

**Management Without Leadership in Nigeria Corporate Organisations –
Issues, Challenges and Strategies**

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Abstract

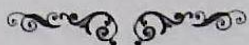
The purpose of this paper is to examine the problematic issue of management without leadership in the Nigeria's corporate organizations. Management has been conceptualized in this paper as a process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of organization members and using other resources to achieve corporate goals and objectives, working through people to mobilize other organizational resources (finance, equipment, facilities, information and time) to achieve corporate goals and objectives. Since people are the most organic and dynamic resource of any organization, it behoves all managers to unleash their leadership influence to direct people towards optimum performance. Of all the resources of an organization, human resource represents a unique resource in that no organization can own it but with proper leadership, an organization can nurture and retain its human resources. Through proper leadership, the members of the organization can be stimulated to contribute towards value creation within the organization. It is unfortunate however, that Nigerian corporate organizations have not generally performed optimally within the last two decades, due to the pervasive practice of managing organization without applying effective leadership.

This paper critically examines the issues at stake and the challenges posed by managing organization without employing effective leadership styles. It also proffers strategies towards the improvement of corporate management through proper leadership.

Key words: management, leadership, corporate, organizations, resources, goals

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the thorny issue of management without leadership in Nigeria's corporate organizations. Management is by definition the

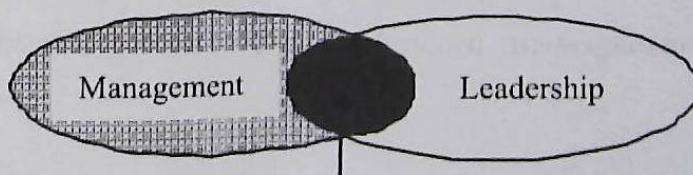


process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of organization members and using other resources (time, materials, information, etc) to achieve organizational objectives. Based on the above definition, no efficient and effective management can be done without applying some tools of leadership (Mullins, 2010).

Corporate organization management involves management of men and other resources. However, any attempt to manage the people component of an organization in the same manner as ordinary materials are handled without personally engaging the people (followers) with compatible leadership styles will meet with disaster.

While there are basic differences between management and leadership (as is indicated in Table 1 below) there can be no proper management of corporate organizations without some elements of leadership. Someone may be a leader without necessarily being a manager (as is commonly seen in the political leadership train of Nigeria). By the same token, no effective leader can ignore the knowledge and application of management principles. Hence, as in the Fig. 1 below there is strong nexus between management and leadership, implying that management and leadership are intertwined in the day-to-day running of any work organization. The paper is divided into six parts. The first section introduces the paper while the second examines the difference between management and leadership. The third section identifies and discusses the issues involved in management without leadership, while the fourth discusses the challenges facing management without leadership. The fifth section suggests the strategies to be adopted in order to integrate leadership into the management framework of Nigeria's corporate organizations, while the sixth part concludes the paper.

Fig. 1. Nexus between Management and Leadership.



Nexus = point of interaction between Management and Leadership



Table 1: Differences between Management and Leadership.

MANAGEMENT	LEADERSHIP
1 Management focuses on shorter time frames and elimination of risks-oriented strategies	Leadership focuses on longer time frames, the big picture and strategies that take longer risks
2 Management is about design of work and ways of controlling work and people.	Leadership focuses on creation of common vision.
3 Management is about handling things, about maintaining the status quo, about organization and control.	Leadership is about a kinesthetic feel, a sense of forward movement.
4 Management is about how to get things done.	Leadership is about what things mean to people.
5 Management adopts interpersonal and passive attitudes towards goals.	Leadership adopts more personal and active attitude towards goals.
6 Management maintains a low level of emotional involvement in relating to people.	Leadership shows empathy and feels with other people.
7 Management works for and belongs to the organization setting.	Leadership may promote work performance in organization but may not belong to the organization.

Management without Leadership: Issues

A review of the work of Goleman (1998), Sawyerr (2004), Saravanja (2008) indicates the following issues of corporate management without leadership. Viewed from a holistic point of view, the issues focus on ethical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of leadership. It is assumed that good managers must be balanced and well developed in all these areas.

