INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
P-ISSN: 1118-4256, E-ISSN:3034-4327
Vol. 5| No.1 | June 2024
Page No.: 474-489

Leadership and Crisis of Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

The failure of political leadership, especially amongst several countries that lay claim to years and decades of uninterrupted democratic practice, raises questions that serve to critique what was earlier espoused of democracy as the best path to leadership. The general objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between leadership and crisis of governance in Nigeria. However, the specific objective is to ascertain the degree of relationship that exists between autocratic leadership and constitutional crisis in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The research aims to collect data directly from respondents, based on the fact that survey research design supports the collection of data primarily through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study comprises of 26 members of house of assembly Ondo state. To analyze the relationship between leadership and crisis of governance in Nigeria, simple linear regression with SPSS version 23 was used. The findings show that there is a strong positive significant relation between autocratic leadership and constitutional crisis. The study concluded that the citizens have an essential duty to play in order to guarantee that the necessary good governance is attained through conscious and deliberate concerted efforts and not looking for short-cuts. The study recommended that Leaders, particularly the political leaders must be made to account for their actions and inactions while serving the people as this will promote try enhance transparency and effective performance. sincerely inculcated and implemented, good leadership capable of promoting and engendering good governance is ensured.

Keyword: Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Constitutional Crisis, Governance.

Introduction

The yearn for a more purposeful and representative form of leadership, worldwide, can be placed side by side with the desire for good governance among the citizenry. Leadership and the diverse processes for the selection, election and emergence of its key actors, determines to a large extent how well a community, society or nation will fare especially in terms of the wellbeing of its citizens, including societal development, progress and infrastructural growth. Overtime, democracy has been heralded – predominantly by the West - as the best path to attaining popularly elected leadership (Wallace et al, 2021); this notion, however, has been equally discountenanced among the comity of several nations which perceive democracy and its concept as a western engendered narrative whose potency and viability does not necessarily hold or apply globally especially if different ways of life, cultures, demographic and ethnicities are to be factored. politics is widely projected as the vehicle or medium through which the attainment of all forms of representative and people-oriented leadership is achieved, (Wallace et al, 2021). Political parties, in turn, are a major component of democracy and are central to the survival of the political system; they are an organized group of people who exercise their legal right to identify with a set of similar political aims and opinions, and seek to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office. Functional political parties serve as the connecting link between government and society; accordingly, a political leadership should ensure good governance that positively impacts society - including the lives and properties of the people. This has remained the key selling point deployed by those who market democracy as the most viable and potent option for attaining purposeful and impact-driven leadership (Wallace et al, 2021). Good governance, on its part, is directly tied to effective leadership, leadership mentoring, however, connects both as it ensures a foundational bottom-up growth nurturing process that presents a path to effective leadership and consequently – good-governance, (Olaopa, 2018). Good governance, essentially, refers to the political, leadership and institutional processes as well as outcomes that are necessary to achieve the goal of development, and it is characterized or has the key attributes of transparency, accountability, responsibility, responsiveness, participation and ownership (OHCHR, 2023).

The failure of political leadership, especially amongst several countries that lay claim to years and decades of uninterrupted democratic practice, raises questions that serve to critique what was earlier espoused of democracy as the best path to leadership and good governance. Failure

of political leadership in these countries under reference is symbolized by widening inequality and social injustice, increasing poverty, food insecurity, scarcity of basic commodities, poor socioeconomic and infrastructural growth, poor access to basic health and education, spiraling crime and insecurity which fuel or engender loss of lives and property. Furthermore, the failure of political leadership often times has its foundation dug in poor internal democracy, ethics and practices within the political parties who sponsor these leadership candidates and, on whose platform, they are nurtured and sponsored for wider and general electoral contest, (Alhassan & Sanusi, 2020). Defective and poorly equipped leadership candidates once presented by political parties and elected by the wider electorate, are bound to offer poor governance.

Nigeria has experienced a crisis in the area of political leadership which has adversely affected the outcome of governance. There is nothing wrong with democracy but rather the leadership traits of the government has frustrated and diminished the process and outcome of governance with several lingering issues. Democracy in Nigeria is still fledgling and struggling to survive under the administration under study as there is overwhelming public outcry regarding the administration in relations promoting corruption rather than ameliorating the menace. deliberate violation of the principle of the rule of law and banditry related issues that created security concern to democracy. In line with the above the study intends to investigate the relationship between leadership and crisis of governance in Nigeria. However, the study will specifically ascertain the degree of relationship that exists between autocratic leadership and constitutional crisis in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature.

