Delegation of Responsibilities: A Leadership Tool for Subordinates' Competence Development in Selected Organisations in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract
Delegation of responsibilities constitutes a very important ingredient of good leadership in organisations and is critical to competence development of workers. However, experience shows that many leaders are unwilling to delegate responsibilities to their subordinates for a number of reasons. This study was therefore designed to investigate delegation of responsibilities as a tool for competence development of subordinates in selected organisations in Ibadan metropolis. The study, anchored on Elkem's model, was descriptive and adopted survey research design with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It was conducted on 206 respondents randomly selected from 20 public and private organisations in Ibadan. Questionnaire and IDI were instruments of data collection, while the data collected were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study showed that respondents perceived delegation of responsibilities as a vital tool for developing, equipping and motivating subordinates; and that it had positive effects on subordinates' performance (X^2 = 11.14, p-value = 0.001). The study also revealed that lack of confidence in subordinates (79%), level of skill and competence (66%), organisational climate (68%) and bureaucracy (58%) were barriers to delegation of responsibilities. Delegation of responsibilities is a cost-free way of enhancing competence development of subordinates in organisations, and should therefore, be encouraged among leaders irrespective of their levels.

Keyword: **leadership, organisation, subordinates, responsibilities, competence**

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The role of leadership in organizations and societies and how it impacts on subordinates' capabilities cannot be over-emphasized. Udegbe (2003) defines leadership as a process of charting a course and influencing others to follow. According to Adefuye (2003), the complexity of the leadership process cannot be revealed without considering the dynamic interaction between the leader and the follower. Leadership therefore depends on an interactional context which includes how employees view a leader's performance, approach and expectations of and from the subordinates. Leadership is so powerful that it gives pace and energy to the workforce and empowers them. When the workforce is empowered, they feel significant, and they are pulled rather than pushed towards the organizational goals. When there is a positive dynamics between leaders and subordinates, it boosts the morale of the latter and they become more willing to associate with the leaders and organisational processes.

The Management of Human Resources Consultants Inc. (1996) cited in Adefuye (2003) identified five basic components of leadership as: ability to inspire, ability to get things done, ability to build relationships, ability to communicate and ability to delegate. Where proper attention is given to the components of leadership, it leads to development of the competence and confidence of subordinates. While in formal terms, organisations are largely responsible for developing the competences of their members, to a very great extent, leadership also has a big role to play in such process of competence development. Adefuye (2003) further argues that leaders should be responsible for building organisations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future and that of the organisation. Competence development refers to the process whereby people acquire or enhance the ability to perform on their jobs (Aloko, 2000). It is about the growth of human capital, the acquisition of new skills and abilities to enable the achievement of corporate objectives.

One of the means of achieving competence development is through delegation of responsibilities. Delegation of responsibilities is a core function of leadership at all levels and through the process, subordinates are developed and equipped for higher performance. In leadership context, delegation is defined as a sharing process where a superior entrusts certain authority to others. According to Nwachukwu (1988), delegation permits the transfer of responsibility and authority from a superior to a subordinate. It empowers a subordinate to make commitments, use resources and take action in relation to duties assigned to them. It therefore does contribute to the process where subordinates are better equipped to carry out their responsibilities, thus enhancing the overall corporate goals and success. In essence, delegation of responsibilities means that a subordinate has the power to make decisions and to act within explicit limits without checking with superior. The process encompasses three basic steps, the assigning of duties to the subordinates, the granting of authority to carry out these duties, and the creation of obligation whereby the subordinate assumes responsibility to the superior to complete the task satisfactorily.

Unfortunately, delegation, like centralization, is often a matter of personal preference on the part of leaders which may be contrary to the requirements of organisations (Oni, 2003). While some leaders will delegate so much to their subordinates that they will virtually abdicate their role as leader, it is far more common to find the reverse occurring (Olabode, 2007). Many leaders tend to hang on to everything, refusing to allow their subordinates to try their hands at anything. This unwillingness to let go is based on the assumption that the leader can do the job better than the subordinate and that it may lead to loss of their authority and respect. Unfortunately, this attitude is often self-defeating, because it leads subordinates to the conclusion that they are not trusted by their superior (Oni, 2003). It also results in a failure to develop effective leadership talent. The question is how can a junior leader or subordinate be expected to fill the boss's shoes if the young person never gets the opportunity to do so?

