

**MANAGEMENT STYLES IN LIBRARIES OF UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI AND FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MINNA, NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

*The paper examined, on a comparative basis, the management styles practised in Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library Complex, Federal University of Technology, Minna. A table of random numbers was used to select a sample size of 125 out of 208 personnel in the libraries. A sampling fraction of 60% was adopted to avoid bias and for a gain in precision of estimates among others. Of the 125 copies of the questionnaire administered on the personnel, 94 were retrieved and found usable, giving a response rate of 75.2%. Data was analysed using descriptive, Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) and t-test statistics. Findings revealed that, participative (democratic) and participative (authoritative) were the management styles predominantly practised by the libraries. There was a significant relationship between the styles practised but no significant difference between the application of practised styles in both libraries. It was established that though the National Universities Commission recommends participative management, no one management style can be applied in isolation; a combination of two or more of them work best. To this extent, recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.*

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**KEYWORDS:** LIBRARY MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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**Introduction**

Management, which is pervasive in every sphere of life, refers to the ability to deploy available resources optimally to achieve pre-determined objectives. Peretomode (2008) defines management as “the job of getting things done

through people; it is a process, that is, a sequence of coordinated events.” On the other hand, Rollins (2007) contends that the subject of management is extensive, complex and controversial; stressing that, the broad nature of the subject is evidenced by a simple analysis of the ‘Library of Congress Classification Schedule’ Class H – Social Sciences. From these definitions, it can be inferred that, management is concerned with the process by which resources including machines, money, materials and people are co-coordinated to achieve set objectives. It therefore encompasses planning, directing and controlling the people and the environment.

Management style, according to Johnson (2000), is the art of influencing people to willingly put in their best towards the achievement of a group goal, while Rod (2006) refers to it as the way in which a manager directs his own or his subordinates’ efforts characterized by initiating, organizing, directing and the extent to which he has personal job relationships, characterized by listening, trusting and encouraging, in a given situation. Davidmann (1995) however asserts that, the effectiveness of management styles can be assessed and ranked on the scale of staff development, staff management and freedom of performance and participation, while Edoka (2000) maintains that, the choice of which management style is more effective in an academic library is subject to a number of factors, stressing that one can hardly draw a conclusion due to the variant nature of libraries, particularly academic libraries in Nigeria. By implication, management styles vary from one library to another, regardless of the type; it is used to monitor and control the behaviour of staff in a given organization or effect changes in the way employees are managed, with a view to achieving set objectives. Therefore, it is increasingly difficult to draw a conclusion on the specific type of management style that is most suitable for an organization to yield maximum efficiency. The type of management style adopted in a library is vital for effective achievement of its set objectives.

University of Maiduguri, located in Maiduguri, in the North-East zone of Nigeria, is a second-generation university, established in 1975 and its library (Ramat Library) assumed its present name in 1976 in honour of the late Nigerian Military Head of State, General Ramat Murtala Muhammed. The University is a conventional one with eleven faculties (Education, Arts, Science, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Agriculture, Engineering, Law, Social Science, and Management Science) and a Postgraduate School. It has about 20,000 students and 650 academic staff. The Ramat Library, established to support teaching, learning and research activities, has four branches, namely:

Agro-vet Library, Harold Scarborough Medical Library, Aminu Kano Law Library, an Arabic and Islamic Studies Library – all centrally administered or controlled by the University Librarian, based in Ramat Library. The Library has a collection size of about 130,000 volumes of diverse information resources.

The Federal University of Technology, Minna, is a Federal Government-owned University located in North Central Zone of Nigeria. It is a specialized University of Technology, established on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1983, to give effect to the nation's drive for the much-needed self-reliance in science, engineering and especially technology. It runs Postgraduate programmes, has four centres and four schools, Schools of: Agriculture and Agricultural Technology; Engineering and Engineering Technology; Environmental Technology; and Science and Science Education. The Centres are Centres for: Climate Change and Freshwater Resources; Human Settlements and Urban Development; Preliminary and Extra-mural Studies; and Research and Development Information Technology. The total student enrolment is over 13,000 with a corresponding academic staff strength of 504 (Students' Handbook, 2009). The University Library which is called Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) Library commenced operation in March 1984 and it caters for teaching and research work of the University. It has a collection size of about 70,000 volumes including reference materials and journals in science and technology.

