

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP VALUES AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE: THE CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

Political leadership involves inspiring others to work as a team towards achieving a common state goal. It is a critical aspect of directing management functions of the state, using political apparatus of the state to achieve the set goals. The value of political leadership is based on its relevance and ability to govern members of the organisation or state, hence, leadership value is a serious aspect of political leadership whose core belief and principles guide the political actions of the leaders in their personal activities to achieve the goal of the state. Hence, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the characteristics of political leadership, political leadership values, and governance of the state. Secondary source of data is used to achieve the objectives of the study, and content analysis used as tool of analysis. The study is basically a conceptual perspective based on scholarship argument. The study conceptualised political leadership, governance, and values. The findings proved that there are different characteristics of political leadership such as good communication skill, leading by example, visionary thinking and creativity, forecasting political future, etc., and these characteristics have significant effects on governance of the state. The study further identified the political leadership values as leadership influence, leadership vision, leadership passion, personal development of the leader, leadership integrity, etc., and its importance in the governance capacity of the leader in the state. The study concludes that the characteristics of a political leader is critical in governance of a state; the leadership values determine the ability of the leader to achieve good governance of the state; and therefore the political leader should at all times maintain moral leadership values in order to achieve good governance of the state.

Keywords: The State, leadership value, political leadership, governance.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership involves directing the functions of management towards the achievement of goals, basically good living of the citizens. Dubin (2016) argues that leadership is the exercise of authority and making decisions for the both individual and organisations. It therefore guides the activities of the state and individuals, using the necessary authoritative powers to make decisions that will regulate the actions of individuals to attain the given goals. Leadership is important and the strategic to success or failure of the state, particularly when it involves political leadership, as the leadership value of the political leader guides the actions of the leader in governance of the state. It is political, when it involves directing the political activities

of the state. Elcock (2001) argues that political leadership is essential to understanding political process and outcomes in a state. Political leadership of a state involves the outcome of decision-making and politics due to the activities of the political office holder in a state. It is a political structure with political actors of the state in making and implementing policies of the state. Okun and Iyawe (2021) stated that political leadership of the state shapes the political ideology of the state. This forms the basis for understanding political leadership as an instrument in determining the policies of a state, the security intelligence and awareness, and political culture of the people in participating in political activities. Political leadership is central in governance of the state, as it distinguishes the citizens demands and the state provisions, thereby creating a platform for public accountability in the state. It is noted at all levels, both locally and international in management of state affairs. Although, a multidimensional concept in political studies, but that creates a balance between political input and political outcome, in terms of governance of the state (Masciulli, et al 2009). Political leadership functions better when such leadership has values, and so values are important. The political leadership has basic characteristics, which qualifies the leader to be political. Such characteristics are noted in the actions of the political leader. Wooll (2021) is of the view that leadership values are those subsets of values that positively inspire one's ability to lead effectively or be a good leader. Value is important in operations of the leader, as values are the underlying beliefs that guide the leader's decisions and actions, and eventually shape his/her daily activities. It is the leadership values of the leader that guide the leader's decisions on governance principles of the state, accounting for the leadership performance and evaluation in the area of improving the living standard of the people. This is the hallmark of governance. World Bank (1992) stated that governance is the process by which the legitimate power is exercised for the ultimate usage of the scarce resources of a state for development purpose. Governance relationship with leadership is critical, as the leadership directs the governance activities of the state, particularly when the leadership is guided with values. It is therefore imperative to state that this study is aimed at addressing the relationship between the characteristics of political leadership and governance in a state, and the importance of political leadership values in governance of a state. The study is conceptually based, and is to depend on secondary sources of data to achieve its objectives.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the ability to organise, direct, and lead people. It is a way of combining actions and plans of a leader to accomplish a specific task. Leadership is understood by different scholars from different perspectives, and becomes relatively challenging in having a particular definition. Although, different scholars have different explanation based on their understanding of the concept, significantly, there are basic variable that are associated with leadership at all levels. Alo (2014) sees leadership as the capacity to raise trust and cooperation among those whose skill and dedication decide performance. It is the process of influencing individual or group actions in an effort to accomplish a goal in a definite condition. Leadership is vital in the social interactions of groups, whether in public or private sector, as it creates the change in the fortunes of any social group, be it a formal or informal group, including a state.

