

LEADERSHIP TUSSLES: CONTENDING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN AFRICAN POLITY

Ella, John Richard (MIIPRDS)
Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, LAPAI

Abstract:

In contemporary African societies and the third world countries in particular, it is saddening to note that leadership, which should be service to humanity is being regarded as an avenue to accumulate wealth. This paper examines the issue of leadership tussle in the third world countries, a case study of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1960-2014, the implications of which are some of the forces militating against social, political, economic and educational development of the country. The continued resources expended towards building genuine democracy in the country have been marred in the past by either coup d'état, revolution / strikes or acts of terrorism. From the findings, it is discovered that government's insincerity of purpose as evidenced by not fulfilling promises made to the masses in discharging public functions coupled with grand corruptions has been attributed largely to development challenges. The objective of this study, among others is to evaluate governments' leadership styles, appraise the suitability or otherwise and determine the impact on the developing nations. The author adopts primary and secondary methods of data collection which includes structured and unstructured questionnaires that were administered, while the Likert's System-4-theories of participative group as the appropriate theoretical guide for this study were used. In conclusion, suggestions were drawn out for academic discourse, among which includes participative and democratic pattern of leadership being recommended in order to achieve developmental goals in Africa.

Keywords: Leadership, Corruption, Terrorism, Coup d'état and insincerity.

Background to the study

Leadership connotes the ability or the quality a good leader should have. It can be defined as service to humanity in order to enhance standard of living. Leadership has meaning only within the context of a group or organization. Leadership in a complex organization defines the pattern of activities required by the organization under various conditions leading to the execution of the organization's programme and the achievement of the organization's goals. Thus, it is observed that an insight into the concept of leadership is essential for an understanding of organizational functioning and a variety of organizational process including maintenance process, cohesiveness or work morale.

Furthermore, it is generally agreed that all over the world and at all times, leadership is held responsible for the conduct or other wise of the followership. This applies not only to the government agencies, but also to military, economic, social, religious, and political organization too. Leadership is believed to be

the fulcrum on which every organization is credited. Though, leadership style and performance are situational, they are also a function of innate or acquired qualities of the individual leader. The willingness and ability of a leader to open up communication channel and effectively utilize this to strengthen functional interactions among all levels and all sections in the organization is desirable.

Blake and Mouton (1963) observed that organization, no matter how small or big has what they call "Universal" that is common characteristics, which includes purpose, personnel, and hierarchy. For them to effectively mobilize the personnel toward achieving the purpose for which the organization is established e.g. the board depend on the leadership style employed by the management. Adamu (2008) in Odoh (2011) defines leadership as an instrumentality provided by a leader or group of leaders by which all other elements of national power, geography, economy, population, technology, ideology and moral can be mobilized and used most purposefully and effectively for the achievement of the goals of a nation in a given context. Ekhatior (2002) conceptualized leadership as the activity of persuading people to cooperate in the achievement of a common objective. He went on to add that, leadership in large-scale organization may be defined as influencing and energizing people to work together in a common effort to achieve the purpose of the enterprise.

On a clear vision, it is envisaged that a good leader should regard his or her country as his constituency and should not be regionally biased. A good leader should be steadfast devoid of religious and tribal sentimentality. The irony of attaining leadership positions in the third world countries include the tussling associated in view of the monetary gains and the illegal accumulation of material wealth. The long term implications are some of the factors responsible for the under- development of our sovereign nation Nigeria. We can now deduce that leadership style plays an important role in integrating workers with the organization's objectives with the aim of enhancing performance. It is in the light of this importance that this study is undertaken to examine the leadership style adopted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria between 1960-2014, that either enhance or hinder developmental goals in Nigeria.

Statement of the problems:

The Federal Republic of Nigeria like any other country in the world today is beset with one type of problem or the other. Problems affecting development in particular include, leadership tussles and in appropriate application of leadership styles. Governance issues that are becoming insurmountable has often lead to grand corruptions, insincerity, coup d'état, revolution, strike actions and acts of terrorism.

