

Justification of Power as Necessary for Leadership

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Abstract

The study seeks to determine the nature of the relationship between power, leadership, and organizational effectiveness; ascertain the factors which determine the extent to which people can leverage their power; identify the types of power that can assure leadership effectiveness; and determine how power can be acquired.

The study was carried out primarily through the survey method and interview of employees in three public sector organizations in Nigeria.

Secondary data were obtained through books, journals, and internet.

Findings indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between power, leadership, and organizational effectiveness;

Centrality, visibility, discretion and non substitutability determine the extent to which people can leverage their power. Organisational power (legitimate, reward, and coercive), expert power and referent power are the types of power which can assure leadership effectiveness.

Power can be acquired by exhibition of knowledge and skills, ability and intelligence, ingenuity, and communication competency.

One don't have to be in leadership to have some form of power. In fact the most respect is garnered on those who have personal sources of power (expert and referent). It has been observed that when employees in an organization associate formal power with personal power (expert and referent) they are more engaged, more devoted to the organization and their role within it, and they are willing to go the extra mile to reach organizational goals.

Generally, the personal sources of power are strongly related to employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance than are the organizational power sources. However, one source of organizational power- Coercive power is negatively related to work performance. The various sources of power should not be thought of as being separate from each other. A leader can acquire the five sources of power.

Keywords: Power, Leadership, Effectiveness, Ingenuity, Knowledge, and Communication Competency

1.0 Introduction

Power is the ability to influence, command, or apply force. Power is a measure of a person's potential to get others to do what he wants them to do as well as to avoid being forced by others to do what he does not want to do (Rue and Byars, 2000). Power is the capacity of a person, team or organization to influence others (Mcshane and Von Glinow, 2000). Power is usually derived from the control of resources. Leaders exercise power, and effective leaders know how to use it wisely.

Leadership is organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal. The leader may or may not have any formal authority (www.en.wikipedia.org).

Leadership involves influencing others to act toward the attainment of a goal. "Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organised group toward goal setting and goal achievement" (Stogdill, 1950). This implies that a leader must be able to influence the followers towards setting appropriate goals and toward their effective achievement of the goals.

Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and discipline: Reliance on intelligence alone results in rebelliousness. Exercise of humaneness alone results in weakness. Fixation on trust results in folly. Dependence on the strength of courage results in violence. Excessive discipline and sternness in command result cruelty. When one has all five virtues together, each appropriate to its function, then one can be a leader (Avila, 2007). Leadership is determined by distinctive dispositional characteristics present at birth e.g, extraversion, intelligence, ingenuity. However, there is evidence to show that leadership also develops through hard work and careful observation (Forsyth, 2009). Thus effective leader can result from nature (innate talents) as well as nurture (acquired skills). A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards a specific result. It is not dependent on title or formal authority. Ogbonna, 2007 defines an effective leader as an individual with the capacity to consistently succeed in a

given condition and be viewed as meeting the expectations of an organization or society. Leaders are recognized by their capacity for caring for others, clear communication, and a commitment to persist. An individual who is appointed to a managerial position has the right to command and enforce obedience by virtue of the authority of the position. However, he must possess adequate personal attributes to match the authority. In absence of sufficient personal competence, a manager may be confronted by an emergent leader who can challenge his role in the organization and reduce him to nothing. Leadership is the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions (Rue and Byars, 2000).

Schien (1980), cited by Ukeje (1996), defines leadership as a function of the relationship between the leader, the followers, and the task-situational characteristics. This implies that to be effective, a leader must maintain good relationship between him and the followers and must constantly bear in mind the task-situational characteristics. A leader cannot lead in isolation. He must be sensitive to the needs of the followers and to the situational variables. Although leadership is certainly a form of power, it is not demarcated by power over people- rather it is a power with people that exists as a reciprocal relationship between a leader and his followers (Forsyth, 2009). Despite popular belief, the use of manipulation, coercion, and domination to influence others is not a requirement for leadership. Leaders must have a source of power.

The types of power used by a leader reveal a great deal about why others follow that individual.

1.1 Objectives

The study has the following specific objectives

1. To determine the nature of the relationship between power, leadership, and organizational effectiveness.
2. To ascertain the factors which determine the extent to which people can leverage their power.
3. To identify the types of power that can assure leadership effectiveness.
4. To determine how power can be acquired.

