

PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHICAL APPRECIATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES THROUGH THE FOOTPRINTS OF MR. PETER OBI

By

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Abstract

Leadership and governance have been recognized as imperatives for the attainment of any political, social and economic objective of any nation. In Nigeria, contemporary effective administrative leadership styles cannot be discussed in Nigeria without using Peter Obi as a reference point given that he has been popularly referred to as an encyclopaedia of good leadership. Despite the prevalence of poor leadership, not just in Nigeria, but in the whole of Africa which has made the continent to be backward in terms of development, Peter Obi has proved beyond reasonable doubt that effective administrative leadership is possible and obtainable in our political system. His leadership style can be assessed by his personal-administrative style and implementing functional strategy established in ANIDS: Anambra Integrated Development System, which encompasses plans for every facet of the human society with regard to human and natural resources in need of human and humane attention. Using the method of critical appreciation and analysis, the researcher finds out that good governance is still possible when a leader develops effective strategies to transform his society and equally allows his personality to influence the polity at large. The researcher, therefore, recommends that every good leader must have a strategy, be prudent and frugal in spending, and as well cultivate managerial skills as no nation gets wealthy by wasting resources and incurring debts.

Keywords: Leadership, Effective, Administrative Style

Introduction

Since the history of mankind, there are continued instances and realities of man trying to gain control of his environment and everyone under his sphere of influence. As human beings, most of us are born with the desire to be in power and exercise social influence. It is also historical evidence that human beings crave for social order in their social and political relationship and this can only be achieved through leadership.

Before the introduction of different systems of government during the pre-colonial era, the Africans already had their traditional system of leadership which also had its own shortcomings. They had many leadership institutions that administered governance through the Warrant Chiefs, Obas, Emirs', who direct, guide and run the affairs of their various communities, to ensure peace and stability. These leaders were either appointed or elected and some inherited kingship by birth, so we have always been victims of effective and ineffective leaders in the past decades. The problem of leadership is as old as man. It is not a product of Democracy, Communism, Capitalism, and Oligarchy among other systems of government.

The effectiveness of a leader can be measured by his personality, administrative style, his social skills, and ability to lead and influence others, ability to adapt to changes and be innovative, ability to be dogged and fearless. The truth is that anybody can win election or be appointed as a leader but the real question is: who can take responsibility for his followers? Conversely, leadership cannot be said to be effective until there is strong followership and support from the people you are leading.

There is no gainsaying to the fact that Peter Obi is a model to be followed when it comes to proper management through the much echoed contemporary effective administrative leadership styles. It is obvious that nothing in the overall development of human and natural resources escaped his memory, sound leadership acumen, generous administrative common sense and governmental *Midas touch*.

Peter Obi has proved beyond reasonable doubts that the failure of a government is not as a result of curse or lack of natural resources. A government fails because her extractive economic institutions do not create the incentives needed for people to save, invest and innovate (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). His political vocation was marked with indispensable administrative leadership styles like the accessibility formulae of reaching him easily through the “Senior Prefect and with Educational Matters” which he used to reposition Anambra State Educational System for a better performance in the scheme of things. He understood that the education of young people is very unique and important so he created a synergy for the Churches and educational sectors and institutions to work together towards raising sound and morally upright students.

His effective administrative models also reflect in his Anambra Integrated Development Strategy popularly known as the ANIDS MODEL which made tremendous impact on the policy, economy, and society. The ANIDS project strengthened the infrastructural bases of the State and placed Anambra as one of the best and most extensive road network in the country today with over 500 kilometres of urban and rural roads, dual drainages, water schemes, waste and emergency management, housing development, healthcare centres, etc. This paper seeks to explore functional contemporary administrative leadership styles through the footprints of Peter Obi. This is done with the view of examining how effective administrative leadership styles can transform a society using Peter Obi as a reference point.

The Personality of Peter Obi

Mr. Peter Obi (CON) was born on July 1961 in the commercial city of Onitsha, Anambra State in Nigeria. He obtained his first degree in philosophy from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and also an *Almunus* of some of the best business schools in the world. He has made tremendous success in the corporate world and he became a two-term Governor of Anambra State between 2006 and 2014 which was borne out of the desire to serve his people.

