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September 2010

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Fatokun, Jonathan Olusola; Salaam, Mulikat O.; and Ajegbomogun, Fredrick Olatunju, "The Influence of Leadership Style on the Performance of Subordinates in Nigerian Libraries" (2010). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 422.

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The Influence of Leadership Style on the Performance of Subordinates in Nigerian Libraries

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Introduction

Leadership, according to Stuart Levine and Michael Crom (1994), "is about listening to people, supporting and encouraging them and involving them in the decision-making and problem-solving processing. It is about building teams and developing their ability to make skillful decisions." A leader is a person who takes the central roles in interactions and who influences the behaviour of other members of the group. He is an individual who has authority over others and is responsible for guiding their actions. He/she is a person engaged in the traditional management practices, such as planning, organizing, decision-making, and controlling, and whose performance is almost often measured by their ability to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. Generally speaking, leadership is in hierarchy and is usually illustrated as a triangle with the ultimate authority at the apex of the triangle and authority flowing downward to all other part of the triangle.

Library is a complex organization that has its own set objectives. It has its hierarchical structure, official decision making processes, institutional policy and routines, to enable it to achieve set goals. The situation in the library has changed dramatically in the last few years. The range of leadership skills required of library managers is greater than ever. Staff have to learn to think and live in different ways. There should be a balance between middle and lower level staff, and a less rigidly hierarchical structure that should result in much more effective organizational performance.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the leadership style of library managers in Nigerian libraries
2. To examine the existing relationship between the leaders and the subordinates in the libraries.
3. To identify the channels of communication and relationship machinery between the leader and the led in the libraries
4. To investigate the techniques used to motivate subordinates

Literature Review

The concept of managerial leadership permeates and structures the theory and practice of work organizations. In the management concepts, leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviour, contingency, power and occupation of an administrative position. Most of the definition reflects the assumption that leadership involves a process whereby an individual exerts influence upon others in an organization context. A general opinion that is supported by research results is that leadership style in a firm, exerts a major influence on the structure, strategy and the well being of the firm.

Smircich and Morgan (1982) state that leadership is by nature dialectical, it is socially constructed for the interactions of both leaders and the followers. Yuki (1998) believed that any definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective but defined leadership as the process wherein an individual member in a group or organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives and strategies, the organization of activities, the maintenance of cooperative relationships, the development of skills and confidence by members, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from the people outside the group or organizations.

Similarly, Clemmer and McNeil (1990) suggest that leadership is not a role or position, but the ability to initiate action and move others to shared goals. For them leadership is the foundation stone upon which other vital components of organizational high performance-management systems and technology rest. According to Gannon (1979), without effective leadership, it is difficult for an organization to function effectively. The leader defines the goal of an organization, develop the planning and control systems that guide and monitor the organizations destiny. Organizations on the other hand function effectively when there are persons to communicate with each other, who are willing to contribute action, to accomplish a common purpose.

Leadership will exist and develop in any organization but it is preferable if the real leader is also the individual who is actually in charge. One of the inherent reasons why leadership among managers is not prevalent as it ought to be, particularly among libraries, is because we tend to select our human resources manager with other criteria in mind. Most senior librarians are bound to be directly concerned with a team of people who will be looking up to them for leadership, motivation and involvement. Although, it is not out of place to find some librarians who are in leadership positions, that lack the basic concepts of personnel management that could have been of tremendous impetus in the development of leadership skills.

Glassman (1978) however believes that motivation is predispositions to act in certain manner such factors are needs, expectations, personalities and operant condition. For the leader, the challenge is determine on how these factors interact to affect individual behaviour and the work situations can be structured to attain maximum employee job performance. Effective leadership generates increased motivation and effort. Greater motivation and effort are factors that lead to high organizational performance. Maslow (1970) identified five need categories which can serve as motivations and arranged them in hierarchical order, with physiological needs being the most basic. Although an individual can be manager without leading and an individual can be a leader without being a manager (for example, an informal group leader or elected trade union leader). A balance of management and leadership is necessary for a work organization to operate effectively.

Is'haq (2008) reported that intellectual stimulation leaders is the one that shows the degree to which he provides encouragement to his subordinates to be creative in looking at old problems in new ways, create an environment that is tolerance of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture people to question their own values and beliefs and those of organization. Three basic leadership styles can be defined as follows:

1. Autocratic: this style is characterized by authoritarian behaviour, unilateral decision making, one way communication and the denial of conflict. In short, the leader acts as an absolute monarch with unlimited authority.
2. Democratic-Participative: this style involves shared decision making, open communication and realization that conflict is inevitable and must be managed. Although the leader maintains final authority, subordinates input and consultation is highly valued.
3. Free-Rain: this style allows subordinates maximum autonomy in their job. Individual decision making, free exchange of information, interpersonal conflict resolution and minimal leadership controls are standard.

