability in private schools, especially among low- and middle-income institutions, which struggle with irregular income due to unstable enrolment and overreliance on tuition fees as their sole funding source. The absence of diversified revenue streams, such as investments or external grants, leaves many schools vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Furthermore, it was noted that financial mismanagement is a recurrent problem, as many proprietors do not keep transparent or audited records of income and expenditure. This lack of accountability limits their ability to attract donors or gain the trust of parents and teachers. Another observed challenge is the poor remuneration and retention of qualified teachers. Due to limited funding, many private schools in AMAC offer low salaries, irregular payment schedules, and limited professional development opportunities, leading to high staff turnover and reduced instructional quality. Lastly, infrastructure development is often inadequate, with many schools lacking standard laboratories, libraries, or ICT facilities due to poor capital planning and limited funding. These problems collectively undermine the long-term goals of private education in the area, making it necessary to investigate the nature of management styles and funding practices adopted by proprietors. This assessment aims to offer evidence-based insights that can inform policy reforms, enhance accountability, and promote sustainable educational practices in private secondary schools across AMAC.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objective of this study is to examine the management styles and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. Specifically, the following objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. Identify the managerial styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.
2. Examine the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.
3. Find out the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in funding of schools in AMAC.
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**Research Questions:** The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the managerial styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC?
2. What are the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC?
3. What are the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in funding of schools in AMAC?

**Research Hypothesis:** The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design to examine the management styles and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of all the 244 registered private secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (NAPPS, 2023). Sampling size estimation technique was used as stated by Mertens (as cited in Nzeh, Ogunshola & Amusan, 2022), that new researchers should use approximations to get a feel for sample sizes. Therefore, the sample of the study was made up of 122 private secondary schools in AMAC which is 50% of the study population. However, the homogeneous purposive sampling was used to select one proprietor, one principal and one administrator from each of the sampled school, making a total of 366 respondents.

In this study, one questionnaire was designed by the researchers to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was titled "Management Styles, Funding and Challenges Questionnaire (MSFCQ)". MSFCQ comprised of 3 sections (A, B, and C), and was administered to proprietors, principals and administrators. Section A covered items 1-15, which were used to measure managerial styles, section B covered items 16-30, which were used to measure funding practices while section C covered items 31-45, which were used to measure the challenges of private proprietors.

The respondents were required to answer the items on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from 4 to 1 as follows: Strongly Agree which is 4 points, Agree which is 3 points, Disagree which is 2 points and Strongly Disagree which is 1 point. The respondents were required to tick (✓) against the rating that reflects their opinion. The reliability coefficient of MSFCQ was .80 using Cronbach's alpha internal consistency measure. Since the reliability coefficient of .08 to .09 signifies high reliability (Tavokol & Dnnick, 2011), the questionnaire was satisfactory and acceptable for the study.

Therefore, an analysis of the sources of funding and financial management practices was conducted. The mean and standard deviation (Sd.) were used to answer the research questions. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The decision rule for the interpretation of the results of the data analysis was that the mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as positive response (Agree), and less than 2.50 was considered as a negative response (Disagree). The calculated probability (p-Value) that is greater than the significance level of 0.005 is considered rejected. With the above procedure, the researchers were able to evaluate the relationship between managerial styles and funding practices of proprietors of private senior secondary schools in AMAC, Nigeria.

### **Results and Findings**

**Research Question One:** What are the managerial styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC?

**Table 1: Analysis of the managerial styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.**

S/No	Autocratic Management Style	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Sd.	Decision
1.	Limited collaborative ability	366	113	125	65	63	3.06	1.07	Agree
2.	Does not involve other stakeholders in decision making	366	121	117	71	57	3.12	1.09	Agree
3.	Does not give teachers the opportunity to air their opinions	366	119	119	67	61	3.10	1.08	Agree
4.	Uses threats and punishment to direct	366	123	115	69	59	3.13	1.10	Agree
5.	Does not request for feedbacks of delegated responsibilities	366	117	121	63	65	3.08	1.08	Agree
<b>Overall Mean for Autocratic</b>							<b>3.10</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>Agree</b>

