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# Distributive Leadership as Correlate of Administrative Effectiveness in Public Universities in Anambra State

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined distributive leadership as correlates of administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consist 6,311 administrative staff in two public universities in Anambra State. The sample of 631 administrative staff was selected using simple random sampling technique for the study. Distributive Leadership Questionnaire (DLQ) and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. The face validation was done using three experts. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and the average coefficients were established at 0.83 for DLQ and 0.86 for AEQ. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to answer research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that that there is a high positive and significant relationship among shared responsibility, teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. The study concluded that distributive leadership exhibits a positive and significant relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that public universities authorities should prioritize sharing responsibilities equitably among staff to enhance administrative effectiveness and prevent one party from being overwhelmed. This could be done by creating leadership teams and giving staffs important roles to play. This will enhance and improve the administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

**Keywords:** Distributive leadership, administrative effectiveness, public universities

## INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the university administration has been a matter of deep-seated theoretical interest and it is one of the matters that have continuously been of concern to various stakeholders in the education sector. The major goals of university education as contained in the National Policy on Education are to contribute to national development through specialized manpower training; development of proper values for the survival of the individual and society; development the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; and the acquisition of both physical and

intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The universities pursue these goals through its administrative activities and programmes.

Administration is concern with the coordination of various activities of people in the school system in other to accomplish organizational goal. It entails careful and systematic arrangement and use of resources (human and material), situations and opportunities for the achievement of the specific objectives of a given organisation. Adinna and Okaforcha (2019) defined administration in its totality as a process which entails the utilization of human, material and financial resources in maximizing the realization of goals or objectives. The administrative process in the university involves students' enrollment, recruitment of personnel, support services, facilities and climate, as well as policies and strategies.

Public universities in Nigeria were established to provide post-secondary education for the Nigerian citizens. The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: the external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies in the country (Aja-Okorie & Oko, 2023). The external administration handles planning, supervision, programme accreditation, policy formulation, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration headed by the school administrators and other principal officers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure implementation of policies, coordination, supervision and organization of the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). The realization of the universities' goals and objective depends on effective administration.

Administrative effectiveness is indispensable for the actualization of the educational policy objectives. Obiekezie and Obi (2025) defined administrative effectiveness as the ability of administrators to achieve the educational goals of the institution through their administrative prowess. It is indispensable for the actualization of the educational policy objectives. Ezeaku and Joseph (2025) noted that administrative effectiveness strives towards the attainment of goals of universities. In other words, administrative effectiveness is judged by the extent to which administrators accomplish their core tasks which includes the ability to communicate with necessary stakeholders as at when needed. In other words, Ohamobi et al. (2025) argued that, in school administration, no meaningful progress may be made without administrative effectiveness because it is through it that administrators give directives as regards educational policies implementation, alignment with set educational policies and bringing about changes in school administration.

Administrative effectiveness involves efforts and technical skills directed towards organizational tasks leading to goals achievement. Mmor and Adinna (2025) acknowledged that the smooth running and uninterrupted activities of any organization require high level of administrative effectiveness of the administrators. Administrative effectiveness can be measured through the school administrators' accountability, school performance improvement, timely discharge of duties, curriculum improvement, effective resources management, monitoring, appropriate delegation of tasks and constant meeting of targets. The goal of effective administration lies in decision-making, delegation of duties to subordinates, setting good examples and motivating staff and students alike in an effort to create conducive working environment to accomplish school goals and objectives. That is why Okoye and Ezeaku (2025) stressed that the realization of these goals depends on leadership and the effectiveness of the university administrators.

Contextually, the researchers defined administrative effectiveness as the ability of the university administrator to achieve the goals and objectives of the university. In essence, it is about how well administration supports the overall mission and purpose of the organization. Effective administration is the hub behind the success and development of every institution of learning. This is because the quality of any school is dependent on quality school administration hence; university education cannot be effective without distributive leadership.