Leadership is no longer guided by conscience and principles

Hence it has become a matter of "vote for me or perish". In the height of insecurity in most parts of the country, Nigerians sleep with one eye opened, hunger and poverty, peace gave way to distress, disaster and violence rising to the highest degree of intensity. The recipients are the less privileged because, those in leadership position kept saying that, situation is in perfect control given that they are seen hovering the continents signing toothless bilateral and multilateral agreements that are of less immediate aid to the governed. Of what value are agreements to dying and helpless citizens?

Ella (2011:251) highlights that the 1963 constitution was suspended in 1966 following a coup that marked the beginning of military intervention in Nigeria politics. After 13 years of military dictatorship, the government of the country was handed over to civilians in 1979. As part of the transition to civil rule programme, a new constitution was designed for the country. The 1999 constitution has the features of the 1979 constitution. It has the presidential system of government as its main features. The national assembly now has 360 in the Federal House of Representatives and 109 senators, 768 local governments' councils and 36 states are listed including Abuja the federal capital territory. The effectiveness of this process shall be based on credible transparent free and fair 2011, electoral process. Reasons for frequent changes in government are often attributed to the incessant military intervention due to the inability of political class to abide by the rules and regulations of competitive party politics. The destruction of lives and properties by hired political thugs due to political intolerance during the 4th republic is unacceptable. The pervasiveness of corruption in the political system has contributed very much to the failure of past and present administration in the country. Political office is seen as an avenue to make quick and enormous wealth hence politicians do everything to see that they themselves or friends and relatives that are politically handicapped grab political offices. In this way, politics becomes pregnant with intense corruption and violence. The (1999) constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 14 (2b) specifically states that, "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government".

It is evident to note that Nigeria has never had peace in terms of security since the inception of this Republic, given that during the period under review the country was characterized by series of misadventures ranging from terrorist acts of bombing and killing of innocent souls, kidnapping, grand corruptions, advance fee fraud (419) e.t.c all of which are manifestation of leadership tussling in the Nigeria politics.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To evaluate government's leadership style and appraise the suitability on the nation.
- ii. To recommend appropriate leadership style that will determine the yearnings and aspirations of the nation.

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated and both in the null form.

- I. Ho: That a participative style of leadership has more chances of being successful than authoritarian style.
- ii. Ho: That leadership tussle contributes to the under-development of the third world countries.

Literature Review

This aspect is concerned with reviewing related literature to this study. The purpose is to examine the various leadership concepts and relate them with the age of globalization regarding applicability and suitability.

Abraha (2009) in Odoh (2011) highlights thus: “ Leadership is dealing with changes by setting a direction, i.e. vision creating, goal setting, values, promotion, formulating strategy, mobilizing people, managing change, developing other leaders, strategic problem solving and decision making.” He went further to add, whether you are a president, governor, chairman, senator or minister, irrespective of whatever leadership capacity an individual occupy's, it should be stressed that the success or failure of institutions be it political, social, or economic will be attributed to the product of leadership.

Ekhaton (2002) observed that, leadership is usually regarded as the important modifier of organization behavior, hence getting the right man in the leadership job would definitely solve all the problems of the organization. Millet (1954) in Ekhaton (2002) contends that: “Leadership is often thought as being primarily personal in character as being founded upon individual pre-eminence or accomplishment in a particular field of endeavor such as, superior strength, superior cunning, superior intelligence, superior knowledge and superior determination. Any or all of these may be means to the attainment of leadership”.

It is evident to note today in Nigeria based on the principles of Federal character, that these concepts postulated by imminent scholars could hardly be achieved due to the fact that, only political party loyalist and sponsors are recognized in appointment to leadership positions of the federation. According to Ujo (2000), Federal Character as applied to Nigeria is the legal and constitutional structure of the Nigeria federations, especially with respect to the number of the constituent members, their inter-relationships, the division of powers and functions. An overview of this policy indicates that, it ought to have been designed for the benefit of the underprivileged; rather it was designed for the benefit of the ruling class in the Nigeria context. Considerable research has been done in the past relating to the various leadership styles and their effect. Leadership is an essential part of management particularly with emphasis on the human aspects. One of the early advocates of the human relations approach who studied the conflict between the demands of the organization and the needs of its followers was Argyris (1964). Blake and Mouton (1964) found more effective leaders were rated high in both person oriented and task oriented behaviors. Argyris (1964) and Likert (1967) stated that a participative styles of leadership had more chances of being successful than an authoritarian style especially as it relates to job effectiveness and satisfaction. Decision appears to be more successful if those who have to implement the decisions are given more opportunity to be involved and have influence in the decisions made.