Accordingly, Imhonopi and Urim (2013) are of the opinion that leadership is a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs

the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. A leader therefore is expected to demonstrate qualities, which involves but not limited to good character, vision, tact, prudence, and ability to lead by example. Leadership is a two way mechanism, which shows that the leader needs the group (followers), and the group needs the leader. According to Okadigbo cited in Daniel et al. (2022), leadership involves both a personality phenomenon and a social process concerning a number of persons in mental contact in which one person assumes dominance over the power of the others and organizes their activities to move in a specific direction, changes their attitudes and beliefs and at every stage the followers exert influence, often a changing counter-influence, upon the leader. More specifically, based on this general background, political leadership is a part of a multi-causal social processes that brings about concrete political outcomes. In this regard, leaders mobilize a significant number of followers to accept their opinion and policy instructions for collective difficulties and both leader and followers are in the end affected by what they create. From the foregoing, the characteristics of political leadership are the existence of a group phenomenon, meaning that there are no leaders without followers, the use of influence by the leaders to guide a group of people towards a certain course of action or towards the achievement of certain goals and the assumption of some form of hierarchy within a group (Ake & Onoge, 1995).

It is political when the leadership is involved in making and directing policies of the state over time. The conception of leadership has moved from an elitist activity related to power and hierarchy, essentially top-down, charismatic, and individualistic process, inbred and inherited potential controlled by a minority to a relationally dynamic activity in which people interact and attempt changes aimed at utilising their knowhow in shaping their political world. Political leadership is both a relation and a process. It is a relation between persons who are engaged, together, in some cooperative activity or set of activities to achieve a common goal of the state. It is a social influence by which the achievement of an output is pursued through the effect of many people by one person (Chemers, 2002). Political leaders essentially direct the workings of the collective actions towards attaining a jointly shared output in the state. It requires explicit organisational ability, strategic thinking and character mixed with vision and goodwill. It is therefore important to state that those with leadership obligations possess traits of tact, vision, charisma, character and goodwill to positively determine how the goal of the state is achieved.

Political leadership is an essential aspect that explains the actions of the political class, who are saddled with the task of conducting the operations and machineries of a political system, through the choice of policy decisions that impacts on institutions and structures of the state for the purpose developing the state. It further implies the group of people that administers the public affairs of a state. Political leaders make public policies for public good. These include people who hold decision-making positions in government, and people enforce the policies.

Ogbeidi (2012), and Adegbami and Uche (2015) see political leadership as the ruling class that bears the obligation of running the affairs and resources of a political unit by setting and influencing policy priorities affecting the territory through different decision-making structures and institutions created for the orderly development of the territory. Such territory is usually the political state. It is the people, usually the elite that operates the machineries of

government on behalf of an organised territory. Such elite has the power to influence the conduct of public affairs from behind the scene.

Political leadership can also be seen as democratic leadership which constitutes a shared leadership pattern where group members participate as everyone is given opportunity to participate and ideas are exchanged freely and discussion is encouraged. In every ideal democracy, Uzundu (2018) avers that supreme or ultimate power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their agents under free electoral system. In a democracy, decision making system is based on people's majority opinion. And majority rule with minority right protected and represented. It is government by election and not selection. It is the process of election that brings about political leadership. Hook (2001) stated that democracy gives room for a political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish. In modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by universal suffrage. The representatives may be supplanted by the electorate according to legal procedures of recall and referendum, and they are, at least in principle, responsible to the electorate.

Governance

Governance is the task of administering a government or any other appropriate organisation. In their views, Nnamani and Nduba (2020) see governance as a set of values, policies and institutions through which the society manages economic, political and social processes at different levels, on the basis of interaction among the government, civil society and private sector. In essence, the concept of governance is not new and is probably as old as human civilization. Governance is the process of decision making and implemented or not implemented. The concept of governance relates to the quality of relationship between the government and citizens, whom it serves and protects. It could be explained as one in which the concerned authority if any, exercises power, exerts influence and manages the country's social as well as economic resources leading to better development. Sahni (2003) sees governance as the way those in power, use the power, and it has social, political, and economic dimensions.

To Galadima (1998), it is a process of organising and managing legitimate power structures, entrusted by the people, to provide law and order, protect fundamental human rights, ensure rule of law and due process of law; and provide for the basic needs and welfare of the people and the pursuit of their happiness. Hence, governance is the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of public realm. In the words of Barkan (1992), governance involves administrative management and more in the way of political management; with its emphasis on developing networks of reciprocity and exchange, governance increases the possibilities of accomplishing more, while spending less. No doubt governance is practiced by political elites, and is basically manifest in the condition of citizenry. This implies that a strong state is unlikely to emerge in the absence of a vibrant civil society. It concerns the institutionalization of the normative values that can motivate and provide cohesion to the members of the society at large (Hyden, 1992).

