

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILL IN WOMEN THROUGH DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

ANGELA EKWUTOSI OZIBO Ph.D, FCAI
National Teachers' Institute
Kaduna, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The topic of this paper is on developing leadership skill in women through delegation of responsibility. The main education is to find out the extent to which leadership skills are developed in women by delegating responsibilities. The key factor is the involvement of the women in decision making and in the general functioning of the programmes. Another factor is the extent to which these functions exist and mastery of their methods of operation. The substantive concepts in this paper were defined and explained and they include delegation, responsibility, authority and leadership. The paper tried to find out the possible means of developing leadership skills in women via delegation of Responsibility. The major finding is that leadership skills are actually developed by carrying out assigned responsibilities in women. The skills are many and some of them are innovation of ideas, patience, tolerance, honesty, tactfulness, accountability, good communication skill, drive and willingness to take extra work, punctuality to functions, good personality and ability to coordinate the various units and activities of other members of the group.

INTRODUCTION

Every organization, establishment, institution or department should have a well established modus operandi in the discharge of its functions and if its objectives are to be achieved. Theoretical and practical activities or functions associated with the attainment of the objective are too many to be left on the shoulders of the over-all administrator or an administrator of a sub-department or unit. Therefore, it is important that he or she is relieved of some of the functions through delegation. The leadership and managerial abilities of those who pilot the affairs of this discipline, to greater extent determine the quality and quantity of the output from the programme. Hence, Yoltmer and Esslinger (1967) stated that no school can be greater than its staff, nor a programme advance beyond the vision of those who administer it, nor a group prospers beyond the limits of its leader. This reminds us that skillful leadership in women is as important as the programme itself. Leadership skills are believed to be developed through taking part in activities that offer opportunities for it.

Stodgily (1959) stated that, it is unquestionable, that the values of participation in group action are to claim confidence in leadership. He continued by stating that leadership qualities cannot be developed by reading or any classroom teaching learning. Therefore, delegating of responsibility as a means of developing leadership skill in women is very

important. It has been established that by carrying out delegated responsibilities, the staff, is equally learning or acquiring qualities that will carry them through in their future tasks.

According to Bucher (1975), administration is concerned with functions and responsibilities essential to the achievement of established goals through associated effort. It is also concerned with that group of individual members, so that the purposes for which an organization is established may be accomplished in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The ideal administrator in this situation is supposed to be a leader and not only a leader, but a skilful leader.

The major constraint in this issue of delegation is that most administrators are reluctant in delegating responsibilities because they fear or doubt the abilities of their sub-ordinates since they (administrators) are held responsible for the over-all activities of their organizations. So, many administrators prefer performing important functions by themselves instead of delegating them out.

Delegation of responsibility is a means of utilizing the staff in the attainment of the objectives of an organization. According to Chambers Encyclopedia, delegation signifies the process of handling over some irresponsibility to others to exercise on ones behalf.

New man (1963) contended that delegation is the assignment of duties by the executive to his sub-ordinates. This means that in women, the administrator's daily official functions demand that he has to delegate certain functions to his sub-ordinates without which progress of work is uncertain.

When any function is assigned to a sub-ordinate, he bears responsibility for what happens to the assigned duty. Therefore, authority that is equal to the responsibility should go with the delegation. Dale and Michelon (1975) suggest that responsibility and authority most correspond in order to make control possible. In this direction, Chambers Encyclopedia highlights that responsibility means holding somebody accountable for an action and yet defines that authority which goes with it as power or right to give orders and make others obey. That power to give orders and make people obey is the tool that helps that sub-ordinate to perform the function delegated to her successfully in working with other members of her group.

As the individual in an organization continues to perform delegated duties which she is accountable for, she needs and develops some leadership skills. According to Armstrong (1990), leadership can be defined as the process of encouraging and inspiring individuals and the general situation. The encouragement mentioned in the above definition can take the form of motivation, initiative and other forms of reward. Guilder (1950) maintained a firm stands when he affirmed that leadership is a function of the law of the situation, stating that different situations suit different types of leadership. But, this can be used as

a model for leadership in precisely that way that the early leadership gurus tried to use leadership qualities. According to him, to enjoy lasting success, leaders must be able to adapt to changing circumstances adopting whatever traits are most appropriate to the context. So leadership in women is important. Its acquisition is more suitable by performing delegated responsibilities.

