

## Educational Leadership in University Education and Goal Achievement in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*An institution as important as the university needs leadership. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the leadership qualities prevalent in Nigerian universities today. Nigerian universities face several issues that can be traced to those in charge of them. Leaders of any institution make decisions that affect all those in the institution. The actions of leaders may make or mar the progress of the institution. Their role is important and as such should be discussed in detail. The introduction of this paper will provide a reader with knowledge of the terms leadership and goal achievement. The roles of a leader, the qualities of a good leader and the importance of good leadership will be stated. Also, the need for goal achievement in the university is another part of the topic that will be examined. The issues that these terms provide such as inadequate planning, and implementation of harmful policies, amongst others will be examined with suitable solutions that can be applied in real-life situations. Literature reviews for leadership and goal achievement will be supplied to provide a reader with several opinions from different authors. The paper concluded by stating that effective leadership in university education is a necessity for goal achievement in Nigeria and suggestions that provide practicable solutions to problems in line with this paper were proffered. Looking at this paper, a reader will find the discussed topics interesting and relatable. It is hoped that readers will be able to apply it where necessary.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is essential for any organization to succeed in education. A leader is a team player who directs, coordinates and uses all manner of skills and principles to achieve common goals and objectives. Leaders are the heads from the vice-chancellors to the lecturers and at these different positions they help to attain the goals of the university. These leaders exhibit certain behaviour and traits for which their followers which are the students emulate. Furthermore, a leader is basically an influence on his followers. It is noteworthy that the goal of any university is to constantly improve education in

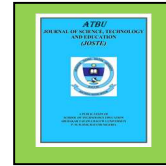
preparing students for successful careers. The essence of leadership is followership and a leader is born or created when he has followers for a cause. Peretomode and Peretomode (2008) cited in Unachukwu and Okoji (2014) opined that a leader is the individual who influences group or organizational members to work willingly, cooperatively, and emphatically to facilitate the achievement of groups or organizations objectives or goals. The driving force for leadership in any organization is the achievement of the goals of the organization and leading followers to achieve said goals. Okorie (2012) opined that leadership involves the maintenance of an organization in

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terms of keeping the organization together. Satisfying individual needs, encouraging self-direction, promoting interdependence, and preserving harmony serve as the primary goals to be achieved by any organization. Educational leadership is concerned with leadership in education. The quality of leadership is of significance to the university and the students. Educational leadership practice for goal achievement is leadership which is responsible for guiding students through enhancement of traits, behaviour in the said leaders to achieve the common educational goals. Nunn and Pillay (2014) are of the opinion that evaluation of teaching leadership effectiveness has largely focused on individual's teaching philosophy and pedagogical approach, classroom activities, teaching curriculum, innovative materials, and evaluations from students and colleagues. Due to the ongoing problems faced in Nigerian universities, educational leaders in universities should possess the necessary qualities of effective leaders. However, educational leaders in Nigerian universities seem to lack these qualities. Thus, the aim of this paper is to examine educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria with emphasis on the types and qualities of leaders engaged in educational leadership. The objective of this paper is to identify the challenges that hinder educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria and also to proffer possible solutions to these problems. Researchers before now have tried to come up with solutions relating to this issue without cogent solutions. This has led to a research gap which this study (educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria). Intends to fill.

## LEADERSHIP

Leadership is all about influencing people (the followers) to achieve goals and objectives. A leader thinks and prioritizes things in order of importance to achieve goals and the objectives as soon as possible in the organization. Leadership rightly put in terms of traits, characteristics and behaviors that focus on a clear vision, action, modelling the way, ethical

relationships, congruence, trustworthiness and collaboration (Avolio, 2004) cited in Hofmeyer, Sheingold and Warlord (2015). Egwu (2015) is of the opinion that a leader's mission is to bring his people from the place where they have been. This is true because every good leader will want to create positive impact and make indelible mark on the sands of time. Okwori and Eide (2012) are of the opinion that leadership is a relational attribute which emphasizes the behavior of the person leading, in relation to the behavior of the group being led. Okwor and Ede again said that leadership consists of such actions by group members as those which aid in setting up a group, moving the group towards its goals, improving the quality of education among the members, and building the cohesiveness of the group. Uko (2015) emphasized that organization can only thrive where effective leadership is implemented, as no organization can grow beyond the level of its leadership or achieve its goals and vision.