According to Uche (2017) Mr. Peter Obi portrays “essential qualities like frugality, humility, integrity, self efficacy and good management skills”. Mr Peter Obi’s success is partly attributed to his strong moral and ethical values as well as religious faith. Education was one of the cardinal pillars of Mr. Peter Obi’s administration. Obi was keenly aware that education in Nigeria was grossly underfunded at all levels, and well below the 26% minimum of national budget for education as recommended by the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). On the average, Nigeria allocated only 8.28% to education between 1999 and 2013; the lowest being 4.4% in 1999 and the highest being 10.21% in 2013. He prudently managed government resources and also collaborated with World Bank,

DFID, EU, UNDP, UNICEF and other funds (Okoye and Oseloka, 2018). Obi funded education because he sees it as a crucial force for lifting people out of poverty believing greatly that no nation can rise above her educational standard. He discovered that a proper effective and sound education cannot take place if it is isolated and left in the hands of a few, so he handed the schools to be run in partnership that is between the Church and government. He successfully returned the schools back to the missions after 42 years of forceful takeover. He initiated policies that reformed the educational system. In his tenure, Anambra State was ranked first in education. He used the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and his home grown strategy, the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS), as special purpose vehicle and template for revitalizing education (Udeh, Okoye and Oseloka, 2018, para 6).

ANIDS is basically a strategy by which the Anambra State Government of Mr. Peter Obi plans carefully, budgets properly, implements the plan, monitors the implementation and ensure delivery of the plan (Chukwuemeka and Chukwujindu, 2013, p.96). The ANIDS model helped the State to move its budget process to be demand-driven rather than supply-driven budgeting, to maximize the benefits from very scarce resources. The strategy ensures that with meticulous planning, participatory/demand-driven budgeting, as well as accountability and transparency in the management of very scarce resources the Anambra State Government would record achievements that would improve the quality of life of the masses in every single sphere of life and in all government sectors (Chukwuemeka & Chukwujindu, 2013, p.96).

Mr. Peter Obi had effective administrative leadership style which addressed the social problems of NDI ANAMBRA. Udeh et al states that Obi rose to the challenges in the state and in eight years proved that once there is a will anything can be accomplished. He declared war against the hoodlums and Bakassi Boys who unlawfully held the state at ransom and took laws into their hands for the slightest pretext, using law enforcement agents like the police and soldiers to checkmate their reign of violence. This strategy changed the face Anambra and other dread zones and areas like Upper Iweka and made them crime free zones.

Mr. Peter Obi also created a platform that acknowledged, respected and revived the Senior Citizens of the state (the retirees) and every person above seventy years. He placed them on allowance and this gladdened and increased the life span of his retired workers who are often abandoned to die because of lack of care. He made old age lucrative and hopeful believing that posterity will not forgive us as we neglect the past in and of our heroes. He is a Leader who is burdened to better the lives of his people at any cost. He was against wasting resources so he cut down on some unnecessary government expenses and this did not go well with some people who were benefitting from it.

Mr. Peter Obi never played a kind of politics that used extractive political institutions to support and cement those who where exploiting government resources. His good leadership techniques allow the interest of a community first before a specific group. Though he is often criticized for individualism, in contrast to the group demand of leadership but a good leader must have the ability to step on toes in other to be effective (Uche, 2017). Good governance is about the people whose welfare is your primary responsibility. Mr. Peter Obi demonstrated that the hallmark of effective administrative leadership is the ability and courage to identify and harness available human and material resources or assets to fulfil its mission, role or mandate

Concept of Leadership

Northous (2007) asserts that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. It is a practice whereby an individual uses a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Good leaders are made and not necessarily born. If you have the craving and will for power you can become an effective leader. Leadership is an art so it can be learnt. Jago(1982) opines that good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study education, training and experience. It also means inspiring others to pursue a vision within the set parameters, to the extent that it becomes a shared effort, a shared vision and a shared success (Zeitchik, 2012). Leadership is simply a two way communication which involves verbal and non- verbal communications. A leader must communicate to followers by setting the examples that he would not ask them to perform anything that he wouldn't be willing to do. Good leadership naturally begets good followership.

