Leadership and Innovative Behaviour in the Twenty First Century Academic Library

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LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY ACADEMIC LIBRARY

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Abstract

The paper considered leadership and innovation behaviours in the academic libraries of the 21st century. Based on an extensive review of literature it explored concepts in leadership behavior that can engender innovation in academic libraries. It was discovered that change is inevitable in environment due to the emergence of a pervasive application of information technology and communication to its operations. Thus, the 21st century library needs to integrate emerging technologies to its routine activities as well as expand the frontier of its services to gain competitive advantage over other information retrieval systems in order to ensure continuous relevance and sustainability. Noting that the extent to which libraries would deploy technologies and conform to global standards is determined by the quality of prevailing leadership competencies and skills. However, it was observed that the Nigerian academic libraries have not been able to find their footings in the scheme of effective leadership and innovation. It is therefore recommended that libraries; promote culture which supports new services, innovation and emerging technologies, put people at the centre by redefining services to provide easy experience for all library users among others.

Keywords: Leadership Behaviour, Innovation Behaviour, Academic libraries, Organisation, Change, Relevance, ICT.

Introduction

The personality and example of a top leader is a key factor in setting the direction and tone of an organization. In essence, the attitudes, personal qualities, and skills of leaders are vital ingredients in innovation. Innovation is increasingly becoming the zeitgeist of this age as it is the key to winning and sustaining leadership in world markets. New ideas and new ways of doing thing are the life wire of business success. According to Adair (2009)," innovation is a deliberate and specific introduction of what is new, aimed at accomplishing the goals of an organization more effectively". This shows that innovation is not just the conception of new ideas but include the process of successfully implementing them by turning same into useful, practicable and commercial services or products. Thus innovation does not happen by chance, it is planned for, controlled, monitored and guided towards the ends of the organization. Therefore, it requires good leadership and management in the organization including the academic library.

The academic libraries has been faced with emergence of novel activities and operations in the last few decades and only the leader who has the ability to think creatively, encourage team creativity, communicate and make things happen will achieve innovation in his/her library. The wave of change has made terms such as benchmarking and scenario management common place in the implementation of new things in the library profession globally. This pre-supposes that although the change may be similar, it is required of the innovative leader to adequately adapt it to his/her work environment based on available facilities and resources. This paper explores different concept of leadership and innovative behavior in academic librarianship, related indicators of leadership and innovative behavior in academic libraries, discuss other related works and narrow it down to leadership and innovative behavior in academic libraries in Nigeria.

Concepts of Leadership Behaviour

Leadership is defined simply as "the ability to inspire motivation in others to move toward a desirable vision. While management is focused on tasks, leadership is focused on the person. All in all, the best leadership drives change and long lasting motivation." (Josh Kuehler cited by Adepoju, Ajiboye &Koleoso, 2016). Leadership is about getting things done and helping people reach their potential. (Smith, 2014). It is the art of influencing human behaviour in order to accomplish a task in the manner desired by the leader. Leadership is the discipline of deliberately

exerting special influence within a group to move it toward goals of beneficial permanence that fulfills the group's real need (Haggai, 2016).

Leadership is ability: the ability of leaders to listen and observe, to be able to apply their knowledge and be able to communicate it at all stages of decision-making, to establish strategies and transparency in decision-making, to articulate their visions and values clearly, thereby not imposing them. Leadership is about figuring out problems, and initiating a change that makes for substantial and quality development instead of coping with change. Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen. Leadership is knowing what to do next; knowing why that's important; and knowing how to bring appropriate resources to bear on the need at hand (Nkwocha, 2012). Riliwanu (2014) opined that the role of leadership refers to the position of authority in some organizational hierarchy, while the function refers to the activities and processes that move a group or organization towards the accomplishment of its goals. In order to be effective, a leader must develop and possess certain behaviours which are referred to as leadership behaviour.

Leadership behaviour is desired recognizable characteristics, in an effective Team Leader at the helm of a productive team or aspiring leader. It is an umbrella term that comprises developing and exhibiting attitudes that depict leadership. Talking about leadership behavior, attributes such as the ability to influence, motivate, mentor, role modeling, commitment, good communication skills, being a team player, trusting others, and be trustworthy are usually considered. It does not rely on traditional managing ability or skills rather it brings a different perspective to the management team. Thus it requires hinging on a continuous learning curve for exceptional performance (Ly, 2015). Leadership behavior entails seizing any available opportunity for development and sees opportunities a problematic situation. For instance, identifying occasion for growth, thinking of ways for improvement, developing a strong working relationship inside and outside of the organization, gaining supervisory experience and serving selflessly to attaining set goals, are manifestations of Leadership behavior.

