

# **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE IN NIGERIA: AN IMPERATIVE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

Leadership has become a resource for the holder of state power as it provides him/her the opportunity to seek self-interest to the maximum space possible. While for those outside the corridors of state power leadership is a source of exploitation, pain and deprivation of their fundamental right to an egalitarian society. This picture of leadership has generally resulted in the increasing apathy and lack of trust for government among most Nigerian. In which case, most Nigerian does not see leadership as constituted to contribute to the peaceful attainment of their progressive socio-economic goal. This view is anchored against the role of Nigeria leadership in significantly contributing to the depression of the national economy, continued failed development process and the irrational and staled implementation of the policy option of privatization. Despite the poor showing of leadership in Nigeria it is a valued resource which if effectively articulated and operated has the capacity to contribute to the efficient mobilization of national resources by genuinely turning the depression for the good of all and also promoting national development. This paper using the documentary and analytical approach has examined the contesting issues about leadership and its place and utility for national development in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Development, Mobilization, Nigeria, Resources and Economy.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Leadership reflects a trust for which the holder must at all times act in ways that is in the interest of the giver. Specifically, it is a contractual relationship defined in terms of a principal-agent relationship; one for which the agent must constantly seek ways of improving the state and condition of the principal. The political process of periodic election presents the platform upon which both the principal and the agent as it were negotiate and re-negotiate the term of the contract. Once signed via popular election, the terms of the contract is binding on all parties for a defined period of time for which a new contract will be re-entered into either with the old agent or an entirely new agent. The change of the agent for a new one will depend on the performance and score card of the old agent. In the contractual relationship the constitution provides the framework that directs and guides the actions and behaviors of both parties as well as defines the progressive goals of the collectives to be pursued by the agent.

The progressive goals aspired by the collectives are summed up in the capacity of the governance process enabling them to effectively overcome the challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Within the locus of social demand is the need for progress which is measurable and of value to the citizens as the principal. It is therefore of the essence for the agent who through the political process is contracted to form a government (leadership team) aimed at achieving the goals of the principal defined in terms of progress and values. In the process of pursuing these values and progressive ends resources must be mobilized and utilized for the attainment of those ends contractually agreed upon through the political process and subsumed in the constitution.

It is easier to attain those goals where resources (resources are in this context defined in terms of human, finance and natural endowment) are readily available and are put into productive uses. However, where the contrarily is the case, attaining those goals become problematic especially in a heterogeneous and largely divided polity. This is because the struggle among the different grouping for the meager resource becomes tensed and outside the corridors of defined order; especially where the struggle is defined in terms of a zero-sum-game. Under this circumstance, poor leadership becomes really challenged and inhibited drawing from the fact that it is unable to ensure that divergent values are properly articulated, integrated and resources mobilized to achieve consensus goals. The ability of leadership to mobilize resources for the attainment of consensus

goals of the collectives is depend on the character, will, trust and tact of the leader. These does not preclude the nature of decision making, discipline, and the management framework the leader and his/her management team espouses in the process of extraction, production and distribution channeled towards promoting the good life for all in the polity.

### **1.1 Four Factors of Leadership**

There are four major factors in leadership (U.S. Army, 1983):

**1. Leader:** You must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know, and what you can do. Also, note that it is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful you have to convince your followers, not yourself or your superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

**2. Followers:** Different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee does. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. You must know your people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' be, know, and do attributes.

**3. Communication:** You lead through two-way communication. Much of it is nonverbal. For instance, when you “set the example,” that communicates to your people that you would not ask them to perform anything that you would not be willing to do. What and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between you and your employees.

**4. Situation:** All situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective. Also note that the situation normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of

time, they have little consistency across situations (Mischel, 1968). This is why a number of leadership scholars think the Process Theory of Leadership is a more accurate than the Trait Theory of Leadership. Various forces will affect these four factors. Examples of forces are:

- Your relationship with your seniors.
- The skill of your followers.
- The informal leaders within your organization.
- How your organization is organized.

### **Total Leadership**

What makes a person want to follow a leader? People want to be guided by leaders they respect and who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, they must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future. When people are deciding if they respect you as a leader, they do not think about your attributes, rather, they observe what you do so that they can know who you really are. They use this observation to tell if you are an honorable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted. Self-serving leaders are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. They succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors at the expense of their workers. However, in Nigeria this leadership qualities are very uncommon in their attribute. The corrupt public officials are been celebrated where they are indicted, they always fight back using the public wealth they amassed through illegal means.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leaders help guide their people (both individuals and groups and entire organisations as well) in establishing goals and support them in actions taken to achieve the goals. Organisations expect managers to be leaders, but not all managers exhibit leadership behaviours, although as research shows (Shockley-Zalaback, 2006, p. 223), leadership communication can be produced by every member of an organization and combined with management communication and managerial skills, may lead to an organizations' success.

