EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

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A book of readings in honour of

AbdulRasheed NA'ALLAH

Edited By:
Muritala Awodun, PhD
Olabisi Adedigba, PhD
Monica N. Odinko, PhD
Keshni Bipath, PhD

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A book of Reading in Honour of AbdulRasheed NA'ALLAH

A Publication of Counselling and Career Services Centre (CCSC),
Kwara State University, Malete, 2019

First published 2019

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Published by:
LAMPSTAND PUBLISHING
Lekki, Lagos
email: *lampstandeducare@gmail.com*

ISBN: 978 - 978 - 310 - 727 - 9

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Chapter 15

DYNAMIC INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

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Introduction

Leadership is a complex concept which every educational manager must understand with a view to promoting quality service delivery in education system. The incessant crisis in the educational system across all levels can be linked to leadership problem. Crisis would have been averted if right leadership strategies have been adopted and correct qualities displayed. In modern day, emphasis is on effective leadership in school management due to challenges been faced in the system. Therefore, individuals in the education sector are expected to play more of leadership roles in order to achieve organizational goals, on the premise that most problems confronting the Nigerian

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education system emanate from bad leadership. Leadership is an essential function of a school manager meant to effect educational reforms. High quality leadership in the school system guarantees stability, developments, good management and harmony within the system.

Leadership is a human factor which has been defined in different ways. Afolabi (2015) described leadership as the process of directing behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of some objectives. It is the ability of a person to motivate the followers to work towards group goals, with a high sense of commitment and dedication. Leadership is a process of persuading other people to jointly formulate objectives and jointly pursue it enthusiastically; it is a process of influencing the actions, behaviour, beliefs and goals of actors in an organization. It is a dynamic process of guiding other people towards achieving goals. An effective manager requires leadership qualities and skills. Thus, Leadership compliments management.

For institutional managers to be successful, they must see leadership as not just a part of the process of management but an integral part of the social structure and culture of an organization. There is a need to display leadership qualities and employ appropriate leadership styles that are required to foster a supportive organizational culture. Leadership is a human factor that is concerned with people as it influences, persuade and direct them to jointly achieve the organizational goals. According to Robbins, Decenzo and Coulter (2013), organizations need individuals who will do more than their usual job duties, as these organizations with such individuals out-perform those that do not. Leadership influences the process of changing behaviours of others through building effective relationships. Leadership pays attention to the human factor within organizations, orchestrates the dynamics of people working with others and recognizes that people may sometimes be irrational, emotional, uncontrollable and unpredictable. Therefore, effective leadership requires developing inspirational context using vision and values. Leadership goes

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beyond appointment but it entails personality and charisma which link up with behaviour.

Leadership has been distinguished from management in quite number of ways. A leader induces workers using motivation and persuasion, inspiration and personal connections, while manager explores inherent formal authority on his subordinates to ensure compliance. Managers get things done through people by all means, without being a great leader. This implies that a successful manager may not necessarily be a good leader.

In Nigeria, leadership problem is a major issue where appointment of school leaders is sometimes based on ascription at the expense of qualification. A situation where a lecturer I or senior lecturer is given a portfolio to be director of a unit where there are Senior Lecturers Associate and full professors, or a level 10 officer being made a school principal over a grade level 14 officer, is an aberration. This is the scenario in some universities and some State Ministries in Nigeria where experience and qualifications are relegated to the background. This is unlike developed countries where stakeholders are fully involved in the entire process.

One major challenge of education reform in Nigeria on the issue of inconsistency and incoherence in plans and programmes, results from the fact that every new administration discards existing policies and begins new ones that suits it purpose. Before a new policy is internalized and understood, a new one is introduced to replace it, leaving the school manager permanently confused. Example of such policy is the 6:3:3:4 policy now transformed into to 9-3-4 system; free education policy; public private partnership initiatives for management of Unity schools and the school feeding project. Each of these policies is associated with one political party or the other, that is the political party in control of the government. Therefore, to improve the quality of education service delivery, there is a need to develop educational leaders in order to carry out the enormous tasks or responsibilities. This

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paper x-rays the qualities of a great leader and juxtaposes these with the leadership qualities displays by the management of Kwara State University, Malete. Then recommendations are made on how to improve leadership in the education system across all levels especially in this period of incessant crisis within the sector.

