

EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A FOCUS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Ozuru, H.N. (Ph.D)

*Department of Marketing
Faculty of Management Sciences
University of Port Harcourt
Choba, Port Harcourt.
henry.ozuru@uniport.edu.ng*

&

Prof. Sam Otamiri

*Department of Office & Information Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.
samotamiri@gmail.com*

Abstract

The paper examined the positive attributes of exemplary leadership within the context of national development concentrating on Rivers State, Nigeria. It looked at the concept of leadership, effective leadership, exemplary leadership showing exemplary governors in the state with innumerable developments in all sectors. It further illustrated fundamental practices relevant in achieving exemplary leadership that translates to national or state development. The paper concluded that leaders should imbibe a patriotic, selfless and committed behaviour that employs effective and efficient use of resources to achieve positive developments. It further recommended amongst others: Governors should emulate positive foot prints of the four governors presented; more attention in the development of tourism in the state. Finally, it proposed a framework to empirically examine the relationship between exemplary leadership and national development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Exemplary Leadership, Governance, Modelling, Vision, Process, National Development.

Introduction

This paper observed that we are living in a situation of political uncertainty laced with serious challenges from the institutional arrangements of our colonial leaders that have underpinned our democracy for more than a decade. This chronic political and economic uncertainty exists around the world, and more so in Africa, and particularly, Nigeria in the context of this paper. In order to be successful in development, a strong and exemplary leadership at all levels of any country is an absolute must. The paper further observed that exemplary leadership is a vital issue in any government or organization. Exemplary leadership is necessary in all spheres of government for building a governance that can thrive and remain alive and to meet the needs of tomorrow. Without exemplary leadership, it is obvious that those in leadership roles in several arms of the

government are doing anything but leading. In Nigeria, they carry appropriate titles, to do nothing but collect huge amounts of salaries and never step up in meaningful approaches to help our nation succeed.

In the words of Molinaro (2017), leadership accountability is seen as critical capability in today's organizations, and that the objectives of today are more ambitious and complex, and as a result, that strong leadership culture is imperative for development. Naturally, Nigeria is endowed with both human and resources such as land, water etc. that needs to be put together, but most of these resources are not fully accessed and utilized. Poor harnessing and management of these resources has resulted to serious hardship and suffering in the state. Rivers State, which is the treasure base of the Nation suffers more when it comes to development. Without doubt, governors like King Alfred Diете Spiff, Late Chief Melford Okilo, Dr. Peter Odili, Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and Chief Barrister Nyesome Wike exhibited leadership qualities that transformed Rivers State with visible developments. The unmatched qualities of Amaechi and Wike witnessed their second term in office. Moreso, if Alfred Diете Spiff wants to run for an election to be the governor of Rivers State, he will be wholeheartedly welcomed as a result of his visible developments in the eyes of Rivers people.

Okebukola (2014) posits that regardless of how a nation may be endowed, harnessing these natural resources for meaningful development is dependent on the volume of the available brain power of the leaders and its citizens. On this strength, it is obvious that brain power on the part of leadership and citizens is identified as what gears the development of the society. Further, to achieve sustainable development in any society, projects are strategized in order to succeed in developmental goals of the

government. Instances where these projects are not adequately carried out as a result of corruption arising from government employees, poor maintenance culture of infrastructure, weak institutions of government, poor or inadequate funds to execute projects, poor management of public resources, high cost of governance or a combination of these mentioned factors, it is obvious that a nation engulfed in these factors is likely to experience challenges of development (Akintoye & Opeyemi, 2014, Kuada, 2010; Edoho, 2007).

On the other hand, several studies indicated that societies that adhere to proper ethical behaviour and transformational leadership that is dependent on innovative ideas are prone to experience sustainable development in terms of enough infrastructure for improvement with regard to the citizens' standard of living (Imhonopi, & Urim 2014; Nnabuife, 2010; Okebukola, 2014; United Nations Development Programme, 2001). The aftermath of this, is that societies that imbibe norms of unethical behaviour and leadership with corrupt tendencies with no innovative ideas seem to face more difficulties that on the long run deter development goals and objectives of the government, and resulting in lack of sustainable development, thereby experiencing the hardship and denial associated with under developed societies.

Premised on these discussions, the following questions are pertinent: To what extent can exemplary leadership lead to good governance? What are those major issues responsible for unethical behaviour. To what extent has the unethical behaviour among government officials hindered development? What should be in place to overcome the challenges of corruption that inherently lead to the problem of sustainable development? Thus, this paper observed that exemplary leadership devoid of corruption

is more likely to witness accountability in governance and sustainable development as noted in the likes of King (Amanabo) Alfred Diets Spiff (the First Governor of the old Rivers State), their Excellences- Late Chief Melford Okilo- the First elected governor of the state, Dr. Peter Odili, Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and Chief Barrister Nyesom Wike of Rivers State.

