IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

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Abstract

This paper discusses Igwebuike philosophy and leadership styles. It is an attempt to see how this philosophy can be applied to leadership styles or how a connection can be drawn between the two terms. Igwebuike philosophy, according the author, means "'number is strength' or 'number is power;' that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful and can constitute an insurmountable force." Leadership has been defined by various authors in various ways. However, it has been agreed by many scholars that leadership involves people, unequal distribution of power, ability to influence, and values. Authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were discussed as a concise presentation of all leadership styles. Phenomenological method of research was used for the purpose of this study. It was discovered that democratic or participative leadership style correlates with what the author of Igwebuike philosophy has in mind. The discussion also disclosed that both terms have number of people, involvement, goals and values in common. It was then recommended that Igwebuike philosophy should be a guide to leaders as they endeavour to know what to do and how to do it for the realization of organizational goals.
Keywords: Igwebuike Philosophy, Leadership styles, Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Authoritarian, Democratic, laissez-faire, Goals and Involvement

Introduction

Leadership is an act of giving directives to people in an organization for the accomplishment of organizational goals. It takes into cognizance some skills to guide individuals, lead a group and facilitate a team work through influences. A leader is one who constantly makes positive statements of ethics. Leadership has been defined by various scholars in various ways. Some, in an attempt to arrive at a good definition, describe leaders and their functions, while some pay attention to traits or qualities. For example, Maxwell (2001) claims that "A good leader is a guy who can step on your toes without messing up your shine"(p.72), and Akindutire (2004) opines that a leader is a person who can help a group to achieve goals with as little fraction as possible, have a sense of unity and provide

an opportunity for self-realization. "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northhouse 2007, p. 122).

In the view of Lunnernburg and Ornstern (2008), "Leadership is not about who is smarter or tougher but about qualities we all have or can develop" (p. 84). Considering the input of (Zeichik 2012), "Leadership is inspiring others to pursue your vision within the parameters you set, to the extent that it becomes a shared vision and a shared success." (p. 3) Miguel (2017), while quoting Maxwell, says "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way;" (p. 64), and Jack Welch offered, "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others." (p. 64)

Recently, Ward (2020) stresses that, "A simple definition is that leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal. This can mean directing workers and colleagues with a strategy to meet the company's needs." (p. 9) She further says that a leader is the inspiration for and director of the action. It is the person in the group that possesses the combination of personality and leadership skills to make others want to follow their directions.

In all these definitions, it can be deduced that leadership deals with people, motivation, influence, organizational goals and values. Also, nearly all these authors are of the opinion that leaders are made not born. To Jago (1992), "good leaders are made not born" (p. 7). If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training and experience. It is surprising to the researcher that the even the definition given by Lunnernburg and Ornstern that pays attention to "qualities we all have or can develop" (p. 84) ended with leaders are made not born. The researcher is of the opinion that "have" in this definition is referring to inborn traits, while "can develop" is about learning. Some of the arguments of these authors can be summarized as follows: Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2002) say that what is to be leant are - motivation, a clear idea of what you need to improve and consistent practice, because to them, leadership works through emotions, and the most important quality of a leader is supervisory ability. Akindutire (2004), who also shares the same view, arrives at the conclusion that the major attribute of a leader is communication skills.

Jago (1982) later makes a distinction between the terms - a born leader and a made leader in this claim. "Leaders carry out this process (desire and willpower) by applying their knowledge and skills. This is called process leadership. However, we know that we have traits that can influence our actions. This is called "trait leadership," in that it was once common to believe that leaders were born rather than made." (p. 8) Ward (2020) is not taking a stand; instead, he agrees with the fact that leaders are born and that leaders can be made through constant practice. "While there are people who seem to be naturally endowed with more leadership abilities than others, anyone can learn to become a leader by improving particular skills." (p. 18). In line with this, Luenendonk (2016) associates certain traits to democratic leadership style especially. "There are certain traits that make being a democratic leader easier. If you possess the below four traits and you enhance these qualities, you can begin your journey towards democratic leadership." (p. 6) The four characteristics are intelligence, honesty, creativity and fairness.