Having an intentional desire to be a leader is the first step in this direction and contributes to a great extent to developing and imbibing leadership behaviour. Rabb (2009) explained the Recognizing Opportunities for Library Leadership (ROLL Matrix) in relation to librarians'

identification of opportunities to inspire, motivate, and lead. Deiss (2008) argues that "leadership by drift" occurs when leadership roles are assumed without much self-reflection or actual choice. This kind of leader may not perform maximally as it takes time and effort to develop excellent leadership behavior (Ly, 2015).

A good leadership behavior is seeking for leadership opportunities as regards professional growth in various ways, volunteering to lead projects and work with different people across the library, such as serving as project manager for an integrated library system (ILS) migration or leading a group to reconsider some new policy for the organization (Ly, 2015).

Furthermore, leadership behavior involves mentoring others as well as upcoming leaders, being humble to identify and have an effective and efficient mentor and observe him/her closely in different settings and actively reflecting with the mentor. Ly, (2015), shared his experience in the lines below;

> I expressed to my new dean that I was interested in becoming a manager and was fortunate to find that she enthusiastically began to mentor me. She shared with me the details about her duties, responsibilities, challenges, and successes, and invited me to assist with administrative tasks such as writing job descriptions, preparing grant proposals, and contributing to staff evaluations…..I had the opportunity to observe my mentor in different settings and actively reflect with her. It was invaluable experience for me to see an effective leader in action in instructional team meetings, faculty discussions, leading a division retreat, and in library professional meetings. I had the opportunity to ask questions during our post-observation processing and my mentor expressed that it was valuable for her to reflect on her leadership practice with me.

Leadership behavior is taking advantage of opportunities to grow one's knowledge of leadership and increase existing network, such as participation in leadership conferences/programmes and professional associations. These are programmes that facilitate dialogue about leadership and help to connect with other leaders. Apart from the foregoing, pursuing a professional higher degree (Doctorate or Master's Degree) can help to study and apply leadership theory to the workplace. This is due to the fact that some coursework at his level exposes the student to concepts that align with practical activities including appreciative inquiry models, critical pedagogy and transformative leadership theory.

Finally, a good leadership behavior expresses more of servant leadership approaches in contrast to traditional, hierarchical models. A "servant leader" prioritizes serving others in a flipped organizational chart and focuses on collaboration, empathy, trust, and ethical use of power (Spears, 2005). The characteristics of servant-leadership that is most desired include commitment to the growth of others, stewardship, and building community (Ly, 2015).

leadership behavior is having the ability to effect change, tendency to identify issues, search for solutions, volunteer time, take on responsibility and put the needs of others first. Additionally it foster strong interpersonal relationships, and provide growth opportunities.
Listening, asking questions for understanding, and focusing on positive outcomes, having to make tough decisions and to be creative in order to meet organizational goals, confidence goes a long way authenticate effective leadership behaviour.

Concept of Innovative Behaviour

Innovation is defined as the introduction of a new product, a new service, a new technology, or a new administrative practice into the organization; or a significant improvement to an existing product, service, technology, or administrative practice (Adair (2009). In a study of innovation in academic libraries, Clayton stated that "innovation is no longer an option but a necessity" (1997). Jantz (2012) citing Thompson (1982) pointed out that the pressure for change comes "not just from the potentiality of the new technology, but from the professional paralysis which has now made most of our major libraries largely unusable" (p. 118). Innovation is about finding a better way of doing something in any organization and it requires some set of behaviours for actualization.

According to DeJong and Hartog, (2007) innovative behavior refers to multi-dimensional inclusive construct that captures all behaviours through which employees can contribute to the innovation process of an organization. Carmeli, Weisberg and Meitar (2006) opined that innovative behaviour is a multi-staged process that comprises recognition of a problem, creating new ideas and solutions for the problem, creating support for the new ideas and solutions for use in the organization. The process of innovation is often described to include an initiation and implementation phases (DeJong and Hartog, 2007). In essence it involves discovering and

defining a problem, proffering solution and implementing the solution. Innovative behavior describes all activities that belong to generating, evaluating, realizing and implementing of new ideas. Amongst others these are; the search for and the testing of new technologies, the creation and use of new paths to reach the companies' goals, the use of new work-methods, or the acquisition of resources to realize ideas (Yuan and Woodman 2010, p. 324). Contrary to creative behavior, innovative behavior also includes the adaptation of others' existing ideas besides just new ones (Yuan and Woodman 2010, p. 324).