1.2 Hypotheses

These hypotheses were proposed for study

H₁ There is significant positive relationship between power, leadership and organizational effectiveness.

H₂ Centrality, visibility, discretion and non substitutability determine the extent to which people can leverage their power.

H₃ Organisational power (legitimate, reward, and coercive) personal power (expert and referent) are the types of power which can assure leadership effectiveness.

H₄ Power can be acquired by exhibition of knowledge and skills, ability and intelligence, ingenuity, and communication competency.

1.3 Methodology

The study was carried out primarily through the survey method and interview of employees in three public sector organizations in Nigeria.

Secondary data were obtained through books, journals, and internet. A sample size of 286 was obtained from the population of 1000 at 5% error tolerance and 95% degree of freedom using Yamane's statistical formular. 275(96.15%) of the questionnaire distributed were returned while 11 (3.85%) of the questionnaire distributed were not returned. The questionnaire was designed in likert scale format. The researcher conducted a pre-test on the questionnaire to ensure the validity of the instrument. Data collected were presented in frequency tables. Correlation Coefficient and Chi-Square statistical tools were used to test the hypotheses.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Sources of Power

French and Raven identified five sources or types of power leaders use to influence other. These sources of power can be grouped into two categories: Organisational power (legitimate, reward, coercive) and personal power (referent and expert).

Effective leaders may find it necessary to use all five types of power at different times.

➤ Legitimate Power

Legitimate power refers to the capacity to influence others through formal authority. It implies influence based on the leader's formal position in the organisation's hierarchy. Access to resources, information, and key decision makers gives some leaders legitimate power in influencing events and passing on information and rewards to subordinates. Such leaders are often said to have political influence within an organisation. Legitimate power can

- get a good job for a talented employee,
- obtain approval for expenditures beyond the budget,
- provide easy access to top people in the organisation and elsewhere, and
- ensure knowing early about important decisions and policy shifts.

➤ **Reward Power**

Reward power refers to the capacity to influence others by controlling the allocation of rewards valued by them. The influence stemming from a leader's ability to satisfy follower's needs is reward power. Employees act on the leader's requests in the belief that their behaviours will be rewarded. This type of power is based on the control over material resources and rewards through allocation of salaries and wages, commissions, compensation, fringe benefits, promotions, etc.

➤ **Coercive Power**

The ability of a leader to obtain compliance through fear or punishment is coercive power. Punishment may take the form of official reprimands, pay cuts, demotions, suspensions, or even termination. Coercive power usually is less effective than, say, reward power for the same reason that punishment has a limited effect as a motivator. Some employees respond to coercion by falsifying performance reports, stealing company property, and exhibiting similar negative behaviour, rather than improving their performance.

➤ **Referent Power**

People have referent power when others identify with them, like them or otherwise respect them. It is largely a function of the person's interpersonal skills and usually develops slowly. Referent power is typically associated with charismatic leadership. Charisma is defined as a form of interpersonal attraction whereby followers develop a respect for and trust in the charismatic individual.

➤ **Expert Power**

Expert power originates from within the person. It is an individual's capacity to influence others by possessing knowledge, skills, abilities or previous experience. Employees are gaining expert power in the work place as our society moves from an individual to a knowledge-based economy. The reason is that employee knowledge becomes the means of production, not some machine that the owner controls (Hellriegel et al, 2009).

2.2 Contingencies of Power

Contingencies of power are not sources of power; rather, they determine the extent to which people can leverage their power bases. You may have lots of expert power, but you won't be able to influence others with this power base if the contingency factors are not in place. The contingency factors include substitutability, centrality, discretion, and visibility (Mcshane and Von Glinow: 2000).

✓ **Substitutability**

Substitutability refers to the availability of alternatives. Power is strongest when someone has a monopoly over a valued resource. Power decreases as the number of alternative sources of the critical resource increases. Thus, substitutability is the extent to which those dependent on a resource have alternative sources of supply of the resource or can use other resources that would provide a reasonable substitute. People increase their power through non substitutability.

✓ **Centrality**

Employees have more power as their centrality increases. Centrality refers to the degree and nature of interdependence (relationship) between the power holder and others.