The researcher stands with the views of Jago, Luenendonk and Ward, because in some cases, issues that might have caused a lot of problem can just be addressed by a leader without noise. If traits are not recognized, why do we prefer a particular person for a specific office? Or why do people appointed unopposed? Traits are inborn and traits of a particular trade or profession can be developed for effectiveness. Psychologists talk about enneagram-personality in sum total of the general characteristics which distinguish one individual from another. This is an attempt to showcase individual traits and what they can be used for. In the work of Anifaloba (1997), type three has been identified as the administrator and type eight, the boss. Both administrator and boss are terms that are common to leadership. Therefore, people of particular traits have been identified to be more effective in these areas. Through acquisition of knowledge and experiences, though, leaders can emerge and be successful. While leadership is learned, their (leaders) knowledge can be subjective to traits and qualities, such as background, values and character. Both knowledge and skills are relevant to leaders' achievements and exceptionality.

Leadership Styles
Leadership style is a way and manner with which a superior gives directives and supervision for the execution of plans, through motivation, for the attainment of

organizational goals. In general, twelve types of leadership styles can be identified for organizational improvement as follows:

1. Autocraticleadership style is centered on the boss. In this leadership, the leader holds all authority and responsibility without consulting their subjects.
2. Democratic leadership style: subordinates are involved in making decisions; headship is centered on subordinate's contributions.
3. Strategic leadership style which is geared towards a wider audience at all levels for creation of better performance.
4. Transformational leadership motivates others to do more than originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance.
5. Team leadership: working with the heart and minds of all workers is the focus. It also recognizes that team work may not always contain trusting cooperative relationship.
6. Cross-cultural leadership normally exists where various cultures are included. This leadership has also industrialized as a way to recognize front runners who work in the contemporary globalized market.
7. Facilitative leadership that is too dependent on measurement and outcome,not a skill, although it takes much skill to master.
8. Laissez-Faire leadership style gives authority to employees or subordinates to work as they choose with minimal or no interferences.
9. Transactional leadership maintains or continues the status quo. It is the leadership that comprises an exchange process, whereby followers get immediate, tangible reward for carrying out the leader's orders.
10. Coaching leadership encompasses teaching and supervising followers. A coaching leader is highly operational in a setting where result or performance required improvement.
11. Charismatic leadership manifests a leader's revolutionary power. Charisma does not mean sheer behavioural change.
12. Visionary leadership is about leaders who recognize that the methods, steps and processes of leadership are all obtained with and through people.

All these leadership styles have been summarized by Stonner et al (2012) as authoritarian, consultative and participative, in which consultative and participative styles have been used interchangeably by many authors. Similarly, Lunnernburg and Ornstern (2008) and Akindutire (2004) present the summary of

all the leadership styles as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. For the purpose of this work, authoritarian /autocratic, democratic/ consultative/ participative and laissez-faire leadership styles will be discussed to arrive at how they can be linked with *Igwebuike* philosophy.

Authoritarian or Autocratic Leadership Style
Authoritarian leadership style involves formulation of policies by the leader. He is also responsible for stating implementation format. He controls and directs all activities without any meaningful input from his subjects. Leaders using this type of style will quickly punish any subordinate that is not working at their pace, because their attention is always on task and output, and not on employees' welfare. Authoritarian leaders are often referred to as "autocratic," and they are termed powerful because they always accompany their commands with threats or intimidations.

This type of leadership style has a lot of negative effects both on employee and the organizational growth. Employee will lack creativity and sense of responsibility, especially when the leader is not available, which will eventually tell on the organization. It is becoming an obsolete style of leadership, but can be used in some cases as Janse (2018) opines, "In teams where consensus is not easily reached because of a high diversity of team members or a group that is only briefly going to be working together, the authoritarian leader sees quickly what needs to be done and who is best suited for this" (p. 9).