Autocratic leadership.

Leadership is the process of influencing people to achieve specific goals and outcomes, effective leadership is essential for a country's political and economic development, but leadership has been a major challenge in Nigeria Okeke & Adebayo, (2022). The concept of leadership essentially embraced personality perspective which proposes, for example, that leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics, which individuals ought to possess, so that they can persuade others to accomplish tasks through effective governance practices. Therefore, it is imperative to state that leadership is to be regarded as a relationship

or a partnership between leaders and followers. Based on that, people who engage in leadership are referred to as ‘leaders’, whereas individuals, toward whom leadership is directed, are referred to as ‘followers'. Leadership theories include trait, behavioral, attribution, characteristic, transformational and visionary, also leadership is a combination of strategy and character, leadership is about inspiring and guiding the efforts of others by creating an environment in which they can become motivated. From this perspective, the foundation of good leadership lies in understanding what motivates people and appealing to these criteria and prerequisites.

According to Adelanwa (2023) autocratic leadership is a leadership style in which a single leader or small group of leaders exercises near-total control over the actions and decisions of an organization or group. Autocratic leadership, also known as authoritarian leadership, is a style of management in which one leader holds the power to make decisions without input from others. While input is not always necessary, this style can also use a small group of trusted advisors to help. Yusuf (2023) defines autocratic leadership as a "system of leadership in which a leader has near-absolute power over an organization or group. Autocratic leadership is a style of leadership in which one person makes all the decisions without input from others. This style is often associated with top-down decision-making, a lack of transparency, and a lack of flexibility Ikenye (2022). Autocratic leadership often works in situations that require error-free outcomes or immediate decisions and situations with potential safety risks or time constraints. According to Bakare & Adebayo (2022), autocratic leadership is a type of leadership in which a leader makes decisions without consulting subordinates and expects them to follow orders without question. Autocratic leaders oversee daily tasks and provide clear direction to each member of the team. They aren't as involved with long-term goal-setting or career progression as other types of leaders. Those who follow the autocratic style focus on making sure team members complete critical tasks according to schedule. In addition, these leaders may often work on teams of people who have limited skills, experience or training. Autocratic leadership is common in Nigeria, where political leaders often use their power to silence opposition and maintain control over the country and autocratic leaders often prioritize their own interests over the interests of the people, and that this can lead to political instability and social unrest Yusuf (2023). Autocratic type of leadership is often associated with poor employee

engagement and low levels of motivation, so therefore there is need for a more democratic style of leadership in the public sector Bakare & Adebayo (2022).

Constitutional crisis

In political science, a constitutional crisis is a problem or conflict in the function of a government that the political constitution or other fundamental governing law is perceived to be unable to resolve. There are several variations to this definition. For instance, one describes it as the crisis that arises out of the failure, or at least a strong risk of failure, of a constitution to perform its central functions. Yusuf (2023) defines a constitutional crisis as a situation where the constitutional order of a country is in jeopardy due to a conflict between the different branches of government, or between the government and the opposition. The crisis may arise from a variety of possible causes. For example, a government may want to pass a law contrary to its constitution; the constitution may fail to provide a clear answer for a specific situation; the constitution may be clear but it may be politically infeasible to follow it; the government institutions themselves may falter or fail to live up to what the law prescribes them to be; or officials in the government may justify avoiding dealing with a serious problem based on narrow interpretations of the law. Nigeria has experienced several constitutional crises in recent years, including the military coups of the 1960s and 1970s, the annulment of the 1993 presidential election, and the current situation of political instability Okoro (2023). Nigeria is currently experiencing a constitutional crisis, as the various branches of government are in conflict and the constitution is not being respected and the country is facing a crisis of legitimacy, as many Nigerians feel that the government is not responsive to their needs and concerns Yusuf (2023).