McDonald (2013) discussed the importance of accountability in helping leaders improve and lead in the United Kingdom. Also in India, Nanjundeswamy & Swamy (2014) argued that effective leadership style is vital as to reduce the attrition rate. Further, Molinaro (2017) studied the leadership accountability gap exploring the real state of leadership in organisations today. None of these studies focused on exemplary leadership which this study is exploring; and therefore becomes the study's knowledge gap or point-of-departure.

Aim of the Paper

The aim of this paper was to examine the importance of exemplary leadership in sustainable development in Nigeria with a focus on Rivers State.

Theoretical Foundation

The Authentic Leadership Theory is the source through which this paper is drawn. The Authentic Leadership Theory posits that organizations, be it public or private sector, require leaders that are transparent and at the same time portray adequate ethical behaviours in the management of the resources as a key for improved performance (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Kuada 2010).

In the words of Luthans and Avolio (2003), authentic leadership is a process that attracts from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive

behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development. Authentic leaders whether at the organizational or national levels tend to exhibit transparent and proper ethical behaviour that focuses on accountability, which is required for efficient and effective management of resources for enhanced development.

Leaders with traits of character such as transparency, honesty and accountability motivate people to share information with them and with each other, resulting in the realization of an organizations or a nations quest for enhanced development (Kuada, 2010). According to Kuada (2010), "a derivative of the authentic leadership is the servant and coach leadership theory". In his words, servant leadership is based on the devolution of powers to followers". Under this circumstance, leaders see themselves as stewards, serving their followers in a manner that allows them to contribute their very best to fulfilling organizational or national objectives. Invariably, where a nation lacks authentic leaders, it is bound to face challenges in its endeavors to development. Avolio et al (2004), stated:

Authentic leaders were leaders who acted in accordance with their core personal values and beliefs in order to build credibility and earn the respect and trust of their followers through the process of actively encouraging diverse view points and building transparent and collaborative relationship with them. Since leaders could be described as charismatic.... Participative, or transformational, in addition to being described as Authentic (Avolio et al, 2004).

Review of Relevant Literature

The Concept of Leadership

Stogdill (1950) posits that leadership "is the process (act) of influencing the activities of

an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement". In like manner, Bryan (1992), argued that a leader either in an organization or nation has unique role of steering members of that organization or nation toward a specified goal- achievement of enhanced performance in terms of increased profitability or development for an improved standard of living.

Gberevbie (2017) also noted that leadership role in an organization or nation for the purposes of increasing profitability as well as sustainable development may be linked to various theories of leadership; and further noted that these theories provide vivid explanation to the behaviour, orientation and attitude of leaders in their zeal to achieve specified goals. These theories include situational, trait, visionary, transactional, charismatic, authentic, and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Gberevbie, Shodipo & Oviasogie, 2013). It is obvious from these studies that they have something in common as they point to how leaders in different sectors of the society are able to realize outstanding goals in the areas of developing an organization or nation at large with regard to fellowship commitment, trust, loyalty as well as dedication for performance (Hartoy & Koopman, 2001). Unique role of leadership in the promotion of enhanced performance in organizations and sustainable development of nations is crucial. Stogdill (1950) views leadership as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its effort toward goal setting and goal achievement.

Leadership is a relationship that exists between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. Sometimes the relationship becomes one-to-one or one-to-many. Regardless of the number to emerge, grow and thrive in these disquieting times, leaders must master the dynamics of this relationship and learn how to mobilize

others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.

Leadership that advocates for accountability in managing public resources is basic to development in any nation, and Nigeria in this regard is not excluded (Ninalowo, 2003; Agweda 2007, and Richardson, 2008). Edoho (2007) and Kuada (2010) argued that there is a positive relationship between effective leadership and proper accountability in the handling of public affairs in a nation's quest for development. For instance, if a government manages public resources poorly, wastage is the resultant effect. According to Gberevbie, (2011), Agweda, (2007) and Onah (2005), critical amongst factors that have militated against the initiatives for development by various governments in Nigeria since independence in 1960 is that of leadership that failed to embrace the culture of proper management of public resources- resulting to poverty and hunger among the people and that of political and social instability in the country. The success of an exemplary leader is hinged on committed values that are relevant to goal attainments both at the federal and state level. Positive values not only influence the leaders but also his followers in a desired manner in achieving stipulated goals.

