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LEADERSHIP, TEAM BUILDING, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND HARMONIOUS WORKING RELATIONSHIP FOR THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF NIGER STATE

By

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Abstract
Leadership serves as the guiding compass for economic development, shaping policies, and fostering an environment conducive to growth. Team building amplifies collective productivity, creating a synergistic effect that enhances organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Emotional intelligence, as a critical skill set, cultivates resilience and adaptability among individuals within the workforce. Harmonious working relationships form the bedrock of a positive organizational environment, fostering innovation and ensuring sustained growth. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the symbiotic relationship between leadership, team building, emotional intelligence, and harmonious working relationships, making use of secondary sources, drawn from journals, relevant textbooks, internet materials and both published and unpublished materials. This paper is anchored on elite theory as is theoretical framework for its analysis. The finding of this paper shows that leadership orientation of the political class can lead to good governance which comes about as the result of adherence to proper application of democratic participation. The study concludes that a framework of good leadership orientation, team building, emotional intelligence and harmonious working relationship can move Niger State to overcome economic challenges and pave the way for sustained economic growth and development. The paper therefore recommends that leadership in Niger State must be strategic by enunciating a strategic perspective that is broad enough to ensure well informed decisions and implementation of developmental policies and programmes for economic prosperity.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Harmonious Working, Leadership, Team building, and Niger state

Introduction

Niger State, situated in north-central Nigeria, possesses a diverse economic profile encompassing agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and services. To ensure sustainable economic growth, it is crucial to explore leadership, team building, emotional intelligence, and harmonious working relationships.

Leadership guides economic development, shaping policies and fostering a growth-conducive environment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Team building enhances collective productivity, creating a synergistic effect for organizational efficiency (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Emotional intelligence cultivates resilience and adaptability among the workforce (Goleman, 1995). Harmonious working relationships are foundational for a positive organizational environment, fostering innovation and sustained growth (Schein, 2010). This paper explores the interconnected nature of these elements and their role in catalyzing economic prosperity in Niger State.

This paper has been written to analyze the symbiotic relationship between leadership, team building, emotional intelligence, and harmonious working relationships. Implementing these concepts can potentially help Niger State overcome economic challenges and facilitate sustained growth.

Conceptual Discourse

Leadership involves providing direction for others to achieve goals, influencing actions to motivate and encourage support (Jacob & Jacques, 1990). It is a process of giving purpose to collective effort and causing willing effort to achieve collective goals. Leadership requires intellectual sagacity, prowess, and wisdom to convince and empower people to play crucial roles in achieving collective goals (Uboma, 2016:5).

In the context of economic development, leadership is dynamic and multifaceted, extending beyond traditional authority. It entails guiding collective efforts toward a shared vision, fostering innovation, and navigating challenges. Effective leaders adapt styles to suit constituents' needs and circumstances (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Leadership styles evolve based on contextual demands. While traditional autocratic leadership may have merits, contemporary economic development often demands transformational and participative approaches. A transformational leader inspires and motivates others for the greater good, fostering shared responsibility and vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Team building is a strategic process aimed at enhancing collaboration, communication, and synergy within an organization (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). In the economic context, effective teams are crucial for organizational success, fostering innovation, improving productivity, and creating a positive work culture. Team building is an ongoing effort, not a one-time event, to cultivate a collaborative mindset among team members (Edmondson, 2012).

A successful team goes beyond individuals working in proximity; it is a cohesive unit where members understand their roles, value diversity, and collectively work towards shared goals. Both formal and informal team building activities play a crucial role in developing strong interpersonal relationships and building trust.

Organizations emphasizing teamwork tend to outperform peers (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Collaborative efforts create synergy, leading to greater creativity, problem-solving capabilities, and adaptability to change. In the economic landscape, this results in increased efficiency in project delivery, faster response to market demands, and a heightened ability to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

A notable example of successful collaboration and open communication is the Nigerian tech company Andela known for its innovative approach to software development and talent outsourcing, Andela fosters a collaborative work culture that brings together skilled developers from across Nigeria to work on projects for global clients.