Qualities of a Dynamic Leader

People come together for different purposes, towards achieving some goals. Studies have revealed the interrelationship between quality of leadership and quality of educational provisions. Qualities that enable individuals to become better leaders are complex interaction of values and culture of the organization, as well as personalities within the team required to demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness while being led. A great leader is not only concerned with end results but also the process. According to Afolabi (2015), a great leader demonstrates the following:

Vision: This simply refers to the creation of a vivid picture of the school's future, where it is heading and what it stands for. Vision inspires and provides a strong sense of purpose and direction. Great Leaders have strong principle, courage and dedication to a clear vision, develops passion to accomplish the vision, builds a strong team and bringing out the best in their subordinates. The leaders know what they want to achieve, how to encourage others to believe in the vision and how to achieve it together with others. Leaders believe that working towards a vision is far more inspiring than working towards personal gains.

Motivation: A leader possesses interpersonal skills for effective communication towards satisfying human needs. Being clear, focusing on expectations, and giving feedback are all important leadership skills. A leader has responsibility to understanding human behaviour. Leaders inspire and provide a strong sense of purpose, direction and showing understanding for worker's needs towards satisfying them. To do these, leaders must understanding that human behaviour is complex and there is no continuity in it. Therefore, as a leader, one must empathize and sympathize when

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and where necessary, such a leader also needs to be knowledgeable about individual differences to deal with each worker appropriately.

To understand human needs, leaders require knowledge of what the needs are and his responsibilities as a leader to satisfy workers' needs. Maslow (1954) came up with a hierarchy of needs by employees. This is illustrated in figure 1

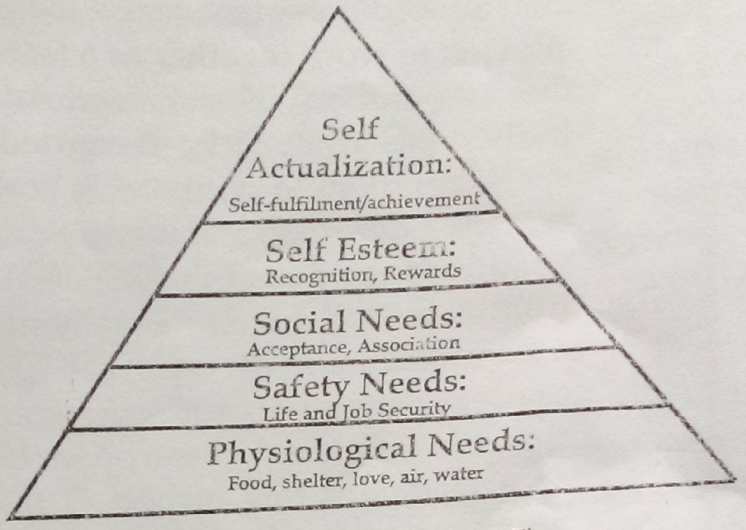


Figure 1: Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (1945)

Maslow gave details of what needs is all about. The most basic need of man is referred to as physiological need which includes food, shelter, love, air, and water. The implications of this is that a leader should ensure that his followers are given living wages and salaries as and when due, in order to meet the basic needs of life.
The Safety needs comprise of security in respect of life and job. Every worker desires security of life as well as good tenure of the job. Therefore, a leader should provide proper security in the environment where subordinates are working. This includes having security agents to watch over the place of work, well secured offices for the safety of documents, fence to protect the

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facilities of the workplace and many more. Also, there must be good condition of service which must stipulate tenure of jobs for the workers to avoid attrition.

