Followership and Leadership Failure: A Theoretical Analyses of Follower-Based Impediments to Good Governance and National Development in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Followership is reflected as the reciprocal social process of leadership in the sense that followership mirrors the capacity of a person or group to follow a leader. Leaders and followers interchangeably form basis for each other in those leaders lead because there are followers, and followers follow because there are leaders. Recently, across the globe, followership is gaining prominence and can no longer be ignored in leadership discussions. Governance on the other hand is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The study relied on documentary method of data collection as it also implored content analysis. In this paper, the discussion will center on the varieties of followers according to different typologies; their implications for actions that will promote good governance and development in Nigeria, and critical analyses of some factors in which followership failed in the achievement of good governance and national development in Nigeria. Recommendations for actions as well as for further studies were made.

Keywords: Followership, Leadership, Governance, Social Change, Leadership Failure.

Introduction

A call to focus on followership and leadership in Nigeria is timely as we are experiencing a lot of challenges generated by political, religious, social, and economic instability with a high prevalence in communal and ethnic/interethnic crisis. The recent agitations for secession due to perceived marginalization and bad governance; violent killing of citizens in the country are all challenges facing or threatening the continuance of the entity called Nigeria. With all these in sight, effective leadership will remain a mirage until the followers actively take part in achieving national goals as they are instrumental to positive change in the environment.

Good governance represents the best possible process for making decisions. It is not just about making "correct" decisions but about the processes for making and implementing decisions (Muyiwa, 2020). Governance by the foregoing is not a term unique or limited and peculiar to political environment as well as immediate society. Governance is felt in every organization, organized group and convention of human endeavor. Harmony between leaders and followers sustains peace and national development.

Recently, across the globe, followership is gaining prominence and can no longer be ignored in leadership discussions. Followership is as important as leadership because a good leader is seen through the eyes and faces of his followers. Thom-Otuya (2012) opines that leadership and followership are mutual activities of great influence to national development in all parts of the world. It is very important to note that without good followership, good leadership remains a broad line mystery. Followership forms a good line of discussion because in most part of the world today especially where democracy and participatory form of social structure is practiced, leadership is determined by the followers through behaviours such as voting, civic involvement, group compliance and support. Also, it is worthy of note that leadership is an offspring of followership. Every leader was once a follower, and most times leaders return to being followers after their leadership cycles or tenures.

Kellerman (2008) asserts that it is neither practical nor philosophically possible for everyone to be a leader. Also, followers out-there are usually more than leaders in any setting (Murji, 2015). For example, there is only one Head of department in a vastly staffed and students enriched department; one governor in a state of over thousands of citizens; one president in the Federal Republic of Nigeria with over 200 million citizens. At any level of human affairs and endeavor, there are more followers than leaders in the population at any given time. This justifies the need to study followers as an indispensable integral arm of every leadership set up. Therefore, it will be unimaginably unkind to focus all of our concern, energy or discussion on just leaders which are just a small fraction of the population. According to scholars, the psychology of followership is not only more complicated but also more interesting than that of leadership (Murji, 2015; Van Vugt, Hogan & Kaiser, 2008). Even when leaders command respect and attention, followers can affect and even constrain leaders' activity in more than passing ways (Hollander, 1992). Leaders depend on followers to be leaders. Followers' consensus is what determine leaders and good leaders are made by good followers (Thody, 2003).

This study is important at the time because there is a dearth of knowledge in core followership studies directed towards good governance and national development. Thom-Otuya (2012) asserts that followership in Nigeria has not generated much academic debate. She went further to note that there have been cases of resistance movements that have been spearheaded by followers in which cases followers protest poor governance and ineptitude of Nigerian Leaders. There is need to investigate these resistance movements to understand the make-up and what class of followers that are involved or that champion these movements. This supposedly will give better understanding of how to handle these people and harness their abilities for National development instead of categorically labelling most of them deviants. Thom-Otuya (2012) in furthering her defense of Nigerian followers said that Nigerian followers are very loyal and supportive to leadership and have participated actively in the achievement of the nation's goals, though Nigeria people being ravaged by poverty are weakened in their ability to rise to their challenges of checkmating the excesses of the leaders. However, it is worthy of note that a lot depends on followers in stirring good governance and national development and many Nigerian followers fail in these responsibilities. It is against this background that this study was crafted to address followers-based impediments to good governance and national development.

