

# APPROACHES, SKILLS AND STYLES OF LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS

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## Abstract

*Leadership entails active choices among alternatives, and the development of subordinates and mobilizing them to get the job done. A good leader is one who is capable of persuading others to move enthusiastically towards the achievement of goals. What is normally expected from employees is that they work with total zeal and determination but this is not always the case. Without good leadership style, the performance level of subordinates will be poor, which also lead to the organizational low performance and productivity. The objective of this paper therefore, is to examine the various leadership styles, approaches, skill and impact of leadership style in the organization. In carrying out this research, the secondary sources of information and data were utilized. Data were elicited from various text books, journals, news papers etc. it was discovered that participative style of leadership is more embracing as it is capable of influencing subordinates towards higher performance and that acquisition of leadership skills is very important for any leader to lead well in organization. It is recommended amongst others, that there should be cordial relationship between leaders and subordinates. It also added that merit award should be established in organizations, so as to spur subordinates to put in their best.*

**Key words:** Leadership, Style, Impact, autocratic, skills, approaches, organization.

Leadership is an essential function in every organization. In fact, no organization can exist without a leader. The objectives of any organization depend on the people that are employed to achieve the organizational objectives. Effective administration depends to a very great extent on sound leadership that can influence the workers in such a way that they all strive towards achieving the desired objective of the organization. Importantly, workers should be encouraged to work willingly with zeal and confidence. Since leadership is very important in organization, there is need to look at different views that have been given by some scholars about leadership and leaders.

Leadership is about innovation and initiative. Leadership is creative, adaptive and agile. Leadership looks at the horizon, not just the bottom line (Aibieyi, 2009).

Leadership has to do with influencing workers behavior towards the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

Leadership is exhibited by the quality of behavior of leaders in guiding subordinates or their activities in organized effort. It creates and implements the incentive that makes it capable of motivating subordinates towards the attainment of organizational objectives. The personal qualities of the leader to influence workers to voluntarily comply with all working principles of the organization, is also very important.

Leadership is the ability to inspire subordinates to willingly perform their institutional duties. Leadership always show where the organizations want to go and the way forward. Leadership also means inspiring others to perform organized duties freely and willingly to achieve the set objectives.

### **Literature Review**

The concept of leadership has been defined by different scholars in various ways. In fact, there are as many definitions of leadership as there are writers. The literary meaning of leadership in universal dictionary and thesaurus is that it is the act of leading, the ability to be a leader, the leaders of an organization or movement collectively. Aibieyi (2009), defined leadership as a person of innovation and initiative, leadership is creative adaptive and agile. Koontz (1988) defined leadership as the art of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of group goals. Heresy and Blanchard (1977) viewed leadership as a process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts towards the achievement in a given situation.

Arubayi (1995) defined leadership in the secondary school context as a situation where the principal or administrator tries to influence the behaviour of teachers and students to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. Macfarland (1979) asserted that leadership is the quality of behaviour of an individual whereby he guides people or their activities in organized effort. He further stated that leadership is an indispensable social essence that gives common meaning to a common purpose. It also creates the incentive that makes other incentive effective, that infuse decision without which cooperation is impossible.

Unugbro (1995) cited Terry (1977) definition of leadership as the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives. Chester (1973) saw leadership as a social influence process in which the leaders seek the voluntary participation of his subordinates in an effort to meet organizational objectives. Katz and Khan (1979) viewed leadership as an influential increment over and above mechanical

compliance with the routine directives of an organization. Etzioni (1964) defined leadership as the ability based on the personal qualities of the leaders to influence the subordinates' voluntary compliance in broad range of matters.

Leadership involves other people, that is, subordinates or followers. Without subordinates, all the leadership qualities of a leader will be irrelevant. The leader's major duty as an influential person is to influence the behaviour of the subordinates.

The way the subordinates are influenced makes them have the urge to work in an extra ordinary way than he is naturally willing to perform. This suggests that the essence is cooperative followership.

From the above, it becomes obvious that the role of leader is very important in every organization, and that leadership style determines the success or failure of all organizations.

### **Approaches to the Study of Leadership**

There are three major approaches or theories to the study of leadership. These are the traits or psychological approach, the situational or contingency approach and thirdly the behavioral approach.

#### **Trait Approach**

The traits approach has the belief that leaders are born and not made and that there are certain qualities that are limited to only leaders which constitute the distinguishing factors between the leaders and subordinates. The approach conceives the fact that these leadership traits are present in all leaders and groups in which leadership exists. Moreover, trait or theorists failed to consider the influence of situational factors. Since leaders do not function in a vacuum, the social, cultural and physical environment play complex role in the development and existence of leaders.

According to Unugbro (1995), there are some weaknesses of trait theory, which include the following;

1. List of traits usually do not indicate which ones are most or lesser important.
2. Trait studies do not distinguish between trait that are needed for acquiring leadership and those that are necessary for maintaining leadership position.
3. Trait theories are based on debatable assumptions regarding personality which for example ignore the fact that personality is not the mere summation of a collection of traits but a function of the total organization of the individuals.

### **Situational Approach**

The situational approach believes that leadership is a function of a social situation, in which there is interaction between the leader and the subordinate. Gibb (1984) argued that leadership is a concept applied to the interaction between two or more persons, in which every member is assigned a role within the system. This role is any expression of his interactions with other members. Therefore, leadership is a combination of personality and social system in interaction.

Leadership cannot have impact if it is not in interaction with the environment. Thus, Edem (1987) argued that leaders in different situations may exhibit dissimilar characteristics and that their success in one situation may not be observed in another.