Democratic or Participative Leadership Style
Democratic or participative leadership style has been presented by authors as also consultative. This is defined by Gastil (2018) as "Distributing responsibility among the membership, empowering group members, and aiding the group's decision-making process." (p. 8) The democratic style of leadership encompasses the notion that everyone, by virtue of their human status, should play a part in the group's decisions. However, the democratic style of leadership still requires guidance and control by a specific leader. Leaders may even ask subordinates to vote before a decision is accepted. Therefore, majority carries the vote. Gastil further says that the democratic or participative leadership style places significant responsibility on leaders and their staff. This is true for all organizations, from private enterprises and government agencies to educational institutions and nonprofit entities. Democratic leaders build their employee and expect staff who report to them to have detailed experience and to display self-

assurance. Leaders of this type must possess the following qualities: honesty and integrity, confidence, inspire others, commitment and passion, good communicator, decision making, capabilities, accountability, delegation and empowerment, creativity or innovation, empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, humility, transparency, vision and pPurpose (Hassan, 2020). Kanu (2017) presents these qualities as: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, foresight, stewardship and commitment to growth of people.

This type of leadership style is relevant in all cases as it makes both the leader and subordinates to have the same focus. It is a leadership style that has benefits in creating a sense of value and job fulfilment for employees, because their opinions and efforts are relevant in the decision-making process of the organization. This is in line with the opinion of Kanu (2017), who says that, "In every circumstance, the good of those led is placed over the self-interest of the leader. This is the leadership that promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, and the promotion shared power" (p. 8).

This will also encourage staff to stay with the organization for a long time to see that organizational goals are realized. Consultative leadership style is task-oriented, and focuses on the end result almost as much the leader seeks the opinion and viewpoints of his subordinates, before taking final decisions. It is a tactful way of asking for the opinion of subjects by the leader. This definition is not far from what democratic and consultative leadership styles stand for.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style
Laissez-faire leadership style is also referred to as free rein leadership style. Leaders in this regard allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. It permits followers a self-rule, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested. The laissez-faire leader provides followers with all materials necessary to accomplish their goals, but does not directly participate in decision making, unless the followers request his assistance.

In the description of universal teachers, laissez-faire leadership style is "no leadership at all" (p. 4), because the   leader uses his/her power very little, if at all, giving subordinates a high degree of independence in their operations. Such leaders depend largely on subordinates to set their own goals and the means of achieving them, and they see their role as one of aiding the operations of

Igwebuike Philosophy and Leadership Styles

In an attempt to draw a line between the *Igwebuike* philosophy and leadership styles, the summary of leadership styles presented in this work will be compared. Among the three styles discussed as a compressed form of all leadership styles - authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire, the democratic or participative leadership style fits in properly to what the author of *Igwebuike* philosophy has in mind. The democratic leadership style involves people, as leadership generally stresses on staff strength in organizations. *Igwebuike* philosophy also involves large numbers of people. The philosophy is about sharing - "common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny. Life is a life of sharedness" (p. 17), while democratic or participative leadership style emphasizes people or personnel working together irrespective of colour, origin or race. One is qualified to participate in decision making by virtue of only being a human person. It boils down to a democratic leader having mutual respect for his subordinates and allowing a free flow of ideas. On this, Kanu (2017) asserts that "*Igwebuike* posits that the level of the leader's impact is dependent on the level of connection he is able to have with his people" (p. 7).

