

Modern Educational Leadership and Goal Achievement in Tertiary Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The need for sound educational leadership as an effective means of facilitating goal achievement in tertiary institutions of learning can never be overestimated. It is for this reason that this article examined the concept of tertiary education and its goals, modern as against the traditional types of leadership, characteristics of effective educational leadership, challenges of providing successful leadership in educational institutions and the way forward. It is the hope of researcher that if some of the selected and discussed modern types of leadership are applied in the management of tertiary institutions, the goals of tertiary education, as itemized in section 5, sub-sections 81 to 85 of the 2013 version of the National Policy on Education will be substantially achieved, irrespective of whatever challenges that may beset the tertiary education system. That means that in spite of whatever challenges tertiary education system may face, Nigerian national development, which remains the main objective of tertiary education, will be enhanced through high level manpower training, affordable quality learning, career counselling, reduction in skills' shortages, encouragement of scholarship, entrepreneurship, community service and international understanding and interactions. The article concludes that improved funding and accountability in the management of institutional resources would, most likely, ensure the provision of infrastructural and other facilities, improved staff and

students welfare needs and provision of more conducive learning environments.

Keyword: *Modern, Educational Leadership, Goal Attainment, Tertiary Education*

Introduction

Modern educational leadership carries the ideas of both administration and management of education at all levels. While administration is a process of systematically arranging and coordinating the human and materials made available to any organization or institution for the main purpose of achieving the stipulated goals of that institution, management carries the ideas of cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement of others in the effective achievement of institutional prescribed goals and objectives (Adegbesan, 2019, p.1). The concepts of administration and management, therefore, relate closely with the ideas of handling, directing, economically guiding and leading. The concepts have to do with the ideas of an integrating process by which authorised individuals create, maintain and operate an organization along with the selection and accomplishment of the institutional goals. Both administration and management, as they relate to leadership of educational institutions, have to do with getting things done through others, since they concern the coordination of all the resources of the institution through the processes of planning, directing and controlling in order to achieve institutional goals (Newstrom & Kith, 2017). This article focuses on modern educational leadership styles and these relate more to democratic leadership, which is widely accepted as being people-oriented. This writer, is of course, aware that the traditional classification of leadership styles is usually, the autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles (Stacey, 2013). But he opted to write on modern leadership style because such styles are people-oriented and educational institutions particularly the tertiary ones, are full of

people who would like to be carried along in the process of the administration or management of their institutions.

Objective of the Article

The main objective of this article is to examine in some detail, the explanations of some of the modern leadership styles and how the application of the identified modern leadership styles can contribute to goal achievement in tertiary education in Nigeria. The article identifies characteristics that administrators must possess and also attempts to discuss some factors that can militate against goal achievement and recommends what can be done to ensure effective goal achievement in the tertiary education system in Nigeria.

Concepts Clarifications

The concepts of educational leadership, tertiary education and the identified modern educational leadership styles are clarified in the context in which they have been used in this article. The purpose of the clarifications is for readers to have a better understanding and appreciation of the article.

Educational Leadership

Educational leadership, according to Adegbesan (2019), is about people in education industry. In education, leadership is not just the process, method or procedure, but it is all about people. It is the people in education industry that can or should be able to, enthrone and empower the leadership positions of their leaders. The greatest assets the leaders have, not just in education industry but also in all other fields or institutions, are the people in those institutions. Leadership success depends on people. People are or should be the focus or real centre of any leadership. This is the point so many leaders in Africa, particularly political leaders, do not seem to understand or appreciate. True leadership, in all spheres

of life, Adegbesan went on, is not or should not be about making money, accumulating wealth or landed property – whether at home or abroad. Certainly, it is or should not be about having a fat bank account. It is about making people feel good and better-off. In the context of this article, therefore, leaders of tertiary educational institutions, are expected to pay attention to the implementation of educational plans and programmes for the betterment, not just of the educational institutions, but also of the people that work/and or study in them. It is the conviction of this writer that if the people that work and study in educational institutions are taken care of properly, they will, in turn, make the institutions and leaders better off by cooperating and rendering selfless services for the betterment of all.

Regarding the types of leadership styles that can apply adequately in educational institutions, if properly implemented anywhere in the world (Nigeria inclusive), Shofoyeke (2016), has identified some eight (8) such types of leadership styles. They include transformational, Participative, interpersonal, transactional, postmodern, moral, instructional and contingent leadership styles. These are the modern leadership styles that this writer believes that, if well applied in tertiary institutions, that they will yield positive results for the betterment of both workers and students. Each of them is discussed later on in the write-up, highlighting how it could be applied for the betterment of workers and learners in tertiary institutions.

