



## **Leadership and Development of Agricultural Education in the University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examined leadership and development of agricultural education in the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 11 academic staff in the Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education. Three (3) of the lecturers served previously at the capacity of the head of department. There was no sample for the study since the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Leadership Development Questionnaire (LDQ) with 24 items. The instrument was validated by three experts for content and face validity. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The researchers administered the questionnaires and retrieved them on the spot, thus recording a hundred percent retrieval rate. The data collected was analyzed using mean with standard deviation while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that all the successive heads of department displayed some level of achievement but were lacking in rewarding hardworking staff and there was no academic tour for staff in the department. There were no welfare packages for staff in the department. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the head(s) of department should reward staff who distinguish themselves, academic tour should be organized for staff in the department.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Development and Agricultural Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a term that has generated divergent concepts for decades, it describes, powerful generals that have conquered territories, chief executive officers who coordinated and directed corporate organizations; politicians who shaped the course of their nations, religious individuals who influenced their followers, and activists who inspired their great followers. These arrays describing leadership makes it difficult to arrive at a definite definition or description of a leader. Janda (1960) in Gary (2006) averred that the term leadership is a word taken from the common vocabulary and incorporated into technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely redefined. As a consequence, it carries extraneous connotations that create ambiguity of meaning. The author further states that additional confusion is caused by the use of other imprecise terms such as power, authority, management, administration, control, and supervision to describe the same phenomena.

Hemphill and Coons (1997) describe a leader as an individual characterized by a drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, originality in problem solving, to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb inter-personal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other persons' behaviour, and capacity to structure interaction system to the purpose at hand. These are also referred to as leadership achievement. House (1999) in Gary (2006) asserts that leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization.

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. As seen by the employees, it includes the total pattern of explicit and implicit actions performed by the leader (Martindale, 2011). The author suggested six leadership styles exhibited by leaders in politics, schools, businesses, military and other organizations.

The authoritarian leadership style keeps main emphasis on the distinction of the authoritarian leader and their followers, these types of leaders make sure to only create a distinct professional relationship. Direct supervision is what they believe to be the key in maintaining a successful environment and followership. Authoritarian leadership style often follows the vision of those that are in control, and may not necessarily be compatible with those that are being led. Authoritarian leaders have focus on efficiency, hierarchy, discipline, strict compliance to rules and regulations of the organization and other forms of laid down procedures.

The way a paternalistic leader works is by acting as a father figure. The leaders take care of their subordinates as a parent would. The leader shows absolute concern for his subordinates and in return receives the complete trust and loyalty of the subordinates. Workers under this style of leadership are expected to be committed totally to what the leader believes and will not work differently. The relationship between the leader and the subordinates is very solid. The subordinates are expected to stay in the organization for a very long period of time because of their loyalty and trust. One of the setbacks of a paternalistic leader is that the leader could start to show favoritism in his decisions; the leader will include subordinates that are more apt to his decisions and exclude the ones who are less loyal.

The democratic leadership style consists of sharing decision-making responsibilities with group members by promoting the interest of the group members and by maintaining social equality. The boundaries of democratic participation tend to be circumscribed by the organization or the group needs and the instrumental value of people's attributes (skills, attitudes, knowledge). The democratic style of leadership encompasses the notion that everyone, by virtue of their human status, should be actively involved in the groups' decisions. However, the democratic leader style still need guidance and control by the leader. Democratic leadership style is one of the most effective and creates higher productivity, better contributions from group members and increases group morale. Democratic Leadership style can lead to better ideas and more creative solutions to problems because group members are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas. While democratic leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles, it does have some potential downsides. In situations where roles are unclear or time is of essence, democratic leadership can lead to communication failure and uncompleted projects. Democratic leadership style work best when group members are skilled and are willing to share their knowledge. It also requires enough time to allow group members to contribute, develop a plan and their vote on the best action to be taken.

The laissez-faire leadership style is where all the rights and power to make decisions is fully given to the group members. Laissez-faire leader allows group members to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion work. It allows group members self-rule, while at the same time offering guidance and support when necessary. The laissez-faire leader provides the group members all the necessary assistance and materials to accomplish the organization goals, but does not participate in decision making unless the workers request the assistance of the leader. The major problem with this style of leadership is that it creates leadership vacuum thereby causing leadership struggle between the group members.