POSSIBLE MEANS OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN WOMEN VIA DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Leadership is a common word in women. Teachers are asked to provide instructional materials for their lesson period to improve upon their teaching and learning process. Carter et al. (1951) reported that the provision of instructional material by teachers is a means of developing in them creativity and other qualities that can carry a programme going. Leadership qualities cannot be ruled out as being included in these other qualities. The development of leadership in group members involves making it possible for them to assume responsibility for the planning and development of the programme and their own in service improvement (Wiles, Brown and Cassidy, 1961). They opined that leadership is fostered by creating a permissive atmosphere in which the individual feels secure enough to make his unique contribution, offering an opportunity to assume responsibility in program development, and encouraging the full use of creative ability in teaching process. Guouldner (1950) stated that designated employees of any firm have a high probability of developing leadership attributes with a constant interaction with their daily routine functions. The women who are constantly in touch with teaching could do so with ease. His quality of work is at the same time increased and more authoritative in the discharge of her functions.

According to Berkwitz (1951) in a democratic sense, the sharing and acceptance of responsibility is enlarged to include contributing ideas, helping the group to reach basic agreements, joining in the establishment of plans and executing Assignments that grow out of group planning. One can understand that all these things are done by women where teachers and students serve in various committees. They therefore develop leadership skills through functioning well in the committees. The director cannot function alone in programmes because his administrative functions are too cumbersome, that he shares his responsibilities with members of his staff. By doing so, he is helping them to develop some leadership skills that will help them in Decisions when they attain such positions.

It can be seen from every indication that for leadership skills to be developed, in women, the person must accept and perform some responsibilities so that he will be acquainted with the principles and techniques involved in such areas. A teacher in the School charged with the responsibility of training and taking students for competition need to be very persuasive, patient, tolerant, soft-minded, motivating, and honest, be able to ensure the welfare of his students, fight for and defend the rights of his students. These and

more attributes he will be able to develop with time as she continues to her assigned functions.

Voltmer and Esslinger (1967) remarked that the student manager who shares responsibilities in the control of intramural learns how to work with a variety of people. She benefits from the responsibility she carries and from the lessons she learns by doing her job. The authors also revealed that other opportunities for the students to develop leadership skills in women are:

1. Serving as activity leaders
2. Serving as a leader of squad or class group
3. Membership on rules committees
4. Leader of warming up exercises
5. Membership on equipment and grounds committee
6. Leader for other lower organization
7. Captain of all-Star-team

LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN WOMEN

Every discipline or field of endeavour – academic or non academic requires some skills on the part of the leader or administrator to carry it to the realms of success in the accomplishment of its objective. Morphet, Johns and Reller (1959) stated that leadership is not a matter of passive status, nor does it devolve upon a person simply because she is a possessor of some combination of traits. Rather, the leader acquires leader status through the interactions of the group in which she participates and demonstrates his capacity for assisting the group to complete its tasks. The leader cannot accomplish his task successfully without possessing some skills that will guide her in her work. This is why leadership skills are important in women.

Deduction from various studies on leadership skills point to the fact that people in leadership position were believed to exceed, on the average, the followers in respect of intelligence, scholarship, dependability in exercising responsibilities, activities and social participation, socio-economic status, sociability, initiative, persistence, knowing how to get things done, self confidence, alertness to and insight into situations, cooperativeness, popularly adaptability, communication skills, originality, ambition, emotional stability and judgment (Selzmick 1957). He added that a closer examination of the above characteristic which were presumed to be associated with leadership, point to the fact that essentially they can be categorized under skill or competence in human relations and not necessarily personality traits. These skills can be attained through appropriate instruction, learning experience and training. The only inherited trait that possesses some relationship to leadership is intelligence.

As Firth (1979) puts it, despite the determination of researchers to fully explore the Relationship, evidence is clear that leaders do not possess common characteristics, traits

or consistent patterns thereof, nor is it possible to predict potential for leadership on the basis of personality, intelligence, stature or scholarship. His emphasis on the above statement is on the inclusion of personality intelligence, stature and Scholarship among the leadership skill in any field including women. Dale and Michelon (1975) defined leadership in terms of traits by expressing that a leader is fair, intelligent, confident, kindly and possesses all the desired traits. Maybe apart from the leadership traits stated earlier, other researchers in management and administration outlined leadership skills based on their findings and understanding. For example Berkowitz (1951) concluded that the leader must have the skill to motivate her group or organization for higher productivity or performance, perceive what is expected of her at all time, innovate new ideas and systems into the organizations, be patient, tolerant, ability to control every member of staff, coordinate the various units and activities, supervision of the entire system, energetic and willing to take extra work, promptness, accessible, be technical and tactful, accountable, be able to communicate well and serve as a model. The skills for traits listed above are all important in women for effective performance of the leader. However, it does not mean that a single individual has to possess all the qualities identified to be appointed or elected as a leader in matters related to women.

