

Ethical Leadership for Sustainable Development in Developing Countries

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Abstract

The study was intended to investigate how ethical leadership is a crucial ingredient in achieving sustainable development in third world countries. Sustainability leadership entails mindful actions and behaviours which embrace a global perspective to recognise the link between earth and humanity. Hence, through personal and organisational choices, a leader is expected to affect positive environmental and social change. Sustainable leaders are rare today, and this is the reason why this study focuses on how sustainable leadership will act as a force towards sustainable development more especially for developing countries. This study concentrated purely on secondary sources of information. It described, summarised and discussed information initially presented in other academic publications sources like textbooks, journal articles, book reviews, commentaries, eBooks, etc. The study came into a conclusion that sustainable leadership is essential for sustainable development of a society. Nurturing an ethical leader is essential and will determine the transformation speed in overall development. It is collectively agreeable that resources are numerous, but leadership styles have been a letdown in many societies due to the plundering of public resources. There is a lack of public inclusivity in decision making. What society lacks most is moral leadership. This is the missing link in the sustainable development agenda.

Key Terms: Ethical Leadership, Sustainable Development, Third World Countries

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Introduction

Populations of the third world countries are faced with shared challenges in various aspects of life today. The problems continue to affect everyone in third world countries either directly or indirectly, and they include climate change, widespread poverty, corruption and social injustice and democracy. Given this, there is an urgent need for leaders who can address these common challenges and facilitate world transition and more so in third world countries to sustainable development. These new leaders, who are needed to promote sustainable lifestyles as an urgent necessity are referred to as sustainable ethical leaders. The model of traditional leaders is no longer adequate for the shared common good and interconnected challenges that affect the increasingly global community.

According to Fullan (2005), continuity of deepening direction over time is necessary for transitioning to sustainability and results in the leader leaving behind successors who can go even further. The holistic actions and long-term planning essential to promoting sustainability and the common good, do not usually concern the majority of those who follow the traditional leadership model. It has been recognised that powerfully charismatic; traditional leaders are often linked negatively towards sustainability (Collins as cited in Fullan, 2005). These conventional leaders generally enact changes as short-term solutions to immediate problems and do not diligently seek answers to the issues and challenges concerning sustainability or sustainable development. Sustainable leaders, however, are dedicated to long-term prosperity and survivability (Trevino and Nelson, 2007). They recognise that sustainable development is critical since it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). It is becoming increasingly apparent that "Today's society is faced with multiple, interconnected problems, such as climate change and significant ecosystem degradation, but it also has the

unique opportunity to design and create sustainable future" (Timmer, Creech & Buckler, 2008). These challenges necessitate the development of, responsible, effective and capable leadership since leaders are crucial to forming and implementing effective reforms (Fullan, 2005). A case in point is Prof. Wangari Maathai, the world female Nobel laureates who became the first African (Kenyan) woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 "for her tireless contribution to sustainable development and for drawing attention to political oppression in Kenya". Other key sustainable, ethical leaders in Kenya include John Njoroge Michuki, Archbishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki, Dr Fred Matiangi among others. Chira (2004) argues that the overall goal of sustainable development is the long term stability of the environment and economy; which can only be achieved through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, social and environmental concerns throughout the decision-making process. Sustainable leadership is the backbone of any development, and this is the reason why this study focuses on how sustainable leadership will act as a strength towards sustainable development.

Research Methodology

This study concentrated purely on secondary sources of information. The Literature review was conducted with the latest information from the internet websites, journals, Google books and government most recent reports in the study area during the research period. It described, summarised and discussed information originally presented in other academic sources like publications, textbooks, journal articles, book reviews, commentaries, eBooks, etc. Generally, secondary sources are written for a broad audience and highlight the definition of disciplines' specific terms, the history of the topic, relevant theories, and summaries of significant studies in the study area.