Nightingale (1981) examined how both styles of leadership and structure of an organization affects group outcome. The outcome that was more positive was the participative decision making process against the non-participative style. Likert (1981) stated that participative management is as effective in achieving superior performance in government agencies as in private organizations. He further stated that as the administrators and supervisors of government agencies are helped to move their managerial behavior close to a participative style, there is a corresponding improvement in both the human resources and productivity of the organization.

Fleishman and Harris (1962), stated that where leaders exercised high control, the number of grievances was equally high and the higher the control, the higher the turn-over and absenteeism. We could discover here that democratic pattern of leadership brought more cooperative behavior, friendliness, and suggestions, more mutually accepted exchange of objective criticism and higher productivity of higher quality. The study observed that, when leaders take cognizance of employee's performance for job enrichment and show accommodative behavior through democratic pattern of leadership, it would bring cooperative and friendly behavior.

The leadership tussle exhibited in the Federal Republic of Nigeria from 1960-2014 had consequently manifested into poor leadership in the country which are highlights in different facets of this study:

Theoretical framework

Many theories abound such as behavioral, the human relations, the autocratic and the laissez-faire etc which cannot be undertaken here, but the focus in this study will be directed to that outlined by Rensis Likert in the Human Relations School of thought what he calls systems and are today known as Likert's systems.

Likert (1981) examined four basic styles of leadership. Each of the four management styles conceptualized as a complete system. They are as follows:-

System 1- exploitative- authoritative

System 2- benevolent- authoritative

System 3- consultative leadership

System 4- participative leadership.

Under this system, the system 1 managers have little confidence in the subordinates to make decisions. Fear, threats, and other types of punishment are used to force subordinates to work. Communication flows down and is viewed with suspicion. The bulk decisions are made at the top of the organization and orders are issued with respect to good setting. The system 4 manager on the other end has complete confidence and trust in subordinates. Rewards are achieved through involvement in the setting and achieving goals. Communication flows free both vertically and horizontally. Decision making is dispersed widely throughout the organization process provided by the overlapping groups. Except in emergencies, goals are usually set through the participative process.

The theoretical framework to be adopted in this study as earlier stated is the Human Relations School of Thought. In this school of thought, we will rely on the theory of leadership propounded by Rensis Likert (1981). He postulates that human beings are basically good and in order to stimulate their performance, we should humanize work. Workers should be allowed to participate and take active role in decisions that affect them.

Methodology

The author adopts primary and secondary methods of data collection which includes structured and unstructured questionnaires that were administered. In the documentary research, the instrument is reliable and vital because they are related materials to the subject matter. The materials include books on leadership styles, periodicals and unpublished materials. Similarly, a set of questionnaires were designed to find out the views of respondents.

Results and findings

The statistics of the data collected are shown as indicated below:

Table 1.1

That leadership tussle contributes to the under-development of our sovereign nation.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
A	Agreed	120	96
B	Disagreed	5	4
	TOTAL	125	100

Source: Field Survey, 2004

The above table 1.1 indicates that, 120 respondents representing 96% agreed that leadership tussle contributes to the underdevelopment of our sovereign nation, while 5 respondents representing 4% disagreed. From the analyses shown, it is indicative that the data agrees with this statement. The military had dominated the reigns of leadership in Nigeria through autocratic leadership style for about (4) four decades without any noticeable development. The autocratic nature of the military dictatorship does not give room to the governed for participation, hence contributed to the under-development of our sovereign nation.

Table 1.2

That a participative style of leadership has more chances of Being successful than authoritarian style.