Studies abound on the role of leadership in employees' performance (Odanye, 2004), effects of training and development on workers' performance (Omolawal, 2009), organisational climate affecting employees' performance (Olabode, 2007), but there is dearth of knowledge on how the leadership tool of delegation of responsibility could enhance the competence of subordinates. This study was therefore, designed to investigate delegation of responsibilities as a leadership tool for subordinates' competence development in selected public and private organisations in Ibadan, with the following specific research objectives, to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception of leaders on delegation of responsibilities; to examine the effect of delegation of responsibilities on subordinates' performance; to investigate reasons behind the unwillingness of leaders to delegate responsibilities and to investigate barriers to delegation of responsibilities in the study organisations.

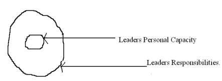
Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Leadership and Subordinates' Performance

Leadership could be defined as the exercise of influence by one member of a group over other members to help the group or organisation achieve its goals. Motivating others is at the heart of leadership and organisational success (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Roberts (1990) defines leadership as the privilege to have the responsibility of directing the actions of others in carrying out the purposes of an organisation, at varying levels of authority with accountability for both successful and failed endeavours. Organisations must groom leaders to support the employees and to build the work environment where workers want to stay. Providing the opportunities to test their abilities and providing level of performance can enhance employees' capabilities and competences and want to stay in the organisation.

Denison (1990) claims that leadership is perhaps the most carefully investigated organisational variable that has a potential impact on employee performance. Successful leaders understand what motivates subordinates and how the subordinates' strength and weaknesses influence their decisions, actions and relationship. He also mentioned the connection between leadership traits or behaviour and subordinates' performance. It is generally accepted that the performance of any group of people is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership. Effective leadership performance facilitates the attainment of the subordinates' desires, which results in effective performance (Akinyele, 2007). Billings and Lounsbury (2000) confirmed the link between high performance and leadership in the United States by developing a model of charismatic/transformational leadership where the leaders' behaviour is said to give rise to inspiration, fear and empowerment in their subordinates, resulting in exceptionally high effort, commitment and motivation to take risks. Effective leadership helps to develop team work and the integration of individual and group goals (Odanye, 2004).

Apart from directing and influencing subordinates, leadership also has the responsibility of developing the competence of subordinates by providing opportunities for them to take risks and act in various capacities. One of the major tools for doing this is delegation of responsibilities. No one, no matter how competent, can do all the work by himself. His responsibilities are always greater than his personal capacity to carry them out (Collin, 1989; Mulder, 2001). (See the diagram below)



Therefore, to be effective, leaders need to delegate parts of their responsibilities and authority to their subordinates. Delegation of responsibilities is a primary leadership tool; a process that allows supervisors to share some of their assigned responsibilities with subordinates, thereby gaining valuable time for completing other assignments (USFA, 2011). Part of the advantage of assuming the best about subordinates is that it allows leaders to delegate as much as possible, to them. This delegation not only frees them (leaders) for more important things, but can motivate their competent subordinates. But as mentioned above, leaders must be careful not to delegate too much. Angst & Browieck (2013) once said that ineffective leaders delegate nothing, the mediocre leaders delegate everything, while the effective leaders delegate selectively. Specially, leaders have to delegate as much as practical to their subordinate, while retaining control over key result areas, so as to enable them to monitor the result.

Delegation empowers a subordinate to make decisions, i.e. it is a shift of decision-making authority from one organizational level to a lower one. Delegation, if properly done, is not abdication. In general, delegation is good and can save money and time, help in building skills, and motivate people. Poor delegation, on the other hand, might cause frustration and confusion to all the involved parties. Some agents however do not favour a delegation and consider the power of making a decision rather burdensome (Ahmed and Jensen, 2009; Angst & Borowiecki, 2013).