Ethics and values: The corporate world has for some years been facing a major crisis of ethics and values. The crisis is reflected in large corruption scandals in both the private and public sectors around the world. It ranges from Evron (an energy company which fraudulently concealed large losses in its projects), to Anderson Consulting (which obstructed justice by shredding documents relating to frauds committed by it) on a global level. At the local level, the maladministration of



public higher education institution as typified by poor performance of the Grace Alele-William regime at the University of Benin, in the early 1990s and the lacklustre performance of Intercontinental Bank under the leadership of Erastus Akingbola, a couple of years ago are good examples of ethical crisis. The situation is no different in other work organizations in Nigeria. It is evident in numerous corruption scandals from various government departments and business firms in Nigeria, especially since the last two decades.

Financial performance issues: Organizations are driven by continuous shareholders pressure to produce large profits and businesses show improved financial reports at all costs. Unbridled manipulations of financial reports represent ways by which many corporate organizations have told lies about the poor financial situations of their companies.

Spiritual crisis: On the spiritual side, most organizations and managers are facing a crisis of meaning and purpose. Most managers are under the influence of stress and pressure at work and the lose sight of their purpose or mission in life. Unfortunately when purpose is forgotten, life becomes meaningless and directionless, which ultimately leads to failure. When organizations forget their purpose, they lose their direction, their reason for existence, their energy and competitiveness, which ultimately leads to their eventual failure.

Emotional issues: On the emotional side, managers are facing huge challenges of managing stress and living a balanced life. Compassion, empathy, happiness and love are becoming rare commodities in the hands of some corporate chieftains in Nigeria and other countries.

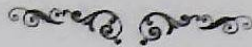
Intellectual issues: On the intellectual side, developments in information technology have radically changed the way managers communicate and access information, manage knowledge and make decisions. Managers are expected to embrace technological developments to make their work and life more efficient and effective but some managers are not innovative enough to adapt to the technological changes sweeping across the globe.

Challenges

A review of Bass (2000), Saravanja (2006) and Yalokwu (2008), reveals that the following challenges of management without leadership:

1. **Lack of Direction**

It is a truism that effective managers tend to cultivate a sense of direction based on the vision and mission of the organizations they manage.



In fact, John Kotter (1990) argued that good leaders have the capacity to move people to a world in which both they (the leaders) and those that depend upon them are genuinely better off without trampling on the rights of others. It is however, unfortunate that many corporate managers in Nigeria direct their organizational affairs without clear-cut vision and sense of direction. Even where the founding managers (owners) have established some sense of direction, some managers take-over the corporate ship without making use of the corporate rudder.

2. **Poor Enabling Environment**

Some of the Nigerian organizations do not provide suitable enabling environment for their managers to exercise themselves in leadership roles. Although, the manager may have the right leadership quality, yet the exercise of faith may be stifled by the extant organizational policies that guide his decisions and actions. For example, under a highly bureaucratic regime, the manager must hold tenaciously to the policy blue-print of the organization which inhibits the exercise of innovative leadership qualities to motivate the subordinates.

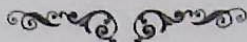
3. **Absence of Corporate Citizenship**

Corporate citizenship involves actual results (what corporations do) and the processes through which they do them. A lack of the right kind of organizational leadership with integrity will not produce desired results. Effective leadership is a value-laden concept and it is critically imperative for an organization to build a consensus on shared values. Such shared values must underpin horizontal, vertical, diagonal communications across the organization. It is however unfortunate that many work organizations in Nigeria lack corporate citizens which can only be possible through effective leadership.

4. **Absence of Competent People**

Having the right calibre of people in senior positions is a sine-quo-non for a sound management. Organizations without competent and committed members do not have enduring philosophy and therefore remain vulnerable to external pressures.

Many training institutions have sprung up in Nigeria in response to the need of competent managers but sadly, their products lack the necessary skills to address the challenges in work organizations.



5. **Inability to Direct Change**

Forces of change are many and varied. They include change in technology, intense competition, customer demand, changing demographic profile, privatization of public enterprises, and shareholders demand.

Change is natural with human society because of its dynamism. Changes take place at different levels of the organization. A manager must have the capacity to effectively direct the changes taking place. This will keep the organization focused, stable and growing. Some Nigerian managers, who are supposed to be change agents, do not have the ability and the right attitude to manage change. Hence, the resultant collapse of many organizations in the recent past.

