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|  | **GST 224**  **LEADERSHIP SKILLS** |
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**LESSON 2**

**Concepts of Constituted Authority**

**Authority**

Authority is the right to act, make or take decisions on behalf of others. It is the right to speak on behalf of a society or organization and make binding decisions that controls the behavior of the individuals and groups in the society or organization. Authority is a form of power; it is legitimate power or a superior form of power which is derived from approved procedures.

**Power**

Power is the capacity to enforce decisions. The possession of power is the ability to act, do something, persuade, punish, etc. Power is also the ability to enforce one’s own will against the resistance of others. Power uses the instrument of force to compel obedience.

Power may also be exercised in subtle ways like through indoctrination, reward, distribution of resources with the will and dictates of leadership.

Weber (1947) defines power as the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance.

Power relationship

The basic elements to power relationship are (1) sanction (2) coercion and (3) the use of physical force. Thus power relationship exists when for instance; Artimas makes Jenom to act in a manner he wants Jenom to act regardless of Jenom’s wish. Here;

Sanction is the drive of fear of punishment by Artimas in Jenom.

Coercion is the compulsion by Artimas of Jenom to carry out Artimas’ wish.

The use of physical force is the threat by Artimas to harm Jenom if Jenom fails to comply with his wish or whims and caprices.

Similarly, these three elements are illustrated in: Federal Government order on striking ASUU lecturers to return to work or lose their jobs. Here sanction (fear of losing jobs), coercion (compulsion to return to work), and physical force (threat to their means of livelihood.

Voluntary obedience is the main distinguishing feature between power and authority. Followers believe that authority’s source of command is legitimate and they obey willingly. If an individual pays tax because he/she is afraid of being sent to jail for refusing, his/her action is a response to the punitive powers of the state. However, if he/she pays tax because he/she believes in the right of the state to ask him/her to pay tax, his/her action is a response to the authority of the state.

**Legitimacy**

This is the acceptance of power backed by authority. Most times, the concept of power and authority are interwoven due to legitimacy. Legitimacy is the approval of the constituted authority by the wider society accompanied with compliance and the support for its policies.

**Constituted authority**

This refers to authority roles that are set up by the law of the land and enjoy the support, trust, confidence of the society by virtue of the fact that authority is functioning on their behalf and interest. An authority is properly constituted when its process of acquisition and exercise are within the limits of the law of the land approved by the norms of the society.

**Influence**

Influence is power relationship which is devoid of sanction, coercion and physical force. Influence is classified into (1) manifest and (2) implicit.

Manifest influence occurs when one’s action causes another person to behave in a way that is pleasing or desirable to one’s own interest (Oyediran, 1998).

Implicit influence is an indirect influence which exists between actors in a power relationship. It involves causing another person to behave in a way that is pleasing or desirable to one’s own interest even if one does not act with the overt intention.