Tertiary Education

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013, p.52), Tertiary Education is the education given after Post Basic Education, in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University centres, like the Nigerian French Language Village, Nigerian Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, Innovation Enterprises Institutions (IEIs), Colleges of Education,

Polytechnics, Monotechnics and other specialized institutions, such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health Technology and National Teachers' Institute (NTI). The goals of Tertiary Education, according to section 81 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), shall be to:

1. Contribute to Nigerian national development through high level manpower training;
2. Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians;
3. Provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work;
4. Reduce skills shortages through the production skilled manpower relevant to the labour market;
5. Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community unity; and
6. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the National Policy on Education (NPE), did not only explain what tertiary education is all about, its objectives and where it might be obtained, but she went further to prescribe the methods of pursuing the goals. Section 5 and sub-sections 82 to 85 provided that the goals of tertiary education shall be pursued through the following:

1. Quality student intake;
2. Quality teaching and learning;
3. Research and development;
4. High standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources;
5. Staff welfare and development programmes;

6. Provision of a more practical-based curriculum, relevant to the needs of the labour market;
7. Generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which enable students to succeed in knowledge-based economy;
8. A variety of flexible learning modes, including full-time, part-time, block-release and sandwich programmes; Access to training funds, such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) etc;
9. Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), that is well structured, coordinated and supervised;
10. Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate regulatory agencies;
11. An all-inclusive, credible admissions policy for national unity;
12. Supporting affordable, equitable access to tertiary education through scholarships and student loans;
13. Inter-institutional cooperation and linkages; and
14. Dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services.

Sub-section 83 of section 5 of the National Policy on Education provides that towards achieving the goals prescribed in section 81 of the policy, all teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching. Section 84 maintains that tertiary institutions shall be encouraged to explore other sources of funding, such as endowments, consultancy services and commercial ventures. Section 85 of the policy holds that the internal organization and administration of each of the tertiary institutions shall have its responsibility for all such traditional areas of academic freedom of their institutions to:

- a. Select their students, except where the law prescribes otherwise;
- b. Appoint, promote and discipline their staff;
- c. Teach and select areas of research;
- d. Determine the content of courses in line with the minimum standards stipulated by regulatory agencies. Government shall continue to respect this freedom.

Modern Educational Leadership Types

The types of leadership styles discussed under this section are what the writer has described as the modern leadership styles because they evolved from the traditional autocratic/dictatorial, democratic and laissez-faire styles that dominated discussions earlier on in life. Many of them are relatively new and therefore, qualify to be described as modern, in the opinion of this writer.

Transformational Leadership

This type of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the absolute commitments and capacities of organizational members to the achievement of organizational goals. The style also assumes that members of the organization have high commitments to organizational goals and therefore, they employ greater capacities at accomplishing such goals, thereby resulting in extra effort and greater productivity. For this reason, the leader and the organizational members should endeavour to build the organizational vision, establish its goals, provide the necessary intellectual stimulation as well as offer individualised support. In this case, the leader and members of the institution should jointly model best practices, demonstrate high performance, imbibe educational values and expectations, create productive organizational culture and climate in addition to creating or developing a structure to foster participation in

educational decisions. It is the considered opinion of this writer that if and when education organizational members have the privilege of being involved in educational decision making to the extent stated above, they will be committed to the goals of their institutions to such a degree that higher level goal achievement will become moral imperatives to them. Transformational leadership is, thus. Consistent with the collegial model because it assumes that leaders and their institutional staff have shared values and common interests (Izedonnu, 2016).

Participative Leadership

Participative leadership carries the ideas of taking part in, being involved in an activity and it assumes that the decision-making processes of the institution ought to be the joint central focus of the leader and staff of the institution. If and when this type of leadership is applied in any educational institution, there is likely to be an increase in institutional effectiveness because it justifies the democratic principles that tertiary education staff and students desire so much because it makes leadership potentially available to any legitimate member or stakeholder in the institution.