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the ability to recognize, influence, and respond to the emotions of others. In the realm of leadership, high emotional intelligence is a crucial attribute that goes beyond traditional leadership skills. Leaders with high EI navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, foster positive relationships, and make decisions that consider both rational and emotional aspects (Goleman, 1995).

Leaders with high emotional intelligence possess self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation, collectively contributing to their ability to inspire and positively influence others (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is an intelligent mental construct for analyzing social phenomena (Obasi, 2008:43). It serves as a way of seeing, analyzing, interpreting, describing, and predicting issues under investigation (Chukwuemeka, 2002:60). The paper adopts the elite theory to analyze leadership orientation and national development in Nigeria. The elite comprises powerful, influential, intelligent, and wealthy individuals who make major decisions for society. Advocates include Pareto, Mosca, Michels, Bumham, Schumpter, Arion, Satoru, and Mannehein (Mahajan, 2005:820-6 cited in Aluko: 2010:5). Pareto's analysis focuses on the governing elite's use of force and consent. Mosca emphasizes the organizational ability of the ruling elite. Michels argues that democracy becomes a "party-cracy," controlled by leaders who are unaccountable to the electorate due to organizational and psychological factors (Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy). This principle applies to all organizations, leading to inevitable oligarchy or the rule of the chosen few.

Political leaders wield significant influence over the economic environment, with their policies and initiatives impacting growth. In the case of Niger State, leaders must adopt a holistic approach, combining short-term economic measures with long-term strategic planning. Policies supporting investment-friendly environments, infrastructure development, education, and healthcare are crucial. Effective political leadership involves responsible management of public resources and alignment of policies with the state's economic vision. By fostering a business-friendly environment, leaders can attract investments, create job opportunities, and drive economic prosperity.

The position of Robert Michels on the elite theory appears to be more appealing especially in the Nigerian situation where the selected few politicians and their up springs are recycled year in year out since independence in 1960. According to Michels, democratic system is in practice, a party system, such that democracy becomes a "party-cracy". Party organization is controlled by a group of leaders who cannot be checked or held accountable by the persons who elected them. This is due to organizational factors such as party funds, control over the press and control over the mass media by the party in power and psychological factors such as the apathy of the majority, technical incompetence, etc. This principle applies to all organizations. It was on the basis of this that Michels propounded his "Iron Law of Oligarchy". In fact, as he opined "who says organization, says oligarchy". He concluded and rightly too, that whatever form of government is adopted, in practice, it is inevitably reduced to oligarchy or the rule of the chosen few.

Over time, several core theories about leadership have emerged, and scholars have engaged in constructive debates on the best theory leaders should adopt to facilitate achievement of the desired goals. There is no universal acceptance of one theory as the enterprising model. However, situational demands may warrant combination of two or three models to achieve the desired objectives. On this promise, elite theoretical framework of analysis is found most suitable and aptly adopted.

METHODOLOGY

To realize the broad objectives of this paper, it was situated on a sound methodological plane. Literature that abound on leadership, team building, emotional intelligence and harmonious working relationship for the economic prosperity and similar literature was reviewed. The paper build on element of past research, verifiable evidence on issue and observation in order to promote and enhance theoretical unity. Relevant documentary sources for proper analysis included conference paper, relevant topics in text book, academic journal, scholarly articles, newspapers, memos, archival records and papers on contemporary argument on the subject matter.

Impact on Organizational Climate

The influence of emotional intelligence on the organizational climate is profound. Leaders with high emotional intelligence contribute to a positive workplace culture characterized by trust, open communication, and a sense of collective purpose. Such environments are conducive to collaboration, innovation, and high employee morale (Goleman, 1995).

Research consistently shows that teams led by emotionally intelligent leaders tend to be more engaged and productive. Employees feel supported, valued, and motivated, leading to increased job satisfaction and a willingness to go the extra mile for the organization (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Harmonious working relationships are characterized by mutual respect, trust, and effective communication among team members. In the economic context, the quality of interpersonal relationships within an organization significantly influences its ability to innovate, adapt to change, and achieve sustained growth. Positive workplace relationships create a conducive environment where employees feel supported, valued, and motivated, leading to increased productivity and overall organizational success (Lencioni, 2002; Schein, 2010).