According to Alos (2002), one common characteristic of effective leaders is that they are usually surrounded by capable subordinates. They are not afraid of strength in their subordinates. In fact, they want strong subordinates by their side. This is because they hold themselves ultimately responsible for the mistakes of their subordinates. Alos goes further to argue that an effective leader knows that there is a risk in having competent subordinates, but such leader also realizes that it is much smaller risk than to be served by mediocrity. He therefore needs to know that the greatest task of leadership is to create human energies and human vision.

Employee Competence Development and Performance

Generally, competence refers to the ability of an individual to do his job. It is also what people need to be successful in their jobs. It includes all the related knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes fit for a person's job. It provides organisations with a way to define in behavioural terms, what it is that people need to do to produce the results that the organisation desires (Mulder, 2001). The process of enhancing that ability is referred to as competence development. Competence development refers to professional and personal development of each employee in line with company values, goals and vision. Some scholars see "competence" as a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, cognitive skills, behaviour and values used to improve performance; or as the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role (Collin, 1989; Eraut, 1994; Mulder, 2001; Raven and Stephenson, 2001).

Where the competence level is high, it translates to high performance on the part of the people. Performance, according to Onyeonoru (2005), is the amount of successful role achievement. He goes further to refer to it as the product of ability combined with motivation; ability is the product of aptitude (inherent abilities/acquired skills) sharpened by training and resources; motivation is the product of desire and commitment in the right direction. To him, a diagnosis of a problem associated with motivation in an organization, would, therefore attempt to determine whether a person's poor performance is the product of lack of ability or lack of motivation. Lack of ability may be traced to low competence which is defined by the level of knowledge, skill and attitude while motivation is seen as the willingness to expend energy to achieve a goal. This is buttressed by Adefuye (2003) that high commitment of employees will result in increased motivation and overall organisational performance.

Barriers to Effective Delegation

Delegation is essential in all organization, yet even though required, there are major barriers that seem to hamper the delegation process. According to Eraut (2004), these include, a fear that subordinate will not do a job satisfactorily, inability to encourage cooperation among subordinates, a feeling that leaders should not have to develop subordinates, a fear that delegation diminishes leadership's authority, the absence of controls that warn leaders of impending difficulties, thus causing them to be cautious about delegating, an unwillingness to let subordinates exercise the initiative that can be generated by an increased delegation of authority.

Theoretically, it is quite difficult for a delegator to bestow upon another complete authority and responsibilities. It is unusual to find a person in whom the delegator has so much confidence that supervision is not necessary (Ahmed & Jensen, 2009). It is important in each case of delegation to steer a course midway between two extremes; on the other hand the extreme of laissez-faire attitudes, in which the delegator follows a hand-off policy, and on the other hand the extreme of over supervision, that is, of annoying the subordinate by constant inquiry and checking.

A reasonable approach to delegation of responsibilities is that the subordinates' results should be the objective desired. Thereafter, authority is delegated to the subordinate. The duties delegated must be commensurate with the authority given. The delegator remains the final arbiter of results. But considerable latitude can be allowed where the subordinate is competent in the selection of methods. Left to determine how to do the work and trusted to work cooperatively and efficiently with others, most subordinates would perform well under such autonomy (Olabode, 2007). To accomplish effective delegation, it is important that the subordinate should understand the purpose of delegated functions and the objectives to be achieved. The determination of the objectives helps the subordinates to relate the assigned tasks to the accomplishment of the overall company objectives.

Subordinate, however, may need or desire the help of the delegator. To avoid the risk of the subordinate blindly accepting the leaders' way as best, or becoming too dependent on the boss, the leader should take time to talk at length with him/her and to raise questions that will lead the subordinates to think constructively about the work delegated. As the work progresses, the subordinates may occasionally check to reaffirm a sense of direction, or the leaders may make judicious inquiries to see how the subordinate is doing (Odanye, 2004).

