

## **| CHAPTER FIVE |**

### **PROFESSOR EUGENE OKOYE NWADIALOR: A RENOWNED PERSONNEL MANAGER AND ADMINISTRATIVE GURU IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: A STUDY OF HIS ANTECEDENTS IN TANSIAN UNIVERSITY UMUNYA**

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#### **A: INTRODUCTION/PROBLEMATIQUE**

The University system at all levels to a large extent relies on the quality of its personnel for the execution of its policies and programmes. It is so because maintaining and improving educational standards is only possible through quality personnel. The personnel, therefore, is the most important asset in the school. Personnel management encompasses the establishment of procedures for the employment and payment of workers or staff. It is the arrangement of conditions that make possible greater self-direction by staff in the performance of their duties. It is, therefore, an important aspect in the general context of all administrative responsibilities of managing staff.

The Tertiary education system is specially designed to bring excellent leadership within our great citadels of learning all across the country. The need to enhance efficiency and workability of the system led to the appointment of heads of different institutions in Nigeria. In spite of these reforms, the system has not adequately produced the much-desired results especially in transforming the tertiary education system in Nigeria. In fact, one area where the

system has suffered severe challenge is in the area of Personnel management. This has helped to enforce low morals in many workers resulting in low productivity, favoritism and corruption. In order to rid the system of persistent challenges, there is a need to keep strictly to the standard rules in relation to proper personnel placement in all the Departments of an organization (Isabemoch, 2010).

In any organization, public or private, personnel play an undeniable role in the success and growth of such organization. A cursory look at University management in the Nigeria typifies that they cannot perform optional because they see personnel management strategies as irrelevant. Inability to cater for the growth of the university system is the resultant effect of inadequate productivity. The World Bank opined that the human capital development is indeed the key index upon which national aspiration and development can be achieved. Bearing in mind the prevalence of globalization, events in one organization and/or country are now capable of having effect in other parts of the world, almost concurrently. Thus, to participate, internalize the benefit and remain relevant in the events and circumstances of the globe is to begin to become committed to the development of national manpower which Prof. Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor has been on its forefront.

Personnel management as a thrust and useful resource in any organization has not received the much desired professional management for the attainment of university contributions towards national development until the emergence of Prof. Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor. Today, training programmes are designed to respond to the needs of administration in a rapidly changing world. Unlike in the ancient classical period, contemporary public programmes rarely remain static. They are being frequently revised, and modern administrators like Prof. Eugene Nwadiakor are aware that the quickest way to adjust to such rapid changes is through deliberate, orderly training of its

employees. If officials in private organizations are well trained, they should be in a position to effectively and efficiently carry out their responsibilities in policy and programme execution.

The continuous expansion of programmes and the increasing requirement of competence and expertise in the public and private services have made training necessary and important in the public sector. The possession of intelligence and common sense by civil servants and officials in classical times enabled them to carry out tasks. In Tansian University, for instance, the problem of insufficient trained staff is a challenge that needs to be tackled; the circumstances emanating from this state of affairs are very glaring to the discerning management and university community. The resultant effect includes among other things: low productivity and performance discrepancies within the university, resulting in inability to meet programme and project deadlines; inadequate knowledge on the part of key actors within the organization; and the problem of poor leadership management skills, resulting in inter-personal conflicts and low morale. These affect service and programme delivery as well as rapid development of the university. Among top administrative staff, there is widespread prejudice and the lack of fair play in the conduct of the affairs of the university, resulting in poor work attitudes. Organizational and planning skills are lacking, and accidents in the technical department are rampant.

In Tansian University Administration, little or no attention is often paid to personnel management as an indispensable tool for University Administration. In any organization, public or private personnel play an undisputed role in the success and growth of the organization. A holistic look at the university management reveals that they cannot perform impeccably because they see personnel management strategies as irrelevant. This has resulted in the total dependency of the Governing Council or Board of Directors of the University. Inadequate ability to cater for the growth of the university is the resultant effect of low productivity.