Leadership entails everything a leader does that affects the achievement of objectives and the well-being of employees and the organization (Abbasialiya, 2010). Ahunaya (2012) described leadership as an input into an organization and involves interpersonal influences as one initiates structures and acts that result in a consistent pattern of group interaction aimed at productivity and individual fulfillment. Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2011) view leadership as the process of influencing directing and coordinating the activities of an organized group towards goal setting, goal achievement and problem solving. Parish (2013) further said these traits have an impact and closely align with emotional intelligence which has been linked with effective academic leadership. Mullins (2010) said leadership is essentially a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or action of other people. Okorie (2012) stated that leadership involves the maintenance of organization in terms of keeping the organization together, satisfying individual needs, encouraging self-direction, and promoting interdependent and preserving harmony. Ani (2007) cited in Ani and Umeral (2014) of the opinion that leadership is ability to stimulate, motivate and galvanize one's

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subordinates into achieving effectively a stated objective. Ghergul (2007) cited in Drugus and Landoy (2014) submitted that leadership is about the capacity to determine people to act. Tudorica (2005) cited in Drugus and Landoy (2014) emphasized on leadership which is perceived as leading at an informal group level and the leader as the one leads this group. It represents the ability to influence others towards the fulfillment of the tasks. Ghergut (2007) cited in Drugus and Landoy further emphasized on leadership as the person's capacity to led by making influence to the natural planning, organizing, and directing the work towards his conclusion. Onuma (2013) observed that leadership is a process of social influence where leaders induce followers to apply their energies and resources towards collective goals. Wolinski, (2010) argued that leadership is a process that involves influencing with a group of people toward the realization of goals. Subsequently, Ofoegbu and Iwuamadi (2012) are of the viewed that a good leader must have a clear and distinct knowledge of vision and objectives of the organization and must believe in the superior power of the mind.

The following terms are important when describing leadership in any organization:

1. **Leader:** This is someone who leads followers to achieve the said goals of the organization.
2. **Follower:** These are directed by leaders to achieve the goals of the organization.
3. **Situation:** The members of an organization as directed by their different leaders in any organization to achieve the said goals of the organization. The directives, intelligence and skills of the said leaders are channeled into achieving the said goals.

Abdussami (2014) lists the following as qualities of an effective leader:

1. Knowledge, trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, and accountability.
2. Ability, capacity, genuineness, firmness, fairness, justice, initiative, creative and assertive,
3. Positive, foresight, modesty, clear vision, understanding and broad mindedness,

4. Information management, straight forwardness, nice, cheerfulness, accommodating, exemplary. demonstrative, and practical.
5. Willing to admit mistakes and ever ready for amendment.
6. Inquisitive, detailed, oriented, competitiveness and flexibility.

#### Qualities of a Leader

The following qualities are necessary for leaders in Nigerian universities to adopt in order to achieve the university's set goals and objectives:

- a) **Vision:** This is an essential quality required of any leader. A leader without a vision is like a man without his sight and additionally does not have an aid or guide. The end-result of a group, team or an organization lacking a vision is one of frustration and failure. Thus, goals would not be met if there is no vision. It needs to be emphasized that the vision of a leader should not just be any vision but one which is appropriate/ideal and unique. The vision should reflect on the goals of the group. This means that the vision should be line with the goals and objectives of the group. For the growth of the organization this vision must be ideal and unique
- b) **Humility:** Humility should be the main quality of every leader. A good leader should not be arrogant or be too proud. He should see himself as a servant to his followers and not see himself as superior to others. This does not imply that he should be weak. He should be ready to accept failures more than successes as in so doing he will be able to achieve success. In his humility, a leader should not seek for praises and recognition of what he has done well, rather he should always be ready to know where he has not done well and be willing to accept those mistakes. He should also be willing to take correction from his followers.
- c) **Courage:** This is a requirement of every leader. A leader should be bold and courageous to achieve the goals and objectives of the team or organization. It is required of a leader to have enough courage

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- to spearhead activities of the organization. He should have moral courage to challenge issues fearlessly. A good leader should not be afraid rather he should be bold and strong enough to take a step-in adventure. He should be ready to take risks.
- d) **Dedication:** A good leader should be dedicated to achieving the goals and objectives of the organization/group. He must love what he is doing and work his heart out for the group/organization. He should exhibit a high sense of responsibility for every action the group takes, and he should not abandon the group when things go badly.
  - e) **Willingness to learn:** Knowledge is said to be power. Also, no man is an island and does not have full knowledge about everything. Thus, it is essential for a leader to listen to any ideas brought up by team members. He should encourage them to bring up ideas so that he can learn from them. He should always seek to improve himself by seeking for more knowledge. He should not disregard any idea brought up as he does not know everything. No knowledge is a waste thus he should be willing to learn so that the team would achieve their goals and objectives.
  - f) **Honesty and Integrity:** A good leader should maintain a high level of honesty in an organization/team. He should be frank in his dealings with people especially with the financial resource of the team/organization. He should not be deceitful and should avoid misleading members of the organization with lies and be fair in everything he does when it concerns the team as he was made leader and the members of the group trust him.
  - g) **Good Knowledge:** A good leader should possess a great sense of knowledge and intelligence when dealing with the affairs of the group. He should be above board and be seen by his subordinate to have original and sound ability for all issues.
  - h) **Good Communication Skills:** This is another essential quality of a leader. A good leader should be able to communicate the happenings of the organization to his/her subordinates, on time, always. He should