Centrality depends on the number of people that are affected by your actions and how quickly people are affected by your actions.

✓ **Discretion**

The level of power which one has depends on discretion: that is the freedom to make decisions without referring to a specific rule or receiving permission from someone else. Lack of discretion makes a power holder largely powerless.

✓ **Visibility**

Employees gain power when others perceive that he or she has something of value. If someone has unique knowledge to help others do their job better, his or her knowledge will yield power only when others are aware of it. Visibility increases as the number of people you interact with increases. Similarly, visibility increases with the amount of face-to-face contact rather than less personal forms of communication. People further increase their visibility by introducing themselves to senior management and by being assigned to important task forces. Along with the valuable learning experience, these committees let you work closely with and get noticed by senior people in the organization.

2.3 Using Power Effectively

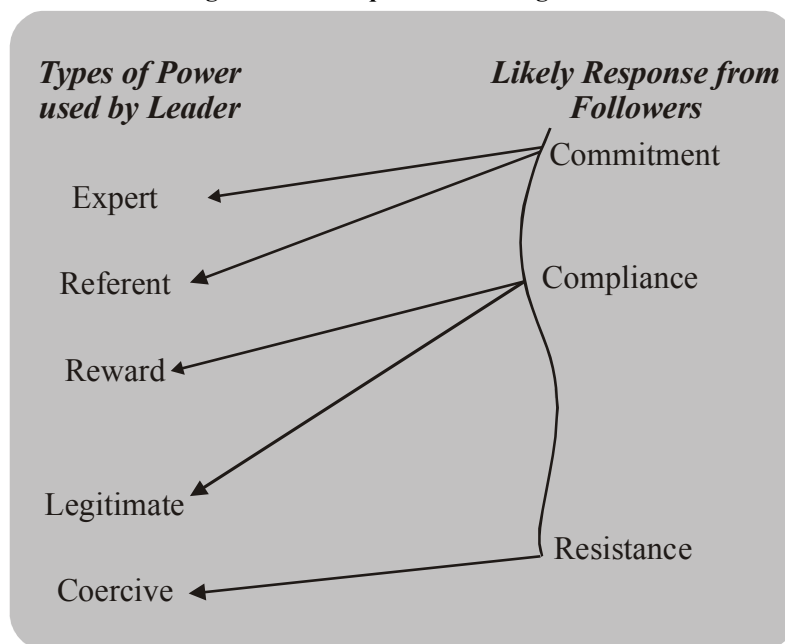
The leader's use of different types of power, can lead to one of three types of behaviour in followers, such as commitment, compliance, and resistance.

Committed subordinates are enthusiastic about meeting their leader's expectations and strive to do so.

Subordinates who merely comply with their leader's requests will do only what has to be done - usually without much enthusiasm.

In most cases, resistance by subordinates will be expressed as appearing to respond to their leader's requests while not actually doing so or even intentionally delaying or sabotaging plans (Hellriegel et al, 1999).

Fig. 2.1: Consequences of Using Power



Source: Hellriegel, D., Jackson, S.E, Slocum, J.W (1999), Management, Ohio: South Western College Publishing Company.

According to Fig. 2.1, expert and referent power tend to result in subordinate commitment, legitimate and reward power tend to result in compliance and coercive power tends to result in resistance.

Referent power usually leads to high levels of performance. Hence effective leaders are likely to rely on expert, referent and reward power, using legitimate and coercive power only minimally. Legitimate power is effective when a manager simply requires an employee to perform a task that is within the employee's capabilities and job description. In some situations, coercive power may be effective in getting subordinates to comply with rules. In general, however, when leaders threaten or punish, the response is anger.

2.4 Principles of Leadership

To help you be a leader and act like leaders, follow these principles of leadership (U.S. Army, 1973).