There are certain traits that characterize an individual or employee's innovative behaviour. They are part of their personality and can only be influenced to some extent. In literature, these are some of the traits that are beneficial for innovative behaviour is as follows:

- ➢ Visionary view on challenges and solutions
- ➢ Openness to change
- ➢ Persistency
- ➢ Thorough presentation of ideas and solutions
- ➢ Persuasive power
- ➢ Independent search for information, resources and support (Yuan & Woodman 2010, p. 323)
- ➢ Proactivity in the pursuit of ideas and their transformation into an economic value (Miron, Erez, and Naveh. 2004, p. 178)
- ➢ Honesty and the ability to solve conflicts (Tjosvold 2008, p. 19)
- ➢ Intrinsic interest in the own work and/or problem solving (Yuan & Woodman 2010, p. 323)

Innovative behavior is limited the employees only but the leadership of an organization if there must be outstanding success. Adair (2009), Few identified traits of innovative behavior at the leadership level in addition to those listed above are:

- ➢ Flexibility
- ➢ Good communication ability
- ➢ Commitment

- ➢ Strategic thinking ability
- ➢ Patience (long term perspective)
- ➢ Responsiveness to change
- ➢ Acceptance of risks
- ➢ Team player

Also innovative behaviour in a leader requires him/her to practice leadership methods such as Transformational and participative leadership as well as leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (DeJong and Hartog, 2007). The foregoing in leader will help the leader implement strategies that influence employee's innovative behaviour more effectively.

Diffusion Theory of Innovation

Rogers (2003) described an organization as a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labor (p.404). Consequently, the Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) theory by Rogers, which state that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among the participants in a social system, will be employed as a model to explain the essential concepts relating to the innovation process. The DoI theory describes how an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Rogers, 2003, p. 5). According to Rogers (2003, p. 15), innovation has five perceived attributes which explain different rates of adoption:

 a) Relative advantage, the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it replaces,

 b) Compatibility, the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the organization's values and culture;

 c) Complexity, the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use;

d) Trial-ability, the degree to which an innovation lends itself to experimenting and prototyping; and

e) Observability, the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others while the diffusion process is divided into three main categories—initiation of the innovation, the decision to adopt, and implementation of the innovation (Rogers, 2003, pp. 421–422).

The peculiarities of the 21st Century Academic Libraries

The 21st century library is characterized by change therefore; the environment places a premium on speed, flexibility, and the ability to lead in uncertain situations. Jantz (2012) stated that "during the last half of the 20th century, many researchers and practitioners have claimed that academic libraries must make dramatic changes or face the possibility of being marginalized"

Cronin, (2010) noted at the session of the Online Information conference, that reference queries, reference transactions and circulation in libraries have been steadily decreasing over recent years. And libraries are progressively getting less and less of universities' budgets, especially in the current financial crisis. One of the issues that arise from this is staffing. Libraries sometimes spend almost half their budget on staff which often results in duplication of effort.

He then predicted that the 21st century academic libraries are going to be zones of sanctuary and security where people can be networked and work together. He envisaged a re-conceptualized space that will be a combination of coffee shop, book shop and speed dating center, with core material and off site stores. He also predicted greater collaboration between libraries beyond the normal consortia deals. Libraries need to understand what users want and embrace opportunities, he argued. 'Students want material that is virtual and personalized. We need to get material into the palm of users' hands and get the library brand out there to compete with Google and new services like ChaCha,' he said.

Presently, the emerging Information technologies are increasingly being deployed to the libraries. Many libraries are effectively using Twitter, e-mail, flikr, group chats google plus, etc., while other libraries have developed applications that enable users to search catalogues from within Facebook.' Others use text and instant messaging alerts, social bookmarking applications devices such as e-book readers and iPods to mention a few.

According to Nkiko (2008), Great and vibrant libraries are now measured by the level of automation, Internet connectivity, and accessibility to other libraries on real time basis, subscription to reputable online databases as well as quality of collections. Information and communication technology (ICT) has, thus become a defining parameter in delineating libraries. The ones that are fully ICT driven are regarded as modern while those manually-driven are

termed traditional. The current global standard is that libraries thrive on the application of technologies in their quest for excellent service delivery. To disregard leveraging with this benchmark is to accept extinction and irrelevance.

The rapid and seemingly unpredictable changes in the library and information profession have put the twenty-first century librarians in an unprecedented apprehension. There is growing and fierce competition from other information providers and companies like Google. It is therefore a critical and defining period for the LIS professionals. Librarians are expected to grow their leadership competencies and skills to manage the emerging changes in libraries. The extent to which libraries will adapt to technologies and mainstream to global standards would be a reflection of its leadership. Ammons-stephens (2009) observed that widening digital divide, resistance to change, declining culture of reading and assimilation as well as poor skills are traceable to leadership deficit in the libraries and the parent institutions.