Social needs consist of the self-respect and social acceptability. People want to associate with their peer groups and belong to unions, associations or societies. Leaders are expected to allow their subordinates to exercise these rights. The workers should be allowed to work together as a team. Self-esteem needs deals with the recognition of achievement and excellent performance. Individuals want to be rewarded for good performance which energizes them to do more. It is therefore expected of leaders to acknowledge good and worthy performances of subordinates and reward them appropriately. Self-Actualization need is that of Self-fulfillment and great achievement where subordinates bask in the accomplishment of their full potentials. For an example, an academic attaining professorial rank would feel satisfied on the job than those who have been on for long without promotion. The role of a leader in this respect is to provide avenue and enabling environment for the subordinates to attain their goals in life.

Self-Awareness and Direction: Great leaders have intimate knowledge of their emotional state, strengths and weaknesses. Such leaders know how to get things done, devote energy to work and exercise care in taking decisions. They are aware of the value of establishing strong, personal and good working relations with others. They exhibit self-discipline and control even in stressful situations. They understand the value of everyone in the organization and treating them with respect and compassion.

Wisdom: This is the application of knowledge. Leaders are knowledgeable and are able to bring this and their experience to bear in the workplace. Handling subordinates, most times requires actions and wise leaders readily demonstrate this to the admiration of subordinates who gladly carries out their tasks with great zeal.

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Strategic: Strategic leaders are expected to employ relevant strategies in the course of performing their tasks. This is not limited to officers at the top of the organization but all other levels of leaders. This is demonstrated by the desire to achieve high-performance in the organization. The strategic leader fills the gap between the need for new possibility and the practicality of providing a prescriptive set of habits. Effective and strategic leadership delivers results in terms of what an organization naturally expects from its leadership.

Transformational: Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance. Transformational leaders inspire subordinates by arousing and inspiring them to work for greater goal achievement. They encourage followers to question established views for improvement in the job delivery.

TeamLeadership: Team leadership is about working with the hearts and minds of all those involved. It also recognizes that teamwork may not always involve trusting and cooperative relationships. The most challenging aspect of this style is whether it will succeed or not. Team leadership may be affected by the qualities of leadership. According to Robbins (2013), team leader requires to determine whether teams members possess the technical skills to function within the team, the need for training of team members to fit into team and reward appropriately for effective performance.

Cross Cultural: This form of leadership normally exists where there are various cultures in the society. This leadership style recognizes front runners who work in the contemporary globalized market. Organizations, particularly international ones require leaders who can effectively adjust their leadership skills to work in different environments. Most of the leaderships observed in the United States are cross-cultural because of the different cultures that exist and work there.

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Transactional: This is the type of leadership style that strives to balance the needs of the followers and those of the organization and maintains the status quo. That is, the leader achieves organizational goals without causing injury to the individual goals within the system. It is also the leadership style that involves an exchange process, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the organization orders.

Assessment of Leadership Qualities in Kwara State University.

Prof AbdulRasheed Na Allah is the pioneer Vice Chancellor of Kwara State University, Malete. He led the institution between June 2009 and 2019. Indeed, the university within the short period of time has recorded a lot of development under his watch. The university attracts much needed attention from the international communities. This places the university among the top ranking universities in Nigeria and beyond. Prof. AbdulRasheedNa'Allah implemented certain strategies to achieve some of the objectives of the university education. The strategies are herein discussed, while pointing out observed inadequacies in each of them:

Motivational Strategies: Salaries of the university staff werepromptly paid; Staffs are sponsored for training, conferences, seminars and workshops which assisted many of them to rise to the peak of their careers in the university. Blanchard (2005) stated that an effective leader will make it a priority to help his or her people produce good results. The Vice Chancellor ensures that University Staff understand what the goals of the university are and encourages them in every possible way as he supports, encourages and ensures proper coaching to accomplish the goals. This accounts for the successes recorded in the university under the leadership of Prof AbdulRasheed. However, staff were not allowed to freely associate or form association of their interest which contravenes human right law in Nigeria.

