

Leadership and management practices in the 21st century academic libraries

Gift Nneka Lazarus
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED) Library
Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria

Arinola Adeola Adesoji
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology
Ogbomoso, Oyo State

Iliasu Jinadu, *PhD*
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Library
Ijanikin, Lagos. jinaduiliasu@gmail.com.

Abstract

This paper explores the place of leadership and management practices in the 21st century academic libraries, the role of leaders and managers, leadership styles as well as the levels of efficacy. This paper argues that for academic libraries to function effectively and efficiently in today's new economy, it needs effective leaders and managers as well as competent and reliable followers. This is because the emerging technologies in this era have expanded the responsibilities of librarians. It also posits that the place of leadership and management practices in today's academic libraries are changing because of the extreme competition among libraries in the new global economy, the emerging technologies, and globalization spurred by the Internet. The paper concludes that leaders and managers in the 21st century academic libraries should do things differently than those of the 19th and 20th century in order to effectively lead and succeed in the highly competitive global economy. This paper recommends that what makes effective leadership and management in the rapidly changing 21st century academic libraries include their personality and style of leadership, passion and values, decision-making and problem-solving process as well as their expectations and levels of relationship with their followers. Also, being transparent would improve the leader's integrity as well as being consistent in their actions will enable them to put their employees or followers at ease and avoid them from second-guessing what to expect from their leaders.

Keywords: Leadership and management practices, leadership styles, followership, delegation, 21st century academic library.

Introduction

Observations have been made that developing a 21st century academic library requires leaders and managers (Academic Librarians) who are capable of making quick and effective decisions and utilize the powers of emerging technologies and social media to effectively and efficiently communicate and coordinate actions. It requires efficient management or responsible caretaking particularly to study and understand what leadership is and what role it plays in management (Jenkins, 2011). This is as a result of the rapid and

discontinuous changes in its professional environment. Librarians need to become aware of global politics in the world connected by the internet and globalization, more innovative and create a sense of urgency, make decisions, and act decisively.

Changing libraries need leaders who have visions and can guide others to achieve these visions. Hernon (2010) stated that current and future academic library leaders need leadership skills, knowledge and managerial activities to prepare infrastructure for the transition of libraries. Therefore, the effectiveness of a modern

society and its ability to perform-perhaps even its ability to survive-depend increasingly on the effectiveness of the people who work as executive in the organizations. Arguments on the place of leadership and management practices in organizations including academic libraries have been on-going for decades; however, globally academic libraries have been seeking to sustain competitive competences in the changing environment to maintain leadership position and management practices. However, they are becoming much more difficult because of the nature of the 21st century organizations and the dynamics of the new global economy (Gichohi, 2015).

Today's leaders and managers, therefore, must behave differently as they need to acquire the essential practical skills and knowledge to thrive in the knowledge-driven 21st century global economy. For instance, in an academic library, the University Librarian needs the ability to respond to change with vision through energizing and inspiring stakeholders. This will create an organizational culture where all the library staff are valued and energized to continuously improve and perform to the best of their abilities (Jenkins, 2011). In addition, leaders and managers have to become great team players and relationship builders in order to influence the accomplishment of organizational goals as well as create motivating work environment to enhance workers' productivity (Cawthorne, 2010).

The 21st century is the millennium of information. The term "21st Century" is said to be elusive as it is difficult to designate or explain because many writers have described it variedly. Dike, Odiwe and Ehujor (2015) opined that the profound social and economic changes and the new realities occurring today is that of transformations and changes which has

witnessed one of the most dramatic technological revolutions in human history. In other words, personalization, collaboration, communication, informal learning, productivity and content creation are the central to the competencies and skills expected from a leader and a manager of any organization (Scott, 2015). It is a period of technological revolution that centers on the computers, information, and communication as well as multimedia technologies. Abubakar (2011) described it as a period of transition and change that are accompanied with sophisticated in changing pattern of information needs, leadership and management. This transformation requires solutions to the challenges facing humanity which requires certain skills and competencies to function effectively at this time of technological revolution.

