Effective Feedback for Understanding Emerging Leaders from Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract

Leadership commitment is essential to the survival and progress of every country, especially the underdeveloped countries, including Nigeria. Incidentally Nigeria is one of the most populated countries in the world with a fast developing economy after China and India. However there appears to be a virtual vacuum of real, effective and visionary leadership in place. Therefore there is need for the country to make a generational shift and look towards its emerging leaders from the tertiary institutions of higher learning. Without this all important shift there can never be social, political and leadership changes. There will forever be that constant struggle for survival. This work will therefore expose teachers and mentors to feedback mechanism for understanding emerging leaders. The emerging leaders will understand what is expected of them and the most effective ways to achieve good leadership. Finally the next generation of creative and morally responsible leaders will be inspired and committed to the good of Nigeria.

Keywords: Emerging leaders, Nigeria, tertiary institutions, feedback

Introduction

Leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task (Chemers, 1997).A leader may be classified as a person, an individual, a specialist or professional, who influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Clark, 2010).However, leadership may also be classified as a form of followership. The followers are actually leaders because they monitor affairs of the society. The followers also determine the success of a leader, especially when the followers do not trust or lack confidence in their leadership (Read, 1996).

Leadership is one of the biggest challenges in Nigeria since Independence. The late Chinua Achebe, one of Nigeria's prominent and legendary writers in one of his books pointed out that the problem with Nigeria is leadership (Achebe, 1983). Nigeria being a nation of many ethnic and religious groups, leadership in such a society is an enormous task (Dike, 2008).

On the other hand, education is the bedrock of every society and a tool for development and nation building. The development of a nation is engendered by the effectiveness of its tertiary institutions. The students in the tertiary institutions receive training on the arts and elements of leadership-vision, inspiration, stimulation, coaching, teambuilding and teamwork (Olwookere and Elegbaleye, 2012).

The aim of this study is to discuss the feedback mechanism for understanding emerging leaders. The following objectives will be achieved in this study:

1. To highlight the need for a generational shift to the students of Nigeria's tertiary institutions for leadership, as emerging leaders.
2. To expose to teachers and mentors their roles towards the emerging leaders.
3. The expose to students of tertiary institutions their role as emerging leaders in achieving good leadership.

Concept of Emerging Leaders

Emerging leaders may be classified as:

- Individuals in their first formal leadership roles.
- Individuals in frontline leadership role, supervisors and managers.
- Specialists, professionals and individuals in formal leadership roles.
- Contributors, followers and protégées of people in leadership positions
- Emerging leaders may also be classified as transformational leaders. They enhance the morale and performance of their followers through motivation. These leaders have democratized the society by identifying the effective mechanism for improving the quality of life for all citizens (Suutari, 2002).

The concept of emerging leaders has transformed the meaning of leadership as follows:

- Connecting the followers' sense of identity and self to the project and collective identity of the organization.
- By being a role model for followers, inspiring them and developing their interest in the organization.
- Challenging followers to take greater ownership of their work.
- Understanding the strength and weaknesses of followers so that followers are aligned with tasks that enhance their performance (Burns, 1978) (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

Expectations from Emerging Leaders: The following are expected from emerging leaders:

- Emerging leaders in different capacities are expected to learn to transition from individual contributors to leaders, understanding the appropriate use and potential misuse of power and control in leadership.

- They are expected to develop advanced decision making skills, effective facilitation skills and techniques for handling team and individuals conflicts.
- They are expected to provide leadership in team and non-team settings, in difficulties, challenges and demonstrate ability to delegate.
- They are expected to be adapting in conflict management, negotiations, collaborations and ability to arrive at a balance in all areas of work.
- They are expected to develop techniques on how to hold themselves accountable for successes and failures, encouraging people with diverse ideas and opinions, identifying best practices and giving feedbacks.
- Finally, emerging leaders are expected to demonstrate willingness to self-examination, honesty; grow emotionally, identify and develop their own leadership style.

Feedback for Understanding Emerging Leaders

Feedback is a strong tool and one of the many ways to effect student achievements (Haltie &Timperley, 2007). The following ideas will be discussed as feedback for understanding emerging leaders.

- Effective feedback involves establishing and clarifying a goal, an objective or a clear purpose of a project. Establishing a goal also helps the teachers of emerging leaders to align their assessment parameters.
- Effective feedback involves responses that teachers of emerging leaders give to students relating directly to the goals, their progress or lack of it towards a goal and suggestions to help improve performance on the larger project.
- The teachers of emerging leaders can use their assessment data to plan for future instructions. This way they can modify their teaching and achieve flexibility in their instruction planning.
- Effective feedback involves checking for understanding by the teachers through the use of oral skills and questioning techniques.
- The use of common assessment parameters enables the teachers of different groups of emerging leaders to co-ordinate with each other. This will gauge students' performance and provide data for instructional and curricula design.
- Effective feedback involves identification of competences by teachers. This will enable the emerging leaders to measure their own attainment of goals – both short and long term.
- Feedback system for emerging leaders must be geared towards good performance in state, national and international tests.
- The use of mentoring programmes and other forms of mentorship is an effective feedback system. In mentoring programmes a two way communication is established and emerging leaders develop higher levels of potentials (Fisher and Frey, 2009).

Conclusion

In conclusion, for effective feedback for understanding emerging leaders, there must be set goals and objectives, monitoring and mentoring. The students/ undergraduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions form the core group of emerging leaders. With a population at over eight (8) million and over (200) two hundred tertiary institutions of higher learning managed by the federal government, the state governments, and members of the private sector (Akani,2012). From these tertiary institutions are huge human resources and the hope for future emerging leaders. On them lie the hope for social, political and leadership change; otherwise, there will be that constant and continuous struggle for survival.

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