It is important for the leader to know what must not be delegated to the subordinates. These include, policy making and policy interpretation, executive actions such as making changes in the organisation structure, disciplinary powers, a duplication of one's own power, and the final responsibility for success and failure. Finally, since leaders retain the ultimate responsibility for the performance of the job delegated; delegation of authority also usually entails the creation of accountability. Thus, subordinates automatically become accountable for the job delegated.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Elkem's (2013) competence model which is concerned with development of critical skills in organisations over the long term. The framework was developed to explain the sources of competence development of people. Competence and capabilities are ingredients which determine the level of success and performance of people in the attainment of goals. According to the model, 10% of competence is developed through course actions in forms of formal training and development programmes organised by organisations; 70% of competence is developed through daily interaction with supervisors, leaders, colleagues, mentors and others, while the remaining 20% is developed through taking new challenges. Applied to this study, subordinates competence should be enhanced through both formal and informal means in the workplace. The formal means involve the training and development programmes organised within or outside the organisation, while the informal approach refers to the other elements identified in the model.

Principally allowing employees to take up new challenges encompasses the willingness of leaders to delegate responsibilities to the subordinates as a way of being prepared for future roles. The taking up of new roles further redefines the patterns of relationships encompassed in the second module of the model, because such subordinate is provided with the opportunity to further relate with other top officers and in the same vein, the respect commanded among peers becomes enhanced. In all, the subordinates become better equipped, and develop higher self confidence.

Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature and adopted survey research design. It combined both qualitative and quantitative techniques. It was carried out in Ibadan metropolis, using purposively selected public and private organisations. Private organisations are those owned and operated in the private sector (in other words, the part of a free market economy that is made up of companies and organisations that are not owned or controlled by the government), while public organisations are those owned and operated in the public sector (government and its activities, in other words, the portion of a nation's affairs, especially economic affairs, that is owned and controlled by the government).

The major inclusion criterion in the selection of such organisations was that they had a minimum of 50 employees as at the time of the study. The study population comprised workers who occupied leadership positions at unit level, departmental level and top level of the selected organisations. Twenty organisations were randomly selected (10 from each sector). The sample size was 206 individuals in leadership positions and they were selected through random sampling process within the selected organisations. Two major instruments were adopted for the collection of the primary data. These were questionnaire which was administered on 200 leaders and In-Depth-Interviews (IDI) conducted with 6 organisational leaders purposively selected (3 from the private and 3 from the public sectors).

Primary data collected with the questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistical tools, while data from the IDI were content analysed. Every attempt was made to respect relevant social research ethics in terms of protecting the respondents, as well as the information elicited from them.

Findings and Discussions

Brief Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

A total number of 198 copies of the study questionnaire were analysed, while 6 in-depth interviews were conducted.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	**Freq (N= 198)**	**%**
Age Less than 30 years	3	1.5
30-39 years	16	8.5
40-49 years	44	22
50-59 years	103	52
60 years and above	32	16
Sex Male	147	74
Female	51	26
Educational Qualifications Below NCE/OND	-	3
NCE/OND	-	19
First Degree/HND	-	31
Post graduate	-	47
Cadre Unit leaders	86	43.4
Heads of Departments	98	49.5
Chief Executives/Top Officers	14	7.1
Sector Private	115	58
Public	83	42

From the questionnaire instrument, a total of 52% of the respondents, representing the majority, were within the age bracket of 50-59 years of age. This seems to align with the fact that they must have been in employment for a considerable length of time to have attained the leadership position they occupy. Also, 74% of the respondents were male, which also suggests a prevalence of male over female in leadership positions. In term of educational qualification, all the respondents had formal education with 47% of them, representing the majority, possessing postgraduate qualifications and having attended various management and leadership training programmes in addition. This was of course expected with the increasing emphasis being placed on possession of higher qualifications in formal organisations today. On the cadre of the respondents, 49.5% of them were Heads of Departments, 43.4% were unit leaders, while 7.1% were chief executive/top officers of the selected organisations. A total of 58% were from the private sector, while 42% were from the public sector.