Conflicts in the workplace can arise from differences in perspectives, goals, or communication styles. Addressing conflicts promptly and constructively is essential for maintaining harmonious working relationships. This involves: -

i. Identification: Recognizing and acknowledging the existence of conflicts.
ii. Communication: Encouraging open and honest communication between parties involved (Lencioni, 2002).
iii. Mediation: In cases where conflicts persist, involving a neutral third party to facilitate resolution.
iv. Learning Opportunities: Viewing conflicts as opportunities for growth and learning, with a focus on finding common ground.

Interconnectedness of Leadership, Team Building, Emotional Intelligence, and Harmonious Working Relationships

The success of an organization hinges on the intricate interplay between leadership, team building, emotional intelligence (EI), and harmonious working relationships. Rather than isolated components, these elements form a symbiotic relationship that amplifies their individual impact. Here's how they synergize:-

i. Shared Vision: Effective leaders articulate a compelling vision that becomes a rallying point for the team.
ii. Empowerment: Leadership involves empowering team members by providing them with the autonomy to make decisions and contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives.
iii. Empathy in Action: Leaders with high emotional intelligence are naturally adept at understanding the emotions of their team members.
iv. Building Trust: Emotional intelligence contributes to building trust, a critical component of harmonious working relationships.
v. Self-Awareness in Leadership: Emotional intelligence enhances a leader's self-awareness, enabling them to recognize and manage their emotions effectively (Goleman, 1998).
vi. Influence and Inspiration: Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more adept at influencing and inspiring others.
vii. Cohesive Teams: Team building activities contribute to the development of cohesive teams. As teams become more cohesive, harmonious working relationships naturally emerge, characterized by mutual respect, collaboration, and a shared commitment to achieving common objectives (Lencioni, 2002).
viii. Communication and Understanding: Effective team building emphasizes open communication and understanding among team members.

Economic Factors than can lead to Economic Prosperity

The concept of economic prosperity in Niger State refers to economic competitiveness, security, growth, and wealth. To achieve this, improving per capita income is crucial, considering indicators like GDP and HDI. The GDP measures the market value of goods and services produced in Niger State, reflecting economic health. Currently, Niger State's GDP is 11.8%, ranking 11th among states (Okeowo and Fatoba, 2022).

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Niger State is low at 0.484, falling below the medium development threshold of 0.535. In comparison, other states like Lagos have higher HDI values (UNDP, 2021; Asongu and Odhiambo, 2022).

This is not only limited to per capita income, but other indicators include gross domestic product, human capital index, human assets index, economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI or EEVI).

The focus of this paper shall be streamlined to two indicators, which include the gross domestic product (GDP) and Human Development Index (HDI).

The GDP refers to the aggregate market value and aggregate monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced that is produced specifically in Niger State (as a whole, in Nigeria) within a specific period of time. In the general perspective, it can be seen broadly to measure the production within the domestic economic. This is can serve as a catalyst for analyzing the level of prosperity, health and wealth of an economy especially in Niger State and in general Nigeria. And so investors in Niger State can use this indicator to make their investment decisions especially a situation on whether an economy is experiencing boom or recession. This can be measured in two ways, either through the income approach or expenditure approach. The GDP statistics of Niger state is 11.8%and is ranked the 11thcompared to other States which is 102.01%, 19.72%, 19.25%, 19.02%, 15.33%, 12.73%, 12.63%, 12.46%, and 11.47% for Lagos, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Imo, Delta, Anambra, Ondo, Ogun, and Bayelsa respectively.(*Okeowo and Fatoba, 2022*).

In addition based on the human development index (HDI)(2021), the economy of Niger State is faced with a low human development of 0.484 compared to other states such as Lagos (0.681), Ogun (0.671), Anambra and Delta (0.662), Bayelsa (0.651), Rivers (0.648), Imo (0.647), Federal Capital Territory (0.646), Abia (0.644), Enugu (0.640), Oyo (0.632), Edo (0.627), Ekiti and Osun (0.614), Benue (0.604), Nasarawa (0.575), Kwara (0.571) and Plateau (0.564) . The threshold for achieving medium development is 0.535. It has been observed that the index for Niger State is far below the required threshold (UNDP, 2018)and according to Asongu and Odhiambo (2022), the modifying thresholds of the HDI vary from 0.542 to 0.632 and 0.333 to 0.705 in inequality and poverty specifications respectively.