## **B: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DISCOURSES**

### **Conceptual clarification**

#### **Personnel Management**

Personnel Management is a term that describes the art of working especially through people for the achievement of the major goals of an organization. Going by the above assertion, it means that personnel management deals with an assemblage of employees to achieve stated goals and objectives. Personnel Management can also be viewed as acquiring, usage and maintenance of a satisfied workforce. It is a significant part of management concerned with employees at work and with their relationship within the organization. According to Breach (1975), "Personnel Management is that part which is primarily concerned with human resource of organization". Personnel Management is saddled with the responsibilities of employing, developing and compensating the employees.

The goal of the school personnel manager are: to plan and direct activities necessary; to select and assign the best qualified individual staff; to provide opportunities for the growth in service for these individuals; and to maintain good interpersonal relationships (Orubuloye, 2006; Paauwe & Boon, 2009). Personnel Management is there to advise and assists its line managers in personnel matters. Therefore, personnel Management lays emphasis on action rather than making lengthy schedules, plans, and work methods. The problems and grievances of people at work can be solved more effectively through rational personnel policies and programmes. Personnel management is human resources function of an organization toward the achievement of desired goals and also involves the procurement of the human resources.

Recruitment of lecturers is one of the personnel management services which refers to those activities or operations which the university administrator undertakes with the intent of attracting

and securing personnel of the desired quality and in the desired quantity to satisfy the needs of the school. Recruitment, according to Ogunsaju cited in Alabi (2006), is the process of sourcing around for qualified applicants/candidates to fill up vacant positions in an organization. In agreement with the above definition, Robert (2014) affirmed that recruitment is the process of attracting, selecting and retaining competent individuals to achieve organizational goals.

### **Leadership**

A deeper introspection on leadership in the education sector portrays the practice of authentic democracy as a persistent problem in Nigeria and most third world countries. A leader can be seen as an individual that can influence others to accomplish beyond their formal horizon. Leadership becomes apparent because not everyone can lead. There is a need for a handful of individuals who will lead (Ujo, 2001). Leadership acts as both the glue that binds a work group together and the stimulant that triggers employee motivation, thereby metamorphosing into a greater organizational performance. Osuntokun (1987) defined leadership in terms of direction and example provided by any person or group of persons who are chosen or who by an accident of history find themselves at the helm of affairs. In this case, it can be in a country, state, department, or educational institution desired for governance for the purpose of overall development and good governance of the said establishment. Leadership therefore, embraces not only political direction but direction in economic, administrative, military and educational sphere of life. Omolayo (2005) describes leadership as an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. According to him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in a country. It involves giving direction to citizens who are the critical assets of the country.

Leaders can instigate their followers or mentees, in addition to being able to give their followers legitimate directions. Leaders

not only can tell their subordinates what to do but also can incite them on how or in what manner the subordinates carry out the leadership instructions (Richardson, 2010). Leadership is a reflection of characters, which include but not limited to knowledge, vision, courage, openness accountability, determination, transparency, uprightness, motivation and patriotism put in place by office holders to lead their people and/ followers as to achieve reasonable and positive societal development. Profound changes need committed leadership exemplified in transformational polices. Leadership is seen as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. The above assertion typifies Prof. Eugene OkoyeNwadiakor's leadership style.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Transformational leadership theory which was started by James V. Downton in 1973. He was the first to coin the term which was further developed by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Burns was a leadership expert and biographer and proposed that it was only through the strength of the vision and personality of a leader that team members could be encouraged to follow. Transformational leadership is a model of leadership that relies on the encouragement of a team to realize overall success. By raising a team's morale and self-confidence, the team can then align itself to an overall vision or common purpose. This purpose, however, must be established earlier on for it to be effective. Transformational leadership, when properly applied, can take a struggling or stagnant team, and completely transform it into a productive and dynamic group of individuals. This starts by identifying the struggles and strengths of each individual member. Next, it is up to the leader to define a new common goal and guide the members of the team towards this new vision.

Practically, transformational leadership is used to inspire and motivate team members to work together as a single unit, rather than many individual parts. A few years after the foremost proponents of the Transformational Leadership theory, Bernard Bass (1990) added even more to the concept. This is known as “Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory”. Bass added ways to measure and rank the success of transformational leadership as well as the idea of leaders expressing authentic and focused energy to inspire the other team members to become more like them. Bass also suggested that there were four primary elements to transformational leadership style (also known as the “four I”s”): idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Each of these four components is valuable to the leadership style and helps to transform its followers into better, more productive people. When these factors are combined, they help transformational leaders radically change the course of their following.

