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RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF ANAMBRA – IMO RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (2016-2026)

KENNETH CHUKWUMA KEMA [1], SUNDAY EKERE AKOR [2], ROWLAND ANSOIKE ECHEBIRI [3]

[1]Department of Political Science, Benjamin Uwajumogu (State) COE Ihitte-Uboma, Imo State;
[2&3]Department of Political Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri, Imo State

ABSTRACT

This study examines the leadership and management practices of Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority, a public enterprise in Nigeria. The research investigates the impact of leadership styles, management structures and organizational culture on the performance of Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority. The study adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing historical and content analysis of secondary data sourced from academic literature, government reports and policy documents. The findings revealed that Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority faces significant challenges including poor leadership, inadequate funding and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which hinder its ability to achieve its objectives. The study also identifies opportunities for improvement such as adopting more effective leadership styles enhancing transparency and accountability and increasing autonomy. The study contributes to the understanding of effective leadership and management in Nigeria's public enterprises, highlighting the need for strategic reforms to enhance performance and achieve development goals. The recommendations of this study can inform policy decisions aimed at improving the performance of Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority and other public Enterprises in Nigeria. By exploring the experiences of Anambra /Imo River Basin Development Authority, this study provides insight into the complexities of leadership and management in Public enterprises in Nigeria, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for improvement. The study's findings and recommendation have implications for policymakers, public enterprise managers and stakeholders seeking to enhance the performance of public enterprise in Nigeria.

Keywords: Leadership, management, public enterprises, river basin development authority, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author

Kenneth Chukwuma Kema
Email Address: kenkemas@gmail.com
Telephone Number: +234803611993

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Public enterprises play a vital role in the economic development of Nigeria, providing essential goods and services to the populace (Adeyemio, 2105). These enterprises are established to promote economic growth, reduce poverty and improve the overall standard of living of citizens. However, the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria has been hindered by various challenges, including poor leadership and management (Olowu, 2015). The Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority is one such public enterprise that has faced significant challenges in its operations. Established to harness the water resources of the Anambra and Imo rivers for irrigation, water supply and hydroelectric power generation, Anambra/Imo River Basin Development authority has struggled to achieve its objectives due to poor leadership and management (Adebayo, 2017).

According to a report by the World Bank (2018), effective leadership and management are critical to the success of public enterprises in Nigeria. The report highlights the need for public enterprises to adopt best practices in governance, leadership and management to enhance their performance and contribute to the country’s economic development. Despite this, many public enterprises in Nigeria continue to struggle with poor leadership and management, leading to inefficiency, corruption and underperformance (Adeyoma, 2015).

This study aims to examine the leadership and management practices of Amambra/Imo River basin Development Authority, with a view to identifying the challenges and opportunities for improvement. By exploring the experiences of Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority, this study hopes to contribute to the understanding of effective leadership and management in Nigeria’s public enterprises. The study will also provide recommendations for improving River Basin Development Authority and other public enterprises in Nigeria.

Public enterprises in Nigeria including the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority have consistently underperformed, despite their critical role in the country’s economic development (Adeyemo, 2015). Poor leadership and management have been identified as major contributors to this underperformance resulting in inefficient service delivery, corruption and a lack of accountability (Olowu, 2015). According to Adebayo (2017), these challenges have hindered the ability of public enterprises to achieve their mandates, ultimately affecting the country’s development prospects”.

Specifically, Anambra/Imo Rivers basin Development Authority has struggled to effectively harness the water resources of the Anambra and Imo Rivers, despite its potential to drive agricultural development, improve water supply and generate hydroelectric power (World Bank, 2018). The persistent poor performance of Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority and other public enterprises in Nigeria raises concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and management practices, highlighting the need for a critical examination of the underlying issues and identifications of strategies for improvement.

1.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study.

1. How do leadership styles and management practices impact the performance of the Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority?
2. What are the major challenges faced by the Anambra/Imo Rivers Basin Development Authority in terms of Leadership and management?
3. How does political interference affect the leadership and management decisions of the Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority?

