

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES OF LIBRARY HEADS ON SERVICE DELIVERY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN NIGER STATE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study explored the extent of leadership style exhibited by heads of colleges of education in Niger State. Population of the study was 26. This comprises of academic librarians working in these colleges of Education. They are College of Nursing Science Minna , College of Nursing Science Bida, College of Nursing Science Kontagora, College of Health Technology Minna, College of Agriculture Mokwa, College of Education Minna and Federal College of Education Kontagora. Twenty-six (26) copies of the structured questionnaire were filled, returned and used for the study. All the population was used for the study. Responses from respondents were analysed using mean scores. Findings from the study showed that heads of College libraries must have basic skills to balance administration. Suggestions were made for improved leadership. An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution which serves two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum, and to support the research of the university faculty and students.

Key Words: Leadership Style, Service Delivery, Academic Librarians, Academic Library, Colleges of Education.

Introduction

Leadership style, otherwise known as management style describes the approach managers / leaders / or library heads use to deal with people in their places of work. There are various styles of leadership, and leaders can be classified in extremes as follows: The head of library plays a great role in enhancing the performance of librarians. According to Bass (2010), the range of leadership skills required of library managers is greater than ever. Staff members have to learn to think and live in different ways.

Autocratic Leadership is characterized by authoritarian behaviour, unilateral decision making, one way communication and the denial of conflict. In short, the leader acts as an absolute monarch with unlimited authority. This type of leadership in any library does not encourage job performance on the part of workers. On the other hand, democratic/Participative Leadership Style involves shared decision making, open communication and realization that conflict is inevitable and must be managed. Although the leader maintains final authority, subordinates input and consultations are highly valued. This type of leadership encourages staff to perform well. Librarians should be democratic in their style of leadership in order to instil the spirit of hard work in their staff.

In addition, free-Rein Leadership Style allows subordinates maximum autonomy in their job. Individual decision making, free exchange of information, interpersonal conflict resolution and minimal leadership control are standard. This type of leadership also brings about good job performance, but the librarian must be careful in order not to be disrespected at the end.

The librarian's task is to reduce the anonymity of books, films, and other materials embodying the thought of the present generation as well as prior generation. According to Bamigboye, Buraimo and Ajani (2008), librarians typically have credentials in teaching as well as in library science. This allows them to participate in school

administration and curriculum development in addition to managing their library duties. Mosley (2004), asserted that the task of the librarian is to help his client separate the static from the message; to locate, within the enormous surge and rush of printed and other materials, precisely the knowledge he needs.

As Nigeria advances towards becoming more industrialized, Nzotta (2007) notes that there is therefore an urgent and increasing demand for qualified and dedicated librarians to manage libraries. From the assertion made by the above authors it could be seen that the task of librarians is enormous. They organize and order the perfect flow of information for their clients and also help to locate them with ease. Furthermore they select the best material and continue to screen them. In addition, they manage, organize and disseminate information, providing support to members of an academic community, including students, researchers and teaching staff. Their main role involves facilitating and supporting learning by teaching information retrieval skills to students and staff within classrooms or virtual learning environment. Bello and Mansoor (2012) state that librarians like other professionals in retrospect need to reflect with increasing needs of development. A leader's personal traits and characteristics probably influence his leadership behaviour or style. For example, an individual who feels adequate and feels comfortable with people will ordinarily adopt a people oriented behaviour style. On the contrary, a person who feels inadequate and feels threatened by people will probably adopt a production- oriented behaviour style. The role of leadership in job performance as source of motivation is an important

Fatokun in Abubakar (2016) opined that leadership is about listening to people, supporting and encouraging and involving them in the decision taking and problem solving process. A leader is a person who plays the central roles in interactions and who influences the behaviour of other members of the group. He is an individual who has authority over others and is responsible. Improve service delivery of these categories of librarians depend greatly on the leadership style of library head. Leaders have two main roles. First, they must achieve the task / functions. These functions include staff administration, library budget preparation, maintenance of library building, preparation of annual reports, coordination of library development, responsible for day- to- day running of the library, ensuring a balanced collection and oversees service to the library clientele among others.. Secondly they have to maintain effective relationships between themselves and the group and the individuals in it. Everybody who works in an organization such as the college library has certain jobs assigned to him or her to perform. According to William (2009), managers are expected to be leaders and facilitators, not order givers.