Knowledge, attitude and perception of leaders on delegation of responsibilities

Findings from the study revealed that respondents understood the meaning of delegation of responsibilities and what it entails. They agreed that it is a basic ingredient of leadership at all levels because the official responsibility of leaders is always bigger than their personal capacity to carry out the responsibilities. This was explained by a male respondent in the private sector during an IDI session that delegation of responsibility is what every leader should do because no leader has the capacity of doing everything by himself. He spoke further:

> A leader's scope of responsibility is wide that he needs to shed part of it to subordinates. It simply means lay your hands off but keep your eyes open. That way you still have the accountability and control.

A total of 35% of the respondents became aware of delegation of responsibility because it is a policy in their organisation and therefore well encouraged, while 27% of them indicated that they became aware of it through the training programmes they have had cause to attend in the course of their work. Some (26%) of them also believed that literature on management has provided them ample opportunities to become knowledgeable in leadership and managerial issues. From these findings, it could be seen that the respondents had good knowledge of delegation of responsibilities and this may have implication for their level of involvement in the process. These findings support the Elkem's (2013) theoretical model adopted for this study which shows the major processes through which competence is developed.

Furthermore, 62% of the respondents claimed that they regularly delegate responsibilities to their subordinates because they see it as part of the requirements of their offices. However, surprisingly, as many as 30% of the respondents indicated that they hardly delegate responsibilities, while 8% indicated they did not delegate responsibilities to their subordinates. When cross tabulated with the socio-demographic characteristics, the respondents who indicated low level of delegation of responsibilities were all from the public sector. This was revealing and seems to further indicate a factor negatively affecting the level of efficiency of workers in the public sector as established by Inyang (2001) and Omolawal (2014).

On the aspects of responsibilities delegated, the study revealed that respondents (70%) did not delegate responsibilities on major key result areas but on other less technical areas. This was captured in the words of a male respondent in the private sector during an IDI session.

> As leaders, it may be dangerous to delegate responsibilities on key and critical areas. These are the areas that actually show and underpin your authority and superiority, and so should not be toyed with.

Although, this finding seems to support literature, but in a way, it negates the fundamental basis of enhancing the competence of subordinates. The study also found out that delegating responsibilities has positive effect on the performance of leaders because it enables them to focus attention on important aspects of their job. This is line with Eraut (1994) and Raven & Stephenson (2001), who argued that delegation of responsibilities, frees leaders from certain responsibilities and enables them to concentrate on more tangible areas.

From these findings, majority of the respondents had knowledge of what delegation of responsibilities means and perceived it to be a necessary ingredient for effective leadership in organisations. The result also showed that the respondents had positive attitude to delegation of responsibilities. As people occupying leadership positions, it is expected that through one way or the other, they will understand the meaning of the concepts. They saw the process as one which every leader must engage in, since no individual leader can on his own, meet the obligations of carrying out his responsibilities independently of the subordinates and this supports the views of Collin (1989) and Mulder (2001) that a leader's responsibility is usually bigger than his personal capacity.

The effect of delegation of responsibilities on subordinates' performance

On the effect of delegation of responsibilities on subordinates, 84% of the respondents, representing the majority indicated that it had positive effect on the performance of both the leaders and the subordinates. The chi square test indicated that a significant relationship exists between delegation of responsibilities and performance of subordinates (X^2=15.78; p-value=0.001). In the first instance, it provides opportunities for leaders to train subordinates and equip them to assume higher responsibilities in the organisation. A total of 68% of the respondents also indicated that it enables them prepare the subordinates for future leadership roles in organisations and that it enhances the skill, knowledge and attitude of workers which make them better equipped for their jobs (X^2=11.14; p-value=0.001).

Fifty-six (56) percent of the respondents explained that delegation of responsibilities provides opportunity to empower the subordinates and that the process is good for motivating followers. The study also revealed that the process of delegation helps in promoting positive relationships between the leaders and the subordinates, and as well build the confidence of subordinates.