Distributive leadership is an approach where leadership functions are spread across multiple individuals and roles within an organization, rather than being concentrated in a single formal leader. Manafa and

Adinna (2023) mentioned that distributive leadership aimed to create a collaborative and inclusive work environment, where multiple individuals contribute to drive the organisation forward. It can be a powerful tool to adapt to change, promote innovation, and engage employees. Obiekezie and Obi (2025) viewed distributive leadership as a shared, collective phenomenon resulting from interactions among team members, culture of shared responsibility, fostering collaboration, and empowerment. By leveraging the diverse skills and perspectives of all members, distributive leadership leads to more effective problem-solving, innovation, and improved organizational outcomes. Spillane (2005) as cited by Okaforcha et al. (2025) modeled distributive leadership as the distribution of leadership influence and the distribution of leadership activity. The distribution of leadership authority refers to the extent to which individuals or groups could influence decision-making and shape the direction of the organization.

Distributive leadership plays a crucial role in creating an effective learning environment. Distributive leadership is the idea that the leadership of an organization is 'distributed' across multiple people instead of just one leader doing all of the work. Adinna and Okafor (2023) opted that decisions are made with teachers in the school participating in the process. It is not about administrator controlling everything that happens. It is essentially a positive relationship that influences the behaviour or action of other people in the school environment. Hence, Okaforcha and Ezeigwe (2024) opted that distributive leadership in education is a system where administrators, other leaders and staff share the leadership load in their schools. They listed distributive leadership as shared responsibilities, collective decision-making, delegation and empowerment.

The practical application of distributive leadership of administrators helps to motivate staff for positivity in the institution. In line with this, Adinna and Okaforcha (2019) noted that the administrators can effectively motivate staff through joint decision-making, encouraging them to attend sponsored training programmes, treating them with respect, making available of facilities to them and recognizing their outstanding contributions in the school. Adinna and Okaforcha noted that distributive leadership include committee based decision-making, shared responsibilities, collective decision-making and delegation of functions. As noted by Obi et al. (2025b) and Ezeaku et al. (2025), distributive leadership shares leadership responsibilities across staff and teams, promoting collaboration and empowerment in school. They shortlisted distributive leadership as culture of trust, teamwork, empowerment, delegation of duties, committee based decision-making and shared responsibilities. Distributive leadership could be applied by administrators to make staff satisfied and dedicated to discharging their duties in the public universities. Ughamadu et al. (2024a) averred that motivated members of staff are likely to find their job to be pleasurable and interesting which boost their morale toward discharging their duties. Ughamadu et al. further added that distributive leadership includes committee based decision-making, delegation of duties, teamwork and shared responsibilities.

Contextually, the researchers referred to distributive leadership as sharing leadership responsibilities in the university. Distributive leadership aims to enhance leadership potential, especially within the university so that the university can develop and grow. Distributive leadership emphasizes the collaborative and collective nature of leadership, where leadership is not confined to a single individual but is distributed throughout the university. In this study, distributive leadership was delimited to shared responsibilities and teamwork.

Shared responsibility is the willingness and commitment to fulfill obligations and duties in a timely and effective manner in the university. In a workplace setting, Mmor and Adinna (2025) noted that shared responsibility is a collaborative approach where tasks and duties are distributed among team members, promoting a sense of collective ownership and accountability. This can lead to increased morale, a wider range of skills being utilized, and potentially faster completion of projects. It is a key characteristic for effective staff, as it reflects the quality of their decision-making, their commitment to the university and their ability to handle complex tasks in the school. Odunukwe et al. (2025) opined that, a staff with a strong sense of responsibility is able to take ownership of their decisions and handle any potential repercussions that may arise from those decisions. They are also able to manage their time efficiently, delegate tasks effectively to students and prioritize the most important tasks first. Furthermore, they are

reliable and can be counted on to get the job done. Obi et al. (2025a) disclosed that shared responsibility are personal attribute characterized by a moral or psychological obligation or duty to complete tasks, behave ethically, make decisions that benefit others and meet one's commitments. This feeling can be rooted in external expectations or internal values and often motivates one to act accordingly despite other distractions or inconvenience. It demonstrates accountability and dependability in different situations, whether at home, university, work or in relationships. Staffs' shared responsibility helps in shaping characters and behaviour through good teamwork.