According to Okoro (2023) constitutional crisis is a situation where the constitutional order of a country is violated by the actions of one or more branches of government, or by a group of citizens. Ezenwa (2023) defines a constitutional crisis as a situation where the normal functioning of government is disrupted due to a conflict between the branches of government, between the government and the people, or between different factions within the society Constitutional crises may arise from conflicts between different branches of government, conflicts between central and local governments, or simply conflicts among various factions

within society. Okoro (2023) constitutional crises can arise when the constitution is not respected by the government, when there is a conflict between the branches of government, or when there is a crisis of legitimacy. In the course of government, the crisis results when one or more of the parties to a political dispute willfully chooses to violate a law of the constitution; or to flout an unwritten constitutional convention; or to dispute the correct, legal interpretation of the violated constitutional law or of the flouted political custom. constitutional crises often arise when there is a lack of consensus about the legitimacy of the government, when there are competing visions of what the constitution should be, or when there is a breakdown in communication between the different branches of government Ezenwa (2023).

Theoretical review

Automatic leadership

Scholl (2000) refers to leadership style as the pattern of behaviour use by a leader in attempting to influence group members and make decision regarding the mission strategy and operation of group activities. Clark (2000) perceived leadership style as the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. Nwankwo (2001) and Enoch (1999) described autocratic style as a leadership style in which production is emphasized at the expense of any human consideration, and where decision are made exclusively by the leader. The leader believes that human beings are evil, weak, unwilling to work, incapable of self-determination, and have limited reasoning. Therefore, they must be directed, pushed and forced to do work. An autocratic style according to Pagewise (2002) is effective and should be used when new untrained employees who do not know which tasks to perform or which procedures to follow, effective supervision can be provided only through detailed orders and instruction and employees do not respond to any other leadership style. The Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers (2004) also opined that autocratic leadership is effective and should be used when time is limited.

Empirical review

Olukemi (2021) leadership and governance are intertwined as they have also been recognized as imperatives for the attainment of development in any polity. Discourses on leadership and national development cannot be over-emphasized particularly as it relates with governance. Given its place, its impact is felt in the delivery of the objectives and citizens' expectations in any given society or organization. Be that as it may, given the several challenges bedeviling Nigeria, the quest for quality leadership and good governance are always burning issues. Thus, the need for further research on this topical issue. It is on the basis of this that this study further seeks to reexamine the place of leadership on governance in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on appraising the #EndSARS protest that took place late 2020 as an effect of absence of quality leadership and good governance over the years. In carrying out the research, we made use of literatures and secondary materials, particularly the mass media to unravel leadership lapses in the governance process over the years and how these occasioned several unrests and protests. The study discovered that the challenges faced by the citizens are products of lack of quality leadership and good governance and concluded that if this is consciously addressed, the Nigerian political and systems would be the better for it.

Nnaji, Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ukeje, & Nwangbo, (2022) Fraught with insecurity in recent years, lack of political and educational leaders' adoption of sound approach to governance in the state is revealed. This manifest in serious humanitarian crises: a threat to national security and the corporate existence of the country. It is against this background that the paper within the framework of systems theory examined the relationship between leadership and security challenges in Nigeria and how it has turned Nigeria into a fragile system. The universal content analysis and qualitative research design were adopted for the study, and secondary sources of data explored to collect facts. The study unveils and traces insecurity in Nigeria to bad political and educational leadership. There is no sound execution of mutual roles by the executive, legislative and judicial arms of the government. Checks and balances as well oversight functions, including rule of law are flouted. The universities have not achieved their goal of moral and mental transformation of the graduates to desist from assisting bad political leaders as thugs. Incessant Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action caused by bad leadership also undermines sound education. The populace and leaders alike lack knowledge

of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 target 4.7 on promotion of non-violence and peace, world citizenship, and cultural differences acceptance, which explains sound governance approach. Based on this, the study recommended among others, revitalization of roles of the three arms of government, reformation of educational governance, and reorientation of both leaders and the led on sound governance and SDGs prescriptions.