6. **Role Conflicts**

Conflicts refer to any situation in which there are incompatible goals, thought or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition.


A role is the expected pattern of behaviours associated with members occupying a particular position within the structure of the organization. In practice, the manner in which people actually behave may not be consistent with their expected pattern of behaviour. Problems of role incompatibility and role ambiguity arise from inadequate or inappropriate role definition and can be a significant source of organizational tension.

7. **Inability to Meet Needs of Organization Members**

Members of the organization have different and often conflicting goals. As a result, the goals which the organization actually pursues may be distinguished from the officially stated goals that are set out in broad terms. Member's goals may be inferred from the actual decisions made and actions taken within the organization. Some of the managerial decisions, for instance, employee rewards, may not be in line with organizationally structured reward system. It is largely due to the asymmetry between organizational reward standards and the actual employee rewards that some bright and committed employees leave their organizations for greener pastures.

8. **Management Myopia**

Given the power of management innovation to deliver high level performance, it is odd that so few companies possess well-honed processes for continuous management of innovation. A scan through the pages of the world's leading business magazines confirms the poor status of



management innovation. Most organizations lack foresight and consequently do not see innovative strides as a way out of their challenges.

9. **Jaundiced Political Leadership Legacy**

The political leadership legacy which our past Colonial masters (the British government) and successive Nigerian governments left behind them could at best be described as jaundiced by its nature. It was rooted in “divide and rule” approach to management and governance. The jaundiced political legacy provided a strong basis for the present day high level and pervasive corruption, a culture of tribalism, nepotism and crony capitalism that have become deep in the Nigerian socio-economic life. Many corporate and political managers have therefore, failed to imbibe good leadership qualities which apparently manifest itself in their wrong decisions and actions. Their decisions and actions are usually characterized by greed and self-seeking propensity devoid of any intent to lead others aright.

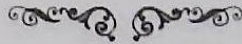
10. **Lack of Educational Curriculum that Emphasizes Leadership and Patriotism**

The educational system is a powerful enduring medium or vehicle for passing norms, beliefs and cultures, from one generation to another. Good management and leadership are achieved through the inclusion of valuable and enduring skills and competencies, into the school curricula at the different levels of education. The new policy on Nigerian Education has an attractive curricula (from primary to secondary school level) which provides for both mainstream secondary education and vocational education but lack the practical activities that would prepare the graduates for the world of work or for a functional higher education. Even the Nigerian Technical schools and the Polytechnics have failed to provide the functional and skill-based education that could prepare graduates for gainful employment and/or new job creation.

Strategies

Against the background of the root causes of the prevailing management without leadership, the following strategies are suggested to contain the challenges posed.

- (a) Create a Conducive Environment – A conducive environment is a must for effective management and leadership to thrive. The process of creating a conducive for proper corporate leadership is not a one-shot process. It is a dynamic and continuous process which requires commitment and



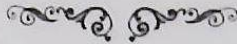
doggedness on the part of all the stakeholders of the corporate entity.

- (b) Develop sound corporate vision, mission and goals – Vision, mission and goals are ends-in-view which any serious work organization must not only develop but also strive daily to achieve. Sound corporate management demands that vision and mission statements must be drawn as vital steps towards giving a sense of direction to the organization. Based on the mission statement, the goals and objectives of the various divisions of the organization can be developed. Properly crafted visions, missions and goals tend to clarify the direction in which the organization needs to move, and they energize the organization members to take necessary actions towards the implementation of the corporate purpose. With proper sense of direction, the managers are able to influence their followers to buy into the corporate vision and thereby move the organization to a higher level.
- (c) Incorporate Leadership Training as part of the managerial development strategy - The vision, mission and goals of the organizations may differ from organization to organization. However, in order to have a successful implementation of the vision, mission and goals, there must be practical provisions for on-the-job and off-the-job training of managers on leadership processes. Managers should be encouraged to participate in leadership conferences, seminars and workshops and also to further their leadership knowledge through executive education. It is only through such integrated approach to management development that both managers and the organization can benefit in their leadership roles (Yalokwu, 2008).
- (d) Create organizational alignment – Successful management of any organization depends on all subsystems of the organization being in proper alignment with one another. The divisions, departments, units and individual members must work together as a whole to support the achievement of organizational goals. To create the necessary alignment, managers need to identify the various elements of an organization and their interrelationships (Louw and Venter, 2004). Management models play useful role in helping managers and leaders to make sense of the world, diagnosing situations, formulating solutions and taking action. An important model which assists leaders in understanding not only the various elements of an organization but the importance of alignment is the congruence model (Nadler and Tushman, 1983).
- (e) Establish Organizational Systems and Structures that Support Leadership Development – As a rule every organizational system and structure should