The earliest theories sought to establish the personal traits necessary for effective leaders. In mid 1940s leadership research centered on identifying the traits or personal characteristics of individual leaders. Such traits as honesty, loyalty, ambition, aggressiveness, initiative, and drive were deemed important. The earliest theories held that traits are inherited and certain leaders are born to be leaders. Traits are carried in the genes, and persons endowed with appropriate traits were natural leaders. Later, these theories held that traits could also be developed through learning and experience.

The current interest in alternative leadership paradigms in the 1980s, variously labeled transformation leadership (Tichy and Devenna, 1986), charismatic leadership (Conger and Kanungo, 1988) self-leadership (Manz and Sims, 1989) or principle-centred leadership (Covey, 1990) can be explained by understanding the pre-requisites of the resource-based strategy and human resource management model.

Methodology

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the survey. A total number of questionnaires 100 were distributed to practicing librarian and their supporting staff (para-professional) in Nigerian libraries in which 72 were returned. The questionnaire was administered directly by the researchers at the 2009 NLA Conference/AGM in Oyo state. This afforded the opportunity to reach out to a large number of respondents. The questionnaire was divided into sections among which included information on the leadership styles, channels of communication, motivational techniques and attainment of organization goals. The questionnaire also elicits information from the para-professional on the relationship between leaders and subordinates. The results of the study were analyzed using percentages and simple average calculations. The research work covers academic, public and special libraries in Nigeria.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Personal Attributes (N= 72)

Personal Attribute	Frequency	Percentage
Type of library		
Academic	49	68.1
Public	3	4.2
Special or Research	20	27.8
Qualification of Respondents		
Diploma	4	5.6
Bachelor Degree	6	8.3
Master Degree	60	83.3
Ph.D	2	2.8
Rank/Status of Respondents		
Head of Libraries	43	59.7
Principal Librarian	6	8.3
Senior Librarian	7	9.7
Librarian I	10	13.8
Librarian II	7	9.7
Library Officers	7	9.7
Library Assistants	2	2.7
Years of Experience		
1-5	22	30.5
6-10	11	15.4
11-15	16	22.4
16-20	7	9.8
21-25	14	19.5
26-30	2	2.8

Table I shows the distribution of the respondents based on personal data. It was revealed that out of the three type of library on which respondent were sampled, academic library carries the majority (68.1%), followed by research/special (27.8%) while public library carries the least (4.2%). This is not surprising, because of the proliferation of academic institutions as against research and public libraries in the country.

It also showed that 58.3% of the respondents were male while 41.7% were female. This shows that both male and female were fully represented in the study.

The age bracket of most of the respondents 60+ was found to be (5.4%), followed by 51-60 (13.9%) and 41-50 (54.1%), the least was 21-30 (5.4%). The age brackets shows even spread of the age expected in any government organization. From this study 83.3% had master degree, 5.6% had diploma while 2.8% had Ph.D degree. It is obvious that workers in the libraries are of higher educational standard. This further shows that for proper discharge of duties in the libraries higher education is unaffordable.

So also, bulks of the respondents are heads of libraries 59.7%, Principal Librarian 8.3% and Senior Librarian 9.7%. Others are librarian I 13.8%, Librarian II 9.7% and Library Officers 9.7%. It is obvious that the library is an organization that stands to benefit immensely from hierarchy of service,

structure and stability while such has been a thread that holds all section of the library and allows it to perform successfully.

Table 2: Leadership Styles

Opinions	Yes	%	No	%
Acceptable by subordinate	67	93.1	5	7
Inherited styles	23	31.9	49	68
Developed styles	57	79.2	15	20.8
Natural styles	58	80.6	14	19.5

Table 2 shows the result of leadership traits/styles. Based on the findings of this study, majority of the respondents, 93.1% agreed with the leadership styles used by their leaders. Responding to a question on whether leadership style is inherited, developed or natural with people, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that leadership style is natural (80.6%). This is closely followed by developed style (79.2%) as shown in table 2.

Table 3: Channels of Effective Communication

Items	Very Frequent	Frequent	Not Frequent	Not at all
Hold general meeting	14 (19.4)	33 (45.8)	17 (23.6)	8 (11.1)
Hold sectional meeting	16 (22.2)	36 (50)	18 (25)	2 (2.8)
Use of internal memorandum	14 (19.4)	33 (45.8)	18 (25)	7 (9.9)
Use of telephone	17 (23.6)	15 (20.8)	33 (45.8)	17 (23.6)
Use of computer (e-mail)	6 (11.1)	8 (11.1)	15 (20.8)	42 (59.7)
Meet one-on-one	32 (44.4)	25 (34.7)	7 (9.7)	8 (11.1)

The above table shows the distribution of respondents on channels of effective communication in the library. 50% of the respondents asserted that holding of sectional meeting is frequent while 44.4% indicated that meet one-on-one is very frequent. From the result, it is obvious that there is cordial relationship in the mode of communication in the library. This testifies to the fact that there is harmony and peace within the leaders and subordinates in Nigerian libraries and only through that the library can strive to achieve its objective. The implication of this is that when works are done in peaceful atmosphere, all will want to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organization.