Although, Institutions such as academic libraries do not have the benefit of quantitative measures such as profit and loss report to provide evidence for the need to change, or a reliable mechanism for measuring outcomes. The customers (students staff and faculty), comprise a typical diverse group and do not usually voice out dissatisfaction when they receive low quality services. Also, competitive threats from the external environment may not be seen as requiring a response and the need for major change. One therefore asks why a library leader should take a risk by instituting major change when incremental change appears sufficient for the institution to survive and thrive (Jantz, 2012). Nadler and Tushman (1990) have indicated, a continued focus on incremental innovation in the face of environmental turbulence is a recipe for failure.

Leadership and Innovative Behaviour in 21st Academic Library

Leadership behaviour in the 21st century academic library behoves the leader to synthesize different leadership styles to influence colleagues and subordinates to produce creative ideas, products, services and solutions. Vision building and promoting the process of owning and buying into a common goal are desired essential features of library leadership that will encourage and grow a learning organisation. The leader must build a culture of continuously challenging its own methods and ways of doing things, ensure continuous improvement and the capacity to align with trends in the profession.

University's roles of learning, teaching & research suggest a dynamic, ever-changing environment. Considering that we are in the information age, the library as an access point for information plays a vital role. It therefore, behoves the leaders of the 21st century academic libraries to continuously seek to extend the frontiers of knowledge and redefine practices and systems. The library leadership must be a strategic thinker, an effective communicator, having enough political 'clout' and good tactical sense to persuade the relevant stakeholders on the need for specific technologies in the library. Based on basic standards in librarianship, the leader thrives on using other libraries as benchmark. Benchmarking exercises are premised on the inquisitiveness of what other reputable libraries are doing with a view to performance measurement. It has been validated by several studies that when leaders are enthusiastic and visionary, all other members of the organization naturally buy in into the philosophy hence successful adoption and implementation.

The leader must make innovation a watch word thereby constantly asking: What should change? What should be done differently? He must imagine a desired future state and figure out how to get there. For instance he should be concerned with how to employ information communication technology for effective operations and service delivery such as, effective access to information, cataloguing and classification, reference services, inter-library loans and circulation services to mention but a few. Thus, responding to new ideas, manage and initiate change knowing that what does not change does not grow, and what does not grow dies.

Review of related Studies

The study by Waghmare and Salve (2014) on Innovative Practices in Academic Libraries in ICT Environment showed that the Library of Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce (BMCC) Pun, is a leading commerce library in Maharashtra, shouldering its responsibility of catering for the information requirements of upcoming leadership in the field of commerce, trade, banking and economics. Findings from the paper revealed that BMCC adopted innovative practices in the mode of its delivery of library services and users are really taking advantage of these new practices in the library services. Consequently, BMCC Library is serving as model for other academic libraries in the zone. The study concluded that Technology alone cannot help bring about the required changes and recommended that Attitudes, practices, and policies need to

change if libraries are to truly benefit themselves and their community of users by the application of new technologies.

Ward, D. M. (2013) in another study titled "Innovation in academic libraries during a time of crisis" found from three libraries where he conducted interviews that innovation in academic libraries require greater attention to the processes that bridge differences between individuals and groups. Noting that whereas social movements focus on conflict between opposing perspectives, innovation stresses the need to welcome diverse ideas and integrate them in a productive manner. The strategic repertoire for innovation according to the study includes authentic participation, facilitation, informal shared learning, outreach and collaboration. Additionally, innovation succeeds when external circumstances conspire to assist in its advancement. Thus, leadership for innovation requires the ability to create the circumstances whereby the members of the organization can engage new ideas. It recommended therefore, that the academic library community must act on the implications of viewing innovation as a form of collective action by focusing more attention on interpersonal and intergroup dynamics. Owing to the fact that the contextual nature of innovation implies that innovation is not about changing people, but about enabling them to use their skills and expertise to participate in shaping innovation. Finally, the study emphasized the importance of developing organizational capacity to generate and integrate cognitive diversity.

A study on Innovation in academic libraries: An analysis of university librarians' perspectives by Jantz (2012) showed that library leadership will need to create strategies that support both traditional services and exploratory activities that hold the promise for creating totally new services. These strategic changes will likely necessitate a different business model, perhaps one with more revenue-generating services and more business-like indicators of performance. The greatest challenge for academic library leaders will be in creating the proper balance, and minimizing the inherent conflict between exploratory efforts and the more traditional activities that support existing services.