Interpersonal Leadership

This relatively new concept of leadership is connected with the idea of relationships between and among people and it is quite relevant to collegiality. It derives from interpersonal intelligence, which usually influences intuitive behaviours and self-awareness. Intuitive behaviours and self-awareness usually facilitate effective engagement with others. Interpersonal leadership stresses the importance of collaboration with others. It encourages working together, consultation with and support of one another in educational institutions and indeed, any other organization. These are characteristics that personnel in tertiary educational

institutions wish for and therefore, they are likely to be very productive and work better under such circumstances.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership occurs when one or more teachers engage with one another and with educational administrators in such a manner that both administrators and teachers raise one another to higher levels of commitment, dedication, motivation and morality. Through such transforming processes, which arise out of working together, the motives of the leader and the followers emerge. This is what Adegbesan (2019, p. 18) called “ an exchange process.” According to the scholar, exchange is an established political strategy for members of an organization. By this strategy, leaders in educational institutions, such as head teachers, principals and education officers etc, possess authority by reason of their positions as formal leaders in their institutions. But these same leaders require the cooperation of their staff to secure the effective management of their institutions. This kind of exchange, by which leaders provide leadership and the followers provide cooperation and dedication to duty, usually secures benefits for both parties to the arrangement. One of the greatest limitations of exchange as a political strategy that benefits both leaders and followers is the fact that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains that arise from the given transaction(s)’ Transactional leadership, therefore, does not produce long term commitment to the values and vision being promoted by organizational or institutional leaders.

Post-modern Leadership

This model of leadership is quite new and recent. It legitimizes the practice of democratic leadership in educational institutions and celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths. It reveals the fact that there is no absolute authority anytime anywhere and suggests

that any situation is open to multiple interpretations. Post-modern leadership believes that there is no absolute reality and therefore, it proposes that situations must be understood at local levels because of the existing diversities. It proposes that leaders should always analyse situations carefully and based on such analysis, they should respect and pay attention to the diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders. This leadership style advocates a more consultative, participatory as well as exclusionary stance in governance and these virtues are consistent with participatory leadership. Rather than focusing on visions that should be developed to guide the leaders, post-modern leadership suggests the acceptance and adoption of multiple visions and diverse cultural meanings. Where an educational administrator finds him/herself in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environments, this style of leadership should come in handy.

Moral Leadership

This style of leadership is concerned with the principles of right and wrong as perceived by the leader. This model assumes that the leader's focus should be on the cherished values, beliefs and ethics of society, as viewed by the leader or leaders. It is the type of leadership that derives from defensible conceptions of what is right and conceived as good enough or wrong. Some such "right positions" could result from the leaders' religious affiliations, while for others, the so-called "right positions" could result from their capacity to act in ways that are consistent with society's ethical system. The latter group could be described as leaders with "moral confidence." These morally confident leaders usually demonstrate causal consistency between principles and practice. They apply principles to new situations and create shared understanding as well as common vocabulary. They tend to explain and justify their decisions in moral terms, sustain principles over time, in addition to re-interpreting and restating principles where

necessary (Adegbesan, 2019, p.19). Moral leadership and beliefs tend to ensure, among others, equal opportunities, equity and justice engagement with stakeholders, cooperation, teamwork, commitment and mutual understanding among leaders and followers in educational institutions. This is the kind of situation educational institutions' staff and students want for productive engagements to evolve and persist.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership concerns itself with giving detailed information to prospective learners on how to do or use any given instruction. It focuses on the direction of influence rather than its nature or source and it emphasizes on managing teaching and learning in educational institutions. It relates to the professional learning of teachers and their relation with their students. In this context, the leaders' influence is targeted at students' learning under teachers. Effective instructional leadership behaviour comprises of the three strategies of improving teaching and learning, as well as modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue. This style of leadership has been criticised too narrow because it ignores other aspects of school life, such as socialization, students' self-esteem, but rather concentrates on teaching and learning.

Contingent Leadership

This type of leadership recognizes the diverse nature of school life or contexts and strives to adapt leadership to suit the particular situation(s), rather than adopting the "one-size-fits-all" position or stance. Contingent leadership assumes that leaders can or should be able to adapt to unique institutional circumstances or problem(s). It recognizes the fact that the variations in the contexts of leadership and suggests that to be effective as a leader, the contexts require different leadership responses. This

presupposes that the leader should be able to master a large repertoire of leadership practices on which to base their responses to events or contexts. This also means that leaders should continue to study and evaluate their situations, with a view to diagnosing the problem(s) and adapting their appropriate responses to them rather than relying on so-called standard leadership models.