Furthermore, the economic and environmental vulnerability index comprises of economic vulnerability indicators such as; the share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in GDP, which can further promote stability of the economy (Guillaumont, 2007). The environmental vulnerability indicators share of population in low elevated coastal zones, share of population living in dry lands, instability of agricultural production and victims of disaster (Dong and Hauschild, 2017).

Arising from the above basic indicators that can be used to measure the health and wealth of the economy of Niger State.

Therefore this paper further identifies the precipitating factors that can contribute to improved prosperity of the economy of Niger State. This factors include:

i. Natural resources
ii. Capital accumulation
iii. Organization
iv. Technological progress
v. Division of labour
vi. Structural changes

Natural Resources

One of the principal factor that can hinder the prosperity of Niger State economy is the natural resources or land. Land is one of the factors of production, this is because natural resources includes the fertility of land, its situation and composition, forest wealth, minerals, climate, water resources, sea resources etc. Thus Lewis (1954:p52) stated that other things being equal, men can make better use of rich resources than they can of poor. Therefore if a Niger State is deficient in natural resources, it will not be in a position to develop rapidly. On the other hand achieving full utilization of this resources can increase the GDP and per capita income of Niger State. On the contrary, if such resources are under-utilized or misused, it can reduce production efficiency and prevent optimal utilization of resources. Thus Fisher (1987) opined that there is little reason to expect natural resource development if people are indifferent to the products or services which such resources can contribute.

Capital accumulation

Capital accumulation is an important factor that can increase and improve the economy of Niger State. According to Jhingan (1997) capital means the stock of physical reproducible factors of

production. When the capital stock increases over time, this is called capital accumulation (capital formation). The process of capital formation is cumulative and self-feeding. The process of capital formation is in three interrelated stages:

i. the existence of real savings

ii. the existence of credit and financial institutions to mobilize savings and to divert them in desired channels and

iii. to use these savings for investment in capital

The rate of capital accumulation can be increased from various possibilities. And so if Niger State is experiencing low propensity to save, the obvious way is to use forced savings. Therefore forced savings reduce consumption and thereby release resources for capital formation. There are various methods that can be adopted for forced savings. This can be in the form of taxation, deficit financing and borrowing.In addition, the following measures can be taking to enhance savings to improve the economy of Niger State among which include:

a. Tax cuts can be introduced on both production and consumption to achieve efficiency
b. The need for promoting good planning, sustainable transparency and accountability in public accounting and auditing
c. There urgent need for promoting financial literacy awareness in both the rural and urban areas
d. Promotion of ethical banking culture through improved banking services and products. This can promote certain threshold of savings.
e. The urgent need to promote the culture of savings among the younger generation
f. Enhancing pension policy to be more growth oriented and workers friendly

Organization

Organization in this context is discussed in relation to the optimum utilization of factors of production in economic activities. Organization is a component that complements capital and labour and helps in increasing their productivities. In this case an entrepreneur is considered as performing the task of an organizer and undertakes risks and uncertainties in a modern economic growth, which can ensure the health and wealth of the economy of Niger State. It is assumed that the entrepreneur is an economic leader who possess the ability to recognize opportunities for successful introduction of new techniques, innovations, strategies, new sources of supply and to assemble the necessary plant and equipment, management and labour force and organize them into running concern. And so deficiency in entrepreneurial activity can increase the susceptibility to shocks, risks and uncertainties in the economy of Niger State. Example of this factors that can lead to these shocks are small size of the market, backwardness in technology, lack of skilled and trained labour, absence of adequate raw materials and infrastructural facilities like power and transport.