**a) Idealized Influence / Charismatic:** Idealized influence describes leaders who have charisma, are curious, and deliver messages with simplicity and tact. These leaders are exemplary role models and are readily trusted and respected by all members of the team. Charisma is one of the essential pieces of this characteristic. Charisma is essential because it is how leaders can rally their followers around a shared vision. Charisma is most often expressed by their ability to listen actively to each team member and focus on the present moment. Charismatic leaders give praise to individual members of the team with each success, and they are the first to take responsibility when things go wrong. They also provide constructive feedback to each individual team member. Intended influence is also represented through their curiosity.

**b) Inspirational Motivation:** Inspirational motivation describes leaders that are motivating and willing to commit to a vision. They encourage team members to also commit to this vision by raising

team spirit, fostering community and a sense of purpose. To do this, there must be simplicity in communication. This means their communication style must be best suited to the needs of the team. Leaders speak clearly and concisely to easily articulate their vision to the members. This provides structure and order so that members can execute tasks without confusion. Leaders articulate a clear plan for the future and communicate expectations in the beginning before the work starts. Leaders must also express their messages with a sense of authority, in order for members to respect their thoughts and trust in their vision.

**c) Intellectual Stimulation:** Intellectual stimulation describes leaders who encourage their members to think outside the box and be innovative. Stimulating followers promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills in order to improve the group or organization as a whole. This challenges the normal beliefs of a group and encourages the team to perform better than they ever thought originally possible. Encouraging innovation involves each team member in the decision-making process and fosters a sense of importance and a stake in the organization's over-all success. The important thing about this is that a leader must not negatively criticize the thoughts or opinions of the members. Premature shutting down of ideas can create a climate of distrust and hurt. Leaders must, therefore gently change the way followers problem-solve and brainstorm new and innovative ways to achieve their team's goals. In short, leaders must recognize that there are many ways to achieve a goal, and no ordinary path to innovation.

**d: Individual Consideration:** Individual consideration is the degree to which a leader attends to each follower's personal needs. Transformational leadership encourages members by focusing on the way each person affects the overall goal. This means recognizing and valuing the motivations, desires, and needs of individual members. Upon recognizing the motivation behind the drive of the individual, leaders then provide opportunities for

customized training. This allows team members to grow and learn in an environment they feel comfortable in. Engaging individuals requires emotional intelligence.

## **C: NOTABLE GIANT STRIDES AND LEADERSHIP TRIUMPHS OF PROFESSOR EUGENE OKOYE NWADIALOR AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TANSIAN UNIVERSITY, UMUNYA**

### **a) Standardization and Accreditation**

Since his inception as the Vice chancellor of the university, it is on record that the first ten departments that sat for NUC accreditation exercise all got full accreditation which gave Professor Eugene Nwadiakor the name 10/10 VC. Suffice it is to say that for NUC to grant a university accreditation, every academic standard must be met. He came and standardized every aspect of the university bringing with him renowned innovations that present the university in brighter light.

### **b) Quality and qualified workforce**

Upon assumption of office, he observed the paucity of quality staff both in numbers and qualification, he went on employment drive to hunt and recruit the best brains to work within the university. Today, the university can boast of numerous Professors and PhD holders that have come to fill various positions to enhance service delivery and quality learning amongst our students. Every department can now boast of a good number of professors that are helping the university system and delivering sound knowledge to students. Employment as an academic staff of Tansian University since his assumption of office as the vice chancellor is based on PhD and above. This has gone a long way to strengthen the academic standard of the institution and attracted commendations from the National Universities Commission. Various faculties within the university are beneficiaries of the best-brain drive by the erudite and visionary vice chancellor.

