

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR MUTATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *In recent times, ardent watchers and analysts of the Nigerian project have suggested that the country has endemic leadership issues with genetic foundations deeply rooted in Her DNA. Although this assertion has been sharply contested, the apparent malady in the current behaviours of persons in key leadership positions in the country seems to have assumed worrisome dimensions. The observed leadership behaviours have taken an impoverishing toll on the efforts at National Development. Thus, this work, in the bid to evolve persons with development –centric leadership behaviours, took an organic approach to attempt to resolve the underlying leadership malaise. This was done using metaphoric symbolisms and biological analogies to have an introspective view of aspects of molecular ecology. This dimension was adopted in order to explain how leadership behaviour mutation could counteract the prevailing leadership trend and provide actionable thoughts for the ultimate attainment of sustainable National Development.*

KEYWORDS: Behaviour, Development, Leadership, Mutation, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The attainment of a secured development model for Nigeria has perhaps been top most in the strategic aspirations of many of her leaders. From the time of her heroes past to contemporary times, various architects and other technocrats of the Nigerian project have been seeking strategies that will be sustainable for nation building. They have worked hard to put indelible footprints in the sands of time in the march towards putting the ongoing Nigerian project on a platform that will bring comfort to the average Nigerian and open new vistas for national development. All the efforts, though lofty and commendable, have not been able to bequeath the desired legacy and achieve sustainable National Development.

It seems obvious that Nigeria has its peculiarities in the socio-cultural environment which present peculiar challenges which are specific to her. There is therefore a need to set strategic priorities that will suit these peculiarities. Leadership is about understanding the whole gamut of the prevailing environmental dynamics in order to take proactive, active and counteractive measures when necessary. It is important that leadership behaviours demonstrate influential competences in a manner that are imbibed and replicated by the followership. It is axiomatic that fish stinks first at the head. Although this may not be in consonance with piscine biology, the role of leadership in swaying the fortunes of the productive capacities of enterprises cannot be undermined. Ebu

(2016) having observed leadership bankruptcy in vision and selflessness, concurred that the development of a nation does not entirely depend on the abundance of her natural and mineral resources. With a population of over one hundred and eighty million persons, the issue of quantity of potential leaders may not be raised. However, the challenge appears to be in the quality of potential leaders with the right behaviours to drive key productive enterprises which will culminate in the ultimate attainment of lofty National development goals.

The colossal waste of the nation's resources and the truncation of the achievement of realistic development goals by some of her leaders have gone on unabated for a long time and will continue if nothing drastic is done. Any waste that is relatively permanent, the result of recurring action and/or made permanent in a formal manner, is pathology (Pasieczny, 2017). Pathologies, dysfunctions and managerial errors are all regarded as mismanagement (Christensen, 1993). The apparent behavioural manifestations of the leadership in Nigeria seem indicative of maladies that are deep rooted. In spite of this controversial position as well as its several points and counterpoints, there is a compelling need to recreate and evolve novel sets of leadership behaviours that will produce desirable outcomes that will meet and surpass development goals. Mutations are essential raw materials of evolution (Carlin, 2011). Without necessarily going into the details of molecular ecology, this paper attempts to explore, figuratively, the use of mutations to explain how leadership behaviours could be altered to obtain beneficial *de novo* behaviours for National Development.

LITERATURE /THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

One source of the theoretical strength of this work is from the Living Systems Theory (Miller, 1995). This theory is a general theory relating to all living systems and applicable to any situation where living systems such as cells, organs, organisms, and organisations, are involved. The theory uses organic analogy as its dominant metaphor to analyze a broad range of organisational issues. Sometimes, there could be a change in the sequence of an organisms DNA as well the presence of a disease. As a diagnostic and design tool in developing administrative systems, the Living Systems Theory makes it possible to determine the condition of a system. If pathological, living systems analysis can help to understand and solve them. Pathology, a Greek language derived word, means a state of being ill or the study of diseases. Miller & Miller (1991) see a pathological (abnormal, unhealthy, maladjusted, or inefficient) state in any living system as one in which, for a significant period, either one or more of its critical variables remain beyond the normal steady-state range, or the processes to avoid this situation is excessively costly. Pasieczny (2017) believes that pathologies inseparably accompany all of man's activities including all areas of management of organisations and thus, regards organisational pathology as a long-term, significant irregularity in the functioning of an organisation and by extension defines management pathology as a significant, long-term irregularity in the process of managing an organisation. The leadership situation in Nigeria has shown obvious signs of abnormalities and the presence of a malady. In this work, both changes in the sequence of an organisms DNA as well as pathology will be treated concurrently.

