

CHANGE LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE MICRO AND MACRO SELF-FULFILLMENT

Abstract

The concern of leadership has attracted many scholars and intellects with the variety of their innate and derivative approaches. This concept has become a key concern in organizations within both the private and public sectors. It determines the successes or failures of any human endeavour and, such is determined by the type of leadership in place. This paper deals with the concept of leadership using a dialectical approach in the quest for a synthesis of its various components. The paper seeks a further retooling or recoiling of the hitherto mutually inclusive components of leadership and its various types.

In the process, while examining the linkage between the concepts of leadership and power and, the latter's transformation into legitimate authority, the concept of change leadership which has gained a wider currency within the matrix of organizational and management studies and, its transcendental utility to the organizational terrains of various political economies and their landscapes was examined.

This examination was done within the context of a change leadership being a key to large-scale sustainable organizational and political reform in the quest for human productivity, improved morale and micro and macro political self-fulfilment. The study concludes with the emphasis that the evocation of the concept of leadership, its types and styles, to alter the behaviours of others in groups and organizations in the hunt for attainment of desired goals based on focused agenda setting will infinitely continue in our world, particularly at this period of the planetary phenomenon of globalization of human relational threads.

Keywords: Leadership, Philosophical approach, Theory, Hierarchy, Humanity.

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Introduction

The concept of leadership has attracted a lot of scholastic and intellectual attentions particularly in the quest to define its subject-matter hence; its definition has not been an exception to the usual volatility and eclecticism of the disciplines within the social sciences in which management science is dominant. This notwithstanding, certain definitions which seem to have gained global acclamation if not total unanimity have been given and provided.

Leadership is “the ability to get men what they don’t want to do and like it” (Cohen, 1984). Leadership is “the process of using power to obtain interpersonal influence” (Osborn, 1985). In other words, leadership involves influence and its evocation to alter the behaviours of others in groups and organizational settings to attain desired goals based on proper agenda setting. Leaders today work in socially intricate organizations where they need the assistance not only of subordinates but also of peers, superiors, and external parties to accomplish their goals. Accomplishing goals that positively impact the organization requires effective leadership linked to strong power bases and workable influence strategies. Building a strong power base and developing effective influence strategies to produce power dynamic is an important leadership challenge (Michelson, 2007).

A reciprocal relationship between those who choose to lead and those who decide to follow. Strategies, tactics, skills and practices are empty unless we understand the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders and their constituents. If there is no underlying need for the relationship, then there is no need for leaders” (Obande, 2009).

As Denga (1986) articulated “a leader in an organization is an embodiment of a force that directs the entire organization towards the realization of the organizational goals”. Concretely put, leadership connotes “ability to inspire, direct, motivate and encourage others positively to targeted end. It is the ability to lead others” (Olusoji, 2002). It “represents authority and the pinnacle of the organization. It is the form that authority assumes when it enters into process” (Rieley, 1931, & 1947).

In short, “leadership styles are as varied as the definition of the

concept of leadership itself. Each style is usually depended on the person involved, places, times and circumstances in question and sometimes even moods" (YHDC, Leadership training, 2009) hence; leadership has emotional dimensions to it and, its conceptualization as it can be clearly perceived. In other words as George (2000) clearly articulated, "leadership can be perceived as a particularly emotion-laden process with emotions entwined with the social influence process. According to Saavedra (2005), "leader's mood in an organization has some effects on his group" and, "these effects" according to them "can be described in 3 levels" thus;

Group members with leaders in a positive mood experience more positive mood than do group members with leaders in a negative. The leaders transmit their moods to other group members through the mechanism of emotional contagion (Saavedra, 2005).

Mood contagion may be one of the psychological mechanisms by which charismatic leaders influence followers (Bono, 2006). Group affective tone represents the consistent or homogeneous affective reactions within a group. Group affective tone is an aggregate of the moods of the individual members of the group and refers to mood at the group level of analysis. Group with leaders in a positive mood have a more positive affective tone than do groups with leaders in a negative mood (Cote, 2005).