Goal Achievement in Tertiary Education

Goal achievement or attainment in tertiary education, in the context of this article, has to do with “completion or achievement of a given or identified objective(s)” of any higher institution of learning in Nigeria (Fowler & Fowler, 1984). Goal achievement in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria presupposes that all such tertiary institutions have carefully identified, well established goals or objectives and that all the resources – including human, material and financial resources – have adequately been mobilised and diligently applied for the purpose of achieving such objectives. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), through the National Policy on Education, has not only identified the goals of tertiary education in section 5, sub-section 81 of the National Policy on Education, but has also gone ahead to prescribe how such goals may be pursued in sub-sections 82 to 85 of the same policy. As it is, only leaders with requisite characteristics, such as the ones spelt out in the succeeding section of this article, will succeed if they apply the types of leadership styles discussed in the preceding sections of this article.

Characteristics of Effective Educational Leaders

For educational leaders to succeed in the management and leadership of educational institutions, they need to have and openly demonstrate most, if not all of the following characteristics:

- i) They should have self-confidence in themselves and be able to tolerate institutional stress. These will enable them to set high goals for themselves and their followers as well as good decisions in different situations.
- ii) Such leaders should demonstrate emotional maturity and good awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. This will make them willing to embark on their self-improvement and the improvement of their followers, peers and supervisors.
- iii) They should be people of unquestionable integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. They should be sociable and very comfortable working in groups.
- iv) Educational leaders should be task-oriented, achievement-driven and be concerned about the welfare of their followers, peers and even supervisors. They should be willing to assume responsibility for their actions and desire to influence others.
- v) Such leaders should possess specialised skills that are relevant to their schedules and have the aptitudes to work with others.. They should be critical thinkers, problem-solvers and people that can translate theory to practice.
- vi) Educational leaders should possess sound emotional intelligence by being self-aware, assertive, independent and self-directed and controlled in their thinking and actions, as well as having self regard. They should be committed to self-actualization, by being able to realize their potential capacities and being involved in pursuits that lead to meaningful and full life.
- vii) Educational leaders should be people-oriented. They should care about others; demonstrate social responsibility by being cooperative and constructive members of the social group. They should be able to establish and maintain satisfying mutual relationships by being able to give and receive affection from the groups they lead. They should be able to control their

impulse and to resist or delay the temptation or drive to act impulsively (Izedonnu, 2016).

Challenges of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Tertiary Education in Nigeria, like all other levels of education, is bisected with myriads of problems and these include the following:

1. Poor Funding

The consequence of poor funding of tertiary education is the near absence of educational infrastructural facilities in institutions of learning. Where some such facilities are found, they are in dilapidated state, and can hardly be used for teaching and learning. Classrooms are in short supply. There are not enough laboratories, libraries, workshops and offices for staff. Teaching aids, such as projectors, and computers are in inadequate supply. Above all, lecturers and other administrative and technical/technological staff are in short supply. There is a generally poor or polluted teaching and learning environments. Worse still, staff welfare packages are usually poor and not forthcoming as and when they are due.

2. Poor Financial Management

Most of the time, even when the funds allocated to tertiary educational institutions are inadequate, such funds are again poorly managed. The poor financial management we are talking about could arise from ignorance on the part of the financial managers due to poor knowledge, complete ignorance or corruption tendencies and practices on the part of the officials that manage the finances of tertiary educational institutions. It is common knowledge that sometimes, managers of finances in tertiary educational institutions inflate contracts awarded and falsify receipts and other financial records related to the provision of facilities and services in institutions of learning. Some such

practices, no doubt, limit the successes of educational leaders, no matter how modern the style of educational management they might apply (Daku, 2014).

3. Over-sized Classes

Following poor funding, the sizes of classes in many tertiary institutions of learning are over-sized. Too many students are crowded in one room for lecture and this does not permit close teacher-student interactions, which would usually promote learning by students. As Daku (2014) observed, most teachers agree that they cannot attend to every child in the class if the classes exceed 30 learners at a time. Where classes accommodate up to 300 or 400 learners, it becomes difficult, indeed impossible, for proper learning to take place.

4. Poverty and Parental Involvement in their Children's Education

Families that live at or below poverty level, most of the time, cannot afford to sponsor their children in schools. Studies in America shows that students who do not get enough food or sleep are less likely to perform at their full academic potentials. This affects their academic performances negatively. This is so because there are costs of education that should be borne by parents or stakeholders, that are unavoidable if students must have access to tertiary education and be able to concentrate on their studies. Such costs include those of transportation, school fees, boarding fees, up-keep allowances, provision of books and other study materials etc. (Ehigiamusoe, Alaba & Daku, 2019). Aside from poverty, which may prevent even willing parents from participating in the education of their children, some parents that probably, have the wherewithal to sponsor their wards are less concerned about the education of their children. Some of them are never seen for the entire school year, no matter what sort of issues might

arise with respect to their children's academic programmes. On the other extreme, there are parents that do not seem to go away from their children. They hover over their children and their teachers, interfering with their children's education process. While it is important that parents should show concern about their children's education, their involvement in school programmes should not disrupt their children's education. They should support their children's education in ways that will promote their learning (Njideka, Uchenna & Modebelu, 2016).