Team Building: The pioneer Vice Chancellor made use of the committee system to get things done. Members were given

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freedom to operate and their recommendations were usually implemented. However, some appointments were lopsided which affected staff morale and to a certain extent affected devotion to duty. A situation where particular positions were held by individuals for several years, when there were others who qualified for same does not comply with the rule of fairness and justice. Besides, staff saddled with much responsibility cannot perform efficiently and new changes might not be introduced since old methods would prevail.

Vision: The pioneer Vice chancellor pursued the vision of the university vigorously, thus achieving a lot of the objectives set. This was achieved by a constant focus of all staff on the vision of the university through his meeting with staff and students of all Colleges on semester basis, speeches in all university fora on the vision of the university, workshops regularly held for new staff, yearly academic retreat for staff, and peer review of academic staff members, among many others. The only stress in this aspect is that outcomes of these meetings and workshops were not fully implemented towards addressing issues that could have enabled better achievement of the vision of the university by the mangement.

Interpersonal Relationship with Staff and Students: The Vice Chancellor made himself accessible and approachable to staff and students, as everyone has the opportunity to write him through his university email which he responds to within 24 hours. He holds regular meetings with staff and students on college basis. His phone number and e-mail are opened 24/7. However, he allows students to take advantage of this as he readily believes most of what students write to him about, especially when it has to do with staff, which has resulted in the unfair treatment of some staff. The common saying among staff is that the Vice chancellor has placed staff at the mercy of students.

Transformational style: Prof AbdulRasheed is a transformational leader who constantly updates the knowledge of staff with new

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technology. He places attention on developmental needs of staff. The ICT unit of the university has a unique portal system, although with teething problems. University staff are regularly trained from time to time on emerging issues in the field of technology, especially in using the computer to teach and upload students' results. The university encourages staff and students to be computer literate. Therefore, many activities are carried out on the internet like; registration of courses, course upload, result upload, communication amongst staff and between staff and students. Each department and programme has its own webpage where information about Departments and units can readily be obtained, while academic staff members are encouraged to pass information and reading materials to students through their emails. The Vice Chancellor ensured that each academic staff member has a desk top computer each, and encouraged to have personal computers. Unlike conventional approach, every information or circular is passed electronically to which the staff and students respond. The problem with this has been inability of staff and students to browse easily on campus as the server most times has problem, while the problem of electricity also contribute to difficulties in using the internet.

Conclusion

Effective leadership is essential in the educational system. It is the only means of achieving institutional objectives. The failure of the various policies, plans and programmes of the Nigerian government on education have been attributed to poor leadership. Therefore, poor quality of instructions and teachers' performance cannot be dissociated from the poor quality and inefficiency of the institutional heads.

Recommendations for Improving School Leadership in Nigeria

It is expected that the following measures be put in place to achieve effective leadership in Nigerian institutions at all levels.

1. Appointment of school leaders should be based on qualifications and experience.

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1. Leaders should be equipped with such skills as Technical, Interpersonal and Conceptual skills. This can be acquired through a training process even after an individual has been appointed to head any institution, especially the tertiary institutions.
2. Leaders are required to possess leadership qualities and be exemplary, charismatic, intelligent, friendly, open, be wise, impartial, etc. This will help them achieve lots more in the education system, and will enhance the quality of graduates.
3. Leaders must deliberately find out the needs of the followers/subordinates, and understands how to satisfy each of the needs. This is the only ways to ensuring optimum performance within the educational system
4. Leaders must learn to subordinate their desires and objectives and not allow it get in the way of staff promotion at work. They should not deny subordinates/followers their rights to promotion, freedom of association and expression, etc. Leaders that allow these will enjoy maximum cooperation of the followers.
5. Equal treatment of the followers will make the leaders more effective. Appointments into positions should be fair and evenly distributed among the subordinates/followers irrespective of their religious, race or tribe. This will not only promote cooperation but will ensure dedication to duty.

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