THE CHARACTERISTICS/QUALITIES OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON GOVERNANCE

Kiran (2020) explain that political leadership as the act of leading a political organisation, be it at local or global levels. Political leadership is basically concerned with directing and controlling the political affairs of the state at all levels. In a state like Nigeria, it involves managing the state affairs at the local, state and federal levels, by guiding the citizens, making decisions for their good, and achieving development of the people and the state. Political leadership is a critical aspect of leadership in the governance of a state, and has certain characteristics that distinguishes it from other types of leadership. Such characteristics are peculiar and is discussed here as synonymous with qualities of political leadership, with its effects on governance of the state.

Understanding the political environment and its dynamism: A political leader understands the complexities of politics of the state, and be prepared to adapt to changing political environment of politics, with the view of moving together with the political time. This creates a better political atmosphere for good governance of the state.

Willing and able to take political risk: The political leader is often prepared to take political risk for the purpose of moving the state forward, and directing the citizens to the right political direction to follow, considering the political forecast for the good of the people. This is in area of developing the political will to undertake certain political programme and projects in the state for the future good of the followers.

Able to forecast the political future of the state: The political leader is able to understand the present political state of the people, considering the present policies of the state, and able to profile political future, with the view of creating enabling ground for the people to have a successful future political alliance, development and relevance in the state. This quality of the political leader gives him/her an edge over other leaders, and enable the followers to follow such leader in anticipation for good governance.

Intelligence of social justice: The political leader has a strong understanding and management of social justice in the state, in terms of allocating social, political and financial resources of the state. Allocation of resources (infrastructure and political power-appointments) is based on the consideration of the geo-political needs of the people to balance their demands for development in the state. No wonder, Governor Nyeson Ezenwo Wike of Rivers State rightly stated during his political campaign in 2023 that governance of the state is best explained on the principle of **nyendieba, nyendieba** (meaning that governance is applied when you give one group, you also give another group). The right application of social justice proves that the political leader has the powers of equity in governance of the state.

Motivation of the followers: Political leader creates the opportunity to motivate their followers in political activities of the state, thereby encouraging others to follow willingly without use of force in political activities. This make the followers to belief in actions of the leader, and the leader to be in control of the followers and directing their actions, thereby leading to effective cooperation among the citizens in governance of the state.

Honest, polite and professional: The political leader is expected to be honest, polite and professional in handling political leadership activities of the state. The honest is noted in area of allocation of political powers among the citizens and keeping to political promises, while polite is in the area of effective communication and relations with the people. Professionalism is in the area of applying political skill in managing people interest in the political arena. This enables the followers to develop more confidence and trust on the political leader, and gives the leader the power to govern the state for the interest of the people.

Good communication skill: The political leader develops good communication skill and capacity to communicate political issues and development ideology to the citizens in clear terms. Such skill helps the leader to negotiate political issues, listen to the citizens, and finding a common goal for the good of the citizens. This enhances the governance of the state with more citizens being involved in the governance process.

Leading by example: The political leader lead others by showing example through demonstration of how best to conduct themselves in the state, in such area as voting and participating in political process, and applying the rule of law in the state. This quality makes the political leader to be admired by majority and be seen as role model to follow in governance of the state.

Visionary thinking and creativity: Political leader has political vision, fast thinking and creative in governance of the state. The leader thinks ahead and inspires others to collectively work together, and creates platform for future political possibility by initiating strategies to develop the state at ease. This enables the leader to initiate and create opportunities for good governance of the state.

Organisation of government and management skill: The political leader organises government activities and develops management skill to manage state affairs by identifying state responsibilities for the citizens and enforcing them accordingly on record time. The leader employs team-work in management of the state for better productivity. The leader considers both the short and long term development demands of the people, and devices means of achieving it. In all, the management skill determines the governance of the state welfare for the good of the people.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP VALUES AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN GOVERNANCE

Leadership values are the basic belief and practice that direct the actions of the leader in his/her leadership activities in the state. Such values are numerous, but shall be studied here under following subheads, with its importance in governance of a state.

Leadership Influence

This is the ability of the leader to change values, beliefs and attitudes of the followers to certain direction and achieve certain objectives. Influence guides and encourages the leader to direct the actions of the followers. Its importance in governance is enormous, as it defines the character of the leader and proves the ability of the leader to make others, usually followers to belief in the leader's directive. Influence enables the leader to exercise more authority than use of force on the subjects, thereby bringing the followers together for effective governance.