<b>Democratic Management Style</b>									
6.	Encourages professional development of staff members	366	125	113	59	69	3.14	1.11	Agree
7.	Allows stakeholders to participate in decision making	366	115	123	61	67	3.09	1.08	Agree
8.	Delegates responsibility/authority to teachers	366	127	111	65	63	3.15	1.11	Agree
9.	Maintains good relationship with staff members and other stakeholders	366	121	117	63	65	3.12	1.09	Agree
10.	Open to new ideas	366	113	125	67	61	3.06	1.07	Agree
<b>Overall Mean for Democratic management style</b>							<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>Agree</b>

<b>Laissez-faire Management Style</b>									
11.	Does not request for feedbacks of delegated responsibility	366	119	119	71	57	3.10	1.08	Agree
12.	Does not supervise financial expenditure of the school	366	123	115	65	63	3.13	1.10	Agree

13.	Gives free hands to staff members to solve school problems	366	117	121	69	59	3.08	1.08	Agree
14.	Allows stakeholders to make decisions on their own	366	125	113	61	67	3.14	1.11	Agree
15.	Measures success based on outcome	366	111	127	63	65	3.05	1.07	Agree
<b>Overall Mean for Laissez-faire management style</b>							<b>3.10</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Overall Assessment of Management Styles</b>							<b>3.10</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 1 presents the analysis of the management styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. The overall mean score for management styles was 3.10 Autocratic management style had the overall assessment mean score of 3.10; democratic management style had overall mean score of 3.11 while laissez-faire had the overall mean score of 3.10. The overall mean score of democratic management style is higher than 2.50 cut off point while autocratic and laissez-faire management styles are lower than the cutoff point. Therefore, the study revealed that democratic management style was adopted by proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.

**Research Question Two:** What are the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC?

S/No	Funding practices of private proprietors	N	SD	D	A	SD	Mean	Sd.	Decision
16	Tuition fee and school fees	366	63	65	121	117	3.10	1.08	Agree
17	Graduation party	366	59	69	113	125	3.14	1.11	Agree
18	Sales of learning materials	366	67	61	119	119	3.10	1.08	Agree
19	Donations and philanthropic support	366	61	67	125	111	3.08	1.07	Agree
20	Developmental fees	366	65	63	117	121	3.11	1.09	Agree
21	Sports and clubs activities	366	69	59	111	127	3.15	1.11	Agree
22	Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)	366	63	65	123	115	3.09	1.08	Agree
23	Endowments and Investments	366	57	71	115	123	3.12	1.09	Agree
24	Income-Generating Activities	366	65	63	127	111	3.08	1.07	Agree

25	School bus services	366	61	67	119	119	3.10	1.08	Agree
26	Rental of school facilities	366	64	66	118	118	3.10	1.08	Agree
27	Holiday coaching programs	366	66	64	117	119	3.10	1.08	Agree
28	Alumni financial contributions	366	62	68	114	122	3.11	1.09	Agree
30	Commercial school canteens or tuck shops	366	60	70	113	123	3.12	1.09	Agree
31	ICT and computer training fees	366	63	65	118	120	3.11	1.08	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>							<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Table 2: Analysis of the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC**

Table 2 shows analysis of the funding practices of the proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. Thus, the overall mean score of 3.11 is higher than 2.50 cut off point, which means that most the respondents agreed to the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC as identified in the study.

**Research Question Three:** What are the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in funding of schools in AMAC?