The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977; Rotter, 1954) was another underlying theory of this work. The values of solidarity, hospitality love and truth are prevalent in the original traditional Nigerian society (Ngamen, 2016). The closely knit Nigerian social system, creates ample opportunities for the influence of senior friends, family members and colleagues with development-centric orientations. Leadership behaviours influence others to act in certain manners. Persons can learn by observing the behaviours of others around them, more especially, certain behaviours as exhibited by their leaders. The Social Learning Theory is based on the type of learning that occurs by observing, retaining and replicating novel behaviours executed by others. Social learning could also impact on behaviour when individuals learn by direct instruction as well as through direct experiences.

Leadership Behaviour Mutation

This work views leadership as a management role in terms of the management of public interests. The management of the whole apparatus of government seems to be a bedeviling issue which has defiled many known models. Drucker (1973) surmised three popular explanations for the common failure of public service institutions to perform. One explanation is that their managers are not "businesslike"; another is that they need "better men"; and yet another is that their objectives and results are "intangible." This implies the need to make all public concerns efficient and yield tangible results by ensuring persons exhibit behaviours that are not antithetical to development. Ejimabo (2013) in a bid to identify the leadership practices of past and present leaders involved in the operation of the Nigerian government, opined that inefficiency in the management of public trust, political instability, lack of proper accountability in the country among other factors have severely impeded the ability of successive governments to implement economic policies for the common good of the people. The issue about the calibre of leadership in terms of expertise and other leadership attributes in productive enterprises, especially those handling national concerns, has repeatedly been raised. The incalculable costs of the behaviour of managers of public concerns through their actions and inactions may have prompted Drucker (1973) to emphasize the strong need for the management of public service institutions such as Schools and universities, research laboratories; public utilities; hospitals and other health-care institutions; professional, industry, and trade associations; and many others. The leadership behaviour of those handling the Nigerian project could be astutely described as how leadership behaviours of the handlers of the Nigerian economy have underdeveloped Her. Despite the ample and abundant human, material and natural resources, the results of the metrics and indicators of development show a far cry from logical expectations. The high rate of unemployment has been adduced to the failure of leadership of those managing national concerns (Egun, 2016). With the multitude of unemployed and underemployed persons as well as the apparent job insecurity of the working populace, social ills will likely continue to emerge with unguaranteed personal safety and security of individuals in the country (Nnaemeka, Chkwemeka, Tochukwu & Chiamaka, 2015).

A Mutation is a change in the sequence of an organisms DNA (Carlin, 2011). It is a permanent alteration in the DNA sequence that makes up a gene and the primary source of genetic variation required for evolutionary novelty and adaptation (Jiang, Mu, Huang, Zhang, Wang & Tao, 2010).

This change differs from what was previously known to novel gene make ups which could be good, beneficial, positive or advantageous that increase fitness; bad, harmful, negative or deleterious that decrease it ; indifferent or neutral that are not affected by selection because their effects are too small (Carlin,2011;Loewe & Hill,2010).The evolution of desired leadership behaviours is possible through the variation of certain fundamental flaws in the behaviour of individuals in leadership . Genetic changes that are described as *de novo* (new) mutations can be either hereditary or somatic. The following part of this section assumes that the expected *de novo* mutations should always be good, beneficial, positive and advantageous so that the novel leadership behaviours possess the necessary fitness for development.