These values include clarifying personal voice of the leader; aligning actions with shared values, envisioning the future by imagining exciting and enabling possibilities, enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations, ability to search for opportunities; experiments and risk taking by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes, fostering collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust, strengthening others by sharing power and discretion, recognizing contributions by showing appreciation for individual

excellence; and celebrate values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Effective Leadership

This is an ingredient that normally influences followers in a desired manner in order to achieve expected goals. Kuada (2010) posits that effective leadership and accountability exhibits positive relationship within them. In this perspective, if a government poorly manages public resources, nothing other than transparency in wastage and leading to lack of development. The paper observed that one of the factors that have greatly hindered the umbrellas for development by different forms of governments in Nigeria since the 1960 independence is that of leadership that failed to embrace the culture of proper handling of public amenities. Gberevbie (2011), argued that the result of such poor management of public resources includes poverty and hunger among the people as well as that of political and social instability both at the federal, state and local government level.

In this era of continuous disruptions as well as uncertainty, Nigeria and in particular Rivers State, blessed with natural resources that hold every form of projects to develop the place needs exemplary leaders who are willing to embrace, navigate and lead change and transformations. Governors like king Alfred-Diete Spiff, Dr. Peter Odili, Late Melford Okilo, Hon. Rotimi Amaechi and Honourable (Chief) Barrister Nyesom Wike are exemplary leaders that have worked to position Rivers State where she is today in terms of development. They have good vision in building a state that is truly united and ready for continuous development and growth.

Exemplary Leadership

Obviously, the paper observed that leadership behaviour is one of the single most important factor for positive engagement. Any leader that creates an environment of positive engagement reaps the benefit of national or state development. Exemplary leadership has better chances of positive accountability in management of the resources of the federal, state and local governments. An exemplary leader must be extremely good, deserving, admirable, copied, serving as an example of something, blameless, guiltless, inculpable, innocent, irreprehensible, pure, righteous, blameless, virtuous, ideal, model, commendable, praise worthy, also be an exemplary service to the community, constituting, or worthy of being a pattern to be imitated.

Exemplary leadership that advocates accountability in the management of public resources is vital to the development in any nation, and in this context, Nigeria, and in particular, Rivers State. is not exempted. The said governors in office at different times exhibited exemplary leadership in the management of available resources that resulted in building various infrastructures that contributed to the development of the state. For example, schools, roads, hospitals, civil servants welfare, scholarships in various institutions both home and abroad, water provision, sports are good indicators of their exemplary leadership in the Rivers State. Worksmart (2019) argues that exemplary leadership practices account for approximately 37% of engagement in Australian workplaces. Burns (1978) argued that followers are driven by a moral need—the need to champion a cause or the need to take a high moral stance on an issue of importance.

The Exemplary Governors of Rivers State, Nigeria



King (Amayanabo) Alfred Diète Spiff
The First Military Governor of the old Rivers State
at the age of 25 years old (1967 – 1975)



Diète-Spiff in his traditional attire



Chief Melford Obene Okilo
1979- 1983



Sir Dr. Peter Odili
1999-2007



Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi
2007-2015



Barr. Ezenwo Nyesom Wike
2015 Till Date

Obviously, these governors are united by uncommon passion for development and their names are synonymous with genuine development strides in Rivers State (Treasure Base of the Nation). Their footprints are still alive in the state and worth emulating by any leader in Rivers State and Nigeria at large.

Legacy of Developments in Rivers State

A legacy of development portrays monuments masterminded by our leaders (past and present Heads of state, local government chairmen in Nigeria). This paper focuses on five governors- King Alfred Diète Spiff, Late Melford Okilo, Dr. Peter Odili, Hon. Minister Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, a two term former Governor and His Excellency, Governor Nyesom Ezenwo Wike serving his second tenure as governor of Rivers State.

These governors are exemplary leaders that made Rivers State what it is through their excellent and effective governance. Through their effective governance, they constantly ensured prudent management of resources, revitalization of the states economy, and ensuring regular salary payments etc. Their vision is nothing other than building a state that is highly united, committed, secured and prosperous with opportunities for all to leave peacefully and pursue their goals as this will bring development as well as enhance quality of life today and the future. Rivers people are ever proud of their services in all spheres of development programmes. For example, the paper observed that in 2015 election, a poll was conducted, seeking the opinion of Rivers people: if Spiff were asked to run for the governorship race, would he be voted for? The response was a 68% resounding yes.