Public expressions of mood impact how group members think and act. When people experience and express mood, they send signals to others. Leaders signal their goals, intentions, and attitudes through their expressions of moods. For example, expressions of positive moods by leaders signal that leaders deem progress toward goals to be good. The group members respond to those signals cognitively and behaviourally in ways that are reflected in the group processes (Saavedra, 2005).

Leader's development of dynamic followership, the followers can become extremely committed to the performance initiative of their leaders. Once this happens, such followers become committed to the utilization of the highest level of their efforts towards the attainment

of the organizational goals and mission statement. Such commitments as articulated by Latour will usually include the following:

- Working (effectively) with others. Followers balance personal interests with the interests of others and discover a common purpose. They coach, lead, mentor, and collaborate to accomplish the mission.
- Embracing change. Followers are committed to constant improvement, reduction of all types of waste, and leading by example. They are change agents.
- Doing the job (competence). Followers know what's expected, strive to be the best, and derive satisfaction from applying the highest personal standards. To them, work is integral to life.
- Seeing one's self as a resource (appreciating one's skill). Followers understand their value to the organization and care for themselves as assets/investments.
- Building trust (core values; their word is their bond). Followers invite honest feedback and share plans and doubts. They are reliable and earn their leader's confidence.
- Communicating courageously (honest, timely feedback). Followers tell unpleasant truths to serve the organization. They seek the same from others and risk self-exposure.
- Identifying with the leader. Followers are loyal to their "partner in success" and take satisfaction in the leader's success.
- Adopting the leader's vision (seeing the big picture from the boss's perspective). Followers know the limits of personal perspective and actively seek others' perspectives for greater team effectiveness. They have clear understanding of priorities.

The focus of this section of the paper is on leadership not in terms of its concept but in terms of its undercurrents of service, stewardship spirit, and servant leadership. The essence of these insights is to examine whether a given leader is actually a leader fulfilling only the hitherto acclaimed view of leadership as a “top-down” phenomenon or, a leader that equally acts as a follower or servant to the led in the course of his service to humanity.

In examining these insights, our focus is principally on servant leadership because the latter is the vehicle for service and spirited stewardship. In other words, service and stewardship spirit are enhanced and put in place by the philosophy of servant leadership devoid of arrogance of power that usually characterize the existential and/or systemic syndromes and values of bossy leaders or leadership.

1. Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership is not all that new in our organizational world or to the lexicon of organizational discourses. As a matter of fact, its pedigree can be traced back to about four decades. Specifically, the concept was developed in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf (www.greenleaf.org; www.leadersdirect.com/servantleadership).

As a concept developed and/or coined for the attainment of organizational goals and, accomplishment of mission statement, servant-leadership has some principles oiling the wheels of its success. These principles are:

- *Transformation* as a vehicle for personal and institutional growth.
- *Personal growth* as a route to better serve others.
- *Enabling environments* that empower and encourage service.
- *Service* as a fundamental goal.
- *Trusting relationships* as a basic platform for collaboration and service.
- *Creating commitment* as a way to collaborative activity.

- *Community building* as a way to create environments in which people can trust each other and work together.
- *Nurturing the spirit* as a way to provide joy and fulfillment in meaningful work (www.greenleaf.org).

These Principles clearly serve as the foundation and/or pillar of and/or for the characteristics of a servant-leader which include amongst others the following:

- Service to the people.
- Avoidance of self-promotion/publicity.
- Open acceptance of all people that come his/her way.
- Non-favouritism.
- Avoidance of nepotism.
- Honesty.
- Self-confidence.
- Trust.
- Meekness/Patience.