S/NO	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A	Effective	100	80
B	Ineffective	25	20
	TOTAL	125	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2004

The table 1.2 depicts that, 100 respondents representing 80% opines that, participative style of leadership is more effective than authoritarian style, while 25 respondents representing 20% claimed that, participative style of leadership is ineffective. With this data, we can rely on the theory of leadership propounded by Rensis Likert (1981). He postulates that human beings are basically good and in order to stimulate their performance, we should humanize work. Workers should be allowed to participate and take active role in decisions that affect them.

Leadership Tussles in Nigeria from 1960-2014

Nigeria had witnessed series of tribulations through leadership tussles prior to and during the period of President Goodluck Jonathan administration. This thinking informed Ella (2012), to postulates thus:

“The end result of the above problems as recorded include:

- I. Terrorism
- II. Kidnapping

- III. Political instability
- IV. Violence
- V. Robbery attacks and assassinations
- VI. Ethnic tensions / wars
- VII. Religious intolerance and
- VIII. Illiteracy

These in no small scale have punctuated the dividends of democracy and security of persons residing in the country. Also the threat to live and killing of innocent citizens are scaring many foreign and indigenous investors.” All of the above emanated as a result of leadership tussles in our society. It is evident to note that, Nigeria consist of over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups. This cultural diversity among others is responsible for Nigeria Federalism. On the contrary, ethnicity, tribalism and religious sentiment remain one of the most notorious factors that have marred the socio-economic and political growth of Nigeria. If Nigeria must forge ahead, the following utterances by well-meaning Nigerians and elder statesmen should be guided.

- I. “If Mr. A does not win the forthcoming election, the country will be made un-governable”.
- II. “If Mr. B does not win the forth coming election, there shall be bloodshed all over the country”.
- III. “To win this forthcoming election is a matter of do or die affair”.
- IV. Nigeria being a secular state can be ruled by either a Christian president or a Moslem president; hence we must avoid unguided statement that is capable of inciting the public e.g. “Nigeria must only be ruled by a particular religious faith”.

In the past we have read the above statements on the pages of newspapers and heard politicians during the course of their campaign. The insecurity in the country today is a clear manifestation of the utterances of politicians in the past. Leadership comes from God devoid of the uses of barrels, rigging, hired political thugs, money politics, kidnapping of political opponents, assassinations, violence attacks, killing of innocent citizens and bombing including the worst acts of terrorism. The author argued that, leadership tussle was inherited from the British colonial master in 1960 due to the system of divide and rule administration adopted. This gave birth to regional politics in Nigeria; we must strive to build a nation devoid of regional sentimentalism.

Olatunbosun (1976) posits that, “Before independence, each region in Nigeria was controlled by a regional political party. None of the parties emerged as a national political party with support from all over the Federation. The temporary compromise and uneasy alliance which the demand for independence fostered in 1969 withered away after independence was achieved. As a result, the basis of the Nigerian politics after independence was the struggle among the political parties to control the Federal Government. In the political struggle, the western region became the battle field between 1962 and 1966. In 1962, there was a political crisis in the Action Group which controlled the Government of the western region and formed the opposition in the Federal Government. The premier of the region, Chief S.L. Akintola was sacked by the Governor Sir Adesoji Aderemi who appointed Chief Adebgenro in his place. The premier, in return, also dismissed the Governor from office. When the Western House

of Assembly met in an attempt to confirm the action of the Governor and pass a vote of confidence in Chief Adegbenro, there was an uproar in the House and fighting broke out.....” He went on to add that, in October, 1965, the chains of political events which had started since 1962 reached a climax. The Nigerian National Democratic Party, led by chief Akintola, was accused of rigging the regional election to the western House of Assembly. The U.P.G.A reacted by burning with petrol, not only the houses and property but also the people who were members of the N.N.D.P.