A leader's personal traits and characteristics probably influence his leadership behaviour or work. Relating this to heads of college librarians, they are expected to be of more facilitators than order givers. They are expected to possess special traits and skills for effective and smooth running of administration. These traits and skills include ability to adapt to situations, assertive, deceive, dependable, desire to influence others, energetic, self confidence, tolerant and above all willingness to assume responsibility. Possession of these qualities go a long way in making a good leader which invariably bring out better administration on the part of heads of librarian colleges. Fred and Allen (2008),state that what sets the beloved leaders apart from those we hate is excellence at things like 'motivating power', 'empathy', and intuitive ability'- these abilities fall within the domain of emotional intelligence-adeptness at changing ourselves and our interactions with others- not school smarts. Apart from being information providers, librarians spend considerable time working with electronic

resources involving data bases management and web development. They are responsible for acquiring, organising, managing and distributing library resources and ensuring that library provision meets the needs of all its users. This make academic library is an important agent in the pursuit of academic excellence in higher institution Their main role involves facilitating and supporting learning by teaching information retrieval skills to students and staff within classrooms or virtual learning environment Considering the importance of the above mentioned services being provided by professional librarians in colleges of education, it will be necessary and important to x-ray the leadership styles these library heads are applying to motivate their staff for effective and efficient service delivery in their various colleges.

Problem statement

The need to carry out this study is born out of the fact that librarians are vital in any educational set up. Aside, considering the job they perform viz- avis acquiring, organizing, managing and distributing library resources and ensuring that library provision meets the needs of all its users, call for more attention they deserve so as to enhance their service delivery. One of these is the leadership style of the library head. It can serve as a motivator and at the same time a demotivator depending on the style and its mode of application in administration. The study was undertaken to identify those traits and skills that leaders such as library heads must possess for effective and efficient running of the library.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine the impact of leadership styles on service delivery of academic librarians in Niger State Colleges of Education. To achieve the objective, the following specific objectives are developed to:

1. To identify traits of a good leader for effective and efficient administration
2. To identify skills associated with good leadership
3. To determine the effect of good leadership in an organization
4. To find out problems of a poor leadership
5. To suggest more ways for effective and efficient good leadership

Research Questions

1. What leadership traits do you feel are most important
2. What skills are associated with good leadership
3. What effect has good leadership on administration
4. What are the consequences of bad leadership
5. What are the strategies to enhance good leadership

Review of Related Literature

Michael A (2006), defined leadership as the ability to persuade others willingly to behave differently. Their function is to achieve the task set for them with the help of the group. Leaders have two main roles. First, they must achieve the task. Secondly they have to maintain effective relationships between themselves and the group and the individuals in it. To achieve their roles leaders such as college librarians must have special traits and skills that will bring about effective and efficient service delivery on the part of their subordinates in the office. College library heads must be able to show the acceptable qualities of a good leader for improved administration. Fred and Colunba (1992) in their book titled Educational Administration: concepts and practices carried out a study on personality traits and leadership effectiveness in

education. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the validity of the sixteen personality factor questionnaire (16PF) as a predictor of principal performance. Seventy-nine elementary and secondary school principals from one large, urban school district were administered the 16PF. Four independent criteria were used to measure principal effectiveness: supervisors ratings, paired comparison ratings, peer nomination ratings, and teacher ratings, resulting in an overall effectiveness score. The results of the study revealed that factors such as dominant, imaginative, self-sufficient, and warm were consistent predictors of superior performance.

Research Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Aina (2004), survey research is a systematic and comprehensive collection of information that reflects the opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviours of people on an issue. The population of the study comprises of 26 academic librarians in Niger State Colleges of Education. Twenty-six (26) copies of the structured questionnaire were filled, returned and used for the study. Responses from respondents were analyzed using mean scores. A four-point rating scale with a response set given as Strongly Agree 3.50-4.00, Agree 2.50-3.49, Disagree 2.00-2.49 and Strongly Disagree 1.10-1.99. The average cut off mean is 2.50. By this an item is accepted if it is 2.50 and above and rejected if the cut off mean is below 2.50.

Data Presentation and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in the tables' as shown below

Table 1 Summary of Respondents Means Scores on the most important leadership traits

S/N	Item	N	Mean (N)	Decision
1.	Honesty and integrity	26	2.96	Accepted
2.	Inspire other	26	3.00	Accepted
3.	Commitment and passion	26	3.04	Accepted
4.	Good communication	26	2.65	Accepted
5.	Decision making	26	3.19	Accepted
6.	Accountability	26	3.11	Accepted
7.	Delegation and empowerment	26	2.58	Accepted
8.	Creativity and innovation	26	2.69	Accepted
9.	Technical competence	26	2.85	Accepted
10.	Far- sighted problem solver	26	2.53	Accepted
Grand Total			2.86	

The findings in table 1 have revealed the librarians high acceptance of the traits as the most important ones expected of a leader in order to effectively administer and carry his subordinate along.