### **c) Establishment of Post Graduate Programme**

One of the key points of Prof. Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor during the first senate meeting was to chastise the staff and management of the University for their Inability to establish a post graduate programme since inception over 11 years of existence. He promised to take up that challenge and make it a reality within the 36 months of his administration. As an astute leader, he lived up to his billing and made it a reality. Today Tansian University is boasting of Post graduate programmes in PGD, M.Sc and Ph.D across various departments within the university. This was made possible by the dynamic vice chancellor in a space of Thirty-six months.

### **d) Establishment of Professional Programme/Courses**

It is worthy to mention at this point that the relentless Professor Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor since his assumption of office worked tirelessly for the growth and upliftment of the university. In line with the above assertion, he worked endlessly with his team to secure the approval of the NUC to mount some professional courses within the university. Notable amongst them are Nursing, Law, Radiography, Medical Laboratory Science and others. The commencement of these programmes within the university has boosted the numerical strength of the students of the university which in turn raises the revenue generation for the institution as well. This can only be achieved by an astute leader who knows what it takes to successfully harness the resources within his reach and fully maximize its usage.

### **e) Staff Welfare and prompt promotions**

Professor Nwadiakor is a man who does not toil with the welfare and promotion of his workforce. He understands the management principle that staff welfare triggers maximum performance within an organization. Capitalizing on that principle, he has established a system whereby promotions are granted to any qualified staff that has met the requisite promotion points and qualification. In furtherance to the above, staff salaries since his administration is

now being paid as and when due moving away from the old order that delays salaries unnecessarily. Arrears owed to any staff are paid upon confirmation by the bursary. It is on record that the tenure of Professor Eugene Nwadiolor fully implements the full funding of staff to attend conferences, seminars and symposiums within the country as part of staff welfare as directed by the NUC.

### **f) Infrastructural Developments**

The leadership of Prof. Eugene Okoye Nwadiolor has extensively surmounted the infrastructural atrophy within the university. Prior to his tenure, the university suffered from paucity of buildings and strictures for the betterment and comfort of staff and students. Upon assumption of office, he collaborated and synergized with private citizens and philanthropists within and outside the shores of this nation as well as government agencies to combat that menace. The university campuses today are wearing a new look. Notable amongst his infrastructural achievements includes a 10,000 liters solar powered borehole, classroom blocks and multiple staff offices which were erected and equipped, the New Law faculty and moot court adequately furnished, Science laboratories were built, the university acquired various plots of land for further expansion and infrastructural development and existing office were properly furnished and equipped to meet International standard and NUC recommendation.

### **g) Social Recognition**

In recognition of his giant strides within the tertiary education system, the traditional ruler of Umuomaku in December 2023 gave him the revered title of Ebekue Dike 1 of Umuomaku meaning (Once you beckon on a warrior, he comes to your rescue). His human capital development is second to none. He has done it at Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra State and is doing it again in Tansian University. Many other awards and accolades too numerous to mention have been given to him to recognize his wonderful achievements, most of it he modestly rejected.

## **D: FINDINGS**

The findings of this study are that upon the assumption of duty by the leadership of Professor Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor the university was in dire need of a skillful and experienced leader who knows the rudiments of running a tertiary institution. Further from the above, the existing leadership style prior to Professor Nwadiakor was not giving the university the required antidote to rid itself of the ailing and obsolete approach of management. Thirdly, the study found out that the university has been suffering untold hardship in the area of quality staffing, infrastructure and funding. The solutions lies within but the previous administrations were unable to look inwards to find the best approach to surmount this challenge. Finally, the study found out that the advent of Professor Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor brought extinguished majority of those persistent bugbears and beamed a light of hope on those dark areas bedeviling the university. In the shortest period of time, he was able to achieve what Napoleon could not do at the battle of Waterloo.

## **E: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing from the holistic and in-depth variables within the study, the following recommendations were made:

- In the future, the University should strive to attract a capable and experienced Vice Chancellor with vast knowledge about leadership and personnel management that will engender positive change within a limited space of time.
- Secondly, the university should also leverage on the standards already established by Professor Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor and build assiduously on that to mount more professional courses in the university which will enhance the revenue generation of the university.
- Finally, in the future, the university must also build on the staff welfare packages already established by Professor Nwadiakor to enable them attract the best-brains to the university who will deliver requisite knowledge and ideas into our dear youths and students.

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