Table 4: Relationship between Leaders and Subordinates

Items	Very often	Often	Occasionally
Interactions at leisure time	13 (18.1)	35 (46.6)	24 (33.3)
Frequency of staff socialization	19 (26.4)	45 (62.5)	7 (9.4)
Positive response to personal needs	27 (37.5)	39 (54.2)	4 (37.5)
Positive response to official needs	46 (63.9)	23 (31.9)	1 (1.4)

The above table shows the distribution of respondents based on work /interpersonal relationship between leaders and subordinate. 63.9% of the respondents asserted that positive response to official need is very often, while 62.5% indicated that frequency of staff socialization is often. From the result, it is

obvious that response to both official and frequency of staff socialization is of appreciable values, hence, testify to the level of relationship between the leaders and the subordinates is very high.

Table 5: Motivational Techniques

Opinions	Very Often	Often	Seldom	Undecided	Never
Recommendation for normal promotion	35 (48.6)	30 (41.7)	3 (4.2)	1 (1.4)	3 (6.9)
Recommendation for accelerated promotion	5 (6.9)	13 (18.1)	18 (25)	23 (31.9)	2 (2.8)
Recommendation for salary increments	19 (26.4)	23 (31.9)	8 (11.1)	11 (15.3)	3 (4.2)
Recommendation for award/honour	3 (4.2)	13 (18.1)	17 (23.6)	15 (20.8)	6 (8.3)
Issuance of commendation letter	4 (5.6)	22 (30.6)	17 (23.6)	16 (22.2)	13 (18.1)
Cash gift	1 (1.4)	13 (18.1)	23 (31.9)	24 (33.3)	9 (12.9)
Material gift	2 (2.8)	12 (16.7)	25 (34.7)	22 (30.6)	11 (15.3)
Verbal commendation	36 (50)	24 (33.3)	6 (8.3)	3 (4.2)	3 (4.2)

The above shows different motivational techniques use in the library as an incentive for high productivity. Based on recommendation for normal promotion, 48.6 % of the respondents asserted that this were done very often, 31.9% indicated that recommendation for salary increment is often and 50% the respondents indicated that verbal commendation is very often.

It is obvious that recommendation for accelerated promotion, award/honour, commendation letter, cash gift and material gift carried a very low percentage, which is an indication that staff are not adequately rewarded for their extra input in achieving organizational goals or set targets. This is not too good; it may lead to discouragement which can make them not to give their best while on duty and their output may not be better. This corroborated the views of Glassman (1998) that motivation is predisposition to act in certain manner (i.e positive); this would go a long way in service delivery.

Table 6: Attainment of Organizational Goals

Variables	Regular	Occasional	Irregular
Staff discipline	26 (36.1)	43 (59.7)	1 (1.4)
Frequency of staff discipline	9 (12.5)	35 (48.6)	26 (36.1)
Frequency of staff cooperation	47 (65.3)	24 (33.3)	1 (1.4)
Work supervision of staff	36 (50)	33 (45.8)	2 (2.8)
Reward for performance	41 (56.9)	25 (44.7)	2 (2.8)

Staff discipline/correction for misconduct is very necessary to make sure that work ethics are strongly adhered to. From the result of this study, 36.1% asserted that very regular discipline is adopted for misconduct, while 59.7% accepted regular/informal discipline as a method of choice and 1.4% confirmed that both above mentioned ways of correcting misconduct were not used at all. Values recorded on discipline shows that large number support one way or the other, this in no small measure will help the staff to be law abiding, which will further promote the efficiency of operation at all levels.

The supervision of staff in any organization gives room for assessment and timeless of operation. In this study, 50 and 45.8% assert that work supervision of staff is very regularly and regularly. Furthermore, frequency of staff reward was evaluated in the study. Large percentages (66.7%) of the respondent were of the opinion that staff is frequently rewarded.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it is evident that there is a high level of commitment to both official and social needs by the leaders in the libraries in Nigeria. There is cordial relationship in the mode of communication from leaders to the subordinates and this made the subordinate to have high sense of belonging and efficient at work. This is also supported by Jaiyeoba (2001) findings that the employee will always make significant contributions to the achievement of organizational goals where a leader communicates frequently with his or her staff and such creates a situation where conflict can be avoided within the organization and thereby makes the system to be more efficient. However, recommendation for accelerated promotion, award of honour, commendation letter carried a very low mark in the libraries

Recommendations

Library managers should ensure the sustenance of effective channels of communication in the library for effective and efficient work flow as well as perfect social interaction and interpersonal relationship among all category of staff in Nigerian libraries. Leaders in Nigerian libraries should adopt various motivational techniques that can encourage staff and increase their productivity. Library managers should not hesitate where and when necessary to recognise, by way of reward or honour, any staff that performs excellently well in the course of his or her duty.

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