These findings are very revealing and are indication of the positive effect delegation of responsibilities has on subordinates. By enhancing their knowledge, skill and attitude, they are more equipped for their functions and their competence is better developed. Furthermore, their confidence is built up and they become more motivated.

According to Odanye (2009), when employees are well motivated and possess the right level of competence, they become strategic resources for employers. This was further captured by a private sector male respondent during an IDI session:

> Delegation of responsibility is a cost free means of boosting the competence and confidence of workers. It costs leaders nothing to delegate, but it makes them gain much, and the workplace becomes healthier.

Another male respondent in the private sector captured the issue as follows:

> Workers feel motivated when their superiors entrust them with certain responsibilities and so they struggle not to disappoint the trust.

From the above findings, delegation of responsibility needs to be given attention in the work place because it enhances the competence of development, and consequently, the level of performance, of the subordinates. This is in line with Adefuye (2003) who argues that successful leaders share power, decision making and credit, and are not afraid to empower their subordinates within the organisation. According to *businessballs.com*, good delegation saves time, develops people, grooms a successor, and motivates. Poor delegation will cause frustration, de-motivate and confuse the other person, and fail to achieve the task or purpose itself. So it's a leadership skill that is worth improving. Effective delegation is crucial for management and leadership succession. For the successor or leader too, the main task of a leader in a growing or thriving organization is ultimately to develop a successor. When this happens, everyone can move on to higher things, but when it fails to happen the succession and progression become dependent on bringing in new people from outside, and this may negatively affect the internal people. This finding supports the Elken's model adopted for this study.

Reasons behind the unwillingness of leaders to delegate responsibilities

The study revealed that there are a number of reasons why leaders may not be willing to delegate responsibilities to their subordinates. A major factor that majority of the respondents (80%) indicated is the "I can do it better myself syndrome" or what some see as self ego syndrome. According to them, this syndrome is common to every leader, believing that they occupy their positions because they are better than their subordinates. Further probe revealed that this attitude may not be right at all times, especially where merit may not be the sole deciding factor for promoting people to leadership positions. This was stressed further by a female respondent (in the public sector) who explained that in the public service in Nigeria in particular, experience has shown that leaders may not in all cases be more competent than followers because of other factors associated with promotion of leaders in the sector. Her words:

> In the Nigerian public sector, people should not glory in the fact that they are promoted solely on their merit, because at times, politics and 'god fatherism' can take over the whole process of promotion and when that happens, mediocre leaders may emerge.

Related to the above, majority of the respondents (64%) also indicated that some leaders may have the fear that subordinates may take over from them hence their unwillingness to delegate responsibilities to them. This again relates to the issue of politics that may play out as explained earlier. Under that situation, the level of preparedness of leaders to delegate responsibilities to such subordinates may be low, hence the inability to enhance the subordinates competence development at work. These findings find support in Adefuye (2003) who argues that some leaders may not be willing to delegate responsibilities because of the fear of being undermined by subordinates, some of whom are probably better qualified on paper or have been better exposed. This will however propel such leaders to further develop themselves.

Another major reason for unwillingness to delegate responsibilities is lack of confidence in the subordinates as indicated by 57% of the respondents. When leaders have no confidence in their subordinates, this may affect the level at which such subordinates can be trusted and tested with responsibilities. However, leaders need to realize the fact that part of their responsibilities is to help subordinates build up their confidence and such could be done by entrusting certain responsibilities to them. This was further buttressed by a male respondent during the qualitative data gathering:

> Trust and confidence are the pillars of the relationships between leaders and followers. When a leader trusts his followers and has confidence in him, he opens up to him and relates better with him.

The above findings support the views of Oni (2003), Raven & Stephensonn (2004) on the relationships between leaders and subordinates in the workplace.
Other factors for unwillingness to delegate responsibilities revealed in this study included, fear of losing leadership authority, lack of ability to encourage cooperation among subordinates and unwillingness to take risks concerning one's job.