**Table 3: Analysis of the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC**

S/No	challenges faced by private proprietors	N	SD	D	A	SD	Mean	Sd.	Decision
32	Financial Sustainability	366	63	65	121	117	3.10	1.08	Agree
33	Quality Assurance	366	67	61	119	119	3.10	1.08	Agree
34	Teacher Recruitment and Retention	366	59	69	113	125	3.14	1.11	Agree
	Infrastructure and Resources	366	65	63	126	112	3.10	1.08	Agree
35	Competition and Market Saturation	366	61	67	115	123	3.12	1.09	Agree
36	Community and Cultural Dynamics	366	71	56	126	113	3.08	1.10	Agree
37	Lack of government financial support	366	63	65	116	122	3.11	1.09	Agree
38	Access and equity	366	69	59	123	115	3.09	1.08	Agree
39	Regulatory compliance	366	57	71	111	127	3.15	1.11	Agree

40	Incessant economic inflation	366	65	63	119	119	3.10	1.08	Agree
41	High Cost of Instructional Materials	366	64	66	120	116	3.10	1.08	Agree
42	Difficulty in Adhering to Curriculum Reforms	366	66	64	119	117	3.10	1.08	Agree
43	Limited Access to Training Opportunities for Staff	366	62	68	114	122	3.11	1.09	Agree
44	Poor Collaboration with Educational Authorities	366	60	70	113	123	3.12	1.09	Agree
456	Difficulty in Collecting and Managing School Fees	366	63	65	118	120	3.11	1.08	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>							<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 which shows the overall mean score for the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in funding of schools in AMAC was 3.11, which is greater than the 2.5 cut-off points. This study showed that most of the respondents agreed to the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in funding of schools in AMAC.

**Hypothesis One:** HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between managerial style and funding practice of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.

**Table 4: Correlation between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.**

Group	N	Mean	Sd.	r	p-value	Decision
Managerial styles	366	3.10	1.03	.417	1.000	HO <sub>1</sub>
Funding practices	366	3.11	1.08			Rejected

Table 4 shows the correlation between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. The calculated value of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was .417, which indicated correlation coefficient (r) was .417, which indicated that there a positive relationship between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. Furthermore, the p-value of 1.000 is greater than 0.05 (5%) significant level, which means that there is a significant relationship between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

## Discussion of Findings

From the data analysis, this study revealed that most of the respondents agreed to the democratic management styles of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC such as involving teachers in decision making, allowing teachers to suggest ideas before establishing goals, encourages team work/building with/among teachers, keeps teachers informed about everything that affects their work, encourages teachers to grow on their jobs and to be promoted. The findings of this study was in line with the findings of Adeyemi (2011) who stated that democratic management style was the most commonly used management style among proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC.

Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the respondents agreed to the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. This study is supported by Oduro (2017) and Kabanda & Mokomane (2017) who stated that tuition fee and school fees, donations and philanthropic support, sales of learning materials, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) among others remains the funding practice of proprietors of private senior secondary schools. Also, the study revealed that financial sustainability, quality assurance, teacher recruitment and retention, infrastructure and resources among others as supported by the study of Hartwell, Mukama and Ndaruhuts (2016). Lastly, this study ascertained that there was a significant relationship between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC (Muijs & Harris, 2020).

## Conclusion

The management styles and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools are critical factors in shaping the quality of education and overall development of students. Understanding these management styles and funding practices is crucial for enhancing the quality of education and ensuring the sustainability of these institutions. The findings of this study showed that: Most of the respondents agreed to the democratic management style of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC; Most of the respondents agreed to the funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC; Most of the respondents agreed to the challenges faced by proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. These findings have led the researchers to conclude that there was a significant relationship between managerial style and funding practices of proprietors of private secondary schools in AMAC. This means the democratic management style can enhance the funding practices of private proprietors of secondary schools in AMAC.

## Recommendations

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

1. Public-private partnerships (PPs) in education between private school proprietors and government should be encouraged to expand access to quality education in private secondary schools in AMAC.
2. Efficient and sound financial management practices, including budgeting, financial reporting and auditing, should be implemented to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds in private secondary schools in AMAC.
3. Private proprietors should uphold the right management style in order to enhance the quality of their management and funding practices in secondary schools in AMAC by

building strong relationships with the local community, parents and other stakeholders to engage them in school development projects and fundraising events.

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