However, 21st century is a period of information challenges and increase in productivity for the knowledge worker. The purpose of this paper therefore is to contribute to the basic understanding of the concepts of business and organizational management. It will add new insights into the diverse and dynamic field of leadership and management practices in the academic libraries and the university community and enhance people's knowledge and skills to lead and manage the 21st century organizations.

The concept of leadership

Leadership is an integral part of work and social life. Leadership behaviour occurs in almost all formal and informal social situations. Even in a non-formal situation such as a group of friends some sort of leadership behavior occurs wherein one individual usually takes a lead in most of the group activities. Sometimes an individual may have also seen how the change of situation leads to emergence of a new leader in a group. Leadership behavior occurs in

political and organizational set-up, wherein the leaders may or may not be having formal authority but may exhibit leadership behavior by influencing people to work towards common goals. Various theories have been propounded to explain the phenomenon of leadership which attempted to define leadership in various ways and have tried to identify the attributes and qualities of a successful leader. Leadership is often considered as the ability to influence a group of people toward the achievement of goals. Thus it is an activity, an influence process in which an individual gains trust and commitment of others with or without reliance on formal position or authority, moves the group to the accomplishment of one or more tasks. According to Beaumont (2010) without good leadership, it is difficult for people to function effectively. It is the duty of a leader to define the goal to be achieved, to control and to motivate as well as to guide his followers. As stated by Beaumont (2010) character is the essential foundation upon which good leadership is built. A leader is expected to lead by example by practicing what he preaches.

According to Abbasialiya (2010) leadership is currently one of the most talked about issues in businesses, schools and organizations. It is hard to turn on the television, open a newspaper or attend a conference without coming across numerous references to leaders, leadership and leading. To him, the concept of leadership has an ambiguous status in organizational practice, as it does in organizational theory. In practice, management appears to be of two minds about the subject of leadership. Many jobs are so specified in content and method that, within very broad limits, differences among individuals become irrelevant, and acts of leadership are regarded as gratuitous at best and at worst insubordinate. Leadership has always been a challenging issue among scholars and researchers.

Sharma and Jain (2013) opined that the recent focus on leadership is an international phenomenon, as is increased investment in leadership and management development. Leadership role usually is formed when group of people come together to perform specific tasks and each member of the group is directly or indirectly affected by each other. Within the group a particular individual is elected to organize the tasks given out and to motivate the members of the group in order to achieve the set goals. While leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge processed by the leader can be influenced by his or her attributes or traits; such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. This definition is similar to Northouse's (2007) definition of leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Yuki (2002) posited that leadership is a process whereby intentional influences is exerted by one person over others in order to guide, structure and facilitate organizational activities and relationships. Leadership is comprised of everything a leader does that affects the achievement of objectives and the well-being of employees and the organization (Abbasialiya, 2010). Leadership involves a type of responsibility aimed at achieving particular ends by applying the available resources (human and material) and ensuring a cohesive and coherent organization in the process. That is to say that an effective leader is one who can invoke support through the channeling of clear shared vision through the organization.

The aim of this paper as noted earlier is to add new insights of practical approach to the issues of leadership and management practices in academic libraries. Management practices in academic libraries for librarians

and para-professionals, high quality performance have experienced drastic transformation because of cut-throat competition and other forces in the new global economy. Among the principles are for management to Create constancy of purpose and Institute training on the job. Leadership can be said to be about compassion and taking care of people. It is pertinent to note that a good leader act by force of will and conviction to move his or her entity into the forefront of other organizations.

Over time, researchers have proposed many different styles of leadership as there is no particular style of leadership that can be considered universal. Despite the many diverse styles of leadership, a good or effective leader inspires, motivates, and directs activities to help achieve group or organizational goals. Conversely, an ineffective leader does not contribute to organizational progress and can, in fact, detract from organizational goal accomplishment.

Types of leadership styles

There are four basic types of leadership styles, according Yuki (2002). These are enumerated as follows:

Authoritarian leadership style: This is also known as autocratic leaders, who provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. There is also a clear division between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group. Decision-making is less creative under authoritarian leadership and is viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial.

Democratic leadership style: This is also known as participative leadership, is a type

of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. Researchers have found that this learning style is usually one of the most effective and lead to higher productivity, better contributions from group members, and increased group morale.