never forget to relay/pass on information. He should also speak clearly and calmly to his subordinates and should not pass on messages or information in a harsh manner.

### Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is recruiting, enlisting, and guiding lecturers and students for the purpose of educational benefits and purpose. As rightly elucidated by Wallace foundation study, leadership is a second only to classroom instruction as an influence on students learning (Joseph, 2017). In the educational sector, several people are assigned different tasks to run the educational sector. The concept is known as educational administrative leadership. Joel and Henry (2014) submitted that educational leadership practices are the manner and approach in which a leader provides direction, implements plans and motivates staff so as to achieve school goals. Educational leadership is therefore to ascertain the growth and stability through the process of learning, relearning, workshops seminars and various trainings. Effective educational leadership encompasses a spectrum of responsibilities, ranging from pedagogical leadership aimed at enhancing teaching and learning practices to administrative duties focused in organizational efficiency (Qubec & Jimerson, 2020). There are leaders in every organization in university education. These leaders in education create an environment for academic success and integrity for students. Educational leadership is a means of creating and maintaining relevant learning environment. Black (2015) commented that leaders must address the institutions needs while prioritizing students' success, well-being, and access to resources and support services, as well as ensuring the curriculum and teaching methods are up-to-date and achieving desired goals. In a related pattern, Wieczorek and Manard (2018) mentioned that educational leadership is critical in developing and sustaining school-level conditions for instructional improvement. The educational leaders need new directions to guide their practice and carry out their work effectively (Radhika, 2016) as cited in (Danbaba et al., 2021). Educational leadership functions can contribute in

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making provision of guidance on the main characteristics, tasks and responsibilities of proficient leaders in the field of education (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008) as cited in (Danbaba et al., 2021). Educational leadership and management play pivotal roles in shaping the quality of education, impacting students, educators and entire school communities. Over the years, the discourse surrounding educational leadership has evolved, transitioning from conventional notions of educational “administration” to more contemporary functions of “educational management” and educational leadership (Qutub, 2021).

#### **How do educationists contribute to educational leadership?**

In every educational sector, there are a range of leaders. In university education, we have lecturers, HODs, registrars, VCs alike. These men and women not only are the leaders but also manage students. They see to the day to day running of the university by managing classroom resources effectively and serve to empower, inspire and impact on the lives of the students.

#### **The following are characteristics of an educational leader**

- An educational leader cultivates and empowers lecturers.** Educational leaders believe in teamwork and therefore to achieve the said goal. They support lecturers by encouraging them in research work, conferences, seminars to develop and build themselves up.
- Educational leaders are knowledge bound.** They learn every day and are very enthusiastic about learning. They are committed to learning, so they never have to stop impacting on followers.
- They create a conducive environment for learning.** They create learning environment that are flexible to nurture students' skills and development.

The aims of educational leadership include:

- Equipping students with relevant skills in-order to effectively run the administration of any university.
- Inspiring and elevating students to the position of leaders and managers.
- Educational leadership equips students with leadership skills and how to apply them.

Furthermore, the objectives of educational leadership include:

- Supporting students in their goal of attaining knowledge and skills in their given field
- Emulating the spirit of hard work, vision and integrity
- Maintaining societal development.

Also, the purposes of educational leadership are:

- To help in improving and ensuring academic integrity through impacting, training and empowering.
- Educational leadership serves as a means of quality control and proper management.
- Ensuring in managing Education and serves as a means of quality control.
- To collaborate with the individuals (parents, lecturers' educators, students, etc, etc.) involved in other to achieve the common goals of the university.