King (Amayanagbo) Alfred Diète-Spiff's administration between 1967 and 1975 left the following legacies:

- i. Massive reconstruction of war-damaged infrastructural facilities
- ii. Rivers State Secretariat Complex
- iii. The ATTC, later College of Education and now University of Education
- iv. College of Science and Technology, now Rivers State University
- v. A liberal scholarship programme
- vi. The Nigerian Navy college, Onne
- vii. Civic Center, Port Harcourt
- viii. The liberation stadium-Elekahia
- ix. Olympia Hotel (Egelege House) Port Harcourt
- x. Eagle Island
- xi. Technical College, now University of Port Harcourt, Choba.
- xii. The Hotel Presidential
- xiii. Waterlines House (Transport Corporation)
- xiv. Water Glass Boat Yard
- xv. The Tourism Corporation
- xvi. West African Glass Industry
- xvii. Pabod Finance Company
- xviii. Riv Bank Insurance Company
- xix. The Super Board Stores, Port Harcourt, now SPA
- xx. Cottage Hospitals and Veterinary Clinic
- xxi. Hospital Boats
- xxii. Rivers Craft for Ferry Services
- xxiii. The East West Road and other Road Projects
- xxiv. Amalgamated Distilleries Limited
- xxv. The New Layout Ultra-Modern Market and Mile 3 Diobu market, Port Harcourt
- xxvi. Mobile Libraries
- xxvii. The Pan African Bank
- xxviii. Oil Palm nursery at Risonpalm Agricultural Prospects
- xxix. Housing Estates
- xxx. International Airport Hotel, Omagwa
- xxxi. The Judiciary
- xxxii. Recreation & Sports Development.

Without doubts, Alfred Diète-Spiff set the blueprint of governance and development in

Rivers State. Rivers State Government Secretariat is the tallest and largest government secretariat in Nigeria aside from the Federal Secretariat in Abuja. The secretariat complex has a cluster of about 6 nine storey buildings with the principal secretariat that is almost twenty (20) storeys high, and the tallest building in South-South and South-East of Nigeria. The buildings are a high light of the city and located at the heart of the city beside the State Government House.

Late Chief Melford Okilo

Chief Melford Obiene Okilo, the first civilian Governor of Rivers State also made significant contributions towards the development of the state. Amongst his contributions or achievements is the reclaiming of massive swamps including Borokiri for development purposes. Okilo also engineered the construction of Kolo Creek Gas Turbine Station in the present Bayelsa State and built Rivers State Television, Radio Rivers FM Station. He also played critical functions in the development of educational infrastructure and converted the College of Science and Technology (CST) built by Diète-Spiff to Nigeria's first Science and Technology University of Port Harcourt (The Tide, 2017). He was instrumental to the development of the independent power plant, a major gas turbine power station, fifty development units for rural areas, reclaimed lands, erosion control, road construction, land, rural housing schemes and industrial estates etc.

Dr. Peter Odili

Reports from the Tide (2017) hold that Peter Odili, the third indigenous Governor of Rivers State made vital contributions to the growth of the state during his tenure as Governor. According to the report, Odili built the Omoku, Trans-Amadi, Eleme and Afam Power Stations, and installed the first state-owned power transmission line. He

built housing estates for civil servants in Aggrey Road, Greek Road, Iriebe, and more than 5000 low cost housing units within the 23 local government areas. Dr. Peter Odili also built the best house of Assembly Complex in Nigeria as at then in Moscow Road with two bridges and constructed Air force flyover including Olu Obasango Bypass that links Rukpokwu from Port Harcourt-Aba Road (The Tide, 2017). Dr Odili also built the new Government House Complex in Port Harcourt.

Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi

On assumption of office, Amaechi embraced the lingering suffering of Rivers State Primary and Junior Secondary (UBE) teachers, and totally took over their salary payments from Local Government councils across the state. Prior to this decision salaries of primary school teachers were the sole responsibility of the local government council which made it a nightmare for teachers to be paid.

Governor Amaechi's administration was visible in infrastructural development. He created and developed the New Port Harcourt Mega City that has one of the best modern stadia and other edifices that are obtainable in modern cities of the Western World. He introduced free education and healthcare programmes. He also created over 50,000 jobs to reduce the menace of unemployment and poverty. His administration built over one hundred forty (140) Primary Healthcare Centers that are still functioning to date, twenty three (23) Model Secondary Schools that can compete with a modern university in Nigeria. He also built over three hundred and seventy five (375) model primary schools that created job opportunities in the State. Revivals of Risonpalm, Banana Farms, Road Infrastructure like the Obiri Ikwerre bridge, Obiri Ikwerre Airport road and several others. Some of his other achievements include the construction of Eleme Junction

flyover, construction of Omofo-Agba Ndele Road, dualization of Airport – Isiokpo/omerelu road, dualization of Ada George phases 1 and 2, Choba Phase 2, NTA Choba Airport, dualization of Rumuola/Rumuokwuta Road, dualization of First Bank/Rumuomasi Road, dualization of Slaughter-Trans Amadi/ Rumuobiakani Road (The Tide, 2017).

Chief Barrister Nyesom Wike

As Wike assumed office, he followed the footsteps of his predecessors and set new and enviable standards in good governance and service delivery. Since then, it has been nothing other than projects after projects which gave him the name “Mr. Project”. Within two years, he had several achievements in restoring financial sustainability, growing the state’s economy, unbelievable infrastructure, healthcare, education and empowerment etc. (Mid Term Progress Report, 2015). Governor Nyesom Wike completed within 100 days of his administration, the Faculty of Law building at the Rivers State University (RSU). He remodeled Nyemoni Grammar School, Rumuokwuta Girls Secondary School, Birabi Memorial Grammar School, Medical College, RSU. Wike sees education as a source of empowerment of the next generation.