According to Graig (2005) leadership is defined as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational goals. Transformational leadership is inward looking and conscious of the benefits that its society can derive from the international environment. It takes the responsibility of the national or local problem depending on the layer of leadership; deploys skill, knowledge imagination and energy to solution to most problems and assists followers to realize their hidden and untapped capabilities. Omolayo (2005) describes leadership as an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. To him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in a country. Olewo (1995) says that development means growth or change or planned change and this assertion can only come when a good leader is in power. Gbenga Lawal (2007) as cited in Onodugu(2016) expressed that development is the process by which a type of (social) change is introduced into a system in order to produce a better production method and improved social arrangement. It involves a structural transformation of the economy society, polity and culture of a country. The level and rate of development of a particular society are influenced by so many variables such as the political culture, leadership style and corruption.

Leadership is about influencing the performance of teams, groups, and organizations. (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Leaders focus on visions, always trying to inspire dynamic changes in those around them. The authentic leadership model-development theory occurs when people observe proper patterns of authentic and ethical leader behaviour that encourages transparency in disseminating of information and welcomes input. Authentic leadership style or theory is an ongoing process that requires moments of reflection by leaders and associates alike. All parties involved must continually evaluate their ability to objectively analyze data, understand moral prospective and evaluate their relational transparency to others and self awareness. Mr. Peter Obi remains an authentic political model in this dispensation for whoever cares to be a good leader. He modelled good governance by setting the pace for others to follow, putting national and or state interest first before self and always practicing what he stands for: people's leader. Mr. Obi proved that leadership requires moments of reflection and critical thoughts. His area of academic specialization in Philosophy and the native intelligence he exudes might have contributed greatly to making him an exceptional exemplary leader of our time. Mr. Obi demonstrated that Management of resources as a leader requires moments of reflection by leaders and associates alike where parties involved must continually evaluate their ability in proper self examination of political consciousness

and awareness. He renovated and improved the educational infrastructure in the state and redefined the educational system in Anambra State by introducing the accessibility formula through the Senior Prefect and other forms of promptness with regard to Educational Matters which created a platform for students to interact with their governor. This *modus operandi* bridged the gap between the common man and the government as students were given the privilege to question the activities of the government and also report what they feel is not right with the system. It also served as a yardstick for the government to measure the effectiveness and the level of commitment of teachers to their chosen career.

Leadership Management Strategies of Peter Obi

A good leader is that individual that is futuristic in his thought. He maximizes scarce resources and accomplishes great result with them. Peter Obi managed to overcome the celebrated culture of waste through his personal discretion and prudence. He made sure Anambra State lived within and even below their capital allocation and revenue, though Anambra is yet to be assimilated fully into an oil-producing state, but the state under Peter Obi's administration, met its contractual obligations without accumulating any debt. He went further to make huge savings for the state. He was able to do this by living a Spartan lifestyle and drastically cutting down on cost of governance (Igbokwe, nd). He proved that rich nations are rich largely because they managed to develop inclusive institutions at some point (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, p.257). This was also demonstrated in his leaving government house without leaving debts behind rather he left resources for his predecessor to inherit. His leadership styles served as a building block for the preceding leadership to build on. As an effective leader, he has a good financial intelligence and was very prudent and frugal in spending in order to avoid mortgaging the future of the next generation after you.

Effective administrative leadership style must be geared towards understanding the problems of the people and mapping out strategies to solve them. The emeritus Governor of Anambra State understood that despite the fact that young people made up the larger population of the society yet, they still had limited opportunities. He believed that it was time to empower the younger generation and these antecedents birthed the Anambra State Youth Re-Orientation Empowerment Programme (ANSYREP). This program was set up to promote democratic ethos, instil character development, moral values, and vocational trainings with incentives to support their chosen vocation.

The Peter Obi administration also took cognizance of every sector: Hospital, Education, Economy, Agriculture, Industry, etc and individual groups in Anambra State including children, teenagers, youths and the elderly. As an effective leader he followed his laid down plans making sure they were executed. Furthermore, he adapted his approach to meet the demands of an ever changing environment. Mr. Peter Obi is an epitome of authentic leadership and effective administrative style. He left formidable footprints for generations after him to take after.