Teamwork facilitates employees to cooperate with each other, improve their skills and deliver useful response without any dispute between them. Adinna et al. (2024) defined teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision. It is a well-known fact that teamwork is not only the foundation of all successful managements, but the means of improving overall results in organizational productivity. Ughamadu et al. (2024b) noted that teamwork is the ability to actively participate in the pursuit of the specific objectives of the organization where performance and a positive attitude are required. It is that variable that allows common people to attain uncommon results. Ezeaku and Obi (2025) opined that teamwork refers to a group of human beings that have high performance with its members along with the spirit that enables them to achieve the group's goals in the workplace with confidence and cooperation and reduces the workload for everyone, which enables them to exchange ideas. The essence of teamwork is to encourage division of labour, specialization and ultimately increased productivity. The importance of teamwork in terms of productivity sees employees coming together to achieve same goals and objective for the good of the organization (Ezeaku, 2025). Good teamwork among teachers is mostly found in the use of committees in decision-making.

Public universities have been designed to be very instrumental in providing the needed manpower and skills in the economy. Unfortunately, they seem to have failed in this regards. The stakeholders in the education sector in Anambra State, Nigeria are complaining bitterly about the falling standard of university graduates. Based on the Times Higher Education World University Ranking (2024) which was based on teaching, research environment, research quality, industry and international outlook, no Nigerian university was ranked among the top 1000 university in the world and. The University of Ibadan emerged as the top-ranked university in Nigeria, placing 1,163$^{rd}$ globally. UNN was placed 1,784$^{th}$ on the worldwide ranking and second in Nigeria. ABU was ranked fourth nationally and 1,881$^{st}$ globally, whereas UNILAG was ranked third in Nigeria and 1,875$^{th}$ worldwide. In recent time, the two public universities in Anambra State were ranked poorly, Nnamdi Azikiwe University ranked 11$^{th}$ in Nigeria, 3079$^{th}$ in the global 2025 rating while Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University ranked 58$^{th}$ in Nigeria, 6479$^{th}$ in the global 2025 rating. This calls to question the leadership and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. Odunukwe et al. (2024) lamented that public university system in Anambra State has some lapses especially in the area of administrative and academic processes as it has been compromised by the university leaders, lecturers, administrative staff, students and even the government. This affects the quality of graduates produced in the State. This prompted the researcher to determine distributive leadership and communication styles as correlate of administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine distributive leadership as correlate of administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent of relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.
2. examine the extent of relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State?

2. What is the extent of relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State?

**Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

## METHODS

The study was carried out in public universities in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consist 6,311 administrative staff in two public universities in Anambra State. The sample of 631 administrative staff was selected using simple random sampling technique for the study. Distributive Leadership Questionnaire (DLQ) and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, while construct validation was carried out with Principal Component Analysis approach using SSPS vol.26 and the results showed that the construct validity was met. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and the average coefficients were established at 0.83 for DLQ and 0.86 for AEQ. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 631 copies of the instrument administered, 628 copies representing 99% of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to answer research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** *What is the extent of relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State?*

**Table 1:** Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State

| Variables | N | r | $r^2$ | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared responsibility | 628 | | | |
| | | 0.818 | 0.771 | Highly Positive |
| Administrative effectiveness | 628 | | | |

***Significant at p < 0.05*

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 1 showed that shared responsibility has a high positive relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This revealed a high positive correlation coefficient valued at 0.818 which indicated that there is a high positive relationship existing between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This implies that a unit improvement in the practices of shared responsibility leads to 0.818(82%) improvements in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and vice versa. The coefficient of determination ($r^2$) value of 0.771 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was positively high. This implies that 77% of the variations in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State were highly accounted for by the variations in the practices of shared responsibility.

**Research Question Two:** *What is the extent of relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State?*

**Table 2:** Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State

| Variables | N | r | $r^2$ | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teamwork | 628 | | | |
| | | 0.782 | 0.735 | Highly Positive |
| Administrative effectiveness | 628 | | | |

***Significant at p < 0.05*

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis in Table 2 showed that teamwork has a high positive relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This revealed a high positive correlation coefficient valued at 0.782 which indicated that there is a high positive relationship existing between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in the practices of teamwork leads to 0.782(78%) increases in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and vice versa. The coefficient of determination ($r^2$) value of 0.735 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was positively high. This implies that 74% of the variations in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State were highly accounted for by the variations in the practices of workplace teamwork.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One**