Sustainable Leadership and Development

"Sustainability" refers to the ability and capacity to meet the present generation's needs without compromising the strength of the future generation meeting their own needs. This definition implies that the present age may use what they need regarding the resources on earth but in a way that will leave sufficient resources for others and with minimal wastage (Sustainability Leadership Institute, 2011). This responsibility is expected of every individual so that they can modify their behaviour as well as the organisations to prevent over-consuming and minimise wastage for the sake of a sustainable, healthy future. Sustainability leadership entails mindful actions and reactions which embrace a global perspective to recognise the link between earth and humanity (Sustainability Leadership Institute, 2011).

There has been a dangerous trend by both political and executives' failure to provide moral leadership which has led to citizens being disappointed and national goals remaining largely unmet (Minja, 2007). The impunity by the political leaders and executives has increased the cost of living that has left many citizens disfranchised, all of which have a bearing in political and economic development. This calls for sustainable leadership in addressing cases of unethical practices in the public sector and the political arena.

Linking Sustainable Leadership and Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable leadership has a wide-ranging approach based on different scholars. Davies (2008) and Hargreaves (2007) define sustainable leadership as the ability for individuals and institutions to continue to adapt and meet new challenges and complexities in demanding and changing contexts. Sustainable leadership empowers others to improve human and resources capacity and provide opportunities for leaders and stakeholders to network, learn from, and support each other in achieving

organisational goals for the future (Hargreaves, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Fullan, 2001). Such leadership seeks to promote development and change for the better. Visser (2011) defines a sustainable leader as someone who inspires and supports the action towards a better world than it is at the moment. This definition is further illustrated by sustainability leadership institute's 2011 offering another explanation suggesting that sustainable leader as 'individuals who are compelled to make a difference by digging into their awareness concerning the world around them. Philips (2003) opines that these individuals tend to embrace new ways of seeing, thinking and interacting that leads in innovative, sustainable solutions.

Inc (1972) defined sustainable leadership as a type of leadership where individual people, groups and organizations take responsibility by assessing the environment, social and economic principles of sustainability in the context of an individual, group, organization and community through encouraging steady knowledge and ideas of sustainability, cooperation with the environment, effective learning and teaching considering the principles of sustainability, as well as peoples of self-expression.

On the concept of leadership, By & Burnes (2013), posit that leadership mean different things to different people. Bass and Stogdill (1990), argue that 'there are as many different definitions as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept'. Rowe (2007), in his understanding, defined leadership as the ability to influence others and this is supported by Rost (1993), and defines leadership as the process of influence. The word leadership has several definitions and according Gallagher (2012), the dictionary defines leadership as 'the position of the function of a leader, a person who guides or directs a group and acts in instances of leading; guidance; direction'. These definitions are shallow and not capturing the actual meaning of leadership. According to Daft (2007), different

leadership theories give different conceptualisations. In other words, not everybody agrees with the concept of leadership of guiding the teams or even directing people; some people see leadership as more of a motivating tool for empowering the individuals within the organisation.

According to Daft (2007), to understand how complex and varied these definitions can be, he referred to what Warwick University compiled a list of popular definitions of leadership;

-) Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation - Hersey and Blanchard
-) Leadership is the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project – Cohen
-) Leadership is the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for the shared aspirations – Kouzes and Posner
-) Leadership is the behaviour of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal – Hemphill and Coons

Leadership Styles

According to Daft (2007), there are many different leadership styles. Ricketts and Ricketts (2010) Argue that the leadership theories outlined by different theorist mostly contain many different styles. Here are the most popular leadership styles

Autocratic/commanding leadership

Autocratic or authoritarian leadership style gives orders and expects instant execution with little to no feedback from the team when it comes to making decisions on the next course of action

The style is efficient in terms of making decisions and can be useful in emergencies or crisis. Mehrotra (2005) point

out that leaders take full authority and assume responsibility. Nonetheless, autocratic leadership is rarely well-liked because autocratic leader uses militant-like style. Autocratic Leadership (n.d.) describes this type of leadership style is mostly seen in very small organisations with very few numbers of employees. This style is a near-military approach to leadership. It is coercive or commanding leadership style. In this leadership style, the leader knows best, and the juniors' role is to comply appropriately. This style provides guidance and clear instructions to be followed on how to achieve the organisation's objectives. Nevertheless, the coercive element and lack of input from the subordinates can lead to low employees' morale and low productivity.