This research demonstrated the complexity and the importance of innovation, as perceived by university librarians. Continued change and opportunity were evident in these leaders' comments.

Their perspectives and the supporting literature clearly suggest that the external environment and the coercive forces resulting from reduced budgets have led to innovative products and services. University librarians espoused a commitment to innovation, some distinctively nontraditional innovations, and a concern for how to encourage risk-taking behavior. Further insight into the innovation process from interview data revealed that leadership and management can foster innovation in a library, while other factors that can influence the ability to innovate, including organizational aspects–size and complexity–and environmental factors. Beyond the organizational aspects, the individual and the norms of the profession appear to create a framework with certain boundaries, some of which may impact the ability to innovate.

Leadership and Innovative Behaviour in Nigerian Academic Libraries

Innovation and leadership in Nigerian academic libraries do not quite measure up to what exists in other parts of the world based on available literature. Mortenson Centre's description of the state of academic libraries in Nigeria evokes a sense of struggling and survival phase of development. This phase is usually characterised by survival instincts devoid of standards, ideals, values and ethics. The operators in this environment appear helpless and live in a mentality of justifiable mediocrity. They reported that the libraries were isolated from what is happening in the library and information global environment as many librarians were still learning about technologies through literature rather than exposure to practical hands-on experience which was not available at the time. Finally, it was reported that Nigerian librarians, lacked the exposure to international standards and experiences.

According to findings by Momodu (2013) in a study, Nigeria is faced with precarious situations like leadership crisis, misplaced priorities, poverty, insecurity, infrastructural decay, economic strife, and most importantly, the politicization of education. Statistical records show that in Nigeria, physical facilities in some university libraries are inadequate for effective learning, and needed facilities for the physically challenged are nearly non-existent. As a result, there are growing concerns about the numerous challenges encountered by physically challenged individuals in the use of the library. This review paper therefore, x-rays these challenges beyond rhetoric and shelf-destined findings and reports. It highlights the need to improve the current

status of Nigerian libraries to meet the multidimensional service demands of citizens living with disabilities.

A study by Osuigwe, Ezeani and Anyaoku (2013), on Emotional Intelligence of library leaders and innovative library services in South East Nigeria established that though high levels of some components of EI could be found among the leaders that are positively related with innovative services, there was a noticeable lack in the area of interactions with stakeholders outside the library circles. The paper therefore, recommended that library leaders within the States under study should synergize with other stakeholders in the information provision chain to bring about innovations in their libraries. They should be able to lobby within their institutions and government circles to attract funds for creative services and leverage the use of ICT to enable innovations. Finally, library leaders need to be more assertive, scale up their social and relationship skills and network within and outside their library workforce to bring about innovation and creativity in their libraries.

Ugwu and Ezema (2010) found from their study that, the skills needed for successful knowledge management applications are KM cultural skills, leadership skills, strategic skills and restructuring skills. For effective application of knowledge management in Nigerian university libraries, it is important that librarians are trained to acquire the identified KM skills to face the challenges of knowledge economy. This is a fundamental study which reveals the relevance of knowledge management in Nigerian university libraries in line with competencies required for effective KM implementation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The 21st century library is characterized by inevitable change due to the pervasiveness of the application of information technology and communication to its operations. This has become a global standard and best practice. The impact of this trend on the demands and expectation of the technology savvy and more sophisticated library clientele has been phenomenal. Modern libraries must integrate emerging technologies to its routine activities as well as expand the frontier of its services to gain competitive advantage over other information retrieval systems, and thus ensure continuous relevance and sustainability. The extent to which libraries would

deploy technologies and conform to global standards is determined by the quality of prevailing leadership competencies and skills. However, it has been observed that the Nigerian academic libraries have not been able to find their footings in the scheme of effective leadership and innovation. The following are therefore, recommended for leadership of academic libraries to meet up with required standards:

> Put people at the centre by redefining services to provide easy experience for all library users.
> Promote culture which supports new services, innovation and emerging technologies.
> Empower everyone to find, share and create content.
> Eliminate barriers to accessing facilities, collections, programs and services.
> Have a more consolidated and holistic approach to service delivery throughout library system.
> Strive to be recognized as the repository of choice.
> Experiment and take necessary risk by trying new things and new ways of doing things!
> Be committed to encouraging and sustaining the learning of all members of the library.
> Finally, the library must provide increasing satisfaction and fulfillment to all stakeholders and support the sharing of common values.

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