Coup of January, 1966

Olatunbosun (O.P.cit.) highlights further, that the situation in the west gave some young army officers the immediate pretext to stage a coup d'etat on 15th January, 1966, when political leaders and senior army officers of Hausa and Yoruba origin were killed. The fact that no Ibo politician and top army officer was killed in the coup confirmed the view that “the coup was organized by young Ibo army officer to achieve what politics has failed to achieve”. With this development, Major General Aguyi Ironsi who became the head of the military government promulgated decree no 34 which abolished federalism and introduced unitary government. The counter coup d'etat of July, 1966 as we can see, the above events lead to the immediate causes of the counter coup of July 1966. Major General Aguyi Ironsi and Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi were killed and some Ibo army officers also lost their lives during the counter coup. General Yakubu Gowon, then a Lt. Colonel became the head of the Federal Military Government.....”

It is on record that, Nigeria administration since the inception of her flag independence in 1960 to 1999 was characterized by series of leadership tussles through either coup, coup d'état or bloodless coup, while between 1999 to date was characterized by all types of tussling including election rigging, violence, killing, kidnapping, assassination, bombing and acts of terrorism between the incumbent government and the opposition groups. The long time implication is mostly felt by the masses due to unemployment, poverty, hunger, illiteracy and social stratification.

Leaders and their Mode of Ascension to the Throne in Nigeria:

S/N	NAMES	MODE	DATE
1	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	Appointed	1960 - 1966
2	Sir. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	Appointed	1960 -1966
3	Gen. Aguyi Ironsi	Coup	1966 -1966
4	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	Coup	1966 -1975
5	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	Coup	1976 -1976
6	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	Co up	1976 -1979
7	Alh. Shehu Shagari	Election	1979 -1983
8	Gen. Muhammed Buhari	Coup	1983 -1985
9	Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida	Coup	1985 -1993
10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Interim Head	1993 -1993
11	Gen. Sani Abacha	Coup	1993 -1998
12	Gen. Abdulsaslam Abubakar	App ointed	1998 - 1999
13	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Election	1999 - 2007
14	Alh. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	Election	2007 -2010
15	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	Election	2010 -Date

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Summary

It is evidently seen in the above table that, the military had dominated the reigns of leadership in Nigeria for about four (4) decades without any noticeable development in the country. It is on record in the 70's that, Nigeria's problem then as echoed by the former Head of State, and General Yakubu Gowon (RTD) was neither resources nor money. This was the period in Nigeria, when crude oil became a major source of revenue in the world market and also the era of oil boom, unfortunately, our leadership visions for economic planning were swayed by corruption through diversion of public funds. During the Second Republic, the country witnessed unprecedented mismanagement of the nation's treasury.

According to the Time Magazine (September 9th, 1985), "in 1983 alone one Billion in petroleum was secretly diverted from state oil terminal to foreign tankers with Nigerian businessmen and politicians taking the profits".

Conclusion

From every indication, lack of credible leadership in Nigeria is largely responsible for the series of adversaries in the country. The violent uprising and killing of innocent citizens witnessing in the country today is a manifestation of frustration of the youths in the society. The frustration aroused due to illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and hunger. The leadership in the country has not been able to provide for the yearnings and aspirations of the masses due to grand corruptions of successive administrations in Nigeria.

This thinking informed Odoh (2011), to postulate that "the way and manner politics is played in the governance of Nigerians always subject the interpretation of the constitution to the whims and caprices of the power that exist. In practice, upholding the purity of the electoral principle has remained one of the challenges that our political system controls. This is because in an emerging democracy such as Nigeria, politics is about personality, religion, ethnicity, tribalism, regionalism, favoritism and nepotism, rather than championing the path of development. Moreover, the political landscape in Nigeria is very unstable and unpredictable with the politicians constantly fighting, struggling and sometimes assassinating opponents to reach the mantle of leadership."

Recommendations

- i. The paper underscores that, for a nation to achieve her developmental goals, credible leadership that will secure future generations is imperative devoid of political rancor and tussles.
- ii. There should be transparency and accountability in every facet of the economy in the country.
- iii. There should be a total overhaul of the political structure in the country using wide range of political education.
- iv. Political stability should be seen as the basis of development because it fosters economic growth, creates job opportunity and eradicates extreme hunger and abject poverty in the society.
- v. It is recommended that, the participative or democratic styles of leadership be adopted in Nigeria, given that, it enhances leaders / followers relationship.

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