Therefore, the issue of leadership has been the subject of various research and discussion which led to a number of theories and approaches, but the great importance of leadership for an

organization's success remains unquestioned. Fixed assets, high-tech equipment, great financial resources and well-qualified staff can count only if combined with effective leaders who are able to take the most of the potential that dwells in their resources. What is more, effective leadership assists in achieving goals and reaching success even if financial, material and human resources are minimal (Blake and McCanse, 1991, p. 24). According to Pocztowski (2003, p. 214), leading or leadership is a process of influencing others in such a way that they voluntarily engage in achieving an organization's goals. Furthermore, Shockley-Zalaback (2006, p. 224) emphasizes that leadership takes place through communication. She points to the fact that leaders communicate about what changes are needed, explain their intentions and "translate them into reality", and together with proposing new strategies, suggest actions to be taken to implement the strategies. The leader, similarly to the manager, can be assigned to the position, but leadership results not from the assignment itself, but from leadership communication behaviours and ability to influence other people. Kostera, Kownacki and Szumski (2002, p. 336) claim that the leader's main duty is to show a long-term and ambitious goal and to encourage their subordinates to follow the direction given, whereas the manager's duty is to manage the processes involved. The leader sets the goal and the effective manager leads the team to realising the goal using the best possible way. Outstanding and charismatic leaders tend to break rules and often "do what they want to" instead of "what they should do" or "what is accepted" (Kostera et al., 2002, p. 337). And 78 Agnieszka Schuetz although they do not abide by the rules, they succeed due to the fact that they are visionaries who like innovations and do not mind changing rules. Leaders coach, generate enthusiasm, use the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I', show how things should be done, enhance people's abilities and, last but not least, ask their subordinates to do things instead of giving them commands (Nogalski, Apanowicz, Rutka, Czermiński and Czerska, 2002, p. 114). And last but not least, Glińska-Neweś (2007) presents a very interesting outline of modern leadership claiming among others that the key to modern leadership is the sharing of power. Due to changes in organisational structures (from hierarchical to horizontal), cooperation is becoming more important than power. A modern leader is more like a coordinator who gets the information, facilitates communications, and integrates people and their knowledge (Glińska-Neweś, 2007, p. 120). Moreover, people at various organisational levels can take over leadership functions if they possess suitable skills to perform the task.

## 1.2 Principles of Leadership

In a bid to keep a leader guided on how to go about his leadership assignment, the (U.S. Army, 1983) came up with these eleven principles of leadership;

1. Know yourself and seek self-improvement - In order to know yourself, you have to understand your be, know, and do, attributes. Seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This can be accomplished through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others.
2. Be technically proficient - As a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with your employees' tasks.
3. Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions - Search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. And when things go wrong, as they often tend to do sooner or later — do not blame others. Analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge.
4. Make sound and timely decisions - Use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools.
5. Set the example - Be a good role model for your employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see. We must become the change we want to see - Mahatma Gandhi.
6. Know your people and look out for their well-being - Know human nature and the importance of sincerely caring for your workers.
7. Keep your workers informed - Know how to communicate with not only them, but also seniors and other key people.
8. Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers - Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.
9. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished - Communication is the key to this responsibility.

Leaders exert influence on the environment via three types of actions:

1. The goals and performance standards they establish.
2. The values they establish for the organization.

3. The business and people concept they establish. Successful organizations have leaders who set high standards and **goals** across the entire spectrum, such as strategies, market leadership, plans, meetings and presentations, productivity, quality, and reliability.

**Values** reflect the concern the organization has for its employees, customers, investors, vendors, and surrounding community. These values define the manner in how business will be conducted. **Concepts** define what products or services the organization will offer and the methods and processes for conducting business.

**These goals**, values, and concepts make up the organization's personality or how the organization is observed by both outsiders and insiders. This personality defines the roles, relationships, rewards, and rites that take place.

### **1.3 Management and Leadership Theories, Models**

**Corporate Governance:** Corporate Governance is fascinating, hugely dynamic, and very far-reaching. It grew as a concept in response to increasingly serious corporate scandals of the late 1900s, and remains strongly concerned with these areas of corporate risk. The ideas surrounding Corporate Governance are increasingly useful for small organizations as well as the very biggest. Corporate Governance also offers interesting perspectives for leadership, authority, ego, wealth creation, greed, risk, responsibility, ethics, morality, etc., and how these issues reconcile or conflict with organizational and market dynamics, and the needs of society, environment, quality of life, economic health, etc.

**The Psychological Contract:** The Psychological Contract is an increasingly relevant aspect of workplace relationships and wider human behaviour. Descriptions and definitions of the Psychological Contract first emerged in the 1960s, notably in the work of organizational and behavioural theorists Chris Argyris and Edgar Schein. Many other experts have contributed ideas to the subject since then, and continue to do so, either specifically focusing on the the Psychological Contract, or approaching it from a particular perspective, of which there are many. The Psychological Contract is a deep and varied concept and is open to a wide range of interpretations and theoretical studies.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Each of us is motivated by needs. Our most basic needs are inborn, having evolved over tens of thousands of years. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs helps to explain how these needs motivate us all. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting with the first, which deals with the most obvious needs for survival itself. Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are we concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development.

