
INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON DECISION MAKING AND THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN ORGANIZATIONS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

Leadership is central to the effective development of the Organization. However, there are different types of leadership approaches a leader can use to motivate workers in the organization namely democratic, authoritarian and so on. Nevertheless, this paper advocate for the strict participation of the employees of the organization in their own affairs. To attain the objectives envisaged here or that which motivates this paper, the author adopted a comprehensive and systematic review of related literature to unveil their weakness and amplify their strengths, secondary data collection and analysis. Indeed, these informed the findings, recommendations, postulations and extra-polations made in the study. Circumstantial on this, it was discovered that because of the military incursion into politics in Nigeria for many years the democratic principles of leadership which inclusive mass participation, equal participation of all, collective effort. These have been replaced by ethnic colourations, self-aggrandisement, political killings and the likes. The paper advocates for the synergy between democracy and leadership in attainment of organizational goals.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership had stirred up controversies between/ scholars in the disciplines of social sciences and organizational psychologists. This is because it deals with human beings who are bedevilled with variabilities in language,

education, orientation and so. Indeed, leadership involves decision making and in democracy the task is demanding. While some scholars argued that leadership should be democratic, situation or a permutation of both others said it should be autocratic or liaises faire (Oguna, 2007; Onyenigwe, 2008). And this is anchored on individual orientation, education and so on.

Whichever the case, one thing is to lead another thing is to follow which is reflective of the concept of leadership-followership continuum. However, this paper involves these contested areas of leadership; meaning of leadership, types/styles of leadership, power, authority looked at the concept, decision making, democracy and democratization paper addressed the challenges and provided tentative solutions to the problems raised in the discussion.

There are many types of leadership namely; democratic leadership style authoritarian style. This is to say that the leadership style adopted by the leaders can be influenced by the type of education the leaders have, the background of the leader and the type of organization, for example the influence of the military, organization on a military leader is expected to different from that of a civilian leader. However, in Africa because of the long years of military role democracy has been saddle with military authoritarianism. Given the above this paper investigate the influence of the military in democratic leadership and development with a view to establish a connection in leadership and development or all both influences each other.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence of leadership styles on decision making and the process of democratization in Nigeria. However, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. To find out the contributing factors to underdevelopment and ineffective leadership in Nigeria.
- ii. To establish if there is a relationship between leadership and decision making.
- iii. To find out if the process of democratisation in Nigeria was really followed by the leaders.

The Concept of Leadership

The concept of leadership in government and politics have added to the numerous floodgates of controversies and volatile arguments generated in social life. Reflecting this is not only the concept of leadership but others like development, motivation, goal attainment, work and so on. Indeed, the concept of leadership will be examined through these lenses. The work of Parker (2016) concluded that motivation is central in leadership, job and work design for development. Leadership seen as the potential force that provides the motivation needed for human development as far as job and work design are concerned. Osteraker (1999) also argued that motivation and leadership are deeply inter-related in organizational goal attainment and productivity because of their inevitable relationship in measuring motivation.

In a similar thrust, Schermerhorn and Wright (2014) in Management argued definitionally that management has a role to play in organization through leadership which is the ability to energize people or the organization to success, given organisational resources. In the same perspective Ogunna (2007), and Ogunna (2003) apparently, addressed the definition

of leadership from the angles of motivation and the attainment of the goals of the organization. Indeed, he sees it as the ability to lead a group of people to attain the goals of an organization which involves motivation, goal attainment, resource control and many more.

These examples/definitions show that leadership in an organization is a group/collective effort at motivating, energizing and controlling people in organization. Leadership is not an individual effort but the collective will of people in an organization. According to Ogunna (2007) leadership means getting people or others to work towards the attainment of an objective and. This means the leader should have and the where wherewithal withal to influence the followers, group or organization.

Ogunna (2004) further said that a leader is nothing without followers which means the leader cannot be separated from the feeling and problems of those led as both of them depend on each other.

