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REVERSING INEFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE DE-MOTIVATION IN ORGANIZATIONS: COUNSELLING AS THE GATEWAY

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ABSTRACT

Dearth of effective leadership and employee motivation is the bane of many organizations in Nigeria today. It is one of the major reasons why some organizations go into extinction soon after they are established. This paper, therefore, highlights the issues involved in organizational leadership and employee motivation. It emphasizes the fact that effective leadership and a well-motivated workforce can never be downplayed if an organization must meet its set goals. Some leadership styles are also enumerated to guide organizational heads in making informed choices as to which style they can utilize to produce results in good time. Furthermore, the discourse equally proffers proven counselling approaches that can reverse defective leadership and employee de-motivation problems, for organizations to thrive and perform optimally.

Keywords: Reverse, Ineffective, Effective, Leadership, Employee De-motivation, Counselling, Gateway.

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INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of every organization is to make progress by way of high productivity or returns on investment. However, this very important goal cannot just happen or can never be actualized without putting in place two requisite factors that would necessitate it. These strategic factors are material resources and human resources. Material resources refer to the ^{work} tools like facilities and equipment acquired by the organization to ease their operations plus a good working environment, while human resources involve the employees of the organization and its leadership structure.

A good leadership overrides every other thing that facilitates an organization's functionality. In other words, even though all other factors are provided, without an effective leadership to run the organization, attaining the organization's goals might be herculean, or worse still, unrealistic. Hence, the place of an effective leadership for an organization's sustenance can never be over emphasized. It is quite unfortunate for one to notice that, in recent times, many hitherto flourishing and highly productive organizations have fallen into oblivion; some are struggling to remain afloat while many others are making frantic efforts to have their feet steadied in the competitive business world.

All these are the attendant results of dearth of effective leadership. It is on this basis that Harvey and Kudesia (2023) assert that there will continue to be a focus on leadership throughout the succeeding decades; effective leadership is in short supply (Bulmer et al, 2022) whereas its effects on the organization is up to one quarter of the total effect of all factors (Gouga & Malinova, 2021). Similarly, Rahman (2022) and Lessy et al (2022) are of the view that there is a visible trend toward accumulation of knowledge regarding leadership and its effects. They further stated that effective leadership of organizations to meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of society will require the knowledge and technical skills of committed and competent leaders. It is therefore apt at this point in time to proffer counselling as the gateway to reverse ineffective leadership and employee de-motivation in order to curb the leadership and employee problems in our organizations. But before the main discourse, it is imperative to clarify the major concepts in this paper.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Reverse: To change something completely so that it is the opposite of what it was before.

Ineffective leadership: This refers to the inability of a leader to execute an organization's vision and create a work culture that allows employees to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of their employer's goals. An ineffective leader typically cannot create strategic plans for an organization, and also cannot help to improve the organization's vision, secure and allocate resources and track performance to identify weaknesses and leverage performance and efficiency (Indeed, 2023).

Employee de-motivation: This is the opposite of employee motivation. It is the lack of commitment, energy and innovation that an organization's staff holds during the working day. Employee de-motivation therefore is the absence of enthusiasm, energy, willingness and creativity that an employee brings to their role daily.

Organization: Organization is a formation of actors or people with the purpose of achieving set goals. It may be a company, firm, church or school.

Counselling: Counselling is a dyadic form of interaction through which a counsellor relates and exchanges ideas and viewpoints with a client for the purpose of assisting the client to understand his situation so as to take appropriate decisions to address his needs (Akpan, 2022). According to Ossai (2022), counselling is an interactive relationship between the counsellor and client with a view to helping the client who is ravaged by turbulence of modern life exigencies from a

beleaguered state to a more functional and socially acceptable form through therapeutic approaches.

Gateway: A means of getting or achieving something. In this case, using counselling as a means to achieve effective leadership and employee motivation.

IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

Every organization, whether a business or a government agency, needs effective leaders to guide others. Effective leaders are required to provide vision and direction, motivate and inspire others to achieve the organization's goals, and help create an environment conducive for success by promoting communication and collaboration among team members (Siena Heights University, 2022). Siena Heights University (2022) also provided ten reasons why effective leadership is important in the workplace as follows:

- **Improves communication:** One of the most important duties of an effective leader is to facilitate communication within the organization. Clear and concise communication is essential for any team to function correctly. Effective leaders will make it a point to keep lines of communication open at all times and create an open and inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas. By ensuring that employees have a forum to voice their concerns and opinions, a leader can encourage a work culture where new ideas are welcome, and misunderstandings are avoided.
- **Creates a better work environment:** Effective leaders have a profound impact on their overall work environment. They create an atmosphere of trust and respect, which in turn fosters creativity and collaboration. Employee morale is also higher in workplaces with strong leadership, leading to greater motivation.
- **Improves productivity:** An effective leader makes all the difference in a team's productivity. When employees feel valued and motivated, they are more likely to be productive. On the other hand, a poor leader can cause employees to become disengaged and uninterested in their work. A team that is led effectively will be more productive, efficient and successful overall.
- **Increases efficiency:** A productive leader can help to improve efficiency by getting the most out of their team. Effective leaders can help to improve efficiency by ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goal and doing what they can do best. They can provide guidance and direction and delegate tasks to make the most of everyone's strengths.
- **Decreases mistakes:** A capable leader is essential for any workplace that wants to minimize mistakes and run smoothly, especially important in high-pressure environments where mistakes can have serious consequences. An effective leader needs to be able to identify potential problems early on and head them off to avoid costly mistakes.
- **Motivates employees:** Good leaders know how to effectively motivate their employees. They understand that people are different and that what works for one person may not work for another. As a result, they take time to get to know their team members and discover what makes them tick. They also create a positive work environment where employees are valued and appreciated. When employees feel like they are part of a team and that their contributions matter, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated.

- Sets a good example for others: An effective leader knows that setting a good example is one of the best ways to inspire others. After all, people are more likely to follow someone they see as a role model. That is why it is so crucial for leaders to lead by example. By behaving in a way that exemplifies the values and goals of their team or organization, they can show others what it means to be a committed and successful member.
- Inspires hard work: A great leader is able to instill a sense of purpose in their team. When people feel like they are working towards something bigger than themselves, they are more likely to be willing to put in the hard work required to achieve it. An effective leader knows how to tap into this sense of purpose and channel it into productive effort.
- Creates a strong vision and direction for the future: A successful leader understands the importance of having a solid vision and how to create one that will guide their organization toward a bright future. A strong vision means having a clear idea of where the organization is going and what it wants to achieve. It also means articulating this vision in a way that inspires and motivates others to follow. Without a clear vision, maintaining momentum or progressing toward long-term goals can be challenging. A leader with a strong vision can create a sense of direction and purpose, helping to focus and energize an entire organization.
- Helps keep employees on track: Once the organization's vision is well-articulated and understood, sound leadership is essential to keep employees focused on reaching that goal. This means clearly communicating the organization's vision and objectives as progress is made and changes occur and then providing the necessary support and resources. Maintaining lines of communication throughout projects, being positive and ensuring that employees receive the support that they need to achieve their tasks all help to keep staff on track with an organization's overarching vision.

In summary, Siena Heights University (2022) stated that effective leaders provide guidance, inspiration and motivation when achieving goals. They help to create a vision and rally people around a common cause. Effective leaders possess the necessary skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and solve problems effectively. Without a strong leadership, achieving success at both an individual and organizational level would be difficult. Therefore, a healthy and effective leadership is essential for any organization to reach its full potential. On the other hand, ineffective leaders create bad morale and hamper employee satisfaction and engagement. Goals may be unclear and productivity suffers. De-motivated and disgruntled employees, in turn can impact negatively on others. The ripple effects can be significant (Arora, 2022).

LEADERSHIP STYLES

A leadership style refers to a leader's methods and behaviours when directing, motivating and managing others in an organization (Becker, 2022). Becker (2022) also opined that the leadership style of a person also determines how they strategize and implement plans while accounting for the expectations of stakeholders and the well-being of their team. Furthermore, he suggested the following as the most common types of leadership styles:

- Democratic leadership: This style, also called participative or facilitative leadership is a style in which the leader makes decisions based on each team member's input. Although, the leader makes the final call, each employee has an equal say in a project's direction. It

is one of the most effective styles because it encourages everyone to participate in all processes, share their opinions and know that the leader will hear them. Democratic style also encourages subordinates to be engaged which makes them feel like they have space to participate in the organization's affairs. This increases employee empowerment, motivation and active participation.