Another common factor of these terms is focusing on a common goal or goals. Any group of people that have agreed to relate together in that regard must work towards a collective target. While the *Igwebuike* philosophy put emphasis on 'number is strength' or 'number is power'; that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful and can constitute an insurmountable force; it is about what they can achieve together (Kanu, 2015 & 2018). Any organization without a focus or output will not last, and it is this output or productivity that a democratic leader stands to gain in any organization, be it for-profit or non-profit organization. Leaders alone cannot improve quality; employees must be encouraged to take ownership of their work. The best way to achieve this is to make them part and parcel of the organization through participation in decision making. If this not done, they become negative about the organization and sell it to outsiders. This negative thought might quickly put down whatever business it may be and vice versa.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, it is recommended that leaders should carry their subordinates along in decision making, as the democratic leadership style

followers by furnishing them with information and acting primarily as a contact with the group's external environment.

However, leaders are encouraged to learn all leadership styles and apply them to situations in their organizations. Whichever style a leader adopts, his/her intellectual capacity helps to conceptualize solutions and to acquire knowledge to do the job. Stoner et al (2002) feel that a manager's style must address situation, while paying attention to organizational size, specific work, time and environmental factors. (p. 471). It is to be noted, therefore, that the most popular and prevalent of all leadership styles is the democratic style. It has more advantages than disadvantages. It is very easy to practice, makes problem solving easy, working together increases the knowledge of members and encourages team spirit that brings about subordinates believing their leaders. In any organization, what subordinates consider the greatness attribute of a leader is credibility or trustworthiness. They want to say from time to time that, 'my boss has won my trust!'

Igwebuike **Philosophy**

According to Kanu (2019)

> '*Igwebuike*' is an Igbo word that is characterized by three simple words. On his terms, the three words involved: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is. Ike* is another verb, which means *strength* or *power*. Thus, put together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power', that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force. (p. 1).

Kanu (2017) further explains this in this assertion. It (Igwebuike philosophy) "is anchored on the African worldview, which is characterized by a common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny. Life is a life of sharedness." (p. 17). In the researcher's assessment of this philosophy, it pays attention to togetherness, collegiality, closeness and sharing. In its merit, it focuses on people, and that no member of the same group can exist or function well without support from others. It also gives encouragements to people to stay and work together in unity for progress (Kanu, 2016).

involves people and the *Igwebuike* philosophy advocates for large numbers of people in leadership. A democratic leader should keep in mind that working together for the attainment of organizational goals, in the spirit of delegation of duty, will reduce stress and improve productivity.

It is also recommended that formation and in-service training for staff should be paramount in the mind of a democratic leader to enable them to be committed to duty. Leaders should keep in mind that regular formation is a better and lasting form of motivation for staff, since *Igwebuike* philosophy is about life of 'sharedness.'

This recommendation can be concluded by saying that the *Igwebuike* philosophy can give any leader a clue to what is expected to be done from time to time, which means, a leader must know what he should be, know and do for the attainment of organizational goals, since according to Kanu (2017), "the success of any organization, religious or secular, state or nation is highly dependent on the quality of leadership. Where there is no good leadership, there can't be unity, peace and progress" (p. 3).

Conclusion

This paper has discussed how the *Igwebuike* philosophy is relevant to leadership styles. Among the three leadership styles discussed as a condensed form of other styles - authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire - only the democratic style matches what *Igwebuike* philosophy advocates in the life of 'sharedness.' Leadership definitions capture the essentials of being able and prepared to inspire others, which is based on ideas from the leader and the subordinates. Ability to communicate these ideas properly to subordinates and properly implement them is the responsibility of the leader.

Although the performances of a leader will be influenced by his values, background, knowledge and experiences, good leaders, however, will continue to work and study to improve their leadership skills, not rely on already gained knowledge. The two terms, *Igwebuike* philosophy and leadership styles, have, to a very great extent, large number of people, goals or productivity and involvement in common. In conclusion, Irabor (2019) reviewed Kanu's essay on inclusive leadership and *Igwebuike* philosophy. He came up with the fact that this philosophy could still "inform the grooming of a leader that will explore the principles of solidarity and complementarity within the whole" (p. 2).

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