EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

One of the major debates in organizational change relates to the contributions made by those who lead it. Leaders have major roles to play in management of change in every establishment. Leaders can shape organizations and a country as a whole by influencing and directing the beliefs, style and values of those inside and outside the organization. The research intend to explain effective leadership and how it can bring about positive change that help the attainment of sustainable developmental goals in Nigeria, the paper also discuss the followings; What is leadership, what are the characteristics of a good leader, the element of successful and effective leadership, leadership styles and behaviour for effective management of change. Thus the behavioural leadership theory was used in an attempt to explain distinctive styles used by effective leaders. A qualitative approach based on an extensive review of relevant literature is used for the paper. The finding revealed that the importance of leadership is commonly judged in terms of its impact on the effectiveness of an entity that is led and the ability to sustain superior result over an extended period of time. Conclusively, the paper stresses that effective leadership is the key to success of every organization, for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, our leaders have greater role to play.

Key words: Effective Leadership, Change Management, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Effective leadership is one of the most essential parts of the overall strategy for organizational success and sustainability of business in the face of problems. This is because leaders control and take charge of the operations of an organization and good leaders are able to set optimistic goals and objectives while steering the operations of the organisation toward those goals through effective strategies. One of the major debates in organizational changes relate to the contributions made by organisational managers. Leaders have major role to play in the management of change in every establishment. Leaders can shape organizations by influencing and directing the beliefs, style and values of those inside and outside the organization. The paper examines what is leadership? What are the characteristics of a good leader? What are the
elements of successful and effective leadership, leadership styles and behaviours for effective management of change. Leadership is one of the main factors in bringing positive change to the organization, if there is no leadership in the organization, there will not be able to change in the direction they desirer (Hao and Rashad 2015). When we say an organization lacks leadership it means that its managers are neglecting their leadership roles and responsibilities. It is leadership that is missing, not leaders. If every manager understood and fulfilled his or her leadership responsibilities, there would be no problem of good leadership. It is the attention to their managerial and leadership responsibilities that convert competent administrators to effective managers, thus those appointed to a position of responsibilities need to appreciate what leadership is expected of them. “All things change, nothing is extinguished; there is nothing in the world which is permanent. Everything are brought into being with a changing nature, the ages themselves glide in constant movement” (Gill, 2011).

**Conceptual Clarification**

The term leadership has generated excitement and interest since ancient times, leadership plays a key role in ensuring success in almost any initiative within an organization (Elueze 2012). In today’s dynamic world, we need leaders to challenge the status quo, to create visions of the future, and to inspire organizational members to want to achieve the visions (Joel 2010).

Moghil (2015) states that “there is no universal definition of leadership because leadership is complex, and because leadership is studied in different ways that required different definitions”. According to CIPD (2014) Leadership is the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of the organization’s purpose, objective and goals. Leadership is the ability to shape the organization’s decisions and deliver high value over time, not only personally but also by inspiring and managing others in the organizations. This implies that leadership not only involves the chief executive but the whole team and head of the organization, thus leadership is everyone’s business (Lynch 2009 pp.600) Leadership is a vital ingredient in developing the purpose and the strategy of organizations. Roger (2005) defines leadership as mobilization process undertaken by individuals who are using the power they draw from motives, values and access to resources in a context of competition and conflict in their pursuit of goals. Keith (2010) argues that leadership is the ‘ability to impress the will of leaders on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty and cooperation’.

Leadership is recognized in the well-known Business Excellence model promoted by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the British Quality Foundation (BQF). This model includes ‘Leadership’ as an underpinning enabler to attaining key performance results. Stephen and Richard (2001) opines that Leadership is how a leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours. The main goal of leadership stated by Donald (1997) is to accomplish useful and desirable things that benefit the people being led.

Western (2008) also argues that Leadership is “showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it. This entails envisioning a desirable future, promoting a clear purpose or mission, supportive values and intelligent strategies, and empowering all those concerned. ‘Showing the way’ presupposes knowing, or at least believing in, that way. And the way implies the route to a destination: a vision of a desirable future position – what we want to be or where we want to be. Kurzman (2010) simply define leadership as ‘the influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change’. He further explains the key elements of his definition of leadership as involving followership, influence, change
management, people and organisational objectives. A follower is a person who is being influenced by a leader. Good followers are not “yes people” who simply follow the leader without giving input that influences the leader. Effective leaders influence followers, and their followers influence them. In short, the qualities needed for effective leadership are the same as those needed to be an effective follower. According to Graetz, Smith and Lawrence (2010) good followers also perform leadership roles when needed. Thus the influencing process is between leaders and followers; it is a two way street and multi-dimensional process:

**Influence**

Influencing is the process of a leader communicating ideas, gaining acceptance, and motivating followers to support and implement the ideas through change. Ionesco (2014) states that “influence is the essence of leadership and it is also about the relationship between leaders and followers.” Thus leaders and followers often change roles through the influencing process.

**Organizational Objectives**

Effective leaders influence followers to think not only of their own interest but the interest of the organization, leadership occurs when followers are influenced to do what is ethical and beneficial to the organization. Taking advantage of followers for personal gain is not part of leadership. Leaders need to provide direction, with the input of followers, they set challenging objectives and lead the change ahead to achieve them.

**Change Management**

To be an effective leader and follower you must be open to change, influencing and setting objectives is about change, effective leaders realize the need for continual change to improve performance. Change must be well managed, According to Perry and Brad (2008) change requires not only good management but good and effective leadership. What is our vision for change: what or where do we want to be? What is important is the change process: what values and ethical principles will guide us? How are we going to change: what are our strategies for change? How will we empower people to be able to do what needs to be done? And how will we influence, motivate and even inspire them to want to do what needs to be done? For the Chief Executive, this means ‘developing a vision of the future, crafting strategies to bring that vision into reality and ensuring that everybody in the organisation is mobilising their energies towards the same goal (Theakston 1999).