### **Behavioural Approach**

This approach sees the leader as one who is passive. It is important to point out that administrators should be appointed based on the qualifications and length of service. It is important to note that on his appointment, he makes some relevant efforts to introduce measures and behaviour that promotes friendship, respect and cordial relationship between himself and the subordinates. The major criticism by some scholars of the behavioural approach is that one does not need to be a leader by virtue of traits or being able to interact with the social system, but a leader, should be able to take initiatives, which means that behaviour is contingent upon purpose.

### **Leadership Skills**

Leadership behaviour is described here in terms of the skills that the leader may exhibit. Included here are technical, human and conceptual skills.

**Technical Skills:** Technical skills are most important at lower managerial levels where the products or service of the organization are produced. Examples of these skills are the capability and ability to utilize modern equipments by engineers, mechanists, computer operators, technicians and accountants.

As a manager moves up the organization hierarchy, the importance of technical knowledge decreases and the job begins to require increased amount of other skills. Then the leader personally must rely more and more on the technical skills of the subordinate.

**Human Skill:** The second kind of skill is the human skill. Human skills are important throughout all management levels. They are concerned with the interpersonal relationship between the manager and those with whom the manager comes in contact.

They are also concerned with applying external motivation to group member and obtaining cooperation from both peers and superiors.

**Conceptual Skill:** The third skill is the conceptual skill which involves the ability to view the most important things at the top levels of management where long planning and broad thinking are required. As leaders move to higher positions in the organizational hierarchy, they must develop and utilize the skill increasingly.

**Proportional Skill Requirement:** The proportion of technical and conceptual skills varies with managerial levels. For example, as a manager moves up the organization hierarchy, the importance of technical knowledge decreases, and the job will continue to require other skills. The skills are necessary for dealing with people who remain important for all levels in the managerial hierarchy.

### **Leadership Styles**

Some considerable amount of work has been done on leadership style by different scholars. Likert (1967) developed universal theory or style ranging from autocratic to participative, that is system one to four theory;

#### **System One: Exploitative or Authoritative**

Here managers make all decisions. They decide what is to be done, who will do it and how and when it is to be accomplished. Failure to complete work as assigned results in threats or punishment. According to Likert (1967) there is low level of trust and confidence between management and subordinates when system one is used. It is task – oriented.

#### **System Two: Benevolent – Autocratic**

Managers still make decisions, but subordinates have some degree of freedom and flexibility in performing their job so long as they conform to the specific procedures. Under this system, managers take a very paternalistic attitude. With system two, there is a fairly low level of trust between the management and the subordinates which causes subordinates to use caution when dealing with management.

#### **System Three: Consultative**

Managers consult with subordinates prior to establishing the goals and making decision about the work. Subordinates have considerable degree of freedom in making their own decision as to how to accomplish the work. Management tends to rely on rewards as opposed to accomplishment to motivate employees. Also, the level of trust between the subordinates and management is fairly high creating a climate in which subordinates feel relatively free to openly discuss work-related matter with management.

### **System Four: Participative Team**

The emphasis of system four is on a group participative role with full involvement of the subordinates in the process of establishing goals and making jobs-related decisions. Subordinates feel free to discuss matters with their leaders who display supportive behavior. The leader provides a link between the organizations and the subordinates.

Decision making is widespread throughout the enterprise. However, this last style was deemed best in the long run for all situations because any leader who adopts these participative style will likely have greater management effectiveness and efficiency.

### **The Impact of Leadership Style on the Organization**

A leader is someone who has the capacity to create a compelling vision that takes people to a new place, and translate that vision into action. Leaders draw other people (subordinates) to themselves by enrolling them in their vision. He inspires and empowers subordinates. Leadership attracts and energizes subordinates to enroll in a vision of the future. It motivates, identifies with the task and the goals rather than rewarding or punishing them.

A leader is therefore, a person who leads, directs and influences subordinates to work hard in order to accomplish the objectives of the organization.

The impact of leadership style on the organization cannot therefore be over emphasized. For example, an effective subordinate could be rendered ineffective if the leadership style is in conflict with the task role of the subordinates. On the other hand, an ineffective subordinate could be made effective if the leadership style encourages such improvement and dedication.

Specifically, the way in which a leader disciplines his staff, his human relations feelings, consideration and inspiration to subordinates, his handling of subordinates welfare, his subordinates development and host of other attributes are likely to spur subordinates towards higher performance. Thus, the more positive approach adopted by the leader in handling the subordinates, the more effective the subordinates will be.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership is the art of influencing workers to work willingly and enthusiastically for group goal accomplishment. There are several alternatives available to every leader to make a choice in order to develop his employees and mobilize them to get the work done. Leaders influence subordinates to contribute effectively towards the achievement of desired goals.

This discourse is basically a review of the leadership skills, leadership styles approaches and impact on workers performance. The paper reveals that for any organization to succeed in actualizing its objectives, there should be a good leader with the appropriate leadership style, such as participative style of leadership which is capable of involving employees in decision making process as well as persuading them towards the attainment of organizational objectives. The acquisition of leadership skills was also found to be very important for a leader to lead well and with positive impact on the organization.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations are made;

1. Efforts should be geared by the leaders to encourage a good relationship between leaders and subordinates.
2. Annual merit award should be established in every organization to enhance greater performance and as a motivational compensation programme for the best behaved and highest performer of the year.
3. The democratic and participative leadership styles should be encouraged, so as to encourage workers to participate in decision making process. Every worker in an organization should be encouraged to work whenever he or she is given freedom to work and allow to participate fully towards the realization of the organization goals and objectives.
4. It is necessary for organization to always organize orientation programme for the leaders and subordinates to enable them know what it takes to lead and direct people. The leaders and their subordinates should work as a team, towards the attainment of organizational objectives.

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