- Know yourself and seek self-improvement. You have to understand yourself: your strengths and limitations. Seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This can be accomplished through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others.
- Be technically proficient: as a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with your employees' tasks.
- Make sound and timely decisions: use good problem solving decision making, and planning tools.
- Set the example: be a good role model for your employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see you do it.
- Know your people and look out for their well-being. Know human nature and the importance of sincerely caring for your workers.
- Keep your workers informed: know how to communicate, not only with employees, but also seniors and other key people.
- Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers. Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished. Communication is the key to this responsibility.
- Train as a team: although many leaders call their organisation, department, section, etc, a team; they are not really teams-they are just a group of people doing their jobs.
- Use the full capabilities of your organisation: by developing a team spirit, you will be able to employ your organisation, department, section, etc, to its fullest capabilities.

2.5 Leadership Style

The leadership styles a manager exhibits depend on the individual manager and the circumstances in which he operates. Management style can be autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic (Ezigbo, 2011).

✓ Autocratic Style

The autocratic manager makes all decisions and expects the subordinate to implement them without question. He issues orders indiscriminately. He is a dictator; he believes that pay is all that interests the employees. Employees are totally subservient to the manager.

- Autocratic management style is practiced by most manufacturing and construction companies in Nigeria, because
- Most of their workers are largely unskilled and less educated.
- In these industries, jobs and production processes are routine, monotonous and do not require individual initiative and participation of employees in decision – making.
- Workers can be easily replaced especially during periods of high unemployment.

✓ Laissez – Faire Style

This happens where the manager has no confidence in his own power as a leader to succeed. The manager has not set goal for the organization. Employees within the organization make all decisions. This situation is dangerous and results in low productivity because there is no effective supervision.

✓ Democratic Style

The leadership functions are shared with members of the group and the manager is more part of a team. Democratic style encourages objective criticisms and praises. The group members have a greater say in decision – making, determination and implementation of policy. This makes the employees develop a feeling of responsibility which enables them to account for their actions. This style of leadership has proved to be more effective than the other two.

2.8 Result and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of data collected in the course of this study. Data were presented in tables for analysis. Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 were tested by chi- square test statistics, hypothesis 1 was tested by correlation coefficient using SPSS.

Table (1) What is the Nature of the Relationship between Power, Leadership, and Organisational Effectiveness?

S/N		AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT	TOTAL
1	There is a significant positive relationship between power, leadership and organisational effectiveness.	260(177)	15(98)	275
2	There is a significant negative relationship between power, leadership, and organisational effectiveness.	05(177)	270(98)	275
3	Within an organization, leadership influence is dependent upon the type of power that the leader exercises.	265(177)	10(98)	275
Total		530	295	825

Source: Field survey, 2013

H₁ There is significant positive relationship between power, leadership and organizational effectiveness

Table (2) Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Power	1.3782	.74645	275
Leadership	1.3964	.88746	275
Organisational Performance	1.2400	.60461	275

Table (3) :Correlations

		Power	Leadership	Organisational Performance
Power	Pearson Correlation	1	.913(**)	.890(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	275	275	275
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.913(**)	1	.917(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	275	275	275
Organisational Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.890(**)	.917(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	275	275	275

Source: SPSS Version 15.00.

.Table (2) shows the descriptive statistics of mean (m), standard deviation (std. deviation) and number of cases (respondents) (N) are displayed for power, leadership and organisational effectiveness. Power had mean of (1.3782), std. deviation (.74645) and number of respondents (275); Leadership had mean of (1.3964), std. deviation (.88746) and number of respondents (275); Organisational effectiveness had mean of (1.2400), std. deviation (.60461) and number of respondents (275). By careful observation of standard deviation values, there is not much difference in terms of the standard deviation scores. This implies that there is about the same variability of data points between the dependent and independent variables.

Table (3) is the Pearson correlation matrix of power, leadership and organisational effectiveness, showing the correlation coefficient significant values and the number of cases. The results in the multiple correlation matrix show that there is a relationship between power and leadership ($r=.913$); relationship between power and organisational effectiveness ($r=.890$). the computed correlation coefficients of the relationship between power, leadership and organisational effectiveness ($r=.913$, $r=.890$). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .195$ with 273 degrees of freedom (df. = n-2) at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .913$, $p < .05$; $r = .890$, $p < .05$). However, since the computed $r = .913$, $r = .890$ is greater than the table value of $.195$ we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between power, leadership and organisational effectiveness ($r = .913$, $p < .05$; $r = .890$, $p < .05$).

Table (4) What Factors can Determine the Extent to which People can Leverage their power?