In the same prospective, Nwizu (1997) defines leadership as the ability to influence a group towards the attainment of goals.

Indeed, influencing people means that the leader continually strives willingly and objectively to motivate workers for the attainment of group objectives. Hodgetts and Luthans (1997) also viewed the concept of leadership as influence when they critically averred that leadership is the process of influencing people to direct their efforts toward goal attainment.

Power and Authority: Relationship with Leadership and Administration

Power, authority and leadership are never the same even though some people often used them inter-changeably. Authority is the legitimate use of the position one has. It does not mean the use of force as in power, Authority is civilized power, and it is also

legitimate. Power is the ability to command obedience from others. Authority is earned, you do not take it by force, but power is. Nelson Mandela of South Africa, and Dr. Kwame Nku of Ghana had authority. The Military Head of States had/has power.

A word or two about democratic, authoritarian, *laissez faire*, positive leadership (trait, situational theory and behavioural styles or theories of leadership. Ogunna (2004) is of the position that democratic and positive leadership the principles of democracy. Furthermore, Ogunna (2004) articulated that leadership style is the characteristics and behaviour which the leader exhibit in performing the role assigned to him. In the authoritative style of leadership also known as the autocratic style, the leader decides on all the policies and rules of the organization. (Ogunna, 2004; Onyenwgwe 2008). Democratic leadership style, on the other hand is a product of neo-classical era of human relations. It is also known as participative management style of leadership. Here all decisions and policies are product of group decision making unlike the autocratic or authoritarian type which centres on the leaders (Ogunna 2004).

In contrast, the *laissez faire* leadership style gives total freedom or independence to the subjects in the organization. Everything happens loosely and whose is to be blamed, (Ogunna 2004). The servant leader focuses on increased service or performance to not the self, but the service others rather than the self. Such as leader is endowed with foresight attention, among others (Spear, 1995).

Trait and Situational

Leadership styles/ leaders also exhibit peculiar features that demand our attention. Nimizigha (2024) said that the epic-centres of transformational leadership given its

popularity in hospital, school, company, board meetings, focuses on individual qualities or components of motivation and expunges adjectival considerations (sectionalism and individual-orientations.)

There is also the development-orientated leader/leadership style. Adamolekun (2011) said developing nation are in need of this type of leadership urgently. In this type of leadership, the leader should be committed to addressing the problems of development. Policy making should not be distanced from policy implementation which is a typical issue in Africa. Contributing to the subject matter of leadership and motivation, Amah (2006) said that leadership is the process of providing a sustainable environment and influence employees need to do the job and attain success. A leader should motivate employees and groups to reflect the collective will which can suppress sectionalism and personal influences.

Harmonization of the Theories of Leadership

There are three theoretical constructs provided by theorists of leadership, namely;

- Trait theory
- Behavioural theory
- Situational theory

In biology or psychology, trait means that which is peculiar to a person or group of people as in habit, characteristics or identity. Over the years, great men (great man theorise) are regard as enthusiastic, brave, full of strength, integrity and magnanimous. Examples of such include: Martin Luther king Jr, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Obafemi Awolowo, Mahatma Gandhi and others. However, Gibbs in Onyenigwe (2008) said that as a theory of leadership, the trait theory of leadership is inconsistent and inconsiderate of the arrays of characteristics a leader possesses. In isolating certain characteristics of a leader from others, it

creates a quagmire of conflicting characteristics the leader should have all together.

The trait theory lacks also a universal list of traits, relativity of traits and so on which makes it an all-compassing theory of leadership.

Contrasting with the trait theory of leadership are the behavioural theory and the situational theories. The behavioural Theory of leadership is based on what leaders do (perform actually). Indeed, human behaviour reflects on what we do now or intend to do in the future. There are limitations however. Among others, the theory failed to identify between bad and good leadership behaviour. (Successful and unsuccessful behavioural patterns. It posited certain generalizations which are difficult certain apply in situations.