**Love and Spirituality in Management and Business:** Love in business and work means making decisions and conducting oneself in a way that cares for people and the world we live in. So why is love (or spirituality) such a neglected concept in business? It hasn't always been so.

**Organizational Change, Training and Learning:** Modern principles for organizational change management and effective employee training and development. These principles are for forward-thinking emotionally mature organizations, who value integrity above results, and people above profit. This is not to say that results and profit don't matter, of course they do. The point is that when you value integrity and people, results and profit come quite naturally.

House and Podsakoff (1994) review the theory and research on leadership effectiveness. They re-label what was formerly named charismatic, visionary or transformational leadership into outstanding leadership, arguing that those theories are all concerned with leaders whose organizations achieve outstanding results. "A common set of behaviors have been shown to differentiate outstanding from ordinary leaders" (House & Podsakoff, 1994, p. 58), and the authors propose ten of them as typical of outstanding leaders, mentioning however that the manifestations of these behaviors may vary. Those ten behavioral categories are: articulation of an ideological vision, high degree of confidence, image building, role modeling, external representation, high performance expectations and confidence, motive arousal, frame alignment, and inspirational communication. Furthermore, House and Podsakoff exclude three behaviors from being outstanding leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and environmental sensitivity. The first two behaviors are central to Bass's theory of transformational leadership, environmental sensitivity is seen as a facet of charismatic leadership by Conger and Kanungo (1988). House and Podsakoff (1994) argue that these behaviors must be displayed by ordinary (or



transactional) managers in order for them to be effective, but are not unique to outstanding leadership.

#### **1.4 Political Leadership and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria**

There is a consensus among well-meaning individuals in Nigeria and foreign nations that corruption has inevitably become a major clog in the quest for sustainable growth and development. It is further agreed that it must be halted before it shut down the country. It is the single most critical impediment to achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs); and like a deadly virus, it attacks the vital structures and systems that engender progressive functioning of the society. Like most developing countries, Nigeria is still grappling with the dilemma of corruption that has largely retarded social development, undermined economic growth, discouraged foreign investments and reduced the resources available for infrastructural development, public service, and poverty reduction programmes (Findings, 1999: 1). Much more disturbing, the scourge of corruption leaves the poor perpetually disproportionately under-privileged, even as it renders the development of democracy and the building of a society of opportunity more problematic (Ribadu, 2007). Thus, by diverting assets away from their intended use, corruption can be said to be the single most important factor responsible for the failure of governance and lack of sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Without doubt, the unpardonable failure of the political leadership class managing the affairs and wealth of the country had inevitably brought severe misery to many voiceless and helpless Nigerians. It must also be mentioned here that Nigeria's post-independence political bureaucratic and military elites had terribly pillaged the nation's common wealth and national patrimony with impunity, thereby denying Nigerians access to economic prosperity and quality living condition. Also disheartening, is the fact that the volume of development assistance totalling about \$400 billion that flowed into the country for socio-economic development between independence and the collapse of military dictatorship in 1999 was atrociously squandered by the political leaders of the period. The mismanagement of resources of such quantum which was worth six times the resources committed to the rebuilding of Western Europe after a devastating Second World War simply defines the callousness of the political leadership class towards the socio-economic wellbeing of the country (Ribadu, 2007).

Indeed, it is difficult to think of any social ill in the country that is not traceable to the embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, particularly as a direct or indirect consequence of the corruption perpetrated by the callous political leadership class since independence. The cycle of poverty keeps growing with all its attendant consequences even as the rate of unemployment remains perpetually high. By giving mediocrity advantage over intelligence through nepotism and cronyism, intellectual capital, which is the bulwark of development and advancement, has continued to drift abroad in search of greener pasture. Paradoxically, the scourge of corruption has left the country straddling two economic worlds at the same time. To state the obvious, the country has found itself in the quagmire of a country too rich to be poor and at the same time too poor to be rich. Thus, this has made it inevitable for every Nigerian to be a victim of corruption.

No doubt, corrupt practices among the political leadership class have also resulted in undermining the growth and stability of the nation's trading and financial system. As Nigeria seeks for more Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), corruption tends to thrive more and impede the country's ability to attract overseas capital. Corruption has also damaged economic development and reforms and if adequate care is not taken, it can hinder the growth of democratic institutions.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

It is evident in the above discussion that Nigerian leaders take the greater blame for leadership failure in Nigeria but the led also have a share of the blame because of their various ways of encouraging bad leadership for the sake of selfish gain. If the facets of misrule in Nigeria are to be encountered, Nigerian leaders must shun selfish tendencies and promote the This is a civic and national task and challenge. The people of Nigeria must insist on good leadership by resisting bad leadership at all costs, including the sacrifice of individual or collective lives. No country gets good leadership on a platter of gold. All hands must be on deck to ensure that leadership in Nigeria becomes and remains good and people-oriented.

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