

THE HUMAN FACTOR AND THE NIGERIAN SYSTEM

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To 'err is human' as the popular saying goes, can't be better stated. It regards humans as imperfect beings. There is no doubt that this ascription is correct because humans have proved themselves consistently imperfect, time and time again. It is fair to say that humans are also endowed with great qualities. Be they good or bad, such qualities may fall short by way of errors. At times, these errors are due to negligence, omission, or even commission as humans choose to do the wrong things. Sometimes these errors are honest mistakes, while some other times errors could be deliberate, suggesting that the right thing was meant to be sabotaged.

Everyone has the potential for some of these special qualities; creativity, strength, goodwill, kindness, giftedness, a loving heart and so on. Indeed, some individuals exhibit many of these qualities, as each human is expected to be an embodiment of some of these attributes, which if applied correctly, tend to curb human error simply by being fair, just and accountable. It is also true that in any democracy, it is taken as a given that a proficient system, be it a production line, sales operation, service or even governmental structure that fairness, justice and accountability remain the corner stone for curbing human error. This is because these principles make a society an effective and efficient one. One wonders why some societies remain consistently good at what they do while others consistently flip – flop. One day, they are excellent at performing their tasks like eradicating Ebola; some other times, they struggle as if in doubt of their cause to lead fairly and curb corruption. This is why this article invokes the "Hawthorne Effect".

Hawkins and Orlandy wrote about an important milestone in the first century, attained by the U.S.A. from 1924 to 1930 (1987, p. 16). “Here it was determined that work effectiveness could be favorably influenced by psychological factors not directly related to the work itself” (Hawkins, 1987, p. 16). Workers produce more when they are motivated for one good reason, which could be; better pay or even for the pride of production of knowing how good they can be (self-pride).

As noted above, “To err is human”. Strauch explains this slogan by saying that people might be embarrassed and angry with themselves when they err at work even when these errors are minor with little consequences (2004, p. 3). “However, sometimes the errors lead to more serious consequences... Settings, known as “complex systems”...; electricity generation, crude oil refining, air traffic management, product and people transportation and systems for treating the sick, all have brought substantial benefit to our way of life..., but when someone who works in these systems makes an error, the consequences may be severe” (2004, p. 3).

Human error can be potentially “deadly”. That is why managing these factors is ultimately the obligation of every human irrespective of discipline. If leaders of any society neglect to manage these factors, such leaders are playing to their ambivalence. Imagine the surgeon performing surgery on a cholesterol clogged human heart. He/she sticks with the normal surgery procedures because he/she cares dearly of the human being seeking health and wellness. A nation’s laws fall within the confines of moral statutes, requiring everyone to obey standard operating procedures (SOPs).

The parallels to draw from here about elected leaders in Nigeria is to ask the hard questions, in what ways do leaders ensure their constituents are better served? In the last two decades, have not Nigerian leaders introduced in to the “complex systems” in Nigeria political

entropy by running away from reality to the neglect of the Nigerian super-structure and its people? Has the *Hawthorne effect* which has been studied and successfully applied to their systems by other societies been thought of for the Nigerian polity, by Nigerian leaders taking into account empirical evidence provided by those successful nations?

Laws are meant for the society to provide the safety net through which citizens can feel that they are fairly treated, have equitable justice, and feel accountable for their actions (leaders included). This is what the “face of human error” looks like in Africa. Documented facts as reported by Burchard show that politicians in Africa tend to be well over compensated, which is a gross abuse of privilege ... overtly so “especially in relation to the average income of their constituents. Nigerian legislators for example, are the highest paid in the world” (Burchard, 2014). The figures also shown by World Bank data, indicate Nigeria’s 2013 Gross National Income (GNI) at 5,360 compared to Angola’s (GNI) of 7,000. Yet, not all African countries pay their politicians such high salaries. Examples of countries that pay within their means are; Benin, Liberia, Angola and Mozambique, all earn salaries well below their high – earning continental counterparts (Burchard, 2014). www.ida.org & <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD> .

The bigger question now is; isn’t it glaringly clear that the leadership in Nigeria has driven the country into the “Complex systems” syndrome with the propensity to causing greater harm to the country? If is not true, then why are the various Nigerian legislatures leaving Nigerians vulnerable by carting away the country’s fortunes with civil servants left without pay four months in counting? <http://www.punchng.com/news/fg-owes-70000-workers-three-month-salaries> this means Nigeria has trended heavily towards the deadly human error and needs to turn

back. Failure will result in a broken country simply because leaders are incapable of being sensitive to press reports about the wrongs and injustice meted on their fellow citizens. It is important to be clear! Only Nigeria through its people can make their country great by entrenching a government which operates with fairness, justice and accountability for all! As at this moment, Nigeria is trending towards man's inhumanity to man through irresponsibility and the promotion of decadence through deliberate negligence by its leaders. This has to stop.

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