Mr. Peter Obi also possesses the rare attribute of a transactional leadership model. The transactional leadership model is based on reward in exchange for enhanced performance. In this model, leaders motivate followers by tapping into their intrinsic values. However, when followers are able to identify with a leader's mission and vision, they feel better about their work and are much more willing to perform at a highest level. This theory suggests that when people who are committed to a task feel satisfied with their contribution, a sense of cohesion among their team and have been found to have deeper level of trust in their leader. Mr. Peter Obi, as he would ever prefer to be called, is an icon of democracy. His effective

administrative style is one to be reckoned with; he wasn't interested in scoring political cheap points or creating an avenue for name calling and chieftaincy titles alongside different parties in his honour. Conversely, he is a visionary who blazed new paths and never allowed himself to be restricted by outdated traditions and political innuendoes. He proved to the world that there is a connection between quality work and rewards. He had the ability to cast his vision of restructuring and repositioning Anambra State for a better performance and this earned him the title; *Okwute Ndi Anambra*.

Effective Leadership and Youths

Effective leadership can only be possible if it takes cognizance of the youths. It is disheartening that young people who make up about 70% of the population of this great nation are relegated to the background in political matters. The reigning mentality and practice of *gerontophobia* as a result of *gerontocracy* in our polity presents a country without functional realizable plan for her youth, her ironic future leaders by implications. Our youths possess the innovative ideas needed to move the country to greater heights and they need to be groomed on how to channel their energy towards productivity.

We live in a society where leadership is equated with age and our young people are recruited as political tugs, assassins and armed with weapons during election in order to help our older generation manoeuvre power. Hence, the young people are considered too young for political offices.

According to a research carried out by Queensland School of Psychology, they found out that there is no relationship between age, wisdom and leadership. The study defined wisdom as a combination of relevant knowledge, understanding of context, and tolerance of different views. This study also found out that leaders who were perceived as having these traits were also seen as been most effective leaders. Therefore, it found neither link nor correlation between age and wisdom or between age and leadership skills.

A society with a leadership system that is negligent about raising the young people will go into a state of comatose or extinction because there will be no one to take after them when they are done. Such a society will only be dealing with the past amidst litany of retaliations, different forms of reprisal, revenge, vengeance and settling of scores of animosity and unforgiveness. Mr. Peter Obi as a leader left remarkable footprints for the next generation to take root in. His unequalled strategies not only positioned the youths but provided great job opportunities for the through his massive infrastructural development and great interest in school. However, great many popular opinions regard Mr. Peter Obi as the *Wikipedia of politics* and the Political Eagle that carefully avoids the inherent financial scandals and other forms of scandals dotting our polity. Like an Eagle, he soared so high with ideas as political detergents washing off many political filths and stains like no other.

Eagled-Peter for functional leaders

An eagle is a large bird of prey with a massive hooked bill and long broad wings, known for its keen precise sight and powerful soaring flight. Mr. Peter Obi, as a proclaimed master strategist shares a lot of administrative qualities with the rare supra-sensible qualities of an Eagle. Anambra polity since her creation presents a test case with many *Chickened* leaders that left the state moribund and in dirt and political grime. Mr. Obi's styled leadership made the much lauded *dividend of democracy* got to every door step of *Ndi Anambra*. To this extent, Peter has been *Eagled* administrative-wise, from the Campaign moments through the election, unto the exercise of his Executive powers and consequent kangaroo impeachment, culminating in his Reinstatement and eight year term n office that benefitted *Ndi Anambra*

with much lauded dividends of democracy under Mr. Peter Obi's unequalled effective leadership. There are basic qualities eagle possess that distinguish it from other species of birds and it is imperative for every leader to imbibe the following characteristics;

1. Eagles have Vision

An eagle's eye is specially designed for long distance. Its eyes are keen on its prey and it has powerful precise focus and clarity. A successful leadership must have a clear vision for his followers just like an eagle. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, guided his country through the most devastating experience in its national history, by having a clear vision of the future of America because vision produces result.

2. Eagles are Fearless

An eagle will never surrender to the size or strength of its prey. It will always give a fight to win its prey or regain its territory. For one to be an effective leader you have to be fearless, your instinct should be to protect those you love and cherish at all cost. You should have the ability to face problems head on.