Justice Department

In the judiciary, the four Governors at their various times in office relentlessly, enhanced and elevated Rivers State as the judicial Hub of the South-South. Governor Wike’s administration witnessed the presence of the National Industrial court that cleared the way of litigants travelling to Bayelsa, Imo and Enugu with regard to cases relating to labour issues.

Civil Servants welfare

Civil servants are amongst the workforce that holds the administration of any government. As a result, these Governors

put first the welfare of civil servants in Rivers State. For example, Governor Wike’s love for workers was transparent when he initiated the building of 24 / 3-bedroom flats for civil servants in Port Harcourt. To make sure these projects stand a test of time, he made room for a facility manager to look after the buildings. These governors provided befitting civil servants housing.

Education

This is one sector that proved to the world that all the exemplary Governors believed in the lives and future of Rivers State. For example, the development of education under Alfred Diète-Spiff was both visionary and revolutionary. The administration through edicts 10 and 14 of 1971 took over all schools, both missionary and other voluntary agency institutions and backdated them to 1968. His view was that it was only through education that people could be liberated from poverty and ignorance (Ogan, 2012). Many schools were then opened. Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi during his governance built 375 model secondary schools to ensure that the youths have proper access to education. Governor Amaechi also established the RSSDA-Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency. Through this agency, many Rivers sons and daughters had the opportunity to attend various educational programmes sponsored by the state government where Rivers indigenes had scholarships both home and overseas.

From the past to our present Governors, the love for education has been unmatched in all ramifications. Recently, Governor Wike met with Heads of secondary and primary schools and decried unnecessary charges (levies and fees) on the students and directed that under no circumstance should any school collect a penny from any student in the state. He further declared that serious punishment awaits any violator which may include even legal prosecution. Finally, this

is a declaration at free education as he said that government would fully undertake the running of the state owned primary and secondary schools (Port Harcourt blog, 2019). For these exemplary Governors, the future progress of Rivers State must be built on nothing else but knowledge and utmost productivity of her residents. For this reason, the Governors gradually repositioned the basic /tertiary education sector in order to ensure quality education for all Rivers indigene and residents.

Effective Governance

In general, these great governors with their knowledge of effective governance

managed the state's public resources, revitalizing the state's economy by putting the economy in a good state. At one time or the other in the office, they cleared backlogs of salaries and ensured regular payment of salaries to workers.

Road Infrastructure

In general, these governors became abreast with the fact that road infrastructure plays vital role in the socio-economic growth and development of every country and as such developed and still developing efficient road infrastructure to connect various localities and parts of the state to enhance the movement of people, goods and services



Rivers State Government Secretariat.
(A cluster of about six nine storey buildings).



Alfred-Diete Spiff Civic Center



Mile One Bridge



Obi-Wali International Conference Centre



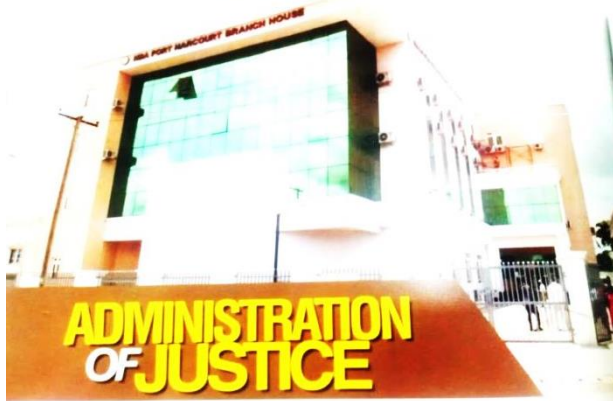
Government Model Primary School



Rivers State Council for Arts & Culture



Government Model Secondary School



A Section of Justice Department



Medical College, Rivers State University



Model Secondary School (Rumuokwuta Girls)



National Industrial Court Complex





Federal High Court Complex

These legacies are still standing and alive in Rivers State.

Practices Fundamental in Achieving Exemplary Leadership

The five practices common to most extraordinary leadership achievements include:

Modeling of the way: showing the right path

As a leader, followers expect high standards of him through which they can emulate. One of the most important qualities citizens of a nation expect from their leader is credibility. The most important personal quality people look for and admire in a leader is personal credibility. Fundamentally, credibility is the foundation of leadership and through which development becomes feasible. When it happens that people don't believe in the leader, they won't believe in his message. Leaders model the way through finding their voice and setting examples.