1.2. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the leadership and management practices of the Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority with a view to:

i. Investigating the impact of leadership styles on the performance of Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority.
ii. Identifying the major challenges faced by Anambra /Imo River basin Development Authority in terms of leadership and management.
iii. Examining the effects of political interference on leadership and management decisions of Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons

i. It will contribute to the understanding of effective leadership and management practices in Nigeria public enterprises, particularly in the context of river basin development authorities.
ii. The findings of this study will provide insights into the challenges faced by the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority and other similar organizations, informing policy decisions and strategic interventions to improve their performance.
iii. The study's recommendations will be useful to policymakers, public enterprise managers and stakeholders seeking to enhance the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria.
iv. The study will also add to the existing body of knowledge on public enterprises management in Nigeria, providing valuable resources for researchers and scholars.
v. The study's focus on Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority will highlight the importance of effective leadership and management in achieving the development goals of river basin development authorities in Nigeria.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Conceptualization

Leadership: Leadership is a critical aspect of organizational success, particularly in the public sector where effective leadership can impact the delivery of essential services to citizens (Bass, 2016). According to Yiki (2016), leadership involves influencing others to achieve a common goal and it encompasses various styles, including transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership.

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Transformational Leadership: This is a style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve organizational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2016). This style of leadership is particularly relevant in the public sector, where leaders need to motivate employees to deliver high-quality services despite limited resources. As noted by Ayoho & Bass (2016), transformational leaders can foster a sense of commitment and enthusiasm among employees, leading to improved performance.

Transactional Leadership on the other hand, is a style that focuses on exchanging rewards and punishments for desired behaviours (Bass,2016), while this style can be effective in certain contexts. It may not be as effective in the public sector, where employees are often motivated by a sense of public service rather than personal gain.

Laissez-faire Leadership: is a style that involves minimal involvement in decision-making and employee management (Yulk, 2016). This style can be detrimental to organizational performance, particularly in the public sector where clear direction and guidance are essential.

Leadership in Public Enterprises

In the context of public enterprises, effective leadership is critical to delivering essential services to citizens. As noted by Olowu, (2015), public enterprise leaders need to balance the demands of multiple stakeholders, including government employees and citizens. This requires strong leadership skills including strategic planning, communication and problem solving. Okoli & Onah (2015), see leadership as the ability to unite people in pursuit of a goal. It is always a matter of degree, strength and depends on personal qualities of leaders as related to the qualities of those he attempts to influence and the situation surrounding the group. It is these qualities that will determine a leader's acceptability.

Management: Management is a critical aspect of organizational success, particularly in the public sector where effective management can impact the delivery of essential services to citizens (Alford & Hughes, 2018). According to Noe, (2020), management involves planning, organizing, leading and controlling resources to achieve organizational goals. According to Onah, (2018), there are many definitions of management as there are books on the subject. All organizations use four basic kinds of inputs or resources from their environment, namely human, financial, physical and information resources. Management is responsible for combining and coordinating these various resources to achieve the organizational goals.

To Griffin,(2017) management is a set of activities (including planning and decision-making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human financial, physical and information) with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner. Wilson (2023) sees management as the life of every organization and important in running the affairs of organization. The resources of the organization are put together through management activities and functions and result is achieved. Management involves the activities of people at different levels in using the resources of the organization to attain the organization's goal. According to Waring, (2016), Management is the administration of organization, whether it is business, a nonprofit organization or government body. Management includes the activities of setting the strategies of an organization and coordinating the effort of its employees (or of volunteers) to accomplish its objectives through the application of valuable resources such as financial, natural, technical and human resources.

Management is the process of mobilizing the available human resources to work together, using the available resources effectively and efficiently to achieve the desired goal (Wilson, 2023). Wilson, (2023) also defined management as the process of making and enforcing the policies and activities of the organization, using people to achieve the policy goal of the organization. Management is considered as the accurate and efficient use of human skill and knowledge, time and resources to maximize productivity at a low level (Wilson, 2023).

Bateman & Snell (2019) see management as planning, defining goals and objectives and developing strategies to achieve them. Jones & George, (2020) say management is organizing, allocating resources and structuring the organization to achieve goals Northouse (2022), averred that management is leading, influencing and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals. Robbins & Coulter, (2021) were of the opinion that management is all about controlling, monitoring and evaluating performance to ensure goal achievement.

In the contest of public enterprises, effective management is critical to achieving organizational goals and delivering essential services to the citizens. As noted by Osborne & Gaebler (2017), public eEnterprise managers need to balance the demands of multiple stakeholders including government employees and citizens. This requires strong management skills, including strategic planning, resources allocation and performance monitoring. According to Van (2017), management involves planning, organizing, leading and controlling resources to achieve organizational goals. Public Enterprises: Public enterprises are organizations owned and controlled by the government, with the primary objective of providing essential goods and services to citizens (Ayeni, 2019).