2. *The Change Leader*

A change leader is a key to large-scale, sustainable reform. It is a leader that is committed to sustained and sustainable innovation in his quest for organizational effectiveness. A change leader is a focused leader who is committed to the development of knowledge and skill within his organization particularly in terms of programme coherence and technical resources (Newmann et. al, 2000). Change leaders are critically concerned with and, committed to the achievement of large-scale organizational turnaround in the course of their leadership role and management of human and natural resources within a given political economy and its accompanying multiple variables and/or other societal landscapes and their terrains.

A change leader is one who seeks deep and lasting reforms through the establishment of conditions aimed at the attainment of "*enduring greatness*". In other words, a change leader is a leader who "*catalyzes commitment to a compelling vision and higher performance*" by going

beyond “*performance standard*” and building “*enduring greatness*” (Collins, 2001).

Generally, a change leader is one whose goal is “*sustainable change in society*” (Fullan 2002). He is a leader of the future who is “*attuned to the big picture*” of his environment and, he is a leader regarded as “*a sophisticated conceptual thinker who transforms the organization through people and teams*”. A change leader is one who displays “*palpable energy, enthusiasm and hope*”. He is a leader who performs change leadership roles that are critical to the organization’s stability, goal attainment and durable sustainability.

A change leader is one who has the following characteristics: moral purpose; an understanding of the change process; the ability to improve relationships; knowledge creation and sharing and; coherence making” (Fullan, 2002); ability to hear wake-up call (Anderson and Anderson, nd). These characteristics are respectively synopsisized below.

3. Moral purpose

This is a social responsibility to others and the environment most especially if, for an example, the goal (in focus) by the change leader is systemic improvement that is, improving all the organizations in the area of his existence (organization). A change leader who is committed to systemic improvement must also be nearly as concerned about the success of other organizations in his area of operation as his own. This is more so in that sustained organizational improvement is not possible unless the whole system is moving forward. The example that readily comes to mind here as far as the Nigerian organizational landscapes and terrains are concerned is the Telecommunication Industry, that is, the GSM service providers’ concerns for their customers in terms of improved customer services.

As a matter of fact, within the Telecommunication Industry in Nigeria, improved customers service could not be made possible and/or attained successfully until the mutually beneficial interconnectivity service among the operators, for example TN and

GLO, the two major players in the nation's Telecommunication Industry was mandated through a policy stand by the NBC. In fact, prior to this policy, it was a hell and, like a Camel trying to pass through the eyes of a needle, for Nigerians and/or customers trying to make calls from either of the Networks to others. Even though, up till now, it is still difficult and financially strangulating and/or annihilating for a plethora of customers/consumers to call from one Network to another due to the existing unhealthy competitions and rivalries, such developments can be completely and/or meaningfully reversed through the policy focus of a change leader or change leaders in the Telecommunication Industry in Nigeria.

4. Understanding the Change Process

For any leader to be regarded as a change leader he has to clearly understand the processes that are involved in the change process. This is particularly so, as Fullan, once clearly articulated that "having innovative ideas and understanding of the change process are not the same thing". As a matter of fact, "those firmly committed to their own ideas are not necessarily good change agents (or leaders) because being a change agent (leader) involves getting commitment from others who might not line one's ideas".

5. Improving Relations

A successful change in organization is clearly predicated on improved relationships. As a matter of fact, improved relationships are predictors of better organizational climate and sustainable development. Organizational ground is lost in a situation of stagnant or decreased relationships. Hence, change leaders "build relationships with diverse people and groups, especially with people who think differently" (Fullan, op. cit). This is particularly so because people who think differently within organization no doubt add to the increased complexities of such organizations.

6. Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Effective change leadership is predicated on creating and sharing knowledge within organizations. Knowledge is clearly attained in organizations through the social process of information

transformation and sharing. Thus, “organization must foster knowledge giving as well as knowledge seeking” through information”. Through the creation and sharing of knowledge, continuous learning and development take place hence, a change leader encourages individuals within the organization to add to their knowledge through sharing without been unmindful of the fact that “there will be little to add if people are not sharing”. It is clearly the belief of the change leader that the critical “norm of sharing one’s knowledge with others is the key to continual growth for all” within any given organization or social setting. Thus, “knowledge creation and sharing fuels moral purpose” in organizations and/or social settings led by a change leader.