Technological progress

For Niger State to achieve economic prosperity, there is need to have high expected technological changes, which is very important. This is because technological changes are related to changes in the methods of production that are as a result of new innovation or new technique in research. Changes in technology lead to increase in the productivity of labour, capital and other factors of production. According to Prof. Kuznets and UNCTAD (2019), opined that there are five distinct patterns in the growth of technology, which include;

i. Scientific discovery
ii. An invention
iii. An innovation
iv. An improvement
v. The spread of invention ususally accompanied by improvements

Structural changes

Structural changes imply the transition from a traditional agrarian society to a modern industrial economy involving a radical transformation of existing institutions, social attitudes and motivations. Such structural changes lead to increasing employment opportunities, high labour productivity and stock of capital, exploitation of new resources and improvements in technology. Structural changes may begin with transfer of population from the primary to secondary and then to tertiary employment. Therefore structural changes involve the expansion of the non-agricultural sector so that the proportion of population in the agricultural sector is progressively reduced.

Another aspect of structural changes is shifting the population from primary and secondary to tertiary employment. For instance tertiary production includes transport, retail and wholesale distribution, and education.

Thus Hoselitz (1957) also indicated that another aspect of structural changes is innovation. Innovation brings about transformation. Innovation is an area that opens up the economy to structural changes. Innovation will widen domestic market and also create a foreign market.

Division of labour (and scale of production)

Specialization and division of labour can lead to increase in productivity. This can lead to economies of large scale production which can be improve industrial development. As labour becomes efficient, it will improve productive capacity that is capable of inventing new machines and process in production. Division of labour depends upon the size of the market and size of the market depends on economic progress. This is to say economic progress in terms of the size of demand, the general level of production, the means of transport etc are developed. As long as the scale of production is large, there is greater specialization and division of labour. The resultant effect is that production will increase and rate of economic progress is accelerated.

B. Non-economic factors that can lead to economic prosperity in Niger State

There are also non-economic factors that can lead to economic prosperity in Niger State. These factors include political factors, social factors, cultural factors , technological factors are:

Social factors: The economy and society of Niger State having high levels of education, health and social welfare can improve the quality of human capital, increase productivity and promote a wealthy economy of the State of Niger.

i. Political factors:

These political factors include political stability and good governance. For example a stable political environment with good governance, rule of law and effective institutions can attract foreign investment, promote entrepreneurship and innovation. This will translate to a health and wealthy economy leading to growth.

ii. Social factors:

The Niger State economy can flourish when it has high levels of education, health, and social welfare, which can improve the quality of human capital, increase productivity, and promote the prosperity of its economy. This can have a multiplier effect on the growth of the State

iii. Cultural factors:

Cultural factors such as attitudes towards work, savings, and investment can have a significant impact on the development of Niger State economy.

Continuous Improvement

Recognizing that the economic landscape is dynamic, leaders and policymakers must prioritize continuous improvement and adaptability in their approaches. Regular assessments of the effectiveness of implemented strategies, coupled with a commitment to refining and evolving practices, are essential for ensuring sustained progress.

Leadership, as noted by Okeke and Idike (20160, in its simplest form, can be depicted:

… as the ability tom inspire, direct, motivate and encourage others positively to targeted end. Also, leadership is about rising up to the occasion by organizing and adequately coordinating the resources of time, relationship, skills, expertise and finances to achieve a goal for common good of all. Leadership is the ability to lead others and not necessarily the availability to lead because certain qualities are normally expected of any person who wishes to attain a leadership position. Even though availability might at times lead to leadership position , it is not leadership itself…

Conclusion

Niger State is blessed with human and material resources and in order to build a prosperous Niger State, the leaders should adhere to democratic principles of the rule of law to ensure consistent harnessing of these resources government must secure the country so that in a peaceful atmosphere all citizens can join in the building of the Niger State Development Agenda.

The paper concludes that while, challenges may exist, the strategic integration of leadership, team building, emotional intelligence, and harmonious working relationships remains a potent recipe for economic prosperity in Niger State. By addressing challenges head-on with targeted solutions and a commitment to continuous improvement, the state can lay the foundation for a resilient, adaptive, and collaborative workforce that drives sustainable economic growth.

This paper recommends that the leadership in Niger State must be strategic by enunciating a strategic context of its present situation and its future by ensuring a well informed decisions. These must derive their sources from well articulated team having a broader perspective of its present situation and future by ensuring putting mechanism of team building, emotional intelligence and harmonious working relationship for well informed actions and implementation of her policies.

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