According to Aharoni (2018), Public enterprises are established to achieve specific social and economic objectives such as promoting public goods and regulating markets. In the words of Kessides, (2019), public enterprises are organizations that provide essential services such as electricity, water and transportation. World Bank (2020) defines public enterprises as organization that are owned and controlled by government, either directly or indirectly to provide goods and services to the citizens. Public enterprises are state owned entities that operate in various sectors including utilities, transportation and finance (OECD, 2019).

Public enterprises are corporations that are owned by government, either wholly or partially to provide goods and services to citizens (Aharoni, 2018). According to the Australian government (2020), public enterprises are government business enterprises that operate in a commercial manner, but are subject to government control and direction. Eurostat (2020) sees public enterprises as organizations that are part of the public sector, providing goods and services to citizens, and are subject to government funding, regulation and oversight. Public enterprises play a critical role in the economy, particularly in sectors such as energy, transportation and water resources. However, public enterprises face several challenges including inefficiency, lack of autonomy and political interference.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Thomas Carlye (1840) trait theory of leadership. The trait leadership theory suggests that effective leaders possess certain inherent traits that distinguish them from non-leaders. These traits are often considered to be innate, meaning that leaders are born with them rather than developing them through experience or training (Western Governors University, 2020).

Dian & Budi (2020), were of the view that leaders with strong ethics and moral standards are more likely to inspire trust and confidence in their followers. Intelligent leaders are better equipped to make informed decision and solve complex problems. Courageous leaders are more likely to take risks and make difficult decisions, even in the face of adversity. Leaders with initiative are proactive and able to drive change and innovation. Responsible leaders are accountable for their actions and decisions, and are more likely to be trusted by their followers.

Given the challenges of corruption and unethical behavior in some Nigerian public enterprises, leaders with strong ethics and moral standards are crucial for promoting transparency and accountability some leaders in public enterprises are corrupt. Effective leaders in Nigeria public enterprises need to be intelligent and able to make informed decisions that balance competing interests and priorities. Unfortunately some leaders are not intelligent. Leaders in Nigerian public enterprises often face significant challenges, including political interference and bureaucratic red tape. Courageous leaders are more likely to take risks and drive change and innovation. They need to be courageous.

Public enterprises in Nigeria often require leaders who can take the initiative to drive development and growth and who are proactive in addressing challenges and opportunities. Some leaders in public enterprise are not courageous. Leaders in Nigerian public enterprises need to be responsible and accountable for their actions and decisions and must prioritize the public interest over personal gain. Unfortunately in Nigeria, many leaders in the public enterprises are unaccountable. They put personal interest first.

3.0. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study adopted quantitative research design. Secondary data were collected from documents such as journals, electronic media, newspapers, textbooks, and other archival materials. The data generated from secondary sources were qualitatively evaluated using content analysis and discourses based on the research questions and objectives.

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCOURSES

How do leadership styles and management practices impact the performance of the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority? The performance of the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) is significantly influenced by leadership style and management practices. Effective leadership and management are crucial for achieving organizational goals and objective.

Leadership Style and Performance

According to Okeke, Odira & Gbenga, (2024) research suggests that transformational leadership styles have a positive impact on employee intrinsic motivation which in turn enhances performance. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employee to achieve organizational goals while transactional leaders focus on exchanging rewards and punishments for desired behaviors.

Management Practices and Performance

Management practices such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling also impact AIRBDA's performance (Okeke, Odira & Gbenga, 2024). Effective management practices enable the organization to achieve its goals and objectives, while poor management practices can hinder performance.

Research Question Two

What are the major Challenges faced by the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA).

Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) faces several challenges in terms of leadership and management including:

i. **Inadequate operational Autonomy:** This is a significant challenge to leadership and management in the Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA). This issue arises from frequent government interference in the running of the authority, which hinders its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. It has far- reaching impacts on AIRBDA's performance.

a. Inadequate operational autonomy restricts AIRBDA's ability to make timely decisions, respond to emerging challenges and adapt to changing circumstances.

b. Government interference can lead to inefficient allocation of resources as decisions may be driven by political considerations rather than organizational needs.

c. Limited autonomy can stifle innovation and creativity within AIRBDA as management may be constrained by bureaucratic processes and government regulations.

d. Government interference can result in inconsistent policies which can negatively impact AIRBDA's long-term planning and implementation. Inadequate autonomy can lead to underutilization of resources including personal, equipment and funds which can hinder AIRBDA's ability to achieve its objective (Okeke, Odira & Gbenga, 2024).

Inconsistent Government Policies: Inconsistent government policies can significantly hinder the effectiveness of AIRBDA frequency changes in policies can disrupt long-term planning, implementation and sustainability of projects, ultimately affecting the authority's ability to achieve its objectives.