S/N		AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT	TOTAL
1	Centrality: the degree and nature of interdependence between the power holder and others.	250(234)	25(41.3)	275
2	Visibility increases as the number of people one interacts with increases.	230(234)	45(41.3)	275
3	Discretion: freedom to make decisions without receiving permission from someone else.	245(234)	30(41.3)	275
4	Non-Substitutability: power is strongest when someone has a monopoly over a valued resource.	210(234)	65(41.3)	275
Total		935	165	1100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

H_2 Centrality, visibility, discretion and non substitutability determine the extent to which people can leverage their power

Table(5) Chi-Square Tests Computed from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	435.998(a)	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	460.693	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.395	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1100		

.Source: SPSS Version 15.00.

Table (5) shows the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the three public sector organisations. Pearson. Chi-Square computed value ($X^2_c = 435.998$) is greater than the Chi-Square tabulated value ($X^2_t = 12.59$) with 6 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha ($X^2_c = 435.998$, $p < .05$)

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi- Square value is greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the alternate hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis.

Since the Pearson Chi- Square computed $X^2_c = 435.998$ is greater than Chi- Square table value $X^2_t = 12.59$, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that Centrality, visibility, discretion and non substitutability determine the extent to which people can leverage their power

Table (6) What Types of Power can assure Leadership Effectiveness?

S/N		AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT	TOTAL
1	Legitimate power, Reward power, and Coercive power.	259(243)	16(32)	275
2	Expert Power	255(243)	20(32)	275
3	Referent Power	215(243)	60(32)	275
Total		729	96	825

Source: Field survey, 2013

H₃ Organisational power (legitimate, reward, and coercive) personal power (expert and referent) are the types of power which can assure leadership effectiveness.

Table (7) Chi-Square Tests Computed from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	238.004(a)	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	238.329	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.430	1	.512
N of Valid Cases	825		

Source: SPSS Version 15.00.

Table (7) shows the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the three public sector organisations. Pearson. Chi-Square computed value ($X^2_c = 238.004$) is greater than the Chi-Square tabulated value ($X^2_t = 12.59$) with 6 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha ($X^2_c = 233.004$, $p < .05$)

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi-Square value is greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the alternate hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis.

Since the Pearson Chi-Square computed $X^2_c = 233.004$ is greater than Chi-Square table value $X^2_t = 12.59$, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that Organisational power (legitimate, reward, and coercive) personal power (expert and referent) are types of power which a leader can possess.

Table (8) How can Power be Acquired?

S/N		AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT	TOTAL
1	Exhibition of knowledge and skills.	263(259)	12(16)	275
2	Exhibition of ability and intelligence.	265(259)	10(16)	275
3	Exhibition of ingenuity.	258(259)	17(16)	275
4	Exhibition of communication competency.	250(259)	25(16)	275
Total		1036	64	1100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

H₄ Power can be acquired by exhibition of knowledge and skills, ability and intelligence, ingenuity, and communication competency

Table (9) Chi-Square Tests Computed from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	568.383(a)	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	625.815	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	199.993	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1100		

Source: SPSS Version 15.00.

.Table(9) shows the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the three public sector organisations. Pearson Chi-Square computed value ($X^2_c = 568.383$) is greater than the Chi-Square tabulated value ($X^2_t = 12.59$) with 6 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha ($X^2_c = 568.383$, $p < .05$)

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi- Square value is greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the alternate hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis.

Since the Pearson Chi- Square computed $X^2_c = 568.383$ is greater than Chi- Square table value $X^2_t = 12.59$, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that Power can be acquired by exhibition of knowledge and skills, ability and intelligence, ingenuity, and communication competency.

Concluding Remarks

One don't have to be in leadership to have some form of power. In fact the most respect is garnered on those who have personal sources of power. It has been observed that when employees in an organization associate formal power with personal power (expert and referent) they are more engaged, more devoted to the organization and their role within it, and they are willing to go the extra mile to reach organizational goals (www.quickbase.intuit.com).

Generally, the personal sources of power are strongly related to employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance than are the organizational power sources. However, one source of organizational power- Coercive power is negatively related to work performance. The various sources of power should not be thought of as being separate from each other. A leader can acquire the five sources of power.

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