

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AND GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE MILITARY

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Abstract

The military is a highly structured group; hence order and roles are strict and clear. The head of the armed forces is the commander-in-chief (CIC), who is the president in Nigeria. Three arms of the military in Nigeria have the organogram in accordance with perceived needs, and in line with international practice. Officers and men of the Nigerian army are classified into two major categories of commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and these have their own hierarchies. The Nigerian army has five commands and five autonomous units, while the air force has five principal staff branches. Maintenance of order in the military, and promotion of efficiency imposes psychological tasks on military psychologists in all units and formations of the military in Nigeria.

Keywords: *military structure, group dynamics, leadership*

Introduction

The military is highly structured (formal) groups hence its leadership structure is definite and processes are defined. Yet military leaders must motivate and guide the group. They must do task leadership by organizing work, setting standards, and focusing on goal attainment, yet build frame work, meditates conflicts, and offer support. It is the actions of leadership, and the reactions of members that is regarded here as group dynamics. Groups that experience positive dynamics are more likely to experience cohesion, while groups that experience negative dynamics are more likely to be polarized.

The military as an organization is made up of soldiers that form units of armies. Hence, there are leaders for each unit, and the leadership is hierarchal. The peculiarity of the military, an organization charged with the protection of territorial integrity and internal cohesion of a country cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore a very highly structured group. It is the interest of this paper to interrogate psychological factors that make for effective leadership in the military, since this translates to effective protection of the country. It shall however start with an over view of leadership structure in the military.

In the presidential system which Nigeria practices, the president is the commander-in chief of armed forces while the minister of defense is second in command. The chief of defence staff is answerable to the president and the minister of defense. The chief of defence staff can emerge from any of the three arms of the military organizations: Army, Navy, or the Air-force.

The Army

The command in the army starts from the commander-in-chief of armed forces who is the president of Federal Republic of Nigeria while the Minister of Defence is the second in command. The president and the Minister of Defence may be Civilian. The Chief of Defence staff is the defacto commander, although the chief of Defence Staff takes orders from the president and the minister of De fen se and he stays at Defense headquarters Abuja. The other three arms of the military are under the Chief of De fen se Staff.

The highest ranking officer in Nigerian Army is the Chief of Army staff who answers to the Chief of Defence staff. So, under the Chief of Army staff are the general officers commanding (GOCs) of different Divisions. The Divisions in the Nigerian army are:

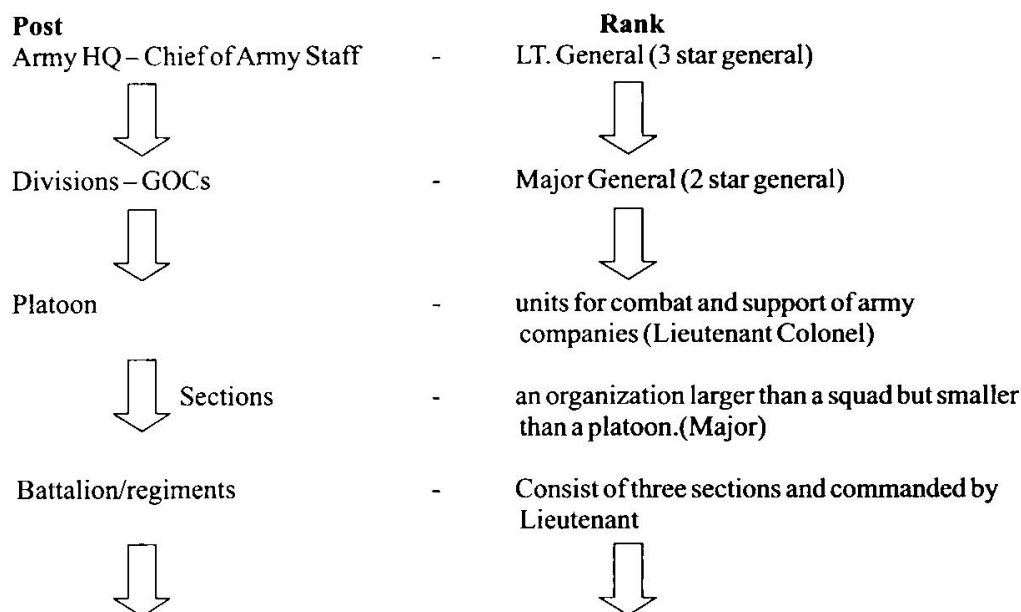
Division 1, located in Kaduna, it is charged with the responsibility of securing its areas of responsibility (AOR) covering the North West of Nigeria with many units under it. Division 2 is located at Ibadan, and it is charged with responsibility of securing its AOR covering the South Western flank of Nigeria and also ensuring that the boarders located in its AOR are secured. The Division is a mechanized infantry with affiliated combat support and combat service support units which includes 32 Artillery Brigade Abeokuta, 4 brigade Benin-City, 19 Battalion Okitipupa, and 195 Battalion Agonebode. The 52 Signal Regiment may be the divisional signal unit.