The transactional leaders focus on motivating followers through a system of rewards and punishments. This type of leader identifies the needs of their followers and gives rewards to satisfy those needs in exchange for certain level of performance. Transactional leaders focus on increasing the efficiency of established routines and procedures. They are more concerned with following existing rules than with making changes to the organization. A transactional leader establishes and standardizes practices that will help the organization achieve its goal.

A transformational leader is a one that is not limited by their follower's perception. The main objective is to work to change or transform his/her follower's needs and redirect their thinking. Leaders that follow the transformational style of leading challenge and inspire their followers with a sense of purpose and excitement. Transformational leaders also create a vision of what they aspire to be, and communicate this idea to others.

Leaders are responsible for the effectiveness and success of any organization including educational institutions like primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities (Thomas and McDaniel, 1992). Steiner (1997) averred that what school leaders stand for and believe about education and school system, the role of education in our society, how schools should be organized and operated, and how parents, teachers and students should be treated constitutes a basic principle that bring

meaning and institutional integrity to educational leadership. The author further stated that successful educational leaders build a common set of values, ideals and principles in their schools.

Education is the process of bringing about relatively permanent change in human behaviour and as the oldest industry, human endeavour, it is the main instrument used by society, irrespective of its stage of development, to preserve, maintain and upgrade its social equilibrium (Armstrong, 2011). The author further states that education which is not targeted towards development is definitely not progressive. It has to do with human development which has a wide range of concern for human, environmental, economic, and sustainable development. Education is a key for the emancipation of human race from the shackles of poverty and want, and in this regards it is seen on three platforms: as a basic human need; as a mean of meeting other human needs and as an activity which sustains and accelerates the general development of human existence.

Education has been recognized as an effective instrument for human development. It is an avenue through which people and materials are produced to transform the society. Education in general and higher education in particular, are noted for the fundamental to the development of knowledge economy and society in all the nations of the world. Education remains a veritable tool for the development of human resources, it constitute the pillar on which the economic, social and political developments are built and remains the fulcrum on which local, national and global prosperity can be achieved (Emaikwu, 2010).

Agricultural education is training given to learners who are ready and willing to acquire skills, knowledge and attitude in order to engage in agricultural production and develop skills in teaching profession. Phipps, Osborne, Dyer and Ball, (2008) averred that agricultural education is the teaching of agriculture, natural resources and land management through hands on experience and guidance to prepare students for entry into agricultural production or for further education to prepare them for advance curriculum; including horticulture, land management, livestock management, among others. Agricultural education is taught at the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels respectively.

Agricultural education stresses on skills that learners must use on specific agricultural job, provides technical background that increases the learner's knowledge of the jobs they are doing and develop interest and attitudes needed for the successful execution of such jobs. The subject matter of agricultural education covers not only crops and animal production but also processing, marketing and storage of farm products (Agbulu and Wever, 2011).

Agricultural education is one programmes of study in the Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education at the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Historically, College of Agricultural and Science Education took off on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2006 with three Departments namely; Department of Agricultural Education, Department of Science Education, and Department of Education Foundation and General Studies

Agricultural Education Department became a statutory department on August 24, 2006 with Prof. A.O. Ochu as the pioneer Head of Department from August 2006 to March, 2007. Dr. J.A. Idoko who took over and served in that capacity till 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2012. He handed to Mr. T. O. O. Agbo- as coordinator of the Department until April 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 when the mantle again was given to Prof. A. O. Ochu. After him Prof. Agbulu, O.N. took over from September, 2014 and has been serving till date. The department runs the following degree programmes; B. Agric. (Ed), PGD Agric. Education, M.Ed Agric. Education and PhD Agric. Education (Dept. of Agric. Edu. Students' Handbook, 20014). It is obvious that women have been left out in the leadership ranking of the department in this era of gender upliftment for the total development of the society. Women are expected to contribute in all facet of economy including leadership positions in academic institutions.