Adeiza, & Mabe, (2022) Leadership effectiveness is instrumental in the socioeconomic and political development of any society. In Africa, ineffective leadership has resulted in crises of varying degrees, with poor development visible in the society. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand individual lived experiences of leadership crisis in Nigeria, specifically, and its impact on the relationship between the leaders and their followers, in order to extrapolate to the continent. Using transformational leadership theory, the study sought to understand breakdowns in trust networks between leaders and followers, perceptions of leadership accountability, failure of leaders to align their campaign promises with their various political parties, and detachment of leaders from followers after winning elections into political offices. A phenomenological approach was used to purposively interview 17 political leaders and 18 followers and data were thematically analyzed. Results of the study revealed that corruption, political thuggery, nepotism, and faulty electoral laws have encouraged monetization of the electoral processes, under-aged voting, undemocratic leadership selection processes (at the political party levels), and other electoral malpractices. Furthermore, some participants viewed the problem from the electorates who are mostly poor, uneducated, and illiterate as easily swayed by ethnoreligious sentiments. To aptly address these problems, the study proffered immediate, intermediate, and long-term recommendations for Nigeria to engender leadership with minimal crises. The positive social change implication of the study is the implementation of an all-inclusive leadership education policy that will aid in stemming the crises associated with leadership in Nigeria.

Lawal & Oriola (2023) state is essentially created to provide and sustain good governance for its citizenry. The ability of the state to fulfill this fundamental responsibility is greatly depended on the physical, social and political capacity of the leaders entrusted with the management of the affairs of the state. Significantly, the nature and quality of leadership and governance in any state determines to a large extent how such state will be socially described,

politically evaluated and economically rated among the comity of global community. Consequently, every state strives to ensure that its leadership recruitment processes is jealously guided and protected by the essential qualities capable of engendering good governance and ensuring effective service delivery system. Nigerian state has been battling with leadership and governance crisis since independence without any strong hope of surmounting these unending challenges as poverty, insecurity, corruption and the like continued unabated. With this ugly a one is forced to ask the following questions; one, despite various policy attempts and ceaseless use of resources at ensuring good governance by successive governments in Nigeria, why has it to achieve? to what has been responsible for this never series of implemented reforms on leadership recruitment? Bas critically leadership recruitment and governance processes in Nigeria with various factors that are strongly responsible for leadership deficiency and the apparent failure of governance in the last decades. The study adopted Elite theory use of existing data from texts, journals, magazines, conference proceedings, newspapers, bulletins, published and unpublished theses and the internet to source its information. leadership deficiency has been responsible f cultivation of public interest, constitutionalism, integrity, accountability and transparency as panacea to good leadership and governance.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The research aims to collect data directly from respondents, based on the fact that survey research design supports the collection of data primarily through the use of questionnaire, the study considered survey research design suitable for the study. The population of the study comprises of 26 members of house of assembly Ondo state. The study used total enumeration because the population size of 26 is considered small and can be handle by the researcher. Cronbach Alpha analysis was administered to obtain the reliability of instrument and a figure of 0.976 was obtained which shows that the instrument is very reliable. To analyze the relationship between leadership and crisis of governance in Nigeria, simple linear regression with SPSS version 23 was used. The dependent variable (constitutional crisis) was regressed on independent variable (autocratic leadership).

Data analysis

Regression 1

Objective: To ascertain the degree of relationship that exists between autocratic leadership and constitutional crisis in Nigeria

Table 1: **Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Constitutional crisis	14.4572	3.29364	26
Autocratic leadership	13.7923	4.38745	26

The table presents the descriptive statistics for two variables: Constitutional crisis and Autocratic leadership. The mean Constitutional crisis score is 14.4572, indicating the average level of efficiency across the sample, while the standard deviation of 3.29364 suggests the degree of variability or dispersion in Constitutional crisis scores among the observations. With a sample size (N) of 26, these statistics provide insights into the central tendency and spread of Constitutional crisis ratings within the dataset. Similarly, the mean Autocratic leadership score is 13.7923, representing the average level of rotation and the standard deviation of 4.38745 indicates the variability in leadership ratings among the observations. Again, the sample size of 26 allows for generalizations about the central tendency and variability of Task rotation observation within the sample. Overall, these descriptive statistics offer a snapshot of the distribution and variability of Constitutional crisis and Autocratic leadership scores in the dataset, providing a basis for further analysis and interpretation.