Barriers to delegation of responsibilities among leaders in the study organisations

The study identified a number of barriers affecting delegation of responsibilities as follows. Majority of the respondents (79%) agreed that lack of confidence on the part of the subordinates and the level of skill and competence of the subordinates (66%) could constitute a barrier to delegating responsibilities to them. Lack of confidence may occur in subordinates if they do not possess the right level of skill and knowledge needed for their jobs. It could also be due to non-exposure to higher responsibilities and challenges. When workers lack self confidence and when their skill level is low, it poses a big threat to leadership and the organisation and may affect the pattern of relationships in the organisation (Alos, 2002). However, it appears to be contradictory if leaders claim that their subordinates lack self confidence, yet they refuse to assign responsibilities to them, how would such subordinates develop their competences? This was the view of a male respondent in the private during an IDI session:

> In our organisation, we use various informal approaches to develop our workers. We hold on to the principle of learning by doing. If we do not let them do it, how can they learn it?

Another major barrier affecting delegation of responsibilities, according to 61% of the respondents is the subordinates' syndrome of "it is not my responsibility'. This attitude normally occurs when the relationship between leaders and subordinates is not cordial. This may be caused by a number of factors which may relate to the climate of the organisation. However, when employees or subordinates develop this attitude, it portends danger for the organisation and could affect the attainment of the corporate goals. A respondent during an IDI session threw more light on this issue and explained that employees may not be willing to accept responsibilities from leaders if such is not backed up with proper incentives such as recognition for jobs well done. He spoke further:

> Leaders need to realize that subordinates should be rewarded after performing well in a job assigned to them. It could be monetary or non-monetary, but whichever, they become more motivated and more willing to accept responsibilities.

The above therefore emphasizes the need for leaders to recognise the successes of their subordinates and motivate them for additional responsibilities as argued by Herzberg (1958).

Another factor identified in this study as constituting a barrier to delegation of responsibilities is organisational climate. A total of 68% of the respondents indicated this, while the remaining respondents either disagreed or were neutral to the issue. This was expressed further during an in-depth interview with a male public sector respondent as follows:

> Organisational climate is a powerful force in organisation that may affect people's willingness to delegate responsibilities. If such a climate is hot and political, people want to be careful with what they can transfer to others to do; otherwise, people may lose their job or power in the system.

Olabode (2007) defines organisational climate as the practices and trend of events that serve as the undertone upon which the actions, decisions and performances of organisational members are based. Where the organisational climate is political, it tends to be exclusive, leaving the views of certain groups to become dominant. On the other hand, when the organisational climate is not political, it becomes inclusive and gives freedom and opportunity for every member to express himself in the organisation. This was seen in this study as a factor capable of influencing leaders' willingness to delegate responsibilities to subordinates.

The study also revealed that bureaucracy is a factor that affects the level of delegation of responsibilities in organisations. This was attested to, by 58% of the total respondents. When cross-checked with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, a total of 73% of the 58% were from the public sector. This is an indication that bureaucratic structures in the public sector are taken more seriously than in the private sector. This supports literature on factors affecting the level of efficiency between the private and public sectors in Nigeria where bureaucracy was found to be among the factors (Omolawal, 2014).

From the above, it could be seen that a number of factors affect the willingness of leaders in delegating responsibilities to their subordinates. Organisations therefore should ensure a climate and culture in which the relationship between leaders and subordinates, whether formal or informal, will enhance their ability and competence needed to discharge their responsibilities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, delegation of responsibility is a vital tool in the hands of leaders in developing the competence level of their subordinates. It has the power to empower the subordinates and expose them to responsibilities which may have positive implications for future leadership roles. It also provides subordinates with opportunities for them to develop self confidence and see themselves as being capable of contributing to the achievement of organisational goals. Organisations should therefore promote a culture and climate where leaders should be ready and willing to build the capacity, confidence and competence of their subordinates which will ultimately translate to higher productivity of the organisation as a whole.

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