Democratic leadership

This type of style encourages and promotes engagement between the leader and the juniors; nevertheless, the leader is still in charge of the final decisions. The junior staff is involved with the tasks or causes of action, even though they might not have powers to make any decision. This type of leadership style removes the issues of low staff morale, and high employees turn over through the participatory approach involved. Conversely, decisions can take a long time to realise. This leadership style is similar to Lewin's theory of leadership. Goleman's style is about enhanced participation and active communication. The leader seeks collaboration by involving the juniors instead of directing them on what to do. It can be effective in innovation and boosting employees' morale; however, the style does not necessarily create the most efficient systems that respond to issue swiftly enough.

Laissez-faire leadership

The junior staffs are given the ultimate power to decide how they want to achieve their vision set out by the leader. The main work of the leader is to provide resources and advice to the subordinates when necessary. This style helps to increase job satisfaction through lack of structure can be

a source of challenges within the organisation. This approach of leadership requires well experienced, trained and enthusiastic employees to work efficiently.

Visionary leadership

This leadership concern about developing the organisation's dream and ensuring all employees within the organisation adhere to it. This leadership style is also known as the authoritative style because it provides clear guidelines on what ought to be done. It gives a lot of autonomy to the juniors on how they can achieve their objectives. It is ideal for institutions or organizations that are lacking direction; however, it has similar downsides as the case of laissez-faire style.

Coaching leadership

Coaching leadership style and charismatic leadership have similarity because of both stresses on leadership development. The main role of the leader is to coach or develop juniors in their professional fields and help them improve the understanding of their strengths and weaknesses they face professionally. This is done so to create a horizontal alignment with the organisation goals and that of juniors. This style of leadership can be significant in motivating juniors and improving the succession plan of the organisation. However, in terms of profitability and productivity, long term focus can be problematic in any organisation in the short run.

Affiliate leadership

The objective of the leadership style is to bring harmony in the workplace and ensure there is a healthy relationship in the organization. This leadership style is applied in conflict-resolution and is effective in overcoming disagreements.

Pacesetting leadership

The core of pacesetting leadership style is high standards and achievement of objectives. The leadership puts short term goal at the centre of its focus and uses them to drive

up the performance of the organisation. This leadership style usually uses an element of rewards to motivate juniors to act and make quick returns. This style is effective in the short-run, but Goleman believes it's among the style that can be potentially having the most negative impact in an organisation.

Charismatic leadership

Max Weber in his book the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism wrote that charismatic leadership was 'a special personality characteristic that gives a person exceptional powers that result in the person being treated as a leader'. The style is mainly focused on the leader's traits and usually his or her own ambitions. Charismatic leadership doesn't emphasize the development of the juniors as much as his or her own expertise.

Bureaucratic leadership

The leadership style is a rule-based system where the emphasis is on achieving tasks. The style bases its operation in the setting up of clear guidelines and procedures of work. Ensuring juniors follow these guidelines as closely as possible. It is more of organisations dealing with enhanced safety risks. This style lacks flexibility and innovation.

Servant leadership

This is a leadership style based on the writing of Robert Greenleaf. The leadership style base emphasis on the subordinates and his or her needs. The responsibility of the leader is to provide support for the juniors and help them achieve more professionally and even privately. This style benefits from its focus on values and ethics. This leadership style is tricky to implement and does work well in situations where quick and strategic decisions need to be made (Greenleaf, 2002).

Authentic leadership

It is among the newest leadership styles that have been developed by Dr Bruce Avolio and Dr Fred Luthans. The style focuses on four critical aspects of leadership namely; self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalised moral perspective. The impression of this style is that leaders and juniors alike are supposed to promote behaviours that lead to positive actions and self-development (development for self).

Situational leadership

The style was developed by Dr Paul Hersey and Dr Ken Blanchard. The style is based on the idea that leaders need to be aware of the different maturity levels of subordinates, once they know it, the time it takes to select the right approach. Situational leadership style can be effective because it recognises that not all juniors or situations are similar. This style is often considered more of a management style and can lead to confusion within the workplace if the leader keeps on changing from one approach to another.