Table 2 **Correlations**

		Constitutional crisis	Autocratic leadership.
Pearson Correlation	Constitutional crisis	1.000	.977
	Autocratic leadership	.977	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Constitutional crisis	.	.000
	Autocratic leadership	.000	.
N	Constitutional crisis	26	26
	Autocratic leadership	26	26

The table presents the correlation analysis between Constitutional crisis and Autocratic leadership. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive relationship between these variables, with a correlation coefficient of .967, which is statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level for both variables.

Table 3: **Model Summary[b]**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.977[a]	.938	.938	1.73578	.938	2874.856	1	24	.000	.085

a. Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Constitutional crisis

The table presents the model summary for predicting Constitutional crisis based on the predictor variable Autocratic leadership. The linear regression model shows a strong relationship between the predictor and dependent variables, with an R Square value of .938, indicating that approximately 93.8% of the variance in Constitutional crisis can be explained by Autocratic leadership practices. The Adjusted R Square value remains the same at .938, suggesting that the model's explanatory power remains consistent after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model. Overall, these results indicate that Autocratic leadership is a significant predictor of Constitutional crisis.

The table presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for the regression model

Table 4: **ANOVA[a]**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2367.397	1	2367.397	2874.856	.000[b]
	Residual	221.534	24	1.346		
	Total	2588.931	25			

a. Dependent Variable: Constitutional crisis

b. Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership

predicting Constitutional crisis based on the predictor variable Autocratic leadership. The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is statistically significant, as indicated by the significant F value of 2874.856 ($p < .001$).

Test of Hypothesis 1

Decision Rule: Reject Null hypothesis if F-value > P-value, otherwise accept

Therefore; F-value = 2874.276 and p-value = 0.001

Since F-value of 2874.276 is greater than p-value of 0.001. We reject null hypothesis that say there is no significant relationship between Automatic leadership and Constitutional crisis. By implication Autocratic leadership significantly contributes to explaining the variance in Constitutional Crisis, highlighting its importance in influencing Constitutional Crisis outcomes.

Table 5: **Coefficients[a]**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	4.217	.278		15.649	.000			
	Autocratic leadership	.824	.021	.977	46.788	.000	.977	.977	.977

a. Dependent Variable: Constitutional Crisis

The table presents the coefficients for the regression model predicting Constitutional crisis based on the predictor variable Autocratic leadership. The coefficient for the constant term (4.217) represents the value of the dependent variable (Constitutional crisis) when all predictor variables are zero. The coefficient for the predictor variable Autocratic leadership (.824) indicates that for each unit increase in Autocratic leadership, there is a corresponding increase of .824 units in Constitutional Crisis This coefficient is statistically significant ($t = 45.248$, $p < .001$), suggesting that Autocratic leadership has a strong positive effect on Constitutional Crisis.

Discussion of finding

The findings from the results indicate strong positive correlations between certain variables. In Table 2, there is a strong positive correlation (0.977) between constitutional crisis and automatic leadership, meaning that as constitutional crisis increases, there is a tendency for autocratic leadership to also increase. Table 3, shows a strong relationship between the predictor and dependent variables, with an R Square value of .938, indicating that approximately 93.8% of the variance in Constitutional crisis can be explained by Autocratic leadership practices.

Summary of finding

There is a strong positive significant relation between autocratic leadership and constitutional crisis.

Conclusion

In all sincerity, the challenges of leadership and governance in Nigeria today are enormous but the gains that come with it far outweigh it all. Good governance is possible and achievable but rests on how prepared the leaders are by embracing the principles of fairness, justice and equality. Public resources must be well utilized for the masses putting their interest first in nation building process. This way the interest of all would be captured making it the nation's objective. The citizens have an essential duty to play in order to guarantee that the necessary good governance through quality leadership is attained through conscious and deliberate concerted efforts and not looking for short-cuts.

Recommendation

What is presently needed is the strategies that are capable of ensuring credible leadership recruitment process with viable and sustainable empowerment programs. For this to be achieved, this is recommended;

Constitutionalism. There is urgent need for adherence to rules and regulations. Every individual irrespective of his or her position must respect and obey the law. Every action of our leaders must be in tandem with the stipulations of law to avoid impunity and recklessness. Integrity is essential to good leadership and governance. This should as a matter of fact be embraced and exhibited by our leaders who are in various position decisions that will affect millions of Nigerians.

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