For instance, Alfred Diете-Spiff, the first Military Governor of Rivers State led the state with credible life, and in like manner, former Governors Late Melford Okilo, Dr. Peter Odili, Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and the present Governor, Hon. Chief Barrister

Nyesom Wike have modeled the way for people to follow. The paper observed that in 2015 election, a poll was conducted regarding Diете-Spiff if he was asked to run for governorship would he be voted for? The response was a 68% response. This is so because he modeled the positive way for followers to emulate during his leadership.

Modeling the way starts with clarification of personal values that involves building and affirming shared values to be embraced by all. Exemplary leaders know that it's their behaviour that earns them the desired respect. The test here is whether they do what they say, whether their words and deeds are consistent. Leaders set an example and build commitment through simple daily acts that create progress and build momentum. Leaders stand up for their beliefs and so they had better have beliefs to stand up for. Leaders must be clear regarding their guiding principles. The governors mentioned above had relentless efforts, had steadfastness, competence and attention to details that positioned Rivers State in the right direction for development.

According to Kouzes & Posner (2003), the power of spending time with someone, of working side-by-side with colleagues, of

telling stories that made values come alive, of being highly visible during times of uncertainty, of handling critical incidents with grace and discipline, and of asking questions to get people to focus on values and priorities are essential in successful exemplary leadership.

Motivating a Shared Vision

Kouzes & Posner (2003) further noted that when leaders share their visions they become good leaders as they describe their personal-best leadership experiences. They talk of times during which they imagined an exciting, highly attractive future for their nation or organization. For example, Governors Alfred Diете-Spiff, Late Melford Okilo, Dr. Peter Odili, Hon. Rotimi Amaechi and Hon. Barr. Nyesom Wike imagined a state of quality people with diverse opinions all working together to produce all the programmes they initiated. Programmes like Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), Songhai Farm etc were initiated to build and develop the state to what it is today.

Leaders are driven by their clear image of possibility and what their nation or organization could become. Leaders inspire a shared vision by envisioning the future and enlisting others in a common vision. Leaders gaze across the horizon of time, imagining the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination. Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference, and in this regard, these five governors have made a difference in the lives of Rivers people. They had a desire to make something better for Rivers people, changed the way things are; and created something that no one else has ever produced. A person with no constituents is not a leader, and people will not follow until they accept a vision as their own. Leaders cannot command commitment, they can only inspire it. What may begin as “my”

vision emerges as “our” vision in positive exemplary leadership.

Further, to enlist people in a vision, leaders must get to know their constituents and learn to speak their language. People must believe that leaders understand their needs and have their interests at heart if they are to sign up for journey into the future. Leaders forge a unity of purpose by showing constituents how the dream is for the common good. These attributes are embodiments of Rivers State governors that are portrayed in this paper.

The Presence of a Challenging Process

Leaders venture out to get things done for their constituent, and those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenges. Leaders challenge the process by searching for opportunities and by experimenting, taking risks, and learning from mistakes. Leaders are pioneers- they are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow and improve. Leaders must remain open to receiving ideas from anyone and anywhere. The leader’s primary contribution is in recognizing and supporting good ideas and being willing to challenge the system that is adopted. Leaders are early supporters and adopters of innovation, as they know well that innovation and challenge involve experimentation, risks and even failure.

Provide Room for Others to Act

Leaders know they cannot do it alone else they are bound to fail as leadership is a team effort. It is obvious that good and effective leaders employ the word “we” instead of the word “I” in explaining their personal-best leadership experiences. Leaders enable others to act by fostering collaboration and strengthening others. Leaders proudly explain how teamwork, trust, and empowerment are essential to strengthening everyone’s capacity to deliver on promises and in the process, often exceed their own

expectations. Collaboration is the master skill that enables teams, partnerships and other alliances to function effectively in nation building. At the very heart of the collaboration is trust which embodies any success. Leaders help create a trusting climate because when leadership is understood as a relationship founded on trust and confidence, people take risks, make changes and keep programmes, nations, organizations alive.

The work of leaders is making people feel strong, capable, informed and connected. Exemplary leaders use their power in the service of others; they enable others to act, not by hoarding the power they have, but by giving it away. When people have more discretion, more authority, and more information, they are much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results thereby satisfying followers.

Supporting the Heart

The climb to the top is arduous and long; and as such, people can become exhausted, frustrated, disenchanted and as such are often tempted to give up. Leaders encourage the heart by recognizing contributions and celebrating values and victories. Genuine acts of caring uplift the spirits and draw people forward. For example, King (Amayanabo) Alfred Diete-spiff established Port Harcourt Polo Club to be a fun place to be and later found creative ways to ensure that members' contributions in gulf playing were noted. Spiff made it a point of duty to let each player as well as the entire team, know about the good work being done in gulf playing. Prizes were awarded for good players to encourage more development in sports. Exemplary leaders set high standards and have high expectations of their state or nation.