3. Eagles are Tenacious

The eagle has tenacity of purpose; it takes advantage of the very storm that makes the lesser birds fear and head for cover. Like an eagle, a leader can only rise to greater heights if he takes up the challenges head on without running away.

4. Eagles are High Flyers

Eagles are high flyers they fly up to an altitude of 10,000 feet, but they are able to swiftly land on the ground. An eagle doesn't mingle around with pigeons or chickens, it flies above sea level and you will never find another bird. Effective leaders must aim high, strive for the best and take challenges as the eagle does when the storm comes.

5. Eagles never eat Dead meat

An eagle doesn't feed on dead meat because every eagle is a forager. An effective leader must spend time with people who are energetic and liberal in thinking to achieve his set goals.

6. Eagles possess Vitality

Eagles are full of life and are far-sighted but they find time to look back at their life and re-energize themselves. It never gives up living; instead it retreats to a mountain top and metamorphose. Great leaders are the ones that always do check and balance of their personal and professional lives and make an effort to learn things every day. Effective leaders do not give up or retire because of a challenge instead they refine themselves to face it squarely.

7. Eagles nurture their younger ones

Eagles nurture their young ones. Research shows that no member of the bird family is more gentle and attentive to its young ones than the eagles. An effective leader must guard, guild and govern the people under him in other to empower them and help them maximize their potentials.

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Benefits of an Effective Administrative Leadership Styles in Contemporary Nigerian Society

The role of contemporary effective administrative leadership styles as regards to national development can never be over emphasized. Good leadership plays a paramount role in developing a society.

It is a truism that the quality of leadership and overall governance in a country directly affects the level of political stability and national growth and development that such country enjoys. Bad governance and poor leadership only result in underdevelopment and political instability (ologbenle, 2007). It is in the recognition of the imperative of leadership and governance to a country that Nnablife (2010) avers that the survival of a system rest with leadership. Leadership has been said to play an important role in governance (Atkinson & Mitchell, 2009). Good governance has been identified as indispensable for social change, economic growth and human development of a country (Maugu, 2008). As demonstrated by many scholars, governance and leadership are also critical for the establishment of democracy and for democratic consolidation

Also, good leadership helps to foster peace, love, harmony and patriotism. When a leader has effective administrative strategy that is concerned about the welfare of his followers it will reduce the rate of nepotism, tribalism, ethnocentrism and marginalization in the society. It equally benefits the common man because the leader adopts a strategy that carries everyone along. It takes cognizance of the young people and maps out plans on how to empower them; this will also reduce the rate of crime in the society, thus, promotes peace and stability in the country.

Conclusion

In our society today, Mr. Peter Obi is a role model to be reckoned with when it comes to contemporary effective administrative leadership styles. His ANIDS model singles him out a master strategy which serves as a standard for integral and connected development. He used his ANIDS project popularly known as Peter Obi Model or *Obimetrics* as admirers coined it, to make "*ANAMBRA STATE BETTER AND BRIGHTER*" echoed in the state national anthem as well as in the Anambra motto as *light of Nations*. Indeed, Anambra State became a shining light among other states with the political administration of Mr Peter Obi as the Governor. Despite the fact he came into power when politics was really dirty in the state, with doubtful feelings whether the state was cursed. His indispensable political style changed the face of Anambra against the impending revenge as a result of years of toying with the state and her children, *Umu Anambra*. Obimetrics made it possible for a workable strategy.

Recommendations

The predominance of poor leadership in the whole of Africa makes the continent backward in terms of social, economic, political and religious growth and development. In spite of our myriad of challenges, this paper makes the following recommendations:

1. Everyone who wants to be an effective leader must build strong character strength in other to achieve his set goals.

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2. A good leader must be focused, fearless and have tenacity of purpose just like an eagle so he can lead his people right.
3. It is imperative for everyone who is running for a political position to cultivate good leadership skills and have a plan on what to do for his people during his administration. Politics shouldn't be a platform to exercise governmental authority and embezzle funds; it should be an avenue for one to serve his fatherland. Leaders must seek to understand and solve the problems of his people.
4. Every good leader must be prudent and cultivate managerial skills because no nation gets wealthy by wasting resources and incurring debts.

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