Principles of Sustainable Leadership

- i. Sustainable leadership understands the interconnections of systems. It is crucial to understand how every group of related factors function. For example, how people, processes and objects work in unison and how they impact on one another (Sustainability Leadership Institute, 2011).
- ii. Sustainable leaders think globally and focus on the present as well as the future. They consider the current and future impacts they make with every decision on other nations, societies, water bodies, animals, communities, waste, resources etc.
- iii. Sustainable leadership protects nature and people as well. It can distinguish how actions are taken will affect a man and his surroundings. It is important to make decisions that will curb the negative impacts on the middle class and the lowest class of

people in the society, processes, environment and economies.

- iv. Sustainable leaders transform businesses. They do things differently within their span of control. For example, they change habits which reduce wastage like reading soft copy material or printing double sides instead of one side.
- v. Sustainable leaders lead by example. They are responsible for themselves, their jobs, actions as their organisations at large. They hold the organisation accountable to lead by example in its actions. Hold them accountable to reduce wastage, better sanitation and increase efficiency (Sustainability Leadership Institute, 2011).
- vi. Sustainable leaders are honest. They work hard not to be seen or recommended or appreciated but because they know that their reward is from God.
- vii. Sustainable leaders are loyal and can be trusted. There exists mutual respect between them, and those they are leading; hence a winning team relationship is built and, consequently, extreme performance is achieved.
- viii. Sustainable leaders mentor unselfishly; for example, when working in an organisation, share your tips and secrets.

For sustainable leadership to be achieved, there must be effective leaders who will combine a multiple of styles in disseminating their duties. This will motivate, guide and inspire his followers (Doppelt, 2003). They drive creativity and productivity while improving the lives of ordinary citizens. Leadership styles often correlate closely with personality type. Influence from previous mentors will also influence a person's ability and technique to guide and direct a group of individuals (De Geus, 1997). Leadership is not limited to extraverted individuals, who have outsized personalities, even though that type of individual often rises to leadership roles because individuals with out-sized personalities are often effective communicators. Some

leaders have their style that does not fit well into a specific personality type. Labelling leadership styles is a general practice, but each leader will have a more in-depth, detailed orientation in the leader's approach to managing, inspiring and driving results within his organisation.

Sustainable leadership is defined by the results achieved under the specific person in charge and the longevity of those results even to future generations. The leader is tasked with the challenge of gathering and moulding individuals into cohesive groups that are capable of achieving a shared, long working goal. They bring out the best in individuals and of the group collectively, while also driving a higher level of performance than usually would be achieved. Effective and sustainable leaders drive innovation, and they encourage their people to think strategically and creatively, while also reaching for new lasting limits (Vroom & Yetton, 1973).

Discussion

Morality and Sustainable Leadership

The concept of leadership dwells in a weak position in the success of any socio-economic and political expectation of society. Leadership is considered as the radar which directs many institutional undertakings which collectively translates into a successful venture. It is generally an endless question in the mind of society on how model leadership can be determined and eventually be recruited to provide the morally accepted leadership, the one, along with the group, will translate expectations into practice. Generally, moral leadership is considered as a profitable investment to the individual leader, to an institution or organisation, and to society as a whole, given that it holds the key to success (Northouse, 2012). In modern times, organisations both profit and nonprofit based, struggle to build up strong moral leadership for the purpose of stability and continuity in the management of organizations.

However, defining the term Moral leadership has been challenging for quite a long time. Till to date, no consensus has been built regarding agreeable definition. Even though, the twentieth-century approach has come up with the emphasis on aspects of control, morality and centralization of power. In 1972 leadership conference, the concept of leadership was looked at as the individual or a group's ability to morally impress the will of a leader on the ones being led with the ultimate demonstration of obedience, respect, loyalty, and competence. In addition, leadership is construed as a process in which an individual gains self-confidence and commitment of others and leads the group to the success of one or more assignment (Tuppen & Porritt, 2003). It generally implies a process in which individual convinces a group to pursue objectives held or shared by the leader and his followers; thus it is the ability to get men to do what they don't like to do and like it (Scharmer, 2008).