Methodological Perspectives

This paper employed a critical review of historical research involving secondary data

from vital books, journals, the internet, magazines and newspapers to clearly understand ways in which poor leadership and the absence of accountability and exemplary leadership in the management of public resources can contribute to poor development in Nigeria and in particular, River State.

Conclusion

Our leaders should be patriotic, selfless and committed leaders as observed with the leaders presented here with a goal to emancipate/liberate and develop Rivers State. Also, our leaders should stand as the best political products when elected into office in order to be an embodiment of development as envisaged by the founding fathers of our state as well as our nation. These Governors had phenomenal progress by constantly injecting positive developments that tremendously shaped Rivers State.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that other Governors should emulate the positive foot prints of the Governors discussed in this paper in order to have a continued and progressive development in Rivers State. Furthermore, attention should be directed towards development of tourism destinations as observed in other neighbouring countries as tourism development is natural to our terrain and at the same time a profitable venture in terms of development in Rivers State.

Proposition for Further Studies

Premised on this research, this paper proposed a conceptual framework of the relationship between exemplary leadership and National Development in Nigeria with a focus in Rivers State. This proposal stipulates that exemplary leadership can be measured through vision, competence and integrity while National Development can

be measured through good governance and citizens' participation or responsiveness.

Based on the above discussions, the following propositions for further studies are made:

P₁ = Vision will influence National Development

P₂ = Competence will influence National Development

P₃ = Integrity will influence National Development

P₄ = Good governance

P₅ = Citizens Responsiveness

Conceptual / Operational Framework

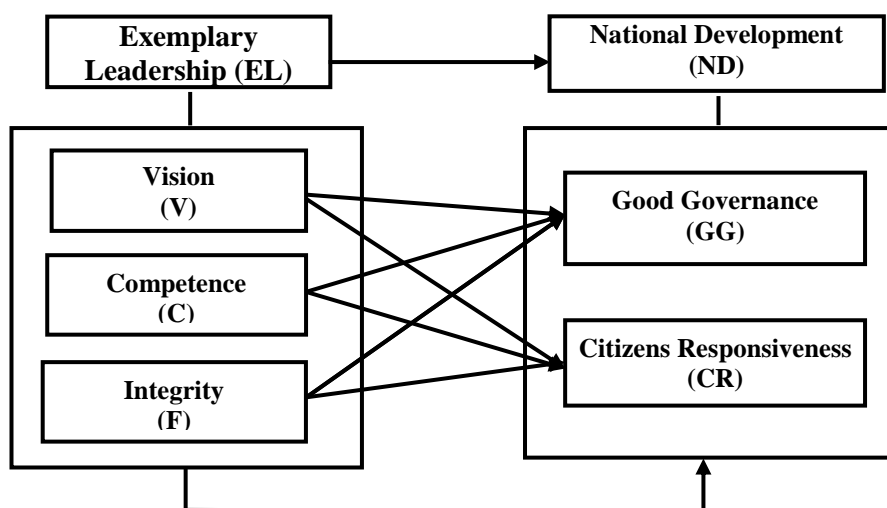


Fig.1: Proposition for further studies on exemplary leadership and National Development in Nigeria: A Focus on Rivers State.

Source: Desk Research, 2019.

References

Agwede, T.O. (2007). *The Imperative Of Leadership In Governance: The Nigerian Experience*. Ekpoma: Ambrose Ali University Publishing House.

Akintoye, V.A. & Opeyemi, O.A. (2014). Prospects For Achieving Sustainable Development Through The Millennium Development Goals In Nigeria. *European Journal Of Sustainable Development*, 3, 33-46.

Avolio, B.J., Gardner, W.L., Wahumbuwa, F.O., Luthans, F., & May, D.R. (2004). Unlocking The Mask: A Look At The Process By Which Authentic Leaders Impact Follower Attitudes And

Behaviours. *Leadership Quarterly*, 15 (3). 801-823.

Bryman, A. (1992) *Charisma And Leadership In Organizations*. London, England: Sage.

Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper And Row. Cardinal Prints.

Edoho, F. (2007). State-Corporate Alliance: Ramifications For Corporate Social Responsibility And Sustainable Livelihood. *African Journal Of Business And Economics Research*, 3, 96.