Hereditary Leadership Behaviour Mutation: Hereditary mutations are DNA alterations inherited from a parent and are present throughout a person's life in virtually every cell in the body (Griffiths,Miller,Suzuki,Lewontin,&Gelbart,2000). For a leader to lead others he/she must first lead himself /herself (Dion, 2012). This implies that the leader must first understand his/ her personal attributes and have an inner understanding of what it takes to be a leader and his/her role in achieving the common good of his /her followers and the society at large. The expected resultant effect is that such a leader will know that leadership is a call to serve which must be done selflessly and sacrificially. This mutant leadership behaviour is development-centric. Development-centric leadership behaviours are leadership behaviours that glaringly portray genuine and purposeful drive for the continuous progress of every aspect of the Nation's life. Going by the natural sequence of life that parents beget children ,it is logical that a person with development-centric leadership behaviours ,will feel the burning need to replicate and reproduce his /her own kind who will possess development-centric leadership behaviours . Through exemplary lifestyles with high moral and ethical values which the development-centric leader exhibits on a continuous basis, their offsprings will naturally inherit such development-centric behaviours which are then inherited by the offsprings after them and it is hoped that any further mutations in the cycle will maintain the status quo or continue to be better than each previously beneficial and advantageous mutation.

Somatic Leadership Behaviour Mutation: Somatic mutations which are also known as acquired mutations occur at some time during a person's life and are present only in certain cells (Griffiths, *et al.*, 2000). These Acquired mutations could be caused by environmental factors and such mutations in somatic cells cannot be passed to the next generation by heredity. Such a situation may occur if a general societal value reorientation on the desired development-centric behaviours is made by perhaps a change in the course of events in the society or from social influence from those who may have inherited such behaviours .People learn from other people through socialization. The Social learning process could be acquired by interaction, instruction and personal experiences (Bandura, 1977; Rotter, 1954). Leadership involves the exercise of influence to affect the behaviour of others in a group in a way that the members are relatively satisfied (Forsyth, 2014). Social norms could be positively affected through social influence in a way that the diverse backgrounds of the citizens of Nigeria, which has hitherto raised concerns for many

with issues such as nepotism and tribalism featuring prominently, could be leveraged upon and the synergy harnessed to propagate the desired development-centric behaviours.

National Development

Nigeria's status among the comity of nations in the developed/developing country taxonomy of the United Nations has consistently been placed in the developing category. Virtually all notions and models of development have been experimented upon to no avail (Aremu, 2003). Ebun (2016) sees development as the positive and conscious transformation of a society and its people and thus believes that development must be related to change in the society, and this change must not only be positive but also a conscious one. Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013) have mentioned high crime rate as an indicator of underdevelopment. The current insecurity levels have assumed an alarming dimension which is an indication of failure of leadership in government. Underdeveloped Countries have the characteristic features of endemic rural and urban widespread poverty, illiteracy, decayed and dilapidated social and physical infrastructural facilities, massive unemployment, low capacity utilization, technological backwardness, short-life expectancy, urban congestion, rural stagnation, growing inequalities with little hopes of accelerated development, excessive debt burden, environmental degradation, low industrial output, deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, poor growth of agricultural production and high incidence of diseases (Ewetan, & Urhie 2014; Iheanacho, 2014 ;Lawal & Oluwatoyin,2011). The state of development of the nation is obviously pathological. Pathology is understood as the extended presence of a dysfunction which negatively impact on a defined social system and leads to interference in the efficient functioning of organisations. (Pasieczny, 2017) considers the worst pathologies in administration to include unjustified excessive spending on the external manifestation of power (Luxurymania), official misconduct or misuse of public function for personal gain (Corruption), permanent increase in the number of employees, multiplication of organisational entities (Gigantomania), and arrogance of power.

The underlying measures of National Development in this work are the security and welfare of the citizens as contained in Chapter II, Section 14, Subsection 2(b) of the Nigerian Constitution (1999) which deals with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. In the said Section, it is specified that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory case study. An exploratory case study investigates distinct phenomena characterized by a lack of detailed preliminary research and can also be used to explain causal relationships as well as in theory development (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). This exploratory study looked at leadership behaviour in the Nigerian context as a contemporary phenomenon and attempted to provide deeper insights into how this phenomenon could be altered to achieve positive developmental outcomes. The vistas of novel ideas generated from this work lay the foundation on which future studies will build upon and open critical paths for future research.