Comparative studies encompass comparison of the practices and study of a field of knowledge, for example, library and information science in nations and regions of the world. Comparative librarianship, on the other hand, involves the systematic analysis of library development, practices or problems in two or more national, cultural, societal environments considered in the context of the relevance, historical, geographic, political, economic, social, cultural and other determinant background factors. This is necessary for understanding similarities and differences with the ultimate aim of arriving at valid generalizations and principles.

This paper is therefore a comparative study which focuses on the management styles in two university libraries in Nigeria. The universities are University of Maiduguri and the Federal University of Technology, Minna respectively. It seeks to ascertain the effectiveness or otherwise of the various management styles adopted in these two university libraries.

### Methodology

The paper adopted a survey research method and data were generated in 2008 through a combination of a questionnaire, interviews and documentary sources. The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with 10 randomly selected staff and also to look into relevant files and sources so as to complement the questionnaire. The target population was 208, drawn from the surveyed libraries (Table 1).

**Table 1: Population and Sample Size**

S/No.	Library	Population	Librarians/ Professional	Para- Professional	Support Staff	Sample Size
1.	Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri	139	21	18	100	83
2.	IBB Library Complex, Fed. University of Tech., Minna	69	15	18	36	42
	Total	208	36	36	136	125

*Source: Field Survey, 2008.*

Owing to the heterogeneous nature of the population, the study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to select 125 out of 208 library personnel. A sampling fraction of 60% was used for a meaningful conclusion to be drawn from the population. The sample size of staff (125) encompassed 22 out of 36 librarians, 21 out of 36 para-professionals and 81 out of 136 support staff (non-professional). The professional (librarian) is one who has at least a first degree in Library and Information Science, the para-professional is a holder of a Diploma in Librarianship, while the support staff are Library Assistants, Library Attendants, Typists, etc.

In selecting the sample, a table of random numbers was utilized. The questionnaire, which was self-administered, comprised two sections. Section A dealt with biographic data while Section B which focused on management styles adopted in the libraries, sought to ascertain the adopted style(s), what informed its choice, extent of staff involvement in the decision-making process, the effectiveness of the adopted styles(s) and factors inhibiting the effective operation of the chosen style(s), among others. Descriptive, Chi-square and t-test statistics were used to analyze the data generated at 0.05 level of

significance. Of the 125 copies of the questionnaire administered on respondents, 94 were retrieved and found usable, giving a response rate of 75.2%

## Findings

### Nature of Management Styles Adopted

Management styles influence productivity and set objectives either positively or negatively, depending on the style applied at a given time. In libraries, particularly academic ones, where a functional management is operated, the traditionally hierarchical structure tends to be utilized under the headship of an authoritarian librarian. There is however an increasing awareness of the need for modern management techniques or styles. The trend is that, in a number of libraries, the traditional management style is being replaced by participatory management. The library personnel were requested to indicate which of the management styles(s) their libraries practised (Table 2).

**Table2: Types of Management Styles Practised in the Surveyed Libraries**

S/No.	Management Style	Frequency	%
1	The traditional management style	05	5.3
2	Laissez-faire (free-rein)	06	6.4
3	Participative (democratic)	39	41.5
4	Autocratic (directive)	08	8.5
5	Participative – authoritative	20	21.3
6	Authoritative – participative	10	10.6
7	The spectator	01	1.1
8	The technician	02	2.1
9	The jungle fighter	01	1.1
10	The gamesman	02	2.1
	Total	94	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Results in Table 2 reveal that 39 (41.5%) of the library staff asserted that the participative management style was adopted in their libraries, 20 (21.3%) indicated participative – authoritative, while 1(1.1%) maintained that it was the spectator or jungle fighter. These results are obvious because in a library situation where people behave differently, it is increasingly difficult to apply one leadership style. The spectator, technician, jungle fighter and gamesman were rated low among the management styles probably because they are more

or less types of leaders whose personal behaviours are exhibited as management styles. The adoption of the participatory style is therefore similar in both libraries. Having identified the management styles practised in the libraries, it was felt necessary to test two (2) null-hypotheses on: Relationship between the management styles adopted in the libraries and the difference between the application of the adopted styles. It was therefore, hypothesized that, “there is no relationship between the management styles adopted in Ramat and IBB Libraries” (Table 3)