### **Objectives for the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine Leadership and Development of Agricultural Education in the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Specifically the study sought to;

1. Ascertain leadership style displayed by successive heads in the development of agricultural education programme,
2. Examine the achievement of successive heads in the development of agricultural education programme,
3. Examine the constraints experienced by successive heads in the development of agricultural education programme.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study

1. What are the leadership styles displayed by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme?
2. What are the achievements of successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme?
3. What are the constraints experienced by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the responses of successive heads of department and lecturers with respect to leadership styles in the development of agricultural education programme.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the responses of successive heads and lecturers with respect to the achievement recorded in the development of agricultural education programme.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the responses of successive heads and lecturers with respect to constraint experienced in the development of agricultural education programme.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria as a country faces chronic and increasing shortage of effective leadership in almost all institutions and organizations. Visionary and effective leadership becomes more and more critical for building and maintaining sustainable education for national development. It is of paramount importance that the dynamics and challenging evolution in agriculture over the last decades be met today with imaginative leadership in virtually all aspect of agricultural education.

It is a difficult task identifying who is a good leader, and what makes a good leader especially in an educational set up with intellectuals. It is also in public knowledge that not all that is required is available for managing an institution or a department, thus the efficiency of doing this need to be known. Despite all these, development are recorded, this are of interest and brought about the quest for this study to a great extent to examine leadership style, achievement and constraint of successive Heads of Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted survey research design. The study was restricted to the Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The population of the study was 11 academic staff of the department, three (3) of the lecturers served previously at the capacity of head of department. There was no sample for the study since the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Leadership Development Questionnaire (LDQ) with 24 items used to elicit information needed to answer the research questions posed for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1). This gave a bench mark of 2.50. The instrument was subjected to face and content validating by three validates from the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The validates were from the Department of Science Education, Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education, and the Department of Educational Foundation and General Studies. The instrument was administered to 10 lecturers of the Department of Science Education who were not part of the variables under study but have the same characteristics, Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used to ascertain the reliability which yielded 0.86 which implies that the instrument was reliable. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents and collected the questionnaires on the spot, thus recording a hundred percent retrieval rate. The mean values of 2.50 and above were termed agreed while mean value below 2.50 were termed disagreed. The three hypotheses were tested with t-test.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *What are the leadership styles displayed by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme?*

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the responses of the heads of department and lecturers on the leadership style displayed by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme.

**Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis Responses of Respondents on the Leadership Styles Displayed by Successive Heads of Department in the Development of Agricultural Education Programme.**

S/N		X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	RMKS
1	Supervise staff closely	3.13	0.74	9	-0.47	2.26	Agreed
2	Involve staff in decision making	2.88	1.01	9	0.39	2.26	Agreed
3	Treat staff fairly	3.53	0.48	9	0.89	2.26	Agreed
4	Provide guidance for any new task given to staff	3.23	0.63	9	0.52	2.26	Agreed
5	Communicate frequently with staff	3.42	0.49	9	-0.53	2.26	Agreed
6	Help staff accept responsibility for completing their work	2.96	0.80	9	-0.98	2.26	Agreed
7	Help staff find their passion in the programme	2.84	0.80	9	-0.55	2.26	Agreed
8	Give clear procedures to staff for effective co-ordination of the department	3.00	0.69	9	-0.54	2.26	Agreed
9	Specify methods for improving instruction and other academic activities	3.11	0.63	9	1.16	2.26	Agreed
10	Be open to innovative ideas for progress in the department	3.17	0.59	9	0.89	2.26	Agreed

**Key:** X=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, DF= Degree of Freedom.

The data in table 1 revealed that the 10 items had their mean ranging from 2.84 to 3.53 and are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed on the leadership styles displayed by the successive heads of department in the development of Agricultural Education Programme. The standard deviation ranged from 0.48 to 1.01 which indicates that responses of the respondents were not too far from their mean and that there is low variation in the responses of respondents. Also the critical value was greater than the t-calculated value at df of 9 and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-critical value is greater than the t-calculated value, we uphold the null hypothesis of no significant differences in the responses of the respondents.

**Research Question 2:** *What are the achievements of successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education development of agricultural education programme?*

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significance difference in the mean responses of the heads of department and lecturers on the achievements of successive heads of department of agricultural education programme.

**Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis Responses of Respondents on the achievement Recorded by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme.**

S/N		X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	RMKS
11	Delegate responsibilities to staff	3.29	0.57	9	2.5	2.26	Agreed
12	Improve teaching and learning through research	3.11	0.54	9	1.31	2.26	Agreed
13	Promote team work among staff	3.29	0.5	9	0.22	2.26	Agreed
14	Create conducive training environment	2.82	0.84	9	0.66	2.26	Agreed
15	Build confidence in staff	2.94	0.71	9	0.23	2.26	Agreed
16	Reward hardworking staff	2.42	0.59	9	-0.46	2.26	Disagreed
17	Create effective communication among staff	3.29	0.57	9	0.22	2.26	Agreed
18	Initiate and conduct academic tours for staff	2.23	0.54	9	0.58	2.26	Disagreed

**Key:** X=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, DF= Degree of Freedom.

The data in table 2 revealed that item 11,12,13,14,15 & 17 had their mean ranging from 2.82 to 3.29 and are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed on the achievements recorded by the successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme. While item 16 and 18 had their mean ranging from 2.23 to 2.42 and is less than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicate that the respondents disagreed on the above two items. The standard deviation ranged from 0.54 to 0.84 which indicate that the responses of the respondents were not too far from their mean and there is low variation in the responses of respondents. Also, the t-critical value was greater than the t-calculated value at df 9 and at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significance difference was upheld.

**Research Question 3:** *What are the constraints faced by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme?*

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significance difference in the mean responses of the successive heads of department and lecturers on the constraints faced by heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme.

**Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis Responses of the Respondents on the Constraints Faced by Successive Heads of Department in the Development of Agricultural Education Programme.**

S/N		X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	RMKS
19	Lack of seminar and workshop of staff	2.58	0.63	9	-3.13	2.26	Agreed
20	Lack of adequate teaching staff	2.60	0.59	9	-2.25	2.26	Agreed
21	Opinions of staff are not always considered	2.56	0.66	9	-0.12	2.26	Agreed
22	Lack of teaching and learning facilities	2.79	0.46	9	-2.90	2.26	Agreed
23	Lack of welfare packages for staff	3.21	1.29	9	-1.37	2.26	Agreed
24	Lack of academic tour for staff	2.55	0.66	9	-2.40	2.26	Agreed

**Key:** X=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, DF = Degree of Freedom

The data in table 3 revealed that item 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 had their mean ranging from 2.55 to 3.21 and is greater than the criterion mean of 2,50. This indicates that the respondents Agreed on the constraints faced by successive heads of department in the development of agricultural education programme. The t-critical value was greater than the t-calculated value at df of 9 and at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significance difference was upheld.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result obtained in table 1 revealed that the successive heads of department supervise staff closely, involve staff in decision making, treat staff fairly amongst others. This finding was supported by Martindale (2011) who opined that democratic leadership style consist of decision-making responsibilities with group members by promoting the interest of the group members and maintaining social equality.

The result obtained in table 2 shows that the successive heads of department delegate responsibilities to staff, promote team work, created conducive working environment. This finding was supported by Jacob and Jaques (1990) averred that leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be achieve purpose.

The result obtained in table 3 revealed that the department has inadequate staff strength, there were no organized seminars and workshops for staff and welfare package for staff was lacking amongst others. This finding was in contrast with Armstrong (2011) who posited that education which is not targeted towards development is definitely not progressive. It has to do with human development which has a wide range of concern for human, environmental, economic and sustainable development.

### CONCLUSION

Leadership is a fascinating term of continuing interest to individuals and the society at large. Both scholars and the public have developed romanticized, heroic images of leaders, what they do, what they are able to accomplish and the general effects they have on individuals and organizations. In this study leadership achievement was seen in the delegation of responsibility to staff, promoting team work, creating conducive teaching and learning environment among staff and students. There were no

organized seminars and workshops, no welfare package for staff and hard working staff were not rewarded to serve as a motivation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding the following recommendation were made

1. The head of department should reward staff who distinguishes themselves in the department in order to boost their morals.
2. Academic tour should be organized for staff in the department.
3. The head of department should organize a welfare packages for staff in the department.
4. Leadership training seminars should be organise for academic staff in the department.

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