7. Coherence Making

This is a critical variable in any organization or social setting that comprises of people with different values and asymmetrical needs, aspirations and goals all of which add to the complexities of such organizations. These complexities in themselves “inherently generate overload and fragmentation” hence, a change leader to be effective “must be coherence-makers” (Fullan, 1999 and 2001). As a matter of fact, coherence making by a change leader is enhanced by “the other characteristics of the change leader – moral purpose; an understanding of the change process; the ability to build relationships, and creation and sharing of knowledge – through checks and balances embedded in their interaction” (Fullan, 2002). Analyzing his position on coherence-making further, this scholar articulated the fact that “leaders with deep moral purpose provide guidance; but they can also have blinders if their ideas are not challenged through the dynamics of change, the give and take of relationship, and the ideas generated by new knowledge”. He went further to contend that “coherence is an essential component of complexity and yet can never be completely achieved”

8. Concept of Power

The concept of power is very central and critical to the systemic existence of all humans within all groups or organizational settings. It

is “a measure of an entity’s ability to control the environment around itself including the behaviours of others” hence, according to Michelson (nd); it is “a pervasive reality in the life process of all modern-day organizations”.

The centrality of power to human existence explains why “leaders regularly acquire and use power to accomplish specific work goals and to strengthen their own positions vis-à-vis the reading of general or organizational goal”. This explains why “every interaction and every social relationship in an organization” involves “an exercise of power” (Gibson et. al, 1985).

It is clear from the foregoing that power is a very important concept in our lives. It is the “ability to command others to obedience without resistance; it involves the use of compulsion and coercion” (Crick, 1964). It is “the capacity to affect another’s behaviour by threat of some form of sanction” (Ball, 1983). The sanctions may be negative (in which case it involves the threat of denial of rewards or imposition of other penalties) or positive (which involves promises of wealth, honour or other forms of rewards) (Akindele et. al, 2000). For the exercise of power to be really acceptable it has to be authorized or legitimized hence; the concepts of power means nothing without its transposition to authority through legitimacy.

9. Authority

Authority is the right to direct and command others to obedience without dissent, and it is associated with respect and influence as well as ability to secure voluntary compliance. It also the recognition of the right to rule irrespective of the sanctions the ruler may possess (Leeds, 1981; Ball; 1983; Akindele et. al, 2000). Authority can be derived from three sources which according to Max Weber (1947) are Traditional Authority; Charismatic Authority and; Legal-Rational Authority.

Traditional Authority is the acceptance of the right to rule of someone resulting from the continuous exercise of political power. It is based on hereditary attributes. Charismatic Authority is the acceptance or recognition of a person’s right to rule due to exceptionally strong,

dynamic, likeable personality and character. The word charisma means the gift of grace. It relates to the personal qualities and abilities of a particular leader to shape the nature of his environment through charismatic mobilization of the people.

Legal-Rational Authority is based on the ascension of a person to a particular post through some established rule or procedures for an example, Political Office holders through elections. It connotes the exercise of rules in an effective, impartial manner. It applies to the modern states whereby the exercise of power takes the course of law. This type of authority is possessed or acquired by holding political and administrative offices (Akindele et. al, 2000).

10. Legitimacy

This concept refers to the process through which power and/or the use of coercion is transposed into authority. A particular government or institution of government gains the acceptability of the people through legitimacy which is conferred by the people when they willingly accept the leaders, laws and institutions.

11. Conclusion

The concept of leadership and its various components of power, influence, and followership have been examined in this paper. In the process, the concept of servant-leadership and change leader were analyzed in the context of today's organizational world and, in the context of the feelings, emotions, goals and aspirations of people within various human settings and organizations vis-à-vis their expected commitment to the *raison d'être* of such organizations in line with the dictates of today's global village.

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