According to Agbidike et al (2015) frequency policy changes can make it difficult for AIRBDA to develop and implement long term plans, leading to inconsistent development outcomes. Changes in government policies can affect the availability of resources leading to project delays or abandonment. Inconsistent policies can result in a lack of continuity in projects, making it challenging for AIRBDA to achieve its goals.

Paucity of Funds: This is a significant challenge to leadership and management in AIRBDA. Insufficient funding can hinder the authority's ability to achieve its objectives, deliver essential services and implement development projects.

Inadequate funding can limit AIRBDA's ability to implement projects, leading to delays or abandonment of development initiatives. Paucity of funds can result in inadequate allocation of resources including personnel, equipment and materials. It can also reduce AIRBDA's effectiveness in achieving its goals including water resources development, agricultural development and rural development.

Dearth of Qualified Manpower: The Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority faces a significant challenge in the form of dearth of qualified manpower which hampers its ability to effectively manage and develop water resources, implement agricultural development projects and provide technical assistance to farmers.

Emeghara (2020) observed that lack of skilled personnel limits AIRBDA's capacity to develop and manage water resources, implement agricultural development assistance to farmers. It reduces AIRBDA's effectiveness in achieving its goals, including water resource development, agricultural development and rural development. AIRBDA may need to rely on external consultants or experts which can increase costs and reduce the authority's ability to develop internal capacity. The dearth of qualified manpower can limit farmer's access to extension services including technical assistance, training and advisory services. It can result in reduced agricultural productivity, affecting food security and rural livelihood (Anambra/Imo River basin Development Authority, 2022).

Research Question Three

How does political interference affect the leadership and management of AIRBDA?

Political interference significantly affects the leadership and management decisions of the AIRBDA. According to Emeghara (2020), inconsistency in government policies and inadequate operational autonomy due to frequent government interference hinder AIRBDA's effectiveness. Political Interference leads to limited autonomy. With restricted autonomy, AIRBDA's is impaired leading to delayed decision making.

Delayed Decision Making

Timely decision making is crucial for effective project implementation, resource allocation and achieving organizational objectives. It can hinder project implementation, leading to cost overruns, reduced project effectiveness and decrease stakeholder satisfaction. Delayed Decision may lead to inefficient resource allocation. Delayed decisions can result to inefficient resource allocation. Resources may be tied up in pending projects or initiatives. Delayed decision-making can lead to missed opportunities such as failing to capitalize on emerging trends, technologies or partnership.

Inefficient Resources Allocation

Restricted autonomy can result in inefficient allocation of resources as decisions may be driven by external factors rather than organizational needs. Emeghara (2020) averred that inefficient resource allocation can lead to waste of financial, human and material resources, reducing AIRBDA's overall effectiveness. It can also lead to project delays. Inadequate resource allocation can cause project delays, affecting AIRBDA's ability to achieve its objectives. Ineffective resource allocation can reduce stakeholder satisfaction including farmers, communities and government agencies.

Loss of Opportunities

Loss of opportunities can be a significant challenge to leadership and management in AIRBDA. When opportunities are missed, it can have far-reaching consequences for the organization's success and effectiveness. Loss of opportunities can lead to missed partnership. This can limit AIRBDA's access to new technologies expertise and resources. It can lead to delayed development affecting the authority's ability to achieve its objectives and improve the lives of stakeholders.

Loss of opportunities can reduce competitiveness repeatedly missing opportunities can reduce AIRBDA's competitiveness, making it challenging to attract funding, talent and resources.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) faces multifaceted challenges that impede its leadership and management decisions. Inconsistent government policies, paucity of funds, dearth of qualified manpower, limited autonomy, delayed decision-making, inefficient resource allocation and loss of opportunities all hinder AIRBDA's effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, AIRBDA's success is crucial for the development of the Anambra/Imo River Basin regions. The authority's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, leverage opportunities and deliver results – driven projects will ultimately determine its impact. By understanding these challenges and their implications, stakeholders can work towards finding solutions that enhance AIRBDA's performance and contribute to the region's growth and development.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the challenge facing the AIRBDA, the following recommendations are made;

1. Anambra/Imo River Basin Development Authority should be granted adequate operational autonomy to enable it to make independent decisions and implement projects effectively.

2. The government should increase funding for AIRBDA to enable it implement its projects and programmes effectively.

3. AIRBDA should streamline its decision making processes to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and enhance efficiency.

By implementing these recommendations, AIRBDA can enhance its performance, achieve its objectives and contribute to the development of the Anambra/Imo River Basin Region.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript.

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