Laissez-faire leadership style: This is also known as delegate leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. Researchers have found that this is generally the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among group members.

Bureaucratic leadership style: Bureaucratic leadership is where the manager manages "by the book" Everything must be done according to procedure or policy. If it isn't covered by the book, the manager refers to the next level above him or her. This manager is really more of a police officer than a leader. He or she enforces the rules.

The 21st century: Promises and dangers

The 21st century is full of promises and dangers (OECD, 1998). For instance, the emerging technologies of the time are helping societies to realize their economic and social objectives (leading to innovations and creativity, bringing democracies to societies ruled by despotism, and press freedom, et cetera) and thus overcome some of the challenges facing them. The 21st century has also brought with it some social and economic uncertainties such are the unprecedented social crisis, riots and turmoil's, religious extremists (onslaught by al-Qaeda, ISIS, BokoHaram), global financial crisis and high youth unemployment that occur in some quarters (The Economist, 2012). The new era can, therefore, be described as a mixed baggage.

Characteristics of the 21st Century Academic libraries

The structures of the 21st Century academic libraries are more complex with distant boundaries, reliance on emerging information and communication technologies. This brought changes in the way people relate to one another, how they communicate as well as changes in career and life skills. To be successful in today's work place, one has to possess the essential skills and knowledge, particularly "Information literacy; Media Literacy; and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy" due to the nature of the profession (Yeramayan, 2014). In his view, the 21st Century leaders are involved in relentless innovation; purposeful; passion for growth; good customer relationship; and good at creating break-through performance environment. Therefore, to lead and grow a successful 21st century academic libraries, the leaders or managers must determine what issues to focus their attention in order to compete effectively in the rapidly changing global economy.

The distinctive situation in the 21st century, any organization that wants to move ahead are planning and working on empowering staff with the skills and knowledge to enable them fit into the knowledge-driven new global economy. This is to say that organization that operates on 19th and 20th century system will definitely not perform as well as those who have acquired the 21st century skills and knowledge (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Miller, 2007). The emerging technologies in this era have expanded the responsibility and accountability of librarians who are the leaders and managers in today's libraries in terms of managing projects, planning, executing, and evaluation. The academic librarians as a leader and manager should motivate the staff to perform to their optimal levels adopting the 21st century teaching

and learning methods to empower the library user (s) with the knowledge and skills in order to compete effectively in today's technology-driven new global economy.

Today's leaders and managers of the library should therefore be prepared to face the reality of the 21st century economy and work harder to develop the essential skills and knowledge to achieve their personal objectives as well as those of the academic community in which they work. Digital and other emerging technologies are making the jobs of leaders and managers a lot easier by freeing up time to focus on the 21st century skills and other challenges tossed-up by the century. For instance, the emerging technologies are helping the academic librarians to build on-line skills for collaboration, communication, and leadership, as well as for interpersonal relationships and cultural skills. However, for all these to be possible the librarians must first be educated and motivated to face the challenges of the rapidly changing world. This will enable the librarians in the field to integrate emerging instructional technologies and the 21st century skills into their acquired skills such as acquisition of books, retrieval of information for library user, cataloguing and classification methods.

Management practices in academic libraries

Management has been defined as activities required in designing, organizing, encouraging, and controlling personnel and operational resources needed to achieve organizational outcomes (Kotter, 2008). Managers are known to focus on daily task completion in organizations in order to get the job done. Their duties include making work schedules, time cards, audits, and other staffing duties (Parsons, 2015). University Librarians are managers skilled in coordinating and motivating employees, maintaining a safe work environment, and

improving worker's morale and productivity. They have the energy and skills to meet the daily challenges of their duties which is to provide information to the right information seeker and the right time the information is needed. Scholars have noted that leadership and management, although similar, are two different concepts that are often used interchangeably (Drucker, 2006; Parsons, 2015). Management is about coping with complexity while leadership by contrast is about coping with change. Drucker (2006) has noted that management is about managing others. To effectively and efficiently run the 21st century organizations, good leaders and managers are imperative. As noted, leadership is an individual's ability to influence others. Therefore, in contrasting management with leadership, Drucker (2009) noted that management is doing things right while leadership is doing the right thing. Bennis (2000) observed that managers are necessary and leaders are essential. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded by personality and vision while management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, statistics, methods, timetables and routine.