It is outstanding from every indication that apart from the administration delegating responsibilities to members of her staff and their developing leadership skills from it, members of staff have important roles to play on their own in the development of leadership skills in women. It might not be surprising that two people may be doing the same work, but one develops more leadership skills because of his preparedness to improve in her abilities while the other relaxes.

IMPORTANCE OF DELEGATION IN WOMEN

Delegation in women is of enormous importance. Ordinary observation of the activities involved is enough to make people believe that this is true. There is no way a woman administrator, can perform all the responsibilities found in her official position all alone and successfully, so in other to keep her institution or department alive to expectations, responsibilities have to be delegated to other women.

Beckhard (1969) discussed the rewards of delegation which include the following:

Increase Productivity

More time is saved when functions are delegated to sub-ordinates in any organization. It is a fundamental administrative and management task to achieve results. Since administrators are strictly limited in the amount of work they can do in a given time, the only sure way to increase productivity is to get works done through others. For example, in the school intra-mural programme, the teacher cannot carry out all the responsibilities alone and successfully. So in order to be sure of a smooth operation, the principal has to share the work to their teachers to help in training the students.

More time For Administrators:

Administrators, who spend time frantically working through endless paper work, are simply, not doing their job. Hastings, Bixby and Chaudhry (1986) stated that the tasks of administration are to plan and control, to make decisions affecting the direction of the department or institution not be bogged down in the peripherals. Time is the administrators' most valuable commodity and delegation is the best way to free time for the important administrative duties.

Better Developed Management Abilities

Practicing delegation improves management skills because so much of management relates to the ability to handle people effectively and accordingly, in order to get positive results. Furthermore, the processes of delegation require skill in themselves. It is relatively straight forward to give orders, but to establish one-to-one relationship, choose the correct team members, formulate correct control procedures and work out feasible schedules – this requires some levels of expertise.

Decision-making at the Right Levels

Departments and institutions inevitably take time to reach decisions. It may be highly appropriate if the issues in question affect the whole department or institution and major areas of its policy-making. Decisions are more effective when those who are actually affected by it make them.

Delegation of responsibility always goes with authority. Therefore the subordinate to whom responsibility is delegated takes decisions concerning the responsibility. At times the administrator delegates some members of his staff to take decision concerning certain matters in her department of institution. Tennehill (1970) stated that delegation ensures that those generally on the cutting edge of other people's decisions can increase organization energy by making their own decision.

Staff Participation

Armstrong (1990) is of the view that team members able to make their own decisions (within management frame work) generally have more commitment to the organization, and this is reflected in more and better work, less absenteeism and fewer disputes. This is related to decision making as already discussed above.

Improved Staff Evaluation

Delegation is all about results; it is not about testing team members to see who can handle what. Nonetheless, delegation with its schedules and controls does provide an environment in which it is easy to get an idea of how a member performs a particular task (Berkowitz, 1951). This is particularly valuable when assessing candidates for promotion. For example, the principal of a school has a vacancy for games master; he has a particular teacher in mind and delegates to her the responsibility of reorganizing the school sports programme. This provides an ideal testing ground for the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Delegation of responsibility encourages the development of leadership skills in women. Delegation of responsibility is directly intended to facilitate the functioning of any organization in the achievement of her objectives and effectiveness. While doing this, it offers members of staff a good opportunity to develop interest, confidence ability to initiate action and other specialized competences. They also have the opportunity to exhibit some natural leadership qualities which have never manifested because of lack of opportunity, to do so.

By delegation of responsibilities to members of staff, the administrator has ensured work effectiveness, increased productivity, cooperation among staff members. They are also given the opportunity to initiate action, motivate others to work. They make decisions based on consensus and decisions are more effective when they are made by those who are concerned. It breeds a good working climate and the welfare of both the staff and organization is enhanced. When people are integrated into the cream of organization's administration, they are likely to offer their best in the organization because they have no reason not to do so. While offering their best, they at the same time develop leadership skills.

Recommendation

Delegation of responsibility should be taken seriously in women. Women administrators should not dominate the sensitive areas in their departments or institutions since by delegation of responsibility to the subordinates, they develop leadership skills. When responsibilities are assigned to a group together, limits of operation of each member of the group should be made clear to avoid conflicts.

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