The functions of leadership in administrative institutions

Dr. S. B. M. Marume¹, R. R. Jubenkanda²,
¹BA, Hons BA, MA, MAdmin, MSoc Sc, PhD
²BSc, MSc. Econ, MSc, DPhil (Candidate)

ABSTRACT: John Adair (1964), one of the leading functionalists on leadership, urges that if leaders are needed beforehand then we cannot wait for the situation to produce the leader. He holds that groups, like individuals, have certain common needs which must be satisfied. Leadership is then defined as the function for the gratification of the group needs. Three categories of needs have been identified as:

a. task needs;
b. team maintenance needs and
c. individual needs.

These categories of needs overlap and influence one another in the group situations. For instance, failure of the group task affects the feeling of solidarity and decrease the individual happiness; whereas success in the group enhances group pride and individual happiness. The functions of leaders are to promote the solidarity of the group, to achieve the needs of the group, and satisfy individual needs.

Several factors may influence practice of leadership functions, for instance, the personality of the leader himself; the knowledge, skill and experience of his subordinates, and the situation of the tasks are all central in the behavioural theory of leadership.

Keywords: functionalist leadership, common needs, individual needs, feeling of solidarity and delegation of authority

I. INTRODUCTION

From the comparative leadership studies, it becomes apparent that the functions of leaders are to:

• promote the solidarity of the group;
• achieve the needs of the group and
• satisfy individual; needs.

However, several factors may influence the practice of leadership functions. All these aspects constitute the subject matter of this article

II. PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE

The purpose of this article is to articulate the functions of leadership in an administrative institution in the context of various thinkers, writers and scholars.

III. FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Firstly, the functions of leadership in an administrative institution are analyzed in the context of the following relevant leading thinkers, writers and scholars:

- Phillip Selznick
- Peter Drucker
- C. I. Barnard
- Hicks and Gullet
- F. E. Redler
- J. J. N Cloete.
- Chester Barnard
- Piñón and Sherwood
- John Adair
- M. P. Follet

Secondly, there is an analysis of the executive functions in the contexts of the views and contributions of the leading thinkers, writers and scholars most relevant to the behavioural theory or functional theory of leadership.

Contributions of thinkers, writers and scholars

Chester Irving Barnard [1886 – 1961] further developed the line of thought initiated by Mary Parker Follett [1868 – 1933]. He also conceived organisation as a social system. He is regarded as the spiritual father of the social system school of thought. Barnard is considered as one of the pioneers of the behavioural movement in public administration. In fact, he is the first full blown behaviouralist. He emphasized on the socio-psychological aspect of administration and management. To him, administration is cooperative social system.
The ideas of Barnard influenced the decision – making theory of Herbert a. Simon; the new human relations theory of Chris Argyris, Rensis Likert and Douglas M. Gregor, the motivation theories of Abraham Maslow and Fredrick Herzberg; the institutionalist model of Phillip Selznick; and systems approach to organizational analysis. Barnard’s contribution to the understanding of organizational behaviour is one of the significant landmarks in the evolution to administrative through. He works include the functions of the executive (1983) and organizational and management (1948).

Executive functions
Barnard observed, functions of executive relate to all the work essential to the vitality and endures of an organisation so far at last as it must be accomplished through formal coordination. Executive work is work is not that of the organisation, but it is the specialized work of maintaining the organisation in operation. He regarded the following three as the essential functions of the executive:

a. establish and maintaining the system of communication in the organisation.
b. securing essential efforts and services from subordinates by motivating them to exert themselves for the organisation’s purpose
c. formulating and defining purposes and objectives

Contributions of some of the famous thinkers, writers and scholars
1. Phillip Selznick: according to him, the functions of organizational leadership includes the following:
   a. The definition of institutional mission and role, that is, setting organizational goals and formulating policies.
   b. The institutional embodiment of purpose that is, helping the meaning of policy to percolate down to lower levels of the organisation.
   c. The defence of institutional integrity that is maintaining the core values and distinctive identity of the organizational
d. The ordering of internal conflict that is, maintaining balance of power among competing interests in the organisation.