**$H_{01}$:** There is no significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

**Table 3:** Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State

| Variables | N | r | $r^2$ | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared responsibility | 628 | | | | |
| | | 0.818 | 0.771 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Administrative effectiveness | 628 | | | | |

***Significant at p < 0.05*

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 3 showed the significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State with p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

**Hypothesis Two**

**$H_{02}$:** There is no significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State

**Table 4:** Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State

| Variables | N | r | $r^2$ | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teamwork | 628 | | | | |
| | | 0.782 | 0.735 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Administrative effectiveness | 628 | | | | |

***Significant at p < 0.05*

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 4 showed the significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in

Anambra State with p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings on the relationship between shared responsibility and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State indicated that shared responsibility has a high positive relationship valued at 0.818 with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This means that increase in the practical application of shared responsibility will bring about 82% increases in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and vice versa. The study also revealed that shared responsibility has a significant relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This finding is not far-fetched from the fact that administrators are ethically obligated to serve the learning needs of all staff, and to do this, they must recognize, understand and demonstrate an appreciation for the perspectives, cultural backgrounds, values and beliefs, world views, and different kinds of motivation that employees (staff) bring to the institution. This finding aligns with previous research by Epelle et al. (2023), who also noted a highly positive correlation between staff perceived sense of responsibility and their job performance in schools. As noted by the findings of Odunukwe et al. (2025), staff are personally responsible for a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the school including creating a positive learning climate that is safe for all students, supporting students' development along with their achievement, upholding school policies, leading extracurricular activities, and seeking professional development. Additionally, the results are consistent with Ezeaku (2025) findings that leaders who value staff highly positively influence their willingness to exert extra efforts and responsibilities for the organization. Similarly, the study's findings are in agreement with the findings of Obi et al. (2025a) and Mmor and Adinna (2025) that positive significant impact of shared responsibility among administrators influences the outcome of the school via their instructional practices, psychological well-being and ultimately their students' learning and performance. The similarities in the findings could be as a result of the fact that all the studies were conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria which indicated that administrators share the same sense of responsibility irrespective of the public secondary schools or tertiary institutions within the educational system.

Findings on the relationship between teamwork and administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State indicated that teamwork has a high positive relationship valued at 0.782 with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This means that rise in the practical application of teamwork will bring about 78% rises in administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State and vice versa. The study also revealed that teamwork has a significant relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State. This result is in consonance with Adinna et al. (2024) that the presence of teamwork amongst staff in the school brings about high performance of the school to coordinate works into work groups so as to tap from the respective human resources the school possesses. The findings of Ughamadu et al. (2024b) indicated that the presence of properly instituted teams or committees in the school to facilitate school activities will not only bring about good students' performance but also a productive administrative system in the school. A team exists when individual strengths and skills are combined with teamwork in the pursuit of a common cause in order to produce meaningful results for the team members and the organisation. The study in collaboration with Ezeaku and Obi (2025) exhibited a positive and significant relationship which could be as a result of friendly, collaborative, strong bonds of loyalty and tradition in the schools as they have similar features which promote school administration. More so, Obi et al. (2025a) asserted that when teams are built, team members share the goals and objectives of the school organisation, which helps the school organisation, achieve better outcomes. Thus, team building also helps to improve teachers' job commitment at work, which contributes to increased teachers' job productivity. Okaforcha et al. (2025) pointed out that when the right team is built, it helps to reduce absenteeism and work defects and also

increases productivity. This does not only benefit the university organisation but also improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the various employees in the team.

## CONCLUSION

Distributed leadership is a practice of spreading leadership roles throughout the university, in such a manner that every activity in the university is covered by a leadership team. The reason behind it is to expose lecturers to leadership functions and create more opportunities for growth and advancement in their professions. The study concluded that distributive leadership exhibits a positive and significant relationship with administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations ware made:

1. Public universities authorities should prioritize sharing responsibilities equitably among staff to enhance administrative effectiveness and prevent one party from being overwhelmed. This could be done by creating leadership teams and giving staffs important roles to play. This will enhance and improve the administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.
2. Public university management should adopt participatory decision-making styles by involving staffs in key decisions regarding university policies and activities. This approach fosters a sense of inclusion, ownership and mutual respect among staff, thereby enhancing administrative effectiveness in public universities in Anambra State.

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