Concept of Followership

Followership is considered the reciprocal social process of leadership. It reflects the capacity of a person or group to follow and assume a subject role to the rule and authority of a leader. Recently, across the globe, followership is gaining prominence and can no longer be ignored in leadership discussions. Kellerman (2008) asserts that the characteristics of followers affect the leader and performance of the leader. Followership is fundamentally the capacity, ability or willingness to follow a leader. The Civil Air Patrol's Professional Development (CAPPD, n.d) defines followership as reaching a specific goal while exercising respect for authority, a positive attitude, integrity, and self-discipline. Kelley (1992) begins the construction of his definition by saying that followers are the

"people who act with intelligence, independence, courage, and a strong sense of ethics". Followers are in a position to better recognize the day-to-day events within an organization or institution and sometimes following is more difficult than leading (Bennis, 2010; Suda, 2013).

Kellerman have it that "Followers are subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors, and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line" (Kellerman, 2008). The majority of people, particularly in organizations, are more often followers than leaders but until recently the role of the follower has not been considered an inherently valuable position, or a role with a specialized set of skills, motivations, and the power to enhance organizational potential (Kelley, 1988).

Followership and leadership are like the two sides of same coin. Without followers, leadership is meaningless, and leaders would not exist. Better followers beget better leaders (Kellerman, 2008). Robert (2013) stated that "for the leader to inspire and lead, however, the followers must be willing and able to be inspired and be led". In description of followership, Suda (2013) added peoples' willingness to cooperate in working toward the success of the set mission, demonstrate a high degree of teamwork and build cohesion among the organization members. Robert (2013) articulated that "Whether our interest is business, government, education, or almost any other entity that organizes humans in some way, it seems that we are perpetually in need of more individuals who can lead organizations effectively. But we also live in an era when we need institutions- *i.e., the* organizations that have formed, and that we have formed, to regulate and improve our livesthat are willing and able to be led. ... just as there are characteristics and behaviors that a leader must have if he or she is to be effective in creating the conditions for and facilitating progress, there are also characteristics and behaviors that constituents in organizations must have if the organization itself is to be susceptible to being led by an effective leader" (Robert, 2013).

The above assertion implies that good leadership is imperatively a function of good followership because good followers make their leaders better. A good leader cannot be identified if there are no followers. Followers serve as means to either validate or invalidate a leader. So, followership studies are imperative just as leadership studies are.

Typologies of Followership

There are different scholars that have made attempt at defining different types of followers. Zaleznik (1965), Kelley (1992), Chaleff (1995), Blackshear (2004), and Kellerman (2008) are some the typologies of followership. The different levels or types of followership according to these scholars are presented in the table below.

Zaleznik (1965)	Kelley (1992)	Chaleff (1995)	Blackshear (2004)	Kellerman (2008)
Withdrawn	Alienated	Resource	Employee	Isolate
Masochistic	Passive	Individualist	Committed	Bystander
Compulsive	Conformist	Implementer	Engaged	Participant
Impulsive	Pragmatist	Partner	Effective	Activist
	Exemplary		Exemplary	Diehard

Table 1: Typologies of Followership by Di	ifferent Scholars
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Despite the avalanche of followership typology, this study will review the Kelly's (1992) model and further discussions in this paper will be aligned to this typology.

The Kelley Typology

Kelley's (1992) typology (in the second column of the table above) is currently the most recognized followership typology (Northouse, 2019). In Kelley's ideology, followers are enormously valuable to organizations and that the power of followers often goes unrecognized; and with this, he stresses the importance of studying followers in the leadership process and gave impetus to the development of the field of followership (Northouse, 2019). Zaleznik's and Kelly's typologies are both psychologically focused. Zaleznik emphasizes the personal aspects of followers, and Kelley emphasizes the *motivations* of followers and follower behaviors (Northouse, 2019) which are both psychological domains.