The challenges ahead more than ever before, require organizations, industries and societies to change and to keep changing. Change may be planned, proactive and about creating the future, or it may be unplanned, reactive and about adaptation. Leaders have to create an environment that embraces change, not a threat but as an opportunity. While the challenge of change requires effective management, even more does it require outstanding leadership. Our leaders are to find new and better ways of motivating people, especially to make effective change happen, satisfy people’s needs and expectations and win their hearts and mind.

The most frequent mentioned key to successful change, according to an American Management Association survey of 259 senior executives in Fortune 500 companies in the United States, is leadership (see table 1.1)
Table 1.1 Keys to Successful change

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Source (Roger 2011, p.25)

Effective leadership for change requires competencies that can span the cognitive, cultural, moral and behavioural domains of our being. And in the end, to change anything, perhaps we have to change ourselves in the process.

People

Effective Leader and followers enjoy working with people and helping them to succeed. Leadership is about leading people. To be effective at almost every job today, you must be able to get along with people. Research, experience, and common sense all point to a direct relationship between a company’s financial success and its commitment to leadership practices that treat people as assets.

Characteristic of a Good Leader

One of the questions early leadership research tries to answers was the qualities that differentiate leaders from non-leaders or effective leader from ineffective one. A person with strong leadership ability will be a good example or a role model for their employees, because a leader who is able to effectively achieve some good results can gain the trust and admiration of the followers and inadvertently change their values, beliefs and attitude. Edwin (2010) defines value as principles or standards that are considered to be important or beneficial. ‘Moral’ values are values that are regarded as good as opposed to bad, right as opposed to wrong. They serve as guiding principles for behaviour for everybody in a group or organization. An effective leader lives the value of the organization and set an example as an inspiring role model

- Honesty/Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Self confidence
- Energy/persistence
- Knowledge of the task

Good emotional adjustment, emotional balance and high integrity (Arnold and Randall et al 2010). Although different types of tasks may require somewhat different leaders’ characteristics and behaviour, the leadership characteristics that are desired and accepted may also vary across different organizational context.

Elements of successful and effective Leadership

- Developing and communicating the organization’s Purpose

Leaders are primarily tasked with determining the organizations’ purpose and then communicating this to every part of the organization. Organisation’s purpose according
to Dave, Hickerson and Pillutla (2011) defines why the organization exists and what it does. It also defines how the vision will be attained.

- **Managing human resources and organizations decisions**

Leaders have a special responsibility to select, nurture and develop employees in the organization, especially those that are key to the organizations. They have a special responsibility to motivate and reward such employees. In addition, strategic leaders need to develop the culture of the organization and to structure the reporting relationship that blind the company together.

- **Setting Ethical Standard**

One of the key leadership tasks is to set and monitor the ethical and corporate social responsibility standards of the organizations. Such values need to come from the top.

- **Defining and Delivering to Stakeholders**

A prime role of strategic leaders is to maintain good relationship with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization. Typically, there are multiple demands on the leader’s time and resource so leaders must judge how to handle this. Outside advisers have become increasingly common in helping senior leaders in such tasks.

- **Sustaining competitive and advantage overtime**

It is the responsibility of the organization’s leadership to preserve and enhance the competitive advantages of the organization. Strategic leaders need to identify and support the key advantages of their organizations.

**Leadership Style and Behaviour**

Watkins (2001) groups different leadership behaviour into four main leadership styles

- **Concern of task.** The extent, to which the leader emphasizes high level of productivity, organizes and defines group activities in relation to the group’s task objective and so on. (Also called concern for production, production centered task-oriented leadership.)

- **Concern for people.** The extent to which the leader is concern about their subordinates as people- their needs, interests, problems, development, etc. Rather than simple treating them as units of production. (Also called person centered, person-oriented and employee-centred leadership)

- **Directive leadership.** The extent to which the leader makes all the decisions concerning group activities themselves and expects subordinates simply to follow instructions. (Also called authoritarian or autocratic leadership)

- **Participative leadership.** The extent to which the leader shares decision making concerning group activities with subordinates. (Also called democratic leadership)

**Conclusion**

The subject of leadership has created plethora of publications, research and debate and has become a key issue in both the public and private sectors, today. Leadership is a hot topic for debate. Organizations need strong leadership and strong management for optimal effectiveness. In today’s dynamic world, we need leaders to challenge the status quo, to create visions of the future, and to inspire organizational members to want to achieve the visions.

All things change, nothing is permanent. Change can be achieved through strategic leadership. Effective leaders need to poses good leadership characteristics for effect change management and implementation. Effective leadership is the key to success in terms of organizational and managerial effectiveness, financial result, or people’s morals and happiness.
The importance of leadership is commonly judged in terms of its impact on the effectiveness of an entity that is led. The ultimate measures of effectiveness for leaders’ according to Gary (2009) is the ability to sustain superior results over an extended period of time. Leadership plays critical role in the success or failure of almost every aspect of an organization, be it profit and non profit making, poor leadership leads to failure, and good leadership to success. Thus it is hard to overstate the importance of leadership.

Although African countries are rich in natural and mineral resources, most African countries in general with Nigeria in particular are poor and underdeveloped. Nigeria for instance is currently facing the problem of slow rate of economic growth, youth unemployment, problem with food import, hunger, or even starvation, injustice and economic mismanagement, high level of population growth, limited industrial investment, For the Nation Nigeria to achieve the vision of the agenda for sustainable development by 2030, our leaders have greater roles to perform. The country needs effective leader that will identify, display, promote and reinforce share values that will move the country forward.

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