Good leaders and managers of any academic library will always strive to do the best they can possibly for their universities/organizations by accepting additional responsibilities to become better no matter the limitations imposed on them by some of their followers. On the contrary some people perceive leadership to be a title or a position loaded with prestige and opportunity to leave the world or an organization as a better place. Despite the challenges, leadership is all about making a difference in lives of others; it is about collaborating with others to enable them fulfill their ambition, stimulating creativity and bringing out the best in others. Leadership is about solving

problems as well as transforming what appears an impossible task into an anthill.

Leadership and management practices in the 21st century academic libraries in Nigeria

The dynamic nature of the 21st century academic libraries is changing, including the role of human resources, acquisition of books, cataloguing and classification of books, reference services, and retrieval of online resources. Leading in today's knowledge-driven and highly competitive business environment requires practical experience and exemplary leadership in order to achieve organizational objectives. The ever-present social media and the evolving technologies have changed the way leaders and managers tackle issues in businesses and organizations as well as how they lead and manage their followers (Kaplan, 2009). For leaders to lead and manage their followers in this Culture of Change for them to assist their followers to acquire the essential 21st century skills that will enable their workers to achieve the goals of their organizations, they must possess the needed skills, including being technologically savvy (Fullan, 2007). In addition, leaders and managers must also be cognizant of the ways they are perceived by the public, because how they are perceived may affect their reputation and that of the organization and their effectiveness in managing their organizations.

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Information Communication Technology (ICT) literacy due to the nature of the profession Yeramayan (2014). The distinctive situation in the 21st century, any organization that wants to move ahead are planning and working on empowering their staff with the skills and knowledge to enable them fit into the knowledge-driven new global economy while those who are operating on 19th and 20th century system will definitely not perform as well as those who have acquired the 21st century skills and knowledge (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Miller, 2007).

The emerging technologies in this era have expanded the responsibility and accountability of university librarians who are the leaders and managers in today's libraries. They have also made managing projects, planning, executing, and evaluating them less cumbersome. University librarians and their staff in today's organizations are, therefore, gearing up to acquiring the essential skills and knowledge to enable them tackle the challenges of the economic time. Today's leaders and managers of the library must, therefore, be prepared to face the reality of the 21st century economy and work harder to develop the essential skills and knowledge to achieve their personal objectives as well as those of the university community in which they work.

Digital and other emerging technologies are making the jobs of leaders and managers a lot easier by freeing up time for them to focus on the 21st century skills and other challenges tossed-up by the century. For instance, the emerging technologies are helping the academic librarians to build on-line skills for collaboration, communication, and leadership, as well as for inter-personal relationships and cultural skills. However, for all these to be possible the librarians must first be educated and motivated to face the challenges of the rapidly changing

world. This will enable the librarians in the field to integrate emerging instructional technologies and the 21st century skills into their acquired skills such as acquisition of books, retrieval of information for library user, cataloguing and classification methods.

Leadership and managerial skills for the 21st century

In the 21st century, leaders and managers will need to authentically communicate and be real or original in order to create value, connect with a wide range of people and cultures and serve a wide range of constituencies. This will lead to success in our new emerging world through innovation, growth and competitive edge over their competitors. The essential leadership and managerial skills include the following as enumerated by Dike, Odiwe, and Ehujor. (2015):

- Good communication skills: Communication is essential to leadership and management. It drives the entire leadership process from vision and strategy through delegation, coaching, recognition and evaluation."
- Character: This is the root of good leadership and managerial skills. The values and beliefs the leader brings to the workplace. They should be authentic - that is, rooted in integrity, honor and ethics.
- Vision: Leaders and managers inspire people by having a vision, taking a personal interest in their people and providing frequent feedback related to the vision. Employees will do amazing things when they are inspired by a vision and when their leader gives them praise and recognition for a job well done.
- The ability to create value leaders and managers of the 21st century

need to go beyond achieving financial results to achieving enduring value for all constituencies served. Execution for results is the outcome of successful leader and manager.