Worthy of mentioning but not explained because of time factor, other behavioural theories/theorists are: Sociological Theory by Kurt Lewin studies by Arthur Douglas McGregor (Theory X and Y), Social Psychologist, Renin Linkert Michigan Studies and the Blake and Muotor's Management Grip.

The central focus of the situational theory is not on traits nor behaviour of human beings but the situation. In other word, leadership is a function of the various situation available subject to that or those of the leader or leaders (Ogunna, 2007; Ogunna 2004; Oyenwigwe, 2008; Spears, 1995; Onyengwe, 2005.)

A critical exposition of the situation theory or leadership style, overtly or covertly, provides us a complete view of leadership Put categorically and undoubtedly, no particular type of leadership certainly has or wears the golden crown. Indeed, the leader adopts democratic, authoritarian, *laissez faire* or servant leadership style depending on the environment the leaders found.

Where peace, dialogue and so on do not work, then confrontation and war come in.

Empirical and Theatrical Constructs

This work depends on the democratic leadership theory. From a definitional approach, Lars (2001) addressed the theoretical stand of democracy and democratization from a bi-focal point of view. First, democracy is conceptualized as universal suffrage, regular elections and basic civil rules, and on the other hand, democracy conceptualized as political equality in actual practice. The truth is, the first instance is popular than the second. In other words, modern political scientists have pontificated and favoured the first position than the second. Two camps emanated from above namely: the minimalist camp favoured by the Swedish political scientist and writer Tingsten (1945) and the U.S.A political scientist. Samuel Huntington took the universal position. Politically, maximizing the position of the minimalist definition and others are Sen (1981) and Hel d (1995) addressed the is for "principles of autonomy" among others on the other hand, Sen (1981) is best known for the "entitlement" political literature. Indeed, what can be deducted from these views points is that electorates are autonomous in their decisions and, let us also do not forget that it is also their right-their entitlement.

How do we reconcile these positions? Indeed, democracy is one's entitlement, yet one should be prepared to make rational decisions for development. It is good for a leader to escape of the censorial reprimand from subject irrespective of the authority and power entrusted on the leader in questions.

The adoption of the democratic theory as the theoretical construct of this paper is significant for many reasons. First, leadership is one of the topical issues/concept of Political Science and Public Administration. It involves human

nature and organization. Indeed, the postulations and extrapolations made in this study, findings and recommendations will trigger further study on the subject matter. It will also help us to address the issue of “two-fold” meaning/definition of the concepts of democracy and democratization.

Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution of this work to theory and practice of Public Administration, Political Science, and others in general are manifold. First, although there exist a great number of political literature on the subject matter of leadership, democracy and leadership, however, the work is purely central to theory building in democracy, democratization and leadership. It is also a known fact that as of the time of writing, Nigeria had just discarded stratocracy governance for a new leaf. It indeed, addressed the polemics of theory and practice amid the other issues generated by leadership.

Findings

Given the types of leadership, it was discovered that no particular type of leadership wears the golden crown in leadership. Thus the findings of this paper were influenced by situational and democratic theories/styles of leadership. First, it was discovered that organizational decision making involves complex of activities in the organization. These complexities revolve around the natural and

type of organization. That is whether it is vertical, horizontal or not, whether the leader(s) is/are political or apolitical, tribalistic or not.

Second, it was found out that collective/group efforts and not personal affairs were responsible for high productivity, given the ideas of participative leadership or democratic leadership style. However, with the Nigerian Military or wholistically Africa environment of long years of stratocracy, authoritarian or autocratic, experimentation with democratic leadership is gradually taking place. However, there is a great deal of opposition only time will tell.

Third, democracy in practice is demystify and sectionalized, Tribalism, political killings and other negative inclination, leadership and progress for nation building in Nigeria.