**Table 3: Relationship between Management Styles Practised in the Libraries**

S/No.	Management Style	Ramat	IBB Library	Total
1	The traditional management style	-	-	-
2	Laissez-faire (free-rein)	1 (1.6)	1 (0.4)	2
3	Participative (democratic)	34 (30.3)	4 (7.7)	38
4	Autocratic (directive)	10 (16.0)	10 (4.0)	20
5	Participative – authoritative	24 (22.3)	5 (5.5)	28
6	Authoritative – participative	6 (4.8)	- (1.2)	6
7	The spectator	-	-	-
8	The technician	-	-	-
9	The jungle fighter	-	-	-
10	The gamesman	-	-	-
	Total	75 (79.8%)	19(20..2%)	94

Source: Field Survey, 2008

In table 3, the 5 degree of freedom (df) of critical or tabulated  $X^2$  value is 11.07 and the calculated  $X^2$  value is 16.81. Thus, by observing that the calculated value is greater than the critical value (16.81>11.07), we reject the null-hypothesis, implying that there is a significant relationship between the management styles adopted in Ramat and IBB Libraries. It was further found necessary to test the null-hypothesis which states that “there is no significant difference between the application of effectiveness of the management styles practised in Ramat and IBB Libraries” (Table 4).

**Table 4: Difference between the Application of Management Styles Practised in both Libraries.**

S/No	Library	X	S	n	df	$\mu$	t-Cal.	t-Crit.
1	Ramat Library	3.96	21.27	75	92	3.19	0.04	1.98
2	IBB Library Complex	3.84	8.86	19				

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Results in table 4 show that at 92 df of critical value (1.98), the calculated t – value is 0.04 (which is less than the critical t - value), thus leading to the retention of the null-hypothesis which states that, there is no significant difference between the application of the effectiveness of the management styles practised in both libraries. The standard error ( $\mu$ ) is 3.19. It can therefore be inferred that both libraries were not very effective in terms of the application of management styles practised.

### Discussion

Findings revealed that participative (democratic) and participative (authoritative) were the most predominantly practised management styles in the surveyed libraries. This is expected, given the fact that, in a number of libraries, the traditional management style is gradually being replaced by participatory management. This finding corroborates Reddin (2006) and Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) who contend that, in general, the chances of a participatory style of management tend to be greater as the size of the library increases, stressing that the system had worked out very well in academic libraries. Though most university libraries would opt for the participatory management style, they further stated, staff participation in decision-making does not make for effective leadership. By extension, therefore, the leader is ultimately responsible for every decision taken; only a few librarians and information providers with genuine and demonstrated abilities and foresight to react positively to environmental changes assume managerial responsibilities.

The authoritarian system of administration involves the university librarian having a high degree of authority and responsibility and these are delegated downward as appropriate. In most cases, decisions are taken at the supervisory

level and imposed on the lower levels. This style is no longer fashionable and has given way to the participatory one, based on the National Universities Commission's (1985) recommendation of university management style, among others.

In participative management, the entire workers contribute genuinely to what is done in all parts of the organization and are thus therefore highly motivated and happy with this kind of participative approach. The advantages of participative management, therefore, include improvement of morale as well as the quality of decisions taken, ensuring mutual trust, provision of relevant information to management, and the promotion of cooperation among workers. Ultimately, this leads to higher productivity in the entire organization, and issues of conflicts are easily resolved between workers and management.

Under the participatory style, the leader is said to be open, flexible and sensitive to the needs and feelings of his staff. However, looking at it from yet another standpoint, its demerits are that, there will be complex feelings among workers. The approach also wastes a lot of time in arriving at decisions.

The foregoing advantages, which outweigh its disadvantages, probably account for the choice of the participative management style by the libraries. Its demerits notwithstanding, it is acknowledged as a useful technique, but should not be seen as a panacea for all organizational problems. The advantages must have influenced the National Universities Commission (NUC) in recommending it to serve as a guide to Nigerian universities. In 1985, the NUC, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and the British Council organized a seminar on management of University resources in Lagos. The choice of participative management, therefore, is in agreement with Ike (1996) who tacitly gives her approval to the assertion that the NUC recommends the adoption of the participative management style in Nigerian university libraries and maintains that the university librarian should ensure that every member of the library team contributes suggestions for decision-making in a given appropriate level and responsibility. Further, she emphasizes that the librarian should have regular consultative meetings horizontally and vertically so that s/he keeps every member of staff fully informed of activities throughout the library system and give them the opportunity to contribute to library issues. To this extent, the participatory management style is seen to have been applied, in varying degrees, to Nigerian university libraries in the forms of participation in decision-making, staff meetings and the committee system.