Division 3 is located in Rukuba Cantonment Jos Plateau state, in the North-west and includes 21 armoured Brigade Maiduguri, 23 Brigade Yola and 33 Artillery Brigades. 81 Division (Amphibious) of Nigerian army is located in Lagos. It is the newest of NA formations. Its AOR is covering Lagos and Ogun state of Nigeria which are the economic nerve centres of the country, and the boarders with other countries there in. The division is a mechanized infantry with affiliated combat support and combat service support units including 9th brigade base at Ikeja compound Lagos.

The 7th infantry division is located at Maiduguri in North-East carved out from I mechanized and 3 armored division to curb Boko-Haram insurgency in the area. 82 divisions (Airborne and Amphibious) are located in Enugu. It covers the South-East and South-South flanks of Nigerian and ensures that boarders in its AOR are secured. The units attached to it are: 2 brigade at P.H; 13 brigade Calabar and 34 Artillery brigade Obinze Owerri. The Onitsha barracks is the 302nd artillery regiment.

Therefore, the general officer commanding (GOCs), head Divisions, of Nigerian Army. Their ranks are mainly Major General (2 star generals) while the Brigades are headed by Brigadier generals (1 star generals) and they are called commanders of Brigades. Moreover, under the brigade are some other units like battalion-a self-sufficient unit, Platoons- which consist of three sections and is commanded by Lieutenant or Captain: and then sections -a formation that is large than squad but smaller than a platoon.

The foregoing is represented diagrammatically below:



So, the military hierarchy for commissioned officers runs thus: Field Marshall - General _ Lieutenant General- Major General - Brigadier General- Colonel - Lieutenant Colonel _ Major _ Captain - Lieutenant - Lieutenant second Lieutenant. The non-commissioned officers in army runs thus: Warrant officer Class I - Warrant Officer class II-Staff Sergeant - Sergeant - Corporal- Lance - corporal- Private - recruit.

Nigerian Navy

This is one of the arms of military organization in Nigeria, and it takes the responsibility of securing the Nigerian territorial water. The command in the Nigerian Navy starts from the Commander-in-Chief of armed forces of Nigeria while the Minister of Defence is second in command and the chief of Defence staff is answerable to them.

The highest ranking officer in Naval headquarters Abuja is the Chief of Naval staff a three star General who is answerable to the Chief of Defence Staff. Under the chief of Naval Staff are flag officers commanding different naval commands of the Nigerian Navy.

The Nigerian Navy has five commands and five autonomous units. The commands are made up of three operational commands: Western Naval command (WNC) Apapa Lagos, which is headed by flag officer commanding. The WNC covers the sea and coastal areas from the Nigeria/Benin boarder at longitude 0020-49°E to longitude 0060E in Delta State and from Nigeria coastline to the limit of the nation's EEZ (Tbs.ng.com). The Eastern naval command is located in Calabar. This is the second operational command of NN and it covers the sea area from longitude 0060E in Delta State to the Nigeria/Cameroon boarder at longitude 0080 300E and from the Nigerian coastline to the limit of her EEZ.

The Central Naval Command (CNC) is located in Yenagoa and is headed by FOC. The command area of responsibility extends from the area before River Benue entrance at longitude 005 00⁰E to River Santa Barabara entrance at longitude 006 30⁰E covering a coastal distance of about 156mm. the coastal state covered by the command are: Bayelsa, and Delta States while the inland states in the AOR include Kogi and Anambra States. Based on the CNC established AOR, all the existing naval bases and establishments located in the states within the AOR become part of the CNC.

The Naval Training Command (NAVTRC).

Its main functions are coordination and harmonization of doctrines and standards for all local training in the NN as evolved by the Naval headquarter. The command is headed by the FOC NAVTRAC who is assisted by PSO namely: CSO, the Command Technical Training Officer (CTTO), Command Logistic Training Officer (CLTO) and Command Medical Training Officer (CMTO), Command Academic Training Officer (CATO). (CABO). CAO, CINTO & CPM.