2. Hicks and Gullet: They identified the following eight functions of a leader;
   1. Supplying organizational objectives to the members
   2. Arbitrating on disagreements among organizational members.
   3. Catalyzing to arouse the subordinate to action
   4. Suggesting ideas to subordinates.
   5. Inspiring subordinates to work effectively towards accomplishment of organizational goals.
   6. Praising subordinates to satisfy their recognition and esteem needs.
   7. Providing security to followers when they face problems
   8. Representing the organisations before others and serving as a symbol of the organisation

3. Chester Barnard: He states that a leader performs the following four functions:
   1. Determination of objectives
   2. Manipulation of means
   3. Control of the instrumentality of action, and
   4. Simulation of coordinated action

4. M. P. Follet: according to her, a leader should perform the following three main functions.
   1. Co ordinations
   2. Definition of purpose
   3. Anticipation

5. Peter Drucker: he mentioned the following functions of leadership:
   1. lifting of man’s vision to higher sights.
   2. raising of man’s performance to higher standards
   3. building of man’s personality beyond its normal limitations

6. F. E. Fiedler: he identified the following two functions of leadership
   1. Directing group activities
   2. coordinating group activities

7. Pfiffner and Sherwood: Accounting to them, a leader is the modifier of organizational behaviour.
They commended: Get the right man in the leadership job, and all your problems will be solved.

8. **J. J. N. Cloete** [1985]: explains that personnel administration consists of four groups of functions namely:
   1. provision function;
   2. utilization functions
   3. support functions and
   4. training and development functions

   Leadership activities are classified as personal utilization functions. Professor J. J N. Cloete’s approach is that leadership, as one of the groups of functions of personal utilization, consists of those functions which must be performed specifically to make employees work to the utmost of their physical and mental capacities; namely:
   1. inspiring employees – motivating employees
   2. communicating with the employees
   3. directing or commanding the activities of employees;
   4. constructing work programmes; and
   5. conducting suggestion schemes.

IV. **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

1.1 **Summary**

From the leadership studies, it is safe to say in summary form that leadership functions consist of those functions which must be performed specifically to make followers work either as individuals or in groups to the utmost of their physical and mental capacities involving inspiring followers – motivating them; constantly communicating with the followers; commanding or directing their activities in relation to the commonly desired goals and objectives; assisting to construct work programmes and, in certain cases conducting suggestion schemes in order to enhance goal achievement, solidarity and group belonging.

1.2 **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the functions of leadership in administrative institutions are many and varied, multi dimensional, multi faceted and complex. No one social scientist can compactly deal with them in one book let alone in one chapter of any study. But one thing that is common of these functions is that there are dynamic and useful

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Profiles of contributors and photographs

**Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume**: a former senior civil servant for over 37 years in various capacities and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; ten years as a large commercial farmer; well travelled **domestically** within Zimbabwe; **regionally** [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and **Africa** [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and **internationally** [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Ireland; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Spain (Nice), France, Geneva in...
Switzerland, Belgrade former Yugoslavia; Rome and Turin in Italy; Nicosia – Cyprus; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, Osaka, in Japan; eleven years as management consultant and \textbf{part – time lecturer} for BA/BSc and MA/MBA degree levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University and National University of Science and Technology, and PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India, and Zimbabwe Open University; external examiner management and administrative sciences at Great Zimbabwe University (2016 – 2019); currently senior lecturer and acting chairperson of Department of Public Administration in Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University; a \textbf{negotiator}; a \textbf{prolific writer} as he has published five books, twenty five modules in public administration and political science for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and over forty journal articles in international journals [IOSR, SICA, IJESR, MJESR, IJER, IJBMI, IJHSS and Quest Journals] on constitutional and administrative law, public administration, political science, philosophy, Africa in international politics, local government and administration, sociology and community development; vastly experienced public administrator; and a distinguished scholar with specialist qualifications from University of South Africa, and from California University for Advanced Studies, State of California, United States of America: \textbf{BA} with majors in public administration and political science and subsidiaries in sociology, constitutional law and English; postgraduate special \textbf{Hons BA} [Public Administration]; \textbf{MA} [Public Administration]; \textbf{MAdmin magna cum laude} in transport economics as major, and minors in public management and communications; \textbf{MSoc Sc cum laude} in international politics as a major and minors in comparative government and law, war and strategic studies, sociology, and social science research methodologies; and \textbf{PhD summa cum laude} in Public Administration .

\textbf{Roy Robson Junekanda:} 2008: currently pursuing DPhil studies with Zimbabwe Open University; dean of Faculty of Commerce and Law for seven years; writer of a book on strategic leadership, several modules on strategic management, corporate governance, strategic human resources, intermediate macro economics, labour economics, business management and entrepreneurship, project management and credit risk management; and over forty articles with international journals on various subject areas; 2000, MSc in Strategic Management – University of Derby, U. K; MSc. Econ. In international Economics, Banking and Finance- University of Wales, Cardiff College of Business Studies, U.K.; 1983, BSc (Hons) Degree in Economics – University of Zimbabwe; 1976 Business Studies Diploma – Solusi University, Zimbabwe; 2005, Certificate in Distance Education Practitioner (UNISA); 2011, Certificate in Higher Education Management in Southern Africa (University of the Witwatersrand) Johannesburg, South Africa.