According to Northouse (2019) and Novikov (2016), Kelley organized his followers' styles on two axes: (1) *the independent critical thinking–dependent uncritical thinking axis and* (2) *the active–passive axis*. These two dimensions for Kelly resulted into five follower role types:

- a) *Passive followers* (sometimes pejoratively called "sheep"), who look to the leader for all the direction and motivation.
- b) *Conformist followers*, who are "yes people"—always on the leader's side but still looking up to the leader for direction and guidance.
- c) *Alienated followers,* who think for themselves and exhibit a lot of negative energy. They have capacity for independent thinking but apply it negatively.
- d) *Pragmatics,* who are "fence-sitters" who support the status quo but do not get on board until others do. They act as bystanders until others get at work.
- e) *Exemplary followers* (sometimes called "star" followers), who are active and positive and offer independent constructive criticism (Northouse, 2019).

Exemplary followers rank high in both active engagement and independent critical thinking (Novikov, 2016); work well with others (Bjugstad et al., 2006); and "assume responsibilities beyond their minimum job requirements and exert considerable effort to accomplish goals" (Blanchard et al., 2009). Kelley (1988, 2008) asserts that effective followers share the same indispensable qualities: (1) They self-manage and think for themselves, exercise control and independence, and work without supervision; (2) they show strong commitment to organizational goals (i.e., something outside themselves) as well as their own personal goals; (3) they build their competence and master job skills; and (4) they are credible, ethical, and courageous (Northouse, 2019). Kelly developed a 20 item survey instrument for tor testing followership styles.

Qualities of Good Followership

Irikana and Orisa (2007) in Thom-Otuya (2012) listed fourteen (14) qualities of good followership as: (1) Total obedience to the laws of the land or constituted authorities; (2) Unalloyed loyalty or allegiance to the leadership that be; (3) Eschew indiscipline in any form or shapes; (4) Explore channels of grievance resolution; (5) Commitment to goals and aspiration of the country; (6) Demonstrate appreciable virtues and values; (7) Avoid sycophancy but telling the leadership the truth; (8) Show true patriotism and participation; (9) To be well enlightened and responsive; (10) Imbibe the principle of self-reliance; (11) Offering constructive criticism and providing solutions; (12) Be prepared at all times to respond to call for national services; (13) Be willing to accept responsibility for his actions;

and (14) Develop the attitude of co-operation with his leader for the accomplishment of group goals.

Problem of Followership in Nigeria

Followers perform certain functions to the organization, group or government and to the leaders. Thom-Otuya (2012) summarized what is expected of followers as functions to perform (for continuance and progress of the group) into three as follow:

- **Surrender to leadership**: followers must be willing to obey the laws of the land, and to be directed and guided by a constituted authority.
- **Obey the command of a leader:** followers should be loyal to leadership.
- Act as mirror of leadership: follower must checkmate the activities or excesses of leadership; for this to be done, followership need to be articulate, vibrant and vocal, this will act as a check on the leadership, and this will assist to reduce the excesses of leadership to the barest minimum.

Blackshear (2004) while discussing the continuum typology of followership in an organizational setting which can be applied to other areas, opined that among other areas of concern that successful followership is built on (1) Belief in an organization's mission, vision or purpose, (2) Willingness to subjugate personal interest for the greater good, (3) Loyalty, and (4) Unity of focus.

It is the failure of followers in these functions and more as well as in factors that incapacitates them from measuring up to these expected functions that the problems of followership are identified. Thom-Otuya (2012) identified series of problems of followership in Nigeria:

✓ Poverty: Followership in Nigeria has some problems that prevent her from playing certain roles that is identified with followership and, that can check the excesses of leadership. Poverty is one major factor that impairs the role of followership in Nigeria. In Nigeria those who are rich are very rich and wealthy; the poor are really poor; the middle-class wobbles between self-sufficiency and poverty. Followers that are poor are afraid to criticize or checkmate the excesses of their leadership because of fear of oppression from the leadership. A poor followership is a weak and fearful crowed that is constrained to be docile over the activities of her leadership.