The Logistic command branch was carved out of the supply and secretariat (S & S) branch and charged with providing logistics support for the NN. The branch at NHQ level has 5 directorates namely: Armament supply, procurement, projects, ship repairs and Directorate of supply. This is not exactly the same at the command. The general administration of the command is under the flag officers command. The FOC is responsible to chief of the naval staff in the implementation of logistics policies. The command has 4 depot located in Lagos, PH, Sapele and Calabar. The depots handle material and supply to the fleet and bases. There are 3 fleet support groups (FSGS): FSG (West), FSG (East) and FSG Central in Lagos, Calabar and Warri respectively. There is also motor vehicle maintenance group and helicopter support group (HSG) both located in Lagos.

Hitherto 3rd line maintenance was carried out either in foreign dockyard or private ones in Nigeria at very high cost. The Naval dockyard in Lagos now takes care of this high level maintenance such as major overhaul of ships engines, additions and alterations and modifications of designs. Ships are equally repaired at naval ship yard Port Harcourt.

Nigerian Airforce

The Nigerian Airforce (NAF) which is the third born of military organization in Nigeria, is presently structured along a service headquarter, six principle staff branches, four direct reporting units and four operational commands. The chief of air staff is the principle adviser to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the Minister of defence and the Chief of Defence Staff on air related defence matters. The NAF headquarter is responsible for establishing long and short term mission objectives and articulating policies, plans and procedures for the attainment of the policies. In addition NAF HQ liaises with the Army & Nigerian Navy on joint operational polices and plans.

NAF HQ consist of the office of the Chief of Air Staff, six staff branches namely: policy and plans, operation & training, logistics & communication, administrative staff, standards and evaluation staff, and the air secretary branches, and each of the branch is headed by an air officer (3 star general) who is responsible to the Chief of the Air Staff.

Moreover, the four operational commands of NAF are:

NAF Tactical Air Command (TAC) located in Makurdi. The HQ of TAC is responsible for interpreting, implementing and controlling NAF operational plans. NAF Training Command (TC) HQ is in Kaduna and chiefly responsible for implementing NAF training policies.

Ground training is also provided for support services and technical personnel. Logistic command (LC) HQ Ikeja. LC is tasked to procure, maintain and sustain equipment in a state of operational readiness and at a minimum cost consistent with NAF mission requirement. Mobility command Yenagoa (MC) performs tactical and strategic airlift in support of government and military operations with many detachment wings and forward operational bases. This command has seven units spread across Lagos, Kwara (norin) Calabar, Warn as well as Abuja.

The leadership structure in any military organization across the world and Nigeria in particular are hierarchical, and it runs this way from recruit (army), Trainee (Navy), recruit (air force) to the highest rank _ field marshal (army), Admiral of the fleet (Navy) and Marshal (air force); they are equally called five star generals. The control of units in any military organization is being determined by the ranks. The highest unit is being handled by highest ranking officer while the lowest unit is handled by lowest ranking officer.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TASKS OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Notwithstanding the formal nature of the military, it is still a social group. Officers and men expect from one another certain roles, and from the organization, certain level of care. The extent these expectations are realized is directly dependent on the leadership role behavior.

The leadership role behavior can be achieved based on the following: maintenance of order, bonding and emotional control.

Maintenance of Order

Enforcement of discipline is one of the major objectives of any military organization in the world. The Nigerian military organization is not different from other military organizations world over, and to maintain order certain roles are expected from the leaders and even the subordinates. Military is the hub of the security of any nation, it is her duty to secure the nation's boundaries from external aggression and protect the lives and properties of residents. Example, during Bakassi Peninsula crisis between Nigeria and Cameroon, it was the duty of the military to secure the Nation from the external aggression of Cameroon. It is the duty of the military equally to maintain order when there is internal crisis, for example, during the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo {from 1999-2003}; there was militant unrest in Niger Delta of Nigeria. Military troops were sent there to maintain order and protect the lives and properties of Nigerians and foreigners living or working in the area. Although, it took years but order maintenance was achieved later. Presently, in Maiduguri, Borno State, the Boko Haram insurgency is ongoing. Nigerian military troops and other paramilitaries are there maintaining order for the security of the nation. For example, on 17 July 2014 in Maiduguri, military enforced movement order.

The essence of the movement order is to maintain order within the nation. Moreover, within the military organization itself, there are certain laid down orders. Example, there are two classes of ranking order. The commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers are not allowed to marry one another. This can be allowed only when one of them decided to resign from the military. The reason is to maintain order and enforce discipline. This is because, if the marriage is allowed, the non-commissioned officer who married the commissioned officer may start disobeying his/her seniors or even some of the commissioned officers who are junior to either the husbands/wives of the senior commissioned officers may not be discharging their duties because of familiarity and sentiments.