- Autocratic leadership: Autocratic leadership, otherwise called authoritarian, coercive or commanding leadership is the inverse of democratic leadership. In this style, the leader makes decisions without taking input from anyone who reports to them. This style is most useful when an organization needs to control specific situations, not as a standalone leadership style. Autocratic leaders carry out strategies with absolute focus. It is most effective when an organization makes difficult decisions that do not benefit from additional input from others who are not fully knowledgeable on the subject. Challenges of this style include intimidation, micromanagement and over-reliance on a single leader.
- Laissez-faire leadership: Leaders who adopt this style give nearly all authority to their employees and do not often interject unless the situation demands. This style makes employees accountable for their work. It also provides many employees an incentive to do their best work. This style of leadership often creates a more relaxed organizational culture, which makes it a good model for creativity and highly-skilled team work.
- Strategic leadership: Strategic leaders sit between an organization's primary operations and its growth prospects. This leadership style requires vision, competitive awareness, and adaptability. Here, leaders accept the burden of executive interests but also ensure that working conditions are stable for everyone else. It is a desirable leadership style in many organizations because strategic thinking supports many types of employees at once, encourages visualization, planning and makes the most of existing resources as well as motivate employees. This style supports accountability, productivity, collaboration and transparency.
- Transactional leadership: This style of leadership is based on reward and punishment, and these leaders tell employees if a goal is met. A transactional leader may require check-ins if people are not meeting set goals. This style also assumes that teams need structure and monitoring to meet organizational goals and that they are reward-motivated.
- Coaching leadership: A coaching (or conscious) leader focuses on identifying and nurturing the individual strengths of each member of the team and develops strategies that will enable teams to work better together. This style is similar to strategic and democratic styles, but it emphasizes individual employees' success. By this style, employees might be helped to improve on their strengths through:
 - Giving them new tasks to try;
 - Offering them guidance; and
 - Meeting to discuss constructive feedback.
- Bureaucratic leadership: Bureaucratic style follows set down rules. Unlike autocratic leadership, they might listen and consider the input of employees, but they might reject input that does not align with organizational policy or past practices.
- Visionary leadership: This style also referred to as affiliative leadership focuses on future and long-term goals of the organization. Visionary leaders encourage collaboration, emotional intelligence and network. They create clear plans for employees to follow and

execute. They also are powerful and persuasive communicators, which help them to energize teams toward impactful organizational growth.

- Pacesetter leadership: A pacesetter leader sets ambitious standards and expects employees to meet those goals in the exact manner they have been laid out. These leaders expect productivity and high quality outputs from employees, and they may step in to ensure things are done correctly and on time.
- Situational leadership: Situational leaders change their leadership style to meet the needs of the situation or team. This leadership style is proactive and recognizes that change is the only thing constant. This approach can motivate employees and ensure that people are not stuck working in a way that does not make sense for the situation. They are good communicators and use team feedback to make decisions.
- Transformational leadership: Transformational leaders gain the trust and confidence of their teams, encourage team members and lead employees toward meeting organizational goals. These leaders also always improve the organization's conventions and motivate employees to grow and further develop their skills. They can inspire their teams to think in new ways (Cherry, 2023). According to White (2022), the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of this style of leadership is a mutual relationship which converts followers to leaders and leaders to moral agents (Cherry, 2023).

CAUSES OF LEADERSHIP FAILURE

Some scholars have in their various studies identified causes of leadership failure. For instance, Arora (2022) suggested that the major causes of leadership failure include the following:

- Selfishness of leaders;
- Lack of self-leadership qualities;
- Confidence turns to arrogance;
- Leaders fail to communicate well;
- Greed;
- Conflicts with other leaders; and
- Low motivation.

Employee Motivation

It is important for an organization to ensure that its workers are well motivated if its desire is to make optimal success. An employee with a low work motivation probably works at a slower pace, avoids tasks and spends time on trivial things. They are unfocused and do not put their energy on unimportant activities. This does not only waste the organization's resources, it could have a vicarious or known-on effect on other employees and potentially hold back the entire organization from producing work to the highest standard or meeting important targets (Perkbox, 2023). On the contrary, a motivated employee is enthusiastic, driven and takes pride in their work. They accomplish tasks quickly, take actions and want to do a good job, both for themselves and for the organization. Perkbox (2023) in alignment with Vantage Circle (2023) further provided ten tips to improve employee motivation in the workplace. They are:

- Lead with vision;
- Make sure everyone understands the ‘why’;
- Set frequent clear targets;
- Recognize and reward great work;
- Give your team autonomy;
- Create a welcoming workplace environment;
- Offer impressive benefits;
- Encourage teamwork;
- Create a career path; and
- Support staff motivation by supporting employee wellbeing.

In addition, Perkbox (2023) suggested that higher productivity levels, more innovation, lower levels of absenteeism, lower levels of staff turnover, great reputation and stronger recruitment for the organization were the benefits of employee motivation. There are two types of employee motivation, which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Vantage circle, 2023). According to Vantage circle, intrinsic motivation occurs when an employee acts without any obvious external rewards. They simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn and actualize their potentials. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external rewards. This kind of motivation is most tangible in nature. External factors like money, fame, praise, promotion and so on, are used to motivate employees. When a known reward is tied to a task, employees are extrinsically motivated to do it (Vantage circle, 2023).