- ✓ Ethnicity: the second problem that confronts followership in Nigeria is ethnicity. Followers pledge loyalty to their tribe first before the larger society Nigeria. Nigerians protects corrupt leaders without integrity and shield them from criticism and prosecution. When a corrupt leader is prosecuted, his tribes' men will come to his defense and rescue. Even the way we vote or choose our leaders is influenced by ethnicity because it is believed that if the leader is there, he will empower his tribes men first before others and programme some projects to his tribe and empower his people with robust government and corporate contracts. Nigerian followership should exculpate themselves from tribalism and put the interest of Nigeria before their tribal interest or else the country will continue to wallow in poverty and insecurity.
- ✓ Sycophancy: Nigerian followers are fond of not telling their leaders the truth, they praise them, tell them lies; as soon as they leave their office, that is when follower turn against their leader to criticize his lapses.
- ✓ Negativized quietude: This is a situation where followers remain adamant and aloof of the excesses of leadership activities. When leaders are not doing the right thing, Nigerian followers has developed a form of careless attitude towards that but instead, tend to speak against other followers that tend to speak up.
- Susceptible to use by some leaders to fan trouble: followers' sometime ally with leaders to create trouble in the society so that; they can divert the attention of the people, to execute their personal interest.
- Powerlessness in influencing government decisions: this is a major problem of followers in Nigeria. Elections in Nigeria are highly manipulated. Leaders do not come to power through the peoples vote, they manipulate election and election results to the extent that vote casted do not make any meaning. Since peoples votes do not count, their opinion too is undermined. The case of fuel subsidy is a vivid example, despite people's protest, government stood their ground.
- ✓ Sitting on the fence and watching the reckless abuse of office by leaders: Corruption and abuse of office would have reduced tremendously in Nigeria if followers have been bold enough to come out to criticize or challenge the excesses of their leaders.

Followership and National Development: Implications for Social Change in Nigeria

In the opinion of Robert (2014) it is possible that the most important characteristic of followers is the characteristic of followers as an agent of change. Kellerman (2008) stated that "followers who do something are nearly always preferred to followers who do nothing and that followers can be agents of change". Ekundayo, Damhoeri, and Ekundayo (2010) paid particular attention to the premise that the act of followership has made great strides globally as they asserted that more followers around the world are creating ripples by initiating change(s) in organizations and politics especially as they synergize by coming together in groups to fight a common cause. Some of these followers in groups have made government functionaries sit up and try doing their best in order to bring about better governance in their nation.

According to Dike (2008), Nigeria's short life has been packed with successions of social changes which cut across the different strata of the nation. There has been the shift from regions to states, farms to cities, agriculture to petroleum and political power has shifted from the north to the south and now back to the north. The implication of followership for social change is seen in influencing, creation, and sustenance of change. Today, there is massive advocacy for community participation and ownership of development projects and action plans. Followers ought not to wait on the leadership or leaders all the time to rise to the concern of every problem in the society. This has necessitated the rise of things like neighborhood watch, followership intervention in solving social problems.

Followers just like leaders have the capacity to influence, create or sustain social change in the society. The solution to the problems that leadership has failed to solve over time in the country lies on followership. Ogbonna, Ogundiwin and Uzuegbu-Wilson (2012) opined that "while leadership in Nigeria has for sure been irresponsible, corrupt, self-serving, personalizing, clueless, etc, it is only critical followership that can reverse the trend". This implies that followership has enormous place and stand in the creation and sustenance of social change in every society. Everything does not nowadays rest on leadership. We have

many followership structures whose activities and works have favored the serious positive changes in the country.