be adapted to the overall strategy of developing sound leadership, at corporate, divisional and functional levels of strategy management (Louw and Venter, 2004). For instance the Human Resource Management subsystem of the organization should ensure that the values and strategic thrusts are factored into the recruitment, selection, induction, training, performance management and labour relations structures and processes. Thus, in ensuring proper staffing, the criteria of recruitment and selection may be changed to consider people who are not only professionally competent but also demonstrate emotional and spiritual intelligences.

- (f) Promote Quality Leadership that Works – Corporate organizations are largely dynamic learning institutions, which by reason of their changing environments are open to change from time to time. They therefore require transformational leaders rather than transactional leaders (Yalokwu, 2006). Transactional leaders cater for the self interest of their constituencies by means of contingent reinforcement. But transformational leaders raise awareness of their constituencies about what things are important, increase concerns for achievement, self-actualization and ideals. It is therefore instructive that corporate management should direct attention towards the development of transformational leaders, in as much that such a strategy will make members to go beyond their individual self interest to meet group, organizational and community needs.
- (g) Staff the organization with competent people – Competent people are critical to all organizations but since different organizations have different missions, goals and strategies, care should be exercised in staffing the organization. Against this background, different organizations require different types of skills, attitudes and behaviours as well as different types of human resources management systems and processes. Learning and the development of knowledge are critical for innovation and may require the organization to embark on continuous improvement programmes to assure excellence in knowledge and organizational effectiveness (Senge, 1990).
- (h) Create a Win-win Paradigm – One of the best paradigms of effective management and leadership is the win-win approach. In this paradigm, both the leader and the followers are expected to benefit. No one loses. Win-win according to Stephen Covey (2004) is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and mutually satisfying. With a win-win solution, all members of an organization feel good about their decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win-win



sees life as a cooperative, not a competitive arena. Win-win is based on the paradigm that there is plenty for everybody, that one person's success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others.

- (i) **Lead and Manage Change** – It is now clear that to survive and succeed in the long term, corporate organizations need to respond to the environment in which they exist. To position themselves, organizations formulate a course of action or strategy. Corporate organization managers need not only to change strategy in response to the environment but also to implement strategy successfully. Successful implementation typically requires change in the elements of the organization such as technology, structure, processes and people (skills, knowledge, attitude, social relationships and performance). In the Nigerian task environment where changes take place by the day, every corporate manager must be open to and exercise adaptive capacity to change as a way of life.

Conclusion

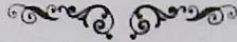
In the foregoing section of this paper, we have discussed the concept of management and the fact that leadership is an integral aspect of effective management of a corporate organization. We have also examined the issues involved when a corporate organization is managed without integrating the leadership element into the process of management. We have identified and discussed the challenges posed by management without leadership. Finally, we have suggested the strategies that should be adopted in order to integrate leadership into the seamless management of corporate organizations.

The paper advocates the notion that corporate organization management in Nigeria and the proximate economics requires able functional leadership that will articulate a vision that will drive the corporate mission and goals in a dynamic and continuous fashion and at the same time be able to mobilize the employees and other stakeholders to buy into the vision. Such managers must inspire clear mutual goals and objectives that both management and workers would commit themselves to achieve. A corporate manager should be able to develop shared goals and values as well as workable teams that will enhance the achievement of these goals and values. The management of corporate organization in these changing times demands individual managers who possess the leadership capacities and competencies and who have the heart and soul to manage organizational personnel not as things but as humans who have dignity and require human touch and compassion. It is only in the presence of such corporate managers who strive to build relationship of trust with other people and lead by example, that we can build effective organizations that grow from strength to strength and promote the welfare of its various stakeholders.



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