#### **Types of Educational Leadership**

There are different types of leaders and they are:

- Autocratic Leadership:** Autocracy is leadership by coercion. This type of leadership is characterized by a leader who takes decisions alone and forces these decisions on his followers. simply announces or gives instructions to followers. He emphasizes production and seeks to achieve goals and completely disregards the well-being of his followers. The autocratic leader pays no attention to the views of his followers. Rather, he relies on his decisions and whatever he says goes. No form of criticism is allowed under this leadership style and any occurrence of such would lead to harsh punishment. The autocratic leader sees his workers as tools that should be manipulated



- for work and increase in productivity. The autocratic leader is work centered and sees communication as a one-way process. He takes decision alone, hands down instructions to his followers, intimidates and threatens them into action using coercive power, and has no time for consultation, interests, and feelings of his workers. This is seen as the worst style of leadership as followers cannot express themselves and they cannot contribute to the decision-making process in the team/organization.
- b) **Democratic Leadership:** Democracy refers to a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Thus, a democratic leadership style refers to a leadership style that is based on the opinions of the people. In this style the leader trusts his followers and seeks their opinions when making decisions. The leader merely guides the followers and thus does not have complete control over them like that of the autocratic style of leadership. This leadership style is characterized by fairness, impartiality, and freedom of expression. The democratic leader believes that no man is an island, and everyone does not know everything. He also understands the concept of togetherness and that "united we stand and divided we fall". He allows others to express themselves freely without fear of punishment and allows criticism to know where to correct himself when he deters from his work. He maintains an open-door policy and allows communication to flow freely between him and his followers. This is a two-way process called the downward and upward mode of communication. This is arguably the best type of leadership style for leaders to emulate
- c) **Laissez-Faire Leadership:** This is a leadership style that involves a leader who only occupies the position of power but has no actual power to make and effect decisions. These leaders do not interfere in the work but hold a sort of ceremonial power and serve as figure heads while hidden people are hold the actual power that is exercised
- d) **Charismatic Leadership:** A charismatic leadership is one that motivates employees and has their full attention because his/her personality exudes confidence and understanding. A charismatic leader may prove to be too proud and unwilling to change his decisions or be influenced even when his decisions are not good. Employees may also follow this leader without question which is not wise because the leader may not always be right.
- e) **Situational Leadership:** This is a type of leadership style that arises when a leader arises based on the situation which comes, the goal, the task, the environment. In situational leadership depending on the circumstances a leader is chosen and expected to reach a goal.
- f) **Transactional Leadership:** This is a leadership style in which different team members under a head which is the leader are paid in exchange for their services. Team members can be punished if their work is not up to standards. Basically, payment goes on in this transaction.

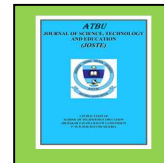
#### Quality of Educational leadership

There are certain guidelines and principles for educational leadership:

- Educational leadership sees to the continual growth of education by adopting new ways methods and techniques
- Teaching practice, curriculum development and the impact of education is regularly improved

#### University Education

The university is an institution of higher learning in which the future leaders are shaped. It is an institution on which the future of every country depends, as it produces elites for the growth and technological advancement of every country at a given period of time (Kpokpo, 2018). The National Policy of Education (2014) listed the following as the goals of university education in Nigeria to include:



- a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic, and effective citizen.
- b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society, and the world.
- c) Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system.
- d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values, and national unity.
- e) Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical, and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Ofor- Douglas (2020) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2024) affirmed the benefits of university education as follows:

- a) University education will help an individual to succeed in today's workforce and establish an enjoyable career of his/her choice.
- b) The job market is extremely competitive, and employees require the services of skilled employees to work for them. This skill can be developed in the university.
- c) Individuals are required to have degrees for a wide range of careers as medicine, education, engineering, accounting, law, and the university provides for attainment of such degree.

Nwankwo, (2014) cited in Ige and Pius (2022) rightly commented that leadership in the university is one headed by senior academic and administrative leaders with the particular focus on achieving the goals of the university and for all round growth and development of the members of the university community.

### Goal Achievement

Goals are what one hopes to achieve at the end of doing something. Goals are the ambitions of any organization, Goal achievement in university education has to do with either lecturers or students in the long run attaining

educational goals. The importance of goals in the university include the following:

- a) The individuals in any organization focus on the needs and wants of the organization keeping the organizational goals in mind, any individual in any organization will channel their actions in attaining the said goals.
- b) Relationship among the members of the organization will be strengthened as they have only one course of action which is the attainment of the goals
- c) Evaluation of the level of performance in the organization, Goal serve as a means of standard of performance for which individuals evaluate themselves in respect of the organization goals

Educational leadership in universities involves the ability of the leader to greatly sway the members of the university to work towards the achievement of the set goals of the university. In the same vein, Kayode et al. (2014) cited in Abdulkareem et al. (2015) submitted that university goal achievement can be measured in terms of either the goals approach or the strategic constituency approach of which the goal approach which concentrates on output in order to discover the indispensable functional objective (benefit, innovation and quality of the product), is the most appropriate. Furthermore, Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2011) rightly maintained that good leadership application, principles and indispensable action are needed for efficient management of educational institutions, as it concerns the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives and attainment of educational goals. Thus, for goals to be achieved within Nigerian universities, educational leadership must be of the highest quality.