Table 2 Summary of Respondents Means Scores on the most important leadership skills

S/N	Item	N	Mean (X)	Decision
1.	Intelligent	26	2.58	Accepted
2.	Conceptually skilled	26	2.62	Accepted
3.	Creative	26	2.81	Accepted
4.	Diplomatic and tactful	26	2.89	Accepted
5.	Fluent in speaking	26	2.63	Accepted
6.	Knowledgeable about group task	26	2.69	Accepted
	Organized	26	3.19	Accepted
7.	Persuasive	26	2.65	Accepted
8.	Socially skilled	26	2.58	Accepted
Grand Total			2.74	

Table 2 gives details on the important types of skills expected of heads of college librarians Majority of these librarians were found to have a leader that is well organized which is evidenced with mean score of 3.19. The result indicates that all the items gave positive responses with a mean score above 2.50 and grand mean total of 2.74.

Table 3 Summary of Respondents Means Scores of the effect of good leadership in organisation

S /N	Item	N	Mean (x)	Decision
1	Develops corporate culture	26	3.00	Accepted
2	Daily open communication	26	2.54	Accepted
3	It is felt positively throughout the organization	26	3.12	Accepted
4	Promotions based on integrity	26	2.89	Accepted
5	Breeds high morale	26	2.85	Accepted
6	Good employee retention	26	2.73	Accepted
7	Employee feels that they are important	26	2.85	Accepted
8	It creates emotionally stable environment	26	2.92	Accepted
Grand Total			2.87	

In table 3, respondents totally agree on the enumerated effects of good leadership in organization. It is positively felt throughout the organization which is the highest rated item with 3.12 as a mean score.

Table 4 Summary of Respondents Means Scores on the consequences of bad leadership

S/N	Item	N	Mean (X)	Decision
1.	It is felt negatively throughout the organization	26	3.23	Accepted
2.	Lack of clear and consistent communication	26	3.00	Accepted
3.	Corporate culture becomes meaningless	26	3.12	Accepted
4.	Office runs by turmoil politics etc	26	2.85	Accepted
5	Uncertainty of organizational goals by employees	26	2.73	Accepted
6.	Low morale	26	2.89	Accepted
7	Decreased ability for sustainable success	26	2.46	Accepted
Grand Total			2.89	

In table 4 respondents accepted all the consequences of bad leadership on organization as listed. However respondents rate its negativity impact through the entire organization as the worst of it among the other listed items with mean score of 3.23 and grand total of 2.89 which is above cut off mean of 2.50.

Table 5 Summary of Respondents Means Scores on the strategies to enhance good leadership

S /N	Item	N	Mean (x)	Decision
1	Admitting mistakes	26	2.83	Accepted
2	Asking for feedback	26	2.83	Accepted
3	Prioritize on improving employees abilities	26	2.85	Accepted
4	Provision of regular and relevant staff development	26	3.73	Accepted
5	Addressing poor work performance	26	2.69	Accepted
6	Stay focussed on what is deliverable	26	2.85	Accepted
7	Creating a better follower	26	2.42	Accepted
8	Engaging employees on issues that could affect their work	26	3.31	Accepted
9	Use power of oneness / togetherness	26	2.96	Accepted
10	Make regular progress / monitoring	26	2.66	Accepted
11	Grand Total		2.93	

Table 5 shows that respondents accepted all the listed strategies that could enhance and correct bad leadership with grand cut off mean above 2.50. Provision of regular and relevant staff development has the highest rating of cut off mean of 3.73 which is closely followed by employees' engagement on issues that affect their work with cut off mean of 3.31.

Summary of Findings

The summary of findings from the study is as follows:

1. College library heads must have some important traits in order to enhance their administration for staff better service delivery
2. Equally important leadership skills are also required of college library heads for improved service on the part of his subordinates
3. Advantages of a good leadership were also is a pre-requisite for better job performance of librarians
4. Bad leadership has serious consequences on any organization, and does not yield the expected result the organization is established for.
5. Bad leadership could be corrected by admitting mistakes, creating better followers, focusing on those projects that have positive impact on employees among others.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Lead and inspire people. Don't try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be lead" *Ross Perot*. The following are therefore recommended for implementation:

1. Heads of College libraries should be friendly, self confident and should be able to with stand any pressure that will be negative to the growth of their college
2. Heads of College libraries should also possess such skills that would enable them to bring out the best from his / her staff
3. The government is advised to provide enabling environment for librarians so that they could carry out their duties effectively
4. .Heads of College libraries should be proactive in all facets of leadership traits and skills to enable them handle and lead his staff well for effective and efficient service delivery.

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