5. Family Factors

Family factors play a role in a teacher's ability to teach students. Principals and teachers agree that what is going on at home usually, does impact students' capacity or propensity to learn. Divorce, single parenting, poverty, violence and many other issues are all challenges that students bring to school every day and which teachers and school administrators have to contend with.

6. Students' Attitudes and Behaviours

Students' attitudes, such as apathy and disrespect for their teachers, are significant challenges facing education today. It is common knowledge that students, especially beginning from Secondary school level of education demonstrate, not only apathy and disrespect for their teachers, but also tardiness, absenteeism and general disinterest in their academic programmes. All these pose serious challenges to school managers, administrators and other tertiary educational leaders.

7. Technology

Many students today are more advanced in their knowledge and application of technology than their teachers and this has usually put the teachers at decidedly disadvantaged positions in the classrooms. Incidentally, students' love for technology also, usually

distracts them from school work and this makes it difficult for teachers to keep and sustain students' interests in and attention whenever they are teaching them new concepts.

8. Bullying among Students

Bullying may not be a new problem in schools but it certainly has profound impact on the learning aptitude and attitudes of many students. Incidentally, bullying in schools has assumed a cyber space dimension, such that cyber-bullying has given bullies even more avenues to torment their victims – through social networking, texting and other virtual interactions. Cyber-bullying is a recent development and the fact that laws relating to it are not yet very clear has further complicated matters because parents, teachers and educational administrators remain unsure about how to legally handle such issues.

9. Students' Health

The health of students is critical to their studies. In places like the United States of America, where many students suffer from obesity, which could lead to other conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, students' study habits are affected adversely. All these conditions could happen as a result of poor eating habits and lack of physical exercises. The consequences of obesity and other ill-health conditions affecting tertiary institutional students could be higher absenteeism and more serious academic issues.

Poor Implementation of the Curriculum

Rather than implementing the curriculum that will give learners the skills they need to apply in their places of work or personal business, teachers concentrate on teaching the “tests” because students' test scores are now being used as the yardstick to evaluate teachers, performances. The public, today, appears more interested in seeing their wards' high scores and therefore, the

teachers tend to base their teaching on the annual standardised tests to satisfy the parent, general public and even some school administrators and managers.

Political Educational Leadership and Decisions

The involvement of politics in educational leadership and decision-making in Nigerian tertiary institutions has not been helpful. Educational politics in Nigerian tertiary institutions has encouraged the application of quota system and god-fatherism by political leaders. Through these systems, wrong and incompetent persons have been imposed on tertiary institutions, whether as students or staff by political leaders and this has dragged the tertiary education system backwards (Njideka, Uchenna&Modebelu, 2016).

Way Forward

Even though tertiary education institutions in Nigeria are beset with many challenges, a lot can be done to improve on their situations. The following can be done in respect of their circumstances:

- a. The funds made available for tertiary education should be increased and corruption should be dealt with severely. No amount of increase in the funding of tertiary education will make impact if corruption is not contained. The money so added to the system will go down the drain if corruption is not checked. With increase in funding and the containment of corruption, tertiary institutions will have requisite infrastructural and other facilities, teaching aids will be in abundance and staff as well as students' welfare will be taken care of adequately. The system will operate smoothly.
- b. With improvement in the national economy and the economies of parents, more parents should be able to support the educational programmes of their children. Rich

but ignorant parents will need sensitisation in order to make them see the need to support the educational programmes of their wards (Daku, Oyekan & Ojeniyi, 2016).

- c. Students who are more knowledgeable about computer technology than their teachers should be humble enough to listen to their teachers and learn whatever new concepts are being taught in the class. They should remain respectful of, not only their parents but also their teachers, so that they can learn from the teachers.
- d. Students' health should engage the attention of their teachers and school administrators. Those of them in boarding houses should be encouraged to develop good feeding habits. Lots of physical exercises' programmes should be planned for them so that they will stay healthy and focus on their studies.
- e. Political leaders should de-emphasize quota system and god-fatherism in the management of the tertiary educational system so that only qualified students and staff are engaged in the appropriate departments of the system.
- f. School administrators and managers should intensify in school the monitoring and supervision of the activities of their schools, so that teachers can sit up and do their work as they should.

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