Transformational Leadership for Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes brought about by the information age have required that libraries re-invent themselves in order to maintain their relevance in the academic community. Specifically, libraries have had to contend with changes such as dramatic increases in the cost of library materials while budgets continue to decrease; new digital formats and communication technologies and improvements in information availability (Weiner, 2003).

The university librarian, who is the head in every academic library is required to be the executive administrator, in charge of the planning, administrative and budgetary functions of the library. However, times have changed and there is an increased call for leaders who possess, communicate, and implement a vision for transformed and improved academic libraries. It is believed that the approach the university librarian adopt in directing, guiding and controlling the staff under him/her determines the pace of progress in their libraries. However, not all leadership styles are suitable for the task of provoking or fostering innovations within the academic library.

Objectives

It is the objective of this chapter to:

1. Explore the current changes evident in academic libraries;
2. Define transformational leadership;
3. Identify the practices of transformational leaders;
4. Focus on three areas where transformational leadership can apply in academic libraries in Nigeria and;
5. Suggestions on how the future transformational leaders in librarianship can be nurtured.

BACKGROUND

It is a well-known fact that the traditional mission of academic libraries has from the beginning been to select, collect, preserve and create access to intellectual resources that can promote academic studies and research. "As a result, it occupies a central and primary place in the university, because it supports all the functions of a university with respect to teaching, research, extension of the frontiers of knowledge and the transmission to posterity the learning culture of the present and past" (Lippincolt, 2005).

However, the demand and expectation placed on academic libraries have changed over time. Reasons being that technology has changed the expectations of library patrons; today, people expect to be able to find and access information from wherever they are. Libraries are now hubs of technology while offering services that have become extremely complex and sophisticated (Afolabi, 2014). Bazillion (2001) stated that electronic information sources have quickly established a formidable presence in academic libraries.

Furthermore, libraries have to implement increasingly complex solutions that involve distributed networking and access to remote information resources. The use of information technology in libraries has tremendously increased due to its

enhanced user satisfaction, cost effectiveness, faster and simpler programs, rapid communicative interaction and easier operational procedures (Storey, 1995). Another typical change that has evolved in today's academic library is in the form of library access. A library card today gives more than just access to books and periodicals at the local library; it gives access to the world just about any location. It also gives access to computing and networking technologies, in all their various forms. Some latest technologies used in academic libraries include internet access and web access to library resources which are an integral part of almost all library services (Rendon, 2014).

In the light of the glaring proliferation of information and information technologies, Germano (2011) pointed out that library managers now grapple with the demands of an increasingly complex and change-laden information landscape which offers patrons seemingly unlimited choices. Most libraries now risk becoming competitively-disadvantaged when compared to other technologically-mediated, user-defined information retrieval choices that are newly available. Critical to this seeming shift in the academic library's identity is leadership.

Townley (2003) defined leadership as mobilizing people to get things done. It involves motivating people and managing resources. Martin (2015) believes that leadership is the link between "intention and outcome. Yukl (1998) gave a comprehensive definition of leadership as the process whereby an individual member in a group or organization influences the interpretation of events, the choices of objectives, strategies, the organization of activities, the maintenance of cooperative relationships, the development of skills and cooperation from the people outside the group or organization. Library leadership has traditionally focused on structural forms of leadership by creating organization structures that support organizational goals (Schwartz, 1997). More recently, the focus is now on the library leader who is uniquely positioned to understand the value of the library and how the library serves its parent institution while preserving and supporting foundational library values that enable that service (Hinchliffe, 2011).

In the light of the foregoing, it can be surmised that the level of effectiveness of a library leader can be measured by the value of services rendered to users, and the productivity of the library staff, which in turn relies on the leadership style employed, (Ogbah, 2013); hence, Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankwere (2011) noted that leadership styles are predictors to leadership effectiveness whereby leadership style in an organization is one of the factors that play significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Inspired by Burns' (1978) notion of the transformational leader, Bass (1985) extended and developed transformational leadership theory and placed it in the context of work organizations. Transformational leaders are those who have a strong sense of direction (vision), which they communicate in inspiring ways. They are charismatic and elicit emotional responses and trust from followers. In addition, transformational leaders are said to raise follower self-confidence and self-efficacy (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Transformational leadership is a leadership style that seeks positive transformations "in those who follow" (Geib & Swenson, 2013). Simola, Barling, & Turner (2012) defined transformational leadership as a type of leadership in which interactions among interested parties are organized "around a collective purpose" in such a way that "transforms, motivates, and enhances the actions and ethical aspirations of the followers."

Apart from seeking to create positive change in their followers, a transformational leader enhances the morale, performance, and motivation of the employees, inspires change driven by a strong purpose, and is able to create a culture of trust and innovation within the organization (Tedford

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