DISCUSSION

Evolution is the change in heritable traits of biological populations over successive generations (Ashraf & Sarfraz, 2016). Drawing from this, Ethical Evolution is the beneficial change in the current moral leadership behaviour in the nation which will be passed on to future generations. Be it hereditary or somatic, a mutation that will alter the current ethical behaviours of persons in leadership in the nation is obviously desirable. Bhagwan & Bhushan (2007) posit that if one gets the right person in the leadership job, all problems will be solved. Unethical behaviours exhibited by many Nigerian leaders have adversely affected the fortunes of Nigeria as a nation (Ejimabo, 2013). The present state of affairs in the nation has indeed necessitated the call for a state of emergency to be declared to resolve the issue of leadership. Transparency International has consistently placed Nigeria in unenviable positions. In its 2017 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the nation earned the 148th position out of 180 in the world (www.transparency.org/country/NGA2018). An assessment of the current leadership situation shows policy and decision makers who make anti-people policies and are involved in deleterious leadership behaviours such as bribery, corruption, abuse of power as well as egoism. Also observable, are the tendencies of leadership to engage in unethical practices such as escalation of commitment in decisions making, although they have ample evidence that the decisions are not appropriate. Perlow, Okhuysen & Repenning, (2002) have linked pathology to faulty decision-making. There is thus the need for ethical disinfection to arrive at a situation of Ethical asepsis- a state of being free of ethical pathogens such as favoritism, nepotism and tribalism, misappropriation, embezzlement, bribery, corruption, abuse of power and such other ethically pathogenic elements.

De Novo Value Orientation is the creation of environmental conditions that are devoid of deleterious elements in the value system which are inimical to development-centric orientations in the society. Development-centric leadership orientation campaigns in the society may be an avenue to inject *de novo* value reorientation into the leadership and followership of the country. The society in which a person lives has a great influence on him/her. Thus, the need to create conditions that will detoxify the environmental values of pathogenic elements inimical to national development. Cultural values and beliefs affect the practice of leadership development, which relates to the values, beliefs, hopes, and fears of human existences. (Hofstede, 2001; Ejimabo, 2013). Get-rich- quick-syndrome, praise –singing, reckless show of opulence, fraud, greed, mistrust, tribalism, nepotism, impunity and injustice are some current toxic values of the Nigerian environment inimical to development-centric leadership behaviours. These factors and others have contributed greatly to the under development of the nation.

Corporate Efficiency is a hopeful derivable benefit of leadership behaviour mutation. Beneficial leadership behaviour mutation will bring about leadership in all facets of the productive sectors that will minimize waste and maximize results for the corporate good of the people of Nigeria. Tsang (2002) notes that to formulate uniquely appropriate performance strategies that result in

process improvements, hands-on coaching and consultation to help citizens and employees avoid unnecessary frustration and waste of efforts, increase task-relevant knowledge and skills should be made available. Advantageous mutant behaviours could help develop problem-solving skills which will enhance the leader's creative ability to solve problems, especially in turbulent and volatile environments. Nigeria is in dire need of development- centric leaders who are visionary problem-solvers, are not resource wasters and do not shift the responsibility for mistakes to others.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

In Nigeria, there is an urgent need to evolve novel sets of leadership behaviours that will be development-centric and be passed from generation to generation. This study on leadership behaviour mutation for national development closes this gap and has the following beneficial implications for research and practice.

- i. This study gives a general insight of the possibility of leadership behaviour alteration as an avenue to national development.
- ii. This study is a novel platform for ethical evolution and value reorientation in the society which could be transferred to future generations.
- iii. This study contributes to the creation of corporate efficiency of the Nigerian nation by having new leadership that prioritizes waste minimization and resource conservation.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria has had enough inefficient leaders. Now is the time for leaders with development- centric leadership behaviours. This paper is optimistic that the attainment of sustainable development of Nigeria is possible through the evolution of *de novo* leadership behaviours which could be made possible by Leadership Behaviour Mutation.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Mutations affect present and future genetic formations and may not be applied retroactively. Specific studies which could generate actionable thoughts in the following areas are therefore suggested.

- i. Deleterious leadership behaviour avoidance.
- ii. Rebirth of *de novo* value orientation for the society.
- iii. Self rejuvenation and self discovery for best behavioural practices in leadership positions.

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