### Challenges of Educational leadership practices in University Education and goal achievement

The following serve as some of the challenges facing educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria:

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1. **Inadequate funding:** A major challenge facing effective educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria is that of inadequate funding. Funding is a very vital aspect for educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria. Funds serve as pillars for the achievement of university goals and objectives. This is not possible because Nigerian universities are not funded enough. Thus, the absence of requisite funds will inevitably lead to these goals remaining at their planning stage - that is, the plans and ideas proffered by educational leaders for the achievement of these goals will remain at their initial stage. Educational leaders are better equipped with adequate funds to improve on education.
2. **Overpopulation of students:** Overpopulation of students in Nigerian universities serves as another challenge facing effective educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria. Year in year out, students are admitted into the university in large population. Thus, the student's population is more than the available equipment, resources which will in turn affect the quality of university education. In classes where the population is a bit overwhelming for the lecturers who are not much to accommodate the students. The staff is underpopulated and under pressure to accommodate the growing population year in and year out. There are not enough lecturers to better impact the students as they are overwhelmed. Thus, educational leadership in Nigerian universities cannot effectively carry out necessary strategies that would cater for a large population of students and this means that the university goals and objectives cannot be achieved.
3. **Lack of equipment and facilities:** This is another challenge derailing effective educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria. Due to shortage of requisite funds, there is an alarming lack of necessary equipment and facilities for teaching and learning in Nigerian universities. A shortage or unavailability of certain facilities and equipment will limit the students and leave them ill equipped, half-baked and their focus will be more on the theoretical aspect of their course.
4. **Lack of Knowledge of ICT:** This is another major problem facing educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria. With the growing global trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ICT stands at the forefront of education thus those that are not ICT literate cannot cope with the educational trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The educational sector in Nigeria is lacking in information and communication technology knowledge and will not be well equipped to keep up with every changing trend in education. This has posed as a challenge to educational leaders in Nigerian universities as where ICT is not used in the classrooms, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. Ekundayo (2010) emphasized on the need for the provision and utilization of information and communication technology in advancing knowledge and skill necessary for effective functioning in the modern world.
5. **Brain-drain and Underemployment of lecturers:** Another problem that is hindering educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria is that of brain drain and underemployment of lecturers in Nigerian universities. Due to the rapid immigration of skilled minds as a result of the derailing economy, there has been a massive brain-drain of skilled lecturers in the country. This has left the country with little to no skilled personnel to man the various sectors in which their skillsets are required. The lecturers are not much and are therefore overwhelmed by the population of the student's year in year out. The lecturers are further put under pressure, sometimes underpaid, owed salaries and have a long line of work piled up for them. This problem

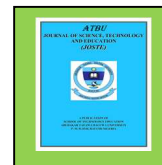
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has thus prevented educational leadership in Nigerian universities from achieving their university's set goals and objectives.

## CONCLUSION

Leaders are there to make an organization thrive. A leader influences his followers based on their collective vision and goals. A leader is nothing without his followers and vice versa. There exists a symbiotic relationship. An educational leader is therefore there to promote education and will strive to see education at it is best. Students and lecturers alike depend on educational leaders. Educational leaders possess some wonderful qualities such as knowledge, intelligence, a sense of vision, ambition, and ready to learn. The impact of education on the students is greatly influenced by their leaders, they work hand in hand to achieve their collective goals. Although educational leadership faces challenges there are several solutions which have been preferred in this paper to curb them.

## SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are proffered as possible solutions to the challenges of educational leadership in university education and goal achievement in Nigeria:

1. Funds should be provided adequately for the university to encourage research, be fully equipped with appropriate equipment, and maintain their qualified staff.
2. Relevant equipment and facilities should be duly provided to ascertain proper development of the students as they will never be lacking both theoretically and practically.
3. Quality of university education can be determined by those in charge therefore educational leaders should be fully equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills.
4. Information and communication technology should be introduced and utilized in the educational system to keep up with the global changes and learning of new techniques.
5. A good number of qualified lecturers should be duly employed for the benefit of the

growing population of the students' year in year out.

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