COUNSELLING FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

If the question is asked as to whether the problem of ineffective leadership and de-motivated employees in an organization can be addressed through counselling, this author’s answer would be an emphatic ‘yes’. The rationale behind such a bold affirmation is that this author strongly believes in the efficacy of counselling and committed counsellors to reverse the problem successfully if given the opportunity to do so. The counsellor is a trained professional that is capable of achieving the desired result by utilizing a number of well-coordinated and result-oriented approaches including but not limited to the ones mentioned below:

- Value reorientation counselling: Value reorientation is conceptualized as the act of deliberately attempting to change the direction which people’s attitudes and beliefs are currently orientated or the act of adjusting or aligning behaviour, attitudes and beliefs in a new direction. This is articulated as a move away from negative behaviours like corruption, embezzlement, dishonesty and general indiscipline to the direction of virtues of honesty, patriotism, hard work and total abhorrence of negative behaviours (Osisioma, 2012 and Okafor, 2014 as cited in Denen, 2020). At the centre of the problem ineffective leadership and employee de-motivation is the issue of values which individuals hold. Both the leadership and the employees of the organization must have strayed away from the age-old values of hard-work, honesty, humility among others. Everyone is on a race to outsmart one another. That is why people go to any length to make it in life. There must therefore be a conscious effort on the part of the counsellor to bring back the organization on the path of progress through value reorientation counselling (Jimoh, 2022). The counselor does this through value clarification and confrontation. In value

clarification, the counselor makes a deliberate effort to assist the ineffective leader and the de-motivated employees to understand which values of life they hold and how such values could be beneficial or detrimental to their personal well-being and that of the organization in general. The therapist must also go on a voyage of discovery with clients on how their negative values had developed and then ensure that clients replace such negative values with generally acceptable positive values of life that would benefit both themselves and the organization (Jimoh, 2022). This kind of counselling could be done with individuals or better still, in groups with all significant stakeholders in attendance.

- Cognitive restructuring counseling: Cognitive restructuring is a technique that helps people to change the way they think. It can help people to feel differently about things that worry or frustrate them, and this in turn can affect their behaviour (Villines, 2022). It involves restructuring or changing a person's belief and thinking patterns. The aim is to reduce the burden or impact that unhelpful thinking styles have on a person's well-being and their workplace behaviour. This method is about slowly replacing an inaccurate belief with one that is more accurate or helpful. Cognitive restructuring emphasizes positive thinking, feeling and behavioural aspects of personality and is orientated toward increasing awareness so that individuals would be able to make new decisions that can enhance their happiness (Stanborough, 2020). Cognitive therapists suggest that ineffective leadership and a de-motivated workforce are derived largely from certain distortions of reality based on erroneous premises and assumptions. For this reason, the counsellor has a duty to help the clients to unravel their distorted thoughts and learn/adopt alternative, more realistic ways to formulate their experiences. For example, when leaders embezzle organization's funds, it is a product of erroneous thinking that they must amass wealth at all cost. Such leaders could be helped through disputing irrational beliefs and thoughts, cognitive tasks as well as emotive techniques. The same is applicable to disgruntled or ill-motivated employees. Cognitive restructuring therapy has proven effective in tackling many employee/employer relationship problems.
- Periodic sensitization: This method implies that the counsellor is expected to organize periodic awareness programmes amongst the leadership and employees of the organization, as a way of sensitizing them on the negative implications of ineffective leadership and ill-motivated workforce. It could be done in form of group counselling where a large number of employees can participate. When such counseling is done on regular intervals and continual basis, there is the likelihood of individuals acquiring the behavioural wherewithal to confront or interrogate organizational problems whenever they occur.

CONCLUSION

Effective leadership and employee motivation are undoubtedly the driving forces organizational success worldwide. Whenever either of these two becomes defective, the organization can suffer dire consequences. This could sometimes result in the organization folding up. In such a situation, staffs lose their sources of livelihood as they get retrenched. The vicarious effect of this on society is increment in the unemployed population. If this trend is not properly checked, the rate of criminality will rise, to the extent that it will be very difficult for the ordinary citizens to enjoy safety of lives and property. However, all these problems that arise from ineffective leadership and employee de-motivation can be successfully handled through the application of

appropriate counselling techniques. Ironically, most Nigerians are yet to acknowledge the usefulness of counsellors in the society. Counsellors are readily available to or assist employees, groups and even organizations to overcome their problems. It is therefore advised that employees, leaders and organizations should ensure to seek a counsellor for professional help when there is a need. On the other hand, counsellors should also be patriotic and not abdicate their professional responsibilities of making organizational culture enjoyable for all stakeholders.

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