Apart from changes created or sustained by the leadership or the government of the nation, there are a lot of others that have or can be caused by the followers. In Nigeria, many followers in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme have created, influenced, and sustained many social changes. These gallant corps members through their respective community development services have created a long-lasting change in their host communities. Other followers through some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) have equally created a long-lasting change in the society.

It is good to note that the capacity of creating or sustaining social changes by followers depends on the type of followership. Not all kinds of followers can prompt creative response or thoughtfulness to participative problem solving in the society. This is because, the way the different types of followers would view or approach a situations or problems in the society varies.

Followers-Based Impediments to Leadership and Good Governance

The continuous blame on the leadership architecture and functionality in Nigeria for the imbalances and societal fall tactically exonerates followers from the fall in the national progress and development architecture. There are many areas in which we can see the existence of a strong collaboration of the leaders and the followers in the fail of policies societal structures. In some of these cases, failure of leadership brought in the failure of the followers and in others, failure of followers brought about the failure of the leaders. However, there are other ways that followers in the past and in the present have contributed solely or majorly to the system breakdown in Nigeria. These followership contributions are through their economic, political, social, work and other civil behaviours.

Economic behaviours- there are so many economic behaviours of the followers that lead to or constitute failures in leadership or diminished good governance. Citizens that produce and sell substandard goods and services are not exempted from this category as they cause a lot of harm in the economy of the nation. Some of the funds spent in the health sector are

due to substandard drugs in the market space. The government spend a lot of funds in reawarding the roads that were sub-standardly constructed by the citizens whom the contracts were originally awarded to. However though, there must be collaboration of a government player or failure of the government/leaders in ding the needful for some of these substandard products and services to happen or continue. Another economic behaviour that forestalls the societal progress is tax incompliance or aversion. So many citizens fail to pay tax, while some fail to fully remit their due taxes. So many private organizations in Nigeria deduct tax from their workers but these tax deductions are not remitted to the government. This act of failure in tax remittance both by organizations and individual followers are detrimental to the strength of the leadership architecture and its attendant result.

Service theft also is another way the followers/citizens contribute in leadership and system failures. So many people use services and pay less than they use of fail to pay entirely. Some illegally adapt these services and all these cause fall in revenue generation of the state or the nation thereby affecting the development progress and mapping. Electric distribution companies in Nigeria record heavy loss in revenue caused by power theft and illegal and unmetered connections in companies and domestic residences.

There are many other ways that the economic activities or behaviours of citizens affect leadership progress in the country. Some citizens or followers who run errands or work directly under some leaders fail to fully account for the funds given to them for one task ort the other. Some see any opportunity to run errands or acquire something for their organization or the government as a lucrative endeavor and the fund as their personal entitlement. Every leader must have as basic composition some members of the followers in their team to serve many functions and aspects of the leadership operations. Some of these appointees, attachés, helps, interns and all what we have are the reasons some government projects and programs fail but the blame taker (the leader) is always the one held accountable for the frails and hence their usual dilemmas.

Excessive Demands on the leaders- Many people stay up all day in a leader's office or house with enormous demands. These leaders are human beings and most of them do not

have other means of making money while in office. So if they at some points must meet the demands of the people in their social clan and constituencies, they will have to meddle with funds allocated to very important projects thereby causing those projects to suffer. Religious groups, family members, friends, other social groups, the needy and all you have make endless personal demands on the leaders for funds, to attend their programs which after the meeting they expect the leader to give them some financial support. Some groups now hide under award presentation to solicit financial supports. Most of these funds are not allocated for the purposes they are been spent which implies that something suffers for the leader to meet up with these unending responsibilities.

Some make demands of jobs and because of social affiliations with the leader, jobs are created where there is usually no need for a new worker. These workers almost stay in the office not doing anything till close of work every day without a clear-cut workload. Some of them do not even come to work and they feel comfortably covered because of the person from whom they entered the system. Need little to say that some of these leader-favoured employees are substandard or are entirely not qualified for the positions into which they were recruited. They cause the reasons the leadership are blamed for not performing.