- Flexibility: Flexibility means more than the willingness to change companies or careers, of course. It demonstrates interpersonal flexibility and a strong sense of emotional intelligence. Leaders and managers of the 21st century can quickly recognize when to use their leadership skill set, their managerial skill set or their coaching skill set.
- Collaboration: With the advent of globalization, rapid technology change and general turbulence in the world, leadership theory predicts that a more collaborative approach is likely to be called for than the traditional command-and-control style. Leaders and managers are likely to need well-developed emotional and cultural intelligence, in addition to cognitive intelligence and a keen understanding of the business they are involved in.

Conclusion

This paper has noted that there is no single definition of styles of leadership and management as the two concepts take many forms. It also explored leadership and management styles, organizational structures and emphasized that the skills levels of the workers determine the leader's levels of productivity as well as the general productivity of the organization. It also noted that a leader is also a manager and vice-versa and that combining leader's and manager's competencies in the 21st century organizations will enable one to become an effective leader and manager in the

uncertain new global economy. Delegation of authority is one of the skills leaders use to empower their followers with crucial critical thinking and problem-solving skills to find solutions to organizational problems and enhance their roles in tackling social problems. Leaders and managers in the 21st century academic libraries must do things differently than those of the 19th and 20th century in order to effectively lead and succeed in the highly competitive global economy.

Being conversant with the emerging technologies will enable leaders and managers of the 21st century academic libraries to maintain active awareness of the dynamic of global political environment and apply practical solutions to personal problems to achieve organizational success. Today's leaders and managers must have the capability to build responsive interpersonal relationship with their followers, communicate effectively both in person and in writing, build a great team, and collaborate effectively with leaders and managers in other businesses and organizations. They must lead by example, be flexible and transparent, have a vision, gain the trust of their followers so as to help them to develop essential skills and capabilities through education and job training. Leaders and managers in the 21st century academic libraries must possess the skills to plan and implement effective interventions as problems arise. Delegation of authority to their staff is among the essential skills for leaders and managers to possess in today's work environment. The pace of change will accelerate faster than expected in the 21st century and executives of organizations across the globe should be prepared to respond accordingly.

The following recommendations are set forth in the light of what has been presented in this paper:

1. Heads of academic librarians as leaders and managers should be consistent with their vision and passion as well as their methods of communication. This will enable them to connect with library staff, earn their trust and improve their productivity as well as to achieve their organizational objectives.
2. Being transparent would improve the leader's integrity as well as being consistent in their actions will enable them to put their employees or followers at ease and avoid them from second-guessing what to expect from their leaders and managers.
3. As every organization is striving to improve their employees' productivity, leaders and managers need to re-examine their management styles or practices to ensure that they align with their expectations from the followers.
4. It has been noted that disgruntled followers can kill the leader's character and stunt his or her vision. It is, therefore, recommended that leaders and managers of the 21st century academic libraries need to help their followers understand the forces that shape their feelings, thoughts, and actions and learn to motivate and engage low performers while they embrace high performers.
5. The ability for heads of academic libraries to effectively lead and become innovative at the same time is more critical in today's 21st century organizations as the work environment is becoming much more complex and dynamic. To lead effectively they must, therefore, possess the art of persuasion and motivating others to perform more than they thought was impossible in

their quest to achieve a common purpose.

6. The library heads must also learn to clearly communicate their vision to their followers. These skills have been noted as one of the secrets to success as a leader in the 21st century organization because it is imperative for leaders to get the people to cooperate and support his or her agenda.

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The authors

Gift Nneka Lazarus obtained MPhil. in Library and Information Science and currently on her PhD programme in Babcock University Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State. She is a Chief Librarian at Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED) Library, Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: nnekalazarus@gmail.com; Cell: +234 803 474 8419.

Arinola Adeola Adesoji obtained PhD in Library and Information Science. He is a Senior Librarian at Ladoke Akintola

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University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. E-mail: aaarino la@lautech.edu.ng.

Iliasu Jinadu obtained PhD in Library and Information Science. He is a Chief Librarian at Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Library in Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria. jinaduiliasu@gmail.com.