Northouse (2012) explains that despite the controversies surrounding the definitions, it is commonly accepted that the term leadership embraces the traits of being a process, influence, it patents within a group or individual and it tends toward achieving a common goal of the organization or the group. The leadership position should be seen as a central establishment which acts as a source and centre of unity. It must take actions which hold the entire establishment together, addressing both the individual as well as group concern. Further, it should create good communication linkages and build ethical responsibilities within the establishment. Besides, leadership trait must be demonstrated in which a leader does not appear to be above other members and being superhuman. The leader and the controlled team must be considered as the two sides of the same coin (Harris, 2007).

Leadership and Sustainable Development

The leading question that surrounds many formations regards how leadership along with the headed can work

towards achieving sustainable development in a society. Sustainable development concept arises from the fact that global leadership is confronted by traditional development challenges such as poverty, diseases. Hunger, as well as new challenges such as environmental destructions and globalization.

There is needed to strike a common balance to address the duo categories. To achieve a positive outcome, a development that is long lasting must be designed and be implemented. That takes the focus of sustainable development (Munasinghe, 2009). How does noble leadership institute a sustainable development? Under normal circumstance, ethical leadership is fundamental to every institution. With ideal ethics, a leader will ensure that he fulfils the socio-economic needs of the group and maintains economic discipline. Lack of ethical or morally upright leadership leads to wastage and embezzlement of public resources, thereby denying the society an opportunity to sustain its development. Unethical leadership had led to the Watergate scandal in 1990 in the USA, economic meltdown in the 2000s besides many economic scandals of huge public resources embezzlement (Greenleaf, 2002). Such a situation impedes the society's sustainable development. Greenleaf (2002) further clarifies that leadership for development must be accomplished; that is, he/she must work with honesty, fair dealing and social responsibility. With such features, there will be transparency in resource management, equity in the distribution and responsibility in administering environmental issues to the expectation of the future society. In this respect, transformational leadership is preferred since it demonstrates a capacity to seek the fulfilment of human possibilities and improve the community's development in general (Flowers, 2008).

Greenleaf (1977) is of the opinion that leadership plays an important role in the institutional progress, similar to that of an entrepreneur who can be able to propel sustainable

development to the next level. An able leadership builds a potential in an organization by becoming proactive to a number of challenges, such as scarce resources, both natural and human which result in the creation of an opportunity for growth. Therefore, moral leadership acts as an explicit catalyst factor in sustaining development. In addition, leadership should be perceived as collaborative, bringing together all groups of mind and reasons. Such inclusive behaviour would result in incorporating all categories of minds necessary for the organization's growth. It will interpret to mean the building of common front to face challenges and to inculcate the feeling of common ownership of decisions. With such respect, leadership becomes a vehicle that steers positive changes expected to sustain development. However, the changes may also come with certain risky decisions which may include punishment of the wrong doors (Findlay-Brooks et al., 2009).

Sustainable development is perceived to be a long term undertaking and integration in nature. It comes along with people's participation, a reflection of their desire and recommendation towards achieving their desires through possible alternative ways. Under such arrangements, people have their say as well as their way. The process considers future generations and their upkeep in terms of environmental management and exploitation (Northouse, 2012). The cost of development is generally expected to be less than environmental destruction. Such positive development places the public at the centre of development.

Conclusion

Even though a number of publications have documented discussions on leadership, there is a lack of consensus regarding the nature of a competent leader. This can be accounted for by the fact that people still regard the great historical rulers like Hitler, Sadam Hussein among others as great leaders. The current leadership is totally different

from such historic references. Researchers have identified two different main interpretation of leadership namely the born- to -lead and those developed leaders (Sheard, 2014). Generally, sustainable leadership is essential for sustainable development of a society. Nurturing an ethical leader is important and will basically determine the transformation speed in overall development Its collectively agreeable that resources are numerous, but leadership styles have been a letdown in many societies due to the plundering of public

resources. There is luck of public inclusivity in decision making. What society lacks most is moral leadership. This is the missing link in the sustainable development agenda.

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