Leadership Vision

Leadership vision refers to the leader knowing what their goal and objectives are, and determining planning and strategies on how to achieve such goals and objectives. The vision of the leader is important as it enables the leader communicate the organisational target to the followers, usually members of the organisation/state. The vision of a leader enables him/her to chart the way forward and plan on how to recruit the right calibre of personnel to the organisation for effective service delivery and good governance of the state.

Personal Development

This is the act of continued learning and acquiring education leading to personal development. Leaders are zealous to acquire education for personal development to enhance their leadership skill for good governance. The zeal for personal development makes the leader to continuously be prepared to learn the rules of the organisation and prepare for the changing policies of the state, with the view of applying the needed rules and skills for the development of the state.

Leadership Development

It involves the process of increasing the capability of leaders to carry out leadership responsibilities in an organisation, including the state. Such responsibilities are those things that encourages the enforcement of the state plans through creating political alliance and developing others to join same. This is usually in a formal setting, where the enabling authority of the state to make decisions and take responsibilities are established by laws of the state for the purpose of influencing and directing others for team governance of the state.

Leadership Integrity

Leadership integrity is all about the leader being factual and honest in carrying out his/her leadership responsibilities at all times in the organisation. The leader needs to be sincere in taking decisions concerning the development of the state. In governance, leadership integrity is important as it makes the citizens to develop trust and respect for the leader, and therefore gives the leader more power to administer the needed welfare programme for the people.

Leadership Passion

This is feeling of fulfilment and encouragement that drives the leader to continue to work in order to achieve the goal of the organisation, and welfare development of the citizens of the organisation/state. Passion enables the leader to genuinely carry out leadership roles for the good of the citizens.

Leadership Dedication

This is leadership commitment to accomplish a specific job task and achieve a given goal. Dedication as a value prepares the leader to face organisational task with commitment, despite its challenges with the zeal to achieve the set goal. It motivates the followers to show more commitment to the organisational task, thereby leading to good governance of the people.

Leadership Empathy

This implies how leaders understand and feel for other members of the organisation, and the leaders' response to their feelings and emotion. It requires the leader to listen to the followers,

and giving them the opportunity to express their opinion on issues with facing any risk or negative repercussion. Although is not the same thing as sympathy. Empathy requires the application of emotional intelligence of the leader in areas of the ability to understand and control their personal feeling and emotions over the actions and demands of the people. Empathy helps the leader to build a strong feeling and emotions that will help the leader to achieve an effective governance of the organisation/state.

Leadership Service

Leadership service refers to the leader's ability to render service and help to satisfy members of the organisation, by putting the needs of the people first to satisfy them. It makes the leader to build a stronger followers base and team to work with commitment, thereby attracting loyalty of the people to the leader. It makes the leader to achieve better cooperation of the people for good governance.

Leadership Respect

This is the perception and filling of the followers on how the leader administer the affairs of the state; in terms of the quality, ability and achievement of the leader and as regards the rights actions of the leader. A good leader earn respect, and is more successful in his/her governance of the state than the leader who demand for respect. A significant strategy to earn respect is to respect others, including your subordinates. The respect when earned, enables the leader to control others with much agitation

Leadership Humility

Humility gives the leader the opportunity to humble, listening to the followers, collaborate effectively, and have compassion on the people. It makes the leader to be ethically and morally able to attend to the citizens' demands. Of course, humility leads to more productivity and good governance and makes the leader to earn more respect and be admired by the subjects.

Leadership adaptability

Wale (2023) sees it as act of mobilising group of individuals to handle difficult challenges in a given organisation with the view of achieving positive result at the end. It enables the leader to be prepared to handle changes when it occurs in the organisation, as the leader set out new and innovative strategies to solve emerging problems, develop new skill and sees challenge as necessary for improvement. Adaptability prepares the leader to welcome and adopt change, and motivates the members of the organisation. It leads to good governance and wide acceptability by the citizens.

Conclusively, political leadership values are important in governance of the state, as such values influences the actions and behaviours of the political leaders in making and implementing state policies for good governance. There are basic characteristics of political leadership, such as the good communication skill, leading by example, visionary thinking and creativity, forecasting political future, motivating followers, knowledge of social justice, etc, and these characteristics have significant effects on ability of the political leaders to govern the state.

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