Although the terms spectator, technician, jungle fighter, and gamesman refer to an overall leadership style, a leader may combine, in varying proportions, characteristics of two or more of these types. For instance, a gamesman may become so carried away with the game that he or she becomes a jungle fighter. A spectator confronted with a dilemma may be forced to learn to use rules and regulations as a technician does. A jungle fighter, who has been blown or knocked in combat or who has been mellowed with age, may decide to give up or abandon ambition and try being a gamesman. A real leader, it is expected, does not exhibit only one type of behaviour; rather his or her personality more likely reflects a blend of all these types of leadership.

In today's challenging global village, leadership or management styles or techniques are crucial to a library's success. Results of the unstructured interviews revealed that though the participatory management style was dominant in the surveyed libraries, the libraries equally utilized the authoritative and to a lesser extent, the laissez-faire management styles, depending on the situation. The management styles adopted were believed to have facilitated the achievement of the overall libraries' set objectives. In the libraries investigated, the management staff (heads of divisions) participated in the decision making process while the junior staff participated in the departmental or divisions' meetings. Interestingly, this is not entirely the case with some libraries as far as the non-management staff are concerned, and thus aptly corroborates the assertion made by Ifidon and Ifidon (2007), John (2007), Lott (2008) and Zia (2008) that, many librarians in developing countries stick to the traditional school which assumes an authoritarian structure whereby decisions made by the Head Librarian are carried out at the lower levels. According to them, the library schools are nowhere close to changing the situation since many of them still rely heavily on bureaucratically-oriented textbooks on library management which describe the traditional chain of command in which all authority rests with the Head Librarian. To this extent, it has been established that no one style can be described as the best; other criteria would have to be taken into account since each situation requires a style that is most suitable.

Participatory management is beyond mere participation in the decision-making process. In the words of Harrison (2008), it equally implies a climate in which the library staff have the opportunity to grow and develop where the head of the library is concerned about the development of his staff and where the staff attitudes are solicited and respected. Such a concern, he maintains, is

demonstrated when a librarian creates avenues for his staff to participate in team work, represent him at faculty board meetings and become aware of the structure and working of library committees, thus broadening the staff's outlook and in effect see the library vis-à-vis the entire institution.

There was a significant relationship between the management styles adopted in both libraries. This finding corroborates assertions by Pendergrass (2004), Greaves (2006) and Smith (2008) but it is at variance with that of Davidmann (1995), who found no significant relationship between libraries of different sizes. Davidmann (1995) contends that larger organizations/establishments tend to be much more authoritative than small and medium-sized ones as a result of lack of cooperation experienced by complexity of the organizational structure. There was equally no significant difference between the application of the effectiveness of the management styles practised in the two libraries surveyed. Effectiveness of the management styles should not only be based on the attainment of set objectives, but also on the management of personnel, effective communication and effective participation in decision-making. However, it is interesting to note that, in this study, the vast majority of the staff interviewed considered the adopted management styles effective, some very effective while few rated it as fairly effective, though inadequate working facilities was the major inhibitor to the effectiveness of the adopted styles. This has far-reaching implications for the entire staff and the attainment of the libraries' set objectives.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has established that a significant relationship exists between the management styles adopted by both libraries at varying degrees. It therefore concludes that the problem of choice of a management style or technique is a herculean one; and this should not be done in any haphazard manner since no one style is effective. It all depends on the prevailing situation and how a combination of two or more of the management styles would work best.

### **Recommendations**

The paper recommends that since management is a strong predictor of the degree of participation which in turn affects its effectiveness, management needs to be truly willing to share its influence and to allow employees to influence outcomes. Regardless of the management style that is employed in a given situation, managers should ensure that it is appropriate and lead to maximum performance of both employees and management. The librarian

should bring in a political dimension to his tasks: he must be an activist who takes the initiative, sets goals and creates vision. Beyond these, the library management should try all that is humanly possible to ascertain the aspects of management styles that need to be reviewed and those it finds most comfortable be identified and promoted.

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