Edoho, F. (2007) State-Corporate Alliance: Ramifications For Corporate Social Responsibility And Sustainable

- Livelihood. *African Journal Of Business And Economics Research*. 3,1. 96-113.
- Gborevbie, D.E. (2011). Leadership: The Financial Sector And Development Nigeria, *Journal Of Humanities And Social Sciences* 3(2), 149-158.
- Gborevbie, D.E. (2017). *Accountability For Sustainable Development And Challenges Of Leadership In Nigeria*. Retrieved From <https://Us.Sagepub.Com/En-Ns/Nam/Open-Dless-At-Sage>.
- Gborevbie, D.E., Shodipo, A.O., & Oviasogie, F. O. (2013). Leadership And Accountability: The Challenges Of Development In Nigeria. *Thought And Practice. A Journal Of The Philosophical Association Of Kenya*, 5, 121-140.
- Hartog, D.N. & Koopman, P. L. (2001). Leadership In Organization, Sage Hand Book Of Industrial, Work & Organization Psychology 2, 166-187.
- Imhonopi, D. O & Urim, U. IU. (2014). *Industrial Development In Nigeria*, Trajectory To Industrial Development In Nigeria, 1-12. Ibadan.
- Knaha, J. (2010). Culture And Leadership In Africa. A Conceptual Model And Research Agenda. *African Journal Of Economic And Management Studies*, 1,9-24.
- Kouzes, J And Posner, B (2003). *The Five Practices Of Exemplary Leadership* 2nd Edition Retrieved From <https://Www.Amazon.Com/Five-Practices-Exemplary-Leadership/Dp/0470907347> On August 19th, 2019
- Kuaha, D. (2010). Culture And Leadership In Africa: A Conceptual Model And Research Agenda. *African Journal Of Economic And Management Studies*, 1(9), 9-24.
- Lulhans, F. & Avolio, B. F. (2003). *Authentic Leadership. A Positional Development Approach*, (Foundation Of New Discipline.
- Mcdonald, G. (2013). *The Role For Leaders In Creating An Accountable Culture In Public Services*, Center For Public Scrutiny. Retrieved From [Http:Www.Solace.Org.Uk/Knowledge/Reports Guides/Solace Leadership-Skills-Screen.Pdf](http:Www.Solace.Org.Uk/Knowledge/Reports Guides/Solace Leadership-Skills-Screen.Pdf).
- Mid-Term Progress Report (2015-2017). University Of New South Wales Business School.
- Molinaro, V. (2017) Leadership Accountability Gap. Retrieved From <https://Theleadershipcontract.Com/Tag/Leadership-Accountability-Gap/> On August 19, 2019
- Nan-Jundeswaraswamy, T.S. & Swamy, D.R. (2014). Leadership Styles. *Advances In Management*, 7(2), 57-58.
- New Rivers (April/May, 2018). Rivers Development: Phenomenal Progress In Three Years. 1-131.Press Unit Government House, Port Harcourt, River State.
- New Rivers (June/July2018). Golden Era For Rivers State, 22, 1-79. Press Unit Government House, Port Harcourt, River State.
- Ninalowo, A. (2003). Democratic Governance, Regional Integration And Development In Africa. *Development Policy Management Forum*, 11, 32.
- Nnabuife, E. K. (2010) Defining And Enforcing Ethical Leadership In Nigeria. *African Journal Of Economics And Management Studies*, 1, 25.
- Ogan, C. (2012). Alfred Diète-Spiff- A Legacy Of Development In The Niger Delta.
- Okebukola, P. A. (2014). Human Capital Development And Innovation. In

- Abioye, T., Awonuga, C., Amuwo, A. (Eds.), *Leadership And Innovation In Africa's Development Paradigm* (Pp. 29-48). Ota, Nigeria: Covenant University Press
- Onah, V.C. (2005). Democratic Governance And Crisis Of Development In Nigeria. *American Journal Of International Politics And Development Studies* 1(1), 129-137.
- Ozuru, H.N. (2019). *Choba Yesterday, Today And The Future: A Chronological Discourse*. Port Harcourt: Super Achievers Resources Ltd.
- Richardson, P. (2008). Good Governance: The Vital Ingredient Of Economic Development. *Journal of Management*, 44(4), 15-20.
- The Tide (2017). *Realizing The Rivers Dreams: Achievements Of Past Governors*. Retrieved On May 29th From [Http://.Www.Thetidenewsonline.Com/2017/05/29/Realizing-The-Rivers-Dream-Achievements-Of-The-Past-Governors-2](http://www.thetidenewsonline.com/2017/05/29/Realizing-The-Rivers-Dream-Achievements-Of-The-Past-Governors-2).
- Stogdill, R.M. (1950). Leadership, Membership And Organization. *Psychological Bulletin*, 47, 1-14.
- United Nations Development Programme . (2001). *Public Service Ethics In Africa* (A Publication Of UNDP Regional Bureau For Africa). Washington, DC: United Nations, Department Of Economic And Social Affairs, Division For Public Economics And Public Administration
- Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus (1976). U.S.A: Merrian-Webster Publishers.
- Worksmart (2019). *The Leadership Challenge*. [Www.Worksmart.Net.An](http://www.worksmart.net).