Fourth, it was revealed that some Nigerians, still profess military dictatorship because of their disinterestedness with the process of democratisation. Such individuals were sceptical of complete or little success especially if things continue this way/ or given the recent coups in Africa. Indeed, Africa had witnessed seven (7) military coups since August 2020. However, the Reciters Daily Briefing newsletter said 8-military coup in West Africa and central Africa since 2020. The table below speaks itself:

Recent Coups in Africa Nations (West Africa and Central Africa)

S/N	COUNTRY SPECIFIC	YEAR OF COUP	ACTORS INVOLVED
1.	Mali (Bamoko)	August 2020	Assimi Goita ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar keita
2.	Sudan (Khartoun)	Saturday 22,2021	Gen. Adhl Fattah Al-Burhane toppled Omaral-Bashir who had rule for 30 years
3.	Chad (Ndjamena)	April 2021	Gen. Mahamat Idris Deby ousted President Idris Deby.

4.	Guinea (Conakry)	September 2021	Col. Mamady Doumpouya ousted from power President Alpha Combe
5.	Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou)	January 2022	On January 2022, a coup ousted President Roul Kabore. However a counter-coup led by captain Ibrahim Traore in September 2023 took over
6	Niger (Niamey)	July 2023	The military ousted president Mohamed Bazoum and put as president Abdourahamane Tinai
7.	Gabon (Libreville)	August/Nov. 2023	President Ali Bongo was arrested. The Military named Gen. Idriss Deby Itno became head of the military government.

The challenges posed by leadership are not in any way caused by civilian leaders alone but by a combination of stratocratic leadership styles and politicians. However, the military usurpation of democracy is not an excuse for restoring democracy.

Fifth, ever since Taylor's ideals about management and leadership we had witnessed management authoritarianism in low and high places which affected become wearier and more with the relationship between employees and bosses. It was discovered that in some organizations, leaders profess and apply a unilateral approach to leadership. Human nature is never a straight-jacket affair. As there, indeed, many ways to kill a bird are so are there many leadership styles for leaders to use.

Sixth, Decision making as a function of leadership and as a process of leadership demand the availability and effective use of organizational resources. However, it was discovered that some organizations adopted a wasteful approach to nearly everything. This becomes more so serious if or when some members of the organization especially top management spend quality time and materials on frivolities. The implications are manifold which include management inability to strictly enforce discipline leading to total breakdown of law and order and in the organization.

Conclusion

Leadership style whether in church, home, school and so on has tremendous influence on decision made the organization. Experience had shown also that while some employees are pliable and adapt to new ideas, concepts and ways other adapt moderately or slowly/reluctantly, and so on. Old ways if not guarded properly destroy a person, people. Nigeria, as in many countries in Africa and somewhere had not completely expunged the ugly scars of military dictatorship over the years. With this scenario, the conclusion is that Nigeria should know that all hope is not lost in that human beings are malleable in as much as change is inevitable.

Recommendation

Informed by the finding the following recommendations sufficed without equivocation. Since organizational decision making, leadership and democracy involve multiple issues and resources, management should find the appropriate decision-making style, leadership styles and way forward to attaining the goals envisaged by the collective will and not a few. In short, team spirit or work should be encouraged and pursued.

The collective will of the organization should be pursued rather than that of a chosen or privileged few. This can help to reduce or wipe away sectionalism or group.

Trend analysis makes room for provision for flexibility in the use of leadership style. This is to say that actions derived from the spur of the moment, actions not well guided, could have a reciprocal effect on the organization. In short, this study recommended a basic analysis of leadership styles before use. Practice should not be confused with theory in that theory paves way for the best practices. Theory guides practice in simple terms but inter marrying both is never an easy task. Never distance one from the other.

Never separate leadership from decision making. Decision making is one of the many functions of a leadership/manager. One should not be separated from the other, but should be carefully studied and applied intelligently without some sort of emotions and other adjectival considerations as in group, ethnic and selected few.

Policies of witch-hunting should be highly tolerated at all cost for sake of unity and progress to the collective will.

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