Work behaviours- Ethics in the workplace is in a big slack in many agencies and organizations both those privately and government owned. There is no doubt how bad workers in different sectors of the country's affairs have contributed to the dilapidation of their sectors through unethical work attitude. Work ethics breaches include but not limited to lateness to work, absenteeism from work, and collection of "settlement" from clients or customers in their offices to perform the same work for which they were employed and paid for. Today if you apply for transcript in some Nigerian universities without knowing someone in the records unit or giving some extra stipends to the staff in charge of your transcript, your transcript may have to unnecessarily take months against the usual few days it should take.

Aiding Corruption- the rate of corruption in the society increases by the day and every one of the citizenries cries out for the rate of increase. However, not a single corrupt practice is perpetuated without a trace to the followers. The citizens bribe their way into offices, bribe their children into unity schools, bribe their way out of police nets, pay heavily to have what they are ordinarily not qualified to have. People also collect bribes and other forms of monetary inducements to do so many forms of sabotage on the government or their organization. Many organizations lose a lot of money and resources because their workers collect bribes to issue clearance to customers or clients. Office attendants sell office consumables, make use of office equipment and consumables for their personal purpose and yet expect the office to do exceedingly great and cast heavy blames on the 'leaders' if things do not go as planned in their sector of ministry.

Civic Responsibilities- the high rate of isolation and bystander apathy at paly among some followers are the reasons for some of the leadership failures. When followers are not engaged, they will not be able to hold the government or leaders accountable for the failures in the state. Many followers contribute in the flaws in the system by their failure to take responsibility in certain civic issues. Some of the areas of concern is in election and voting, corporation with the law enforcement agencies in crime detection, illicit disposal of wastes in the environment, poor maintenance of government or public appliances and facilities under one's care or within one's vicinity. People need to rise and take responsibility and stop blaming the leaders.

The followers are up to 80% of the time responsible for the cases of littered cities and extreme accommodation of wastes in the environment, the blocked drainage channels, rigging of elections, sabotaging of security architecture of the community, vandalizing public facilities and amenities among others evils that cripple our society.

Conclusion

Plato wrote in his work, the Republic; "Like man, like the state." It is in having better followers or people in the society that we will have better leaders. This because from these followers comes leaders in the next minute and the better the followers, the better the leaders become. No matter how great a CEO or a Governor is, they cannot do any better if the people who are supposed to be their followers are bad, corrupt or irresponsible. Irresponsible followership breads irresponsible leadership. Most of the failures attributed to leadership are issues of the followers. The littered cities, the vandalized social amenities of infrastructures, the dilapidated social architecture, traffic congestion, hike in price of

commodities and others are all issues majorly caused by the followers and not solely by the leaders as being perceived. Followers should rise and take responsibility for their actions and inactions and stop casting unnecessary blames on the leaders which they are supposed to put in check and hold responsible when they have done what they should do.

As the maxim says, 'he that wants equity should come with clean hands. Followers can only succeed in holding their leaders accountable when they themselves are not found wanting in their own duties. Citing the issues of civic responsibility and work ethics as an example, democracy has powered the people to choose their leaders through periodic elections and equally vote them out, recall or impeach them as the case maybe but when the followers stay apolitical on activities that can make the leader to sit-up, then checkmating the leaders becomes more elusive.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- 1. The leader-follower continuum should be harmonized as this harmony between leaders and followers sustains peace and national development.
- 2. Each follower should lead well from his/her own background or immediate cycle. This involves taking responsibility where necessary for a good nation.
- 3. Researchers in administrations, leadership, public policy and organizational studies should pay attention to the makeup of followers and other follower-specific issues that affect productivity and sustenance of group goals.
- 4. Leaders should identify the capacity and type of their followers in order to know where to channel the best of energy for optimal performance.
- 5. Sentiments, favoritism and ethnicity should be set aside in followers' assessment of leaders in order to help leaders drive the nation to enviable heights.
- 6. Finally, the study strongly recommends value reorientation for effective followership amongst Nigerian citizens. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) in all the states should rise to the responsibility of reorienting the followers on their responsibility in building a greater nation.

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