Indeed, maintenance of order and discipline helps to reduce stress in the long run because people / officers and men serve their routines and perfect in their tasks. It also enhances efficiency through mediators.

Bonding

Military units' cohesion has been suggested as very essential for military effectiveness. So, Unit bonding/cohesion is a military concept, defined as the processes of developing a close inter personal relationship, among persons especially in the military (org/wiki/human-bonding). Thus, bonding in military refers to unity among soldiers in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, the unit and mission accomplishment, despite combat or mission stress. It is obvious that bonding in any military organization is very important for the sake of the nation's defense (org/wiki/human).

Successful bonding seems to be a function of leadership effectiveness which in turn determines how effective the organization will be. A competent leader follows a laid down rules and regulations and shuns favoritism in carrying out his/her duties. When a leader carries out his duty diligently and shows no favoritism, the subordinates will love and work with for him even on his absence. Since there is no favoritism but openness and fair treatment to the subordinates, they will see themselves as one and work towards attainment of the organizational goal. So, in military organization, when the leader is not showing any favoritism to his subordinates and handles them as one, the subordinates will equally be seeing themselves as one hence the unit cohesion. Once there is bonding among the men and officers they will work together, but in a situation where the leader shows divide and rule tendency or other forms of discriminatory behaviors, subordinate may explain toxic stress which affects efficiency.

Bonding is very important in the military because absence of it leads to mutiny and sabotage of the organizational goal, which may be very disastrous to the security of the Nation. The Nigerian military, were able to work with other military in West African foreign military interventions effectively well

because of cohesion. For example, in December 1983, major Gen. M. Buhari military regimes announced that Nigeria could no longer support activists anticlerical role in Africa Anglophone members of ECOWAS. ECOWAS was established dominated by the Nigerian Army in 1990 to intervene in civil war in Liberia. Again smaller armed forces have been previously sent on UN and ECOWAS deployments in the former Yugoslavia, Angola, Rwanda, Somalia and Sierra-Leone. In January 2013, Nigeria began to deploy troops to Mali as part of the Africa led international support mission to Mali. Based on the available information, Nigeria claimed to have contributed more than 20,000 troops and police officers to various mission since 1960.

The effect of bonding has been explained by Uniben-Shalom, Lahrer, and Ben - Ari (2003) using the experience of Israel operations in the occupied territories. Also, Lee (1989, 1996) used the broad concept of cohesion to explain military behavior during hostilities between China and Indonesia. These two examples highlight that bonding strengthens soldiers' resolutions to defend one another, remain active for long periods and become more effective. Bonding makes them to see themselves as a group rather than as different individuals. This will help the military to continue to be achieving the organizational goals, but in a situation where they will start see themselves as different individuals, it may led to stressful situation since they may be interested in achieving individual goals instead of the organizational goals. It may equally lead to mutiny because the organizational goals have been substituted with individuals goals, this will equally threatened the defense of the Nation.

It may important to mention at this point that personality of a military leader is very necessary for the effective functioning of the day to day leadership of the military leader for peace of the People within his jurisdiction. Gordon Allport (1939) defined personality as the sum total of all behavioral, mental characteristics that makes one distinct and unique in his environment. The behavior of the leader is of extreme importance in the military as it is the very essence of his office. Qualities such as impulsive level, ability to work on pressure or extreme conditions, temperament level, tolerance, vision, and a whole lot of other qualities are necessary to excel in military leadership duties.

Furthermore, the style of leadership a leader adopts is important also because it defines success or failure in the duties of the leader. The democratic, free hand and autocratic styles are the age long known styles, but the application of any should be a function of the prevailing circumstance at point of its consideration. Thus, there is no perfect style of leadership though it is important that a leader gets acquainted with the need for flexibility in application of any style since each choice comes with different benefits and costs.

Role of psychology in selecting effective military leader

In selecting a military leader the Psychologist has a very big duty to perform, in the sense that failure in this area will definitely affect the public and everyone within the territory under consideration in a many ways. Some people have the natural endowment to lead, yes there are great leaders as supported by the great man leadership theory, however, dominant school of thought hold that leaders are made not born. Thus, both nature and nurture predispose some persons to be leaders. The role of the Psychologist is to ensure that the most qualified person is shortlisted for the position. The Psychologist like a painter has many things to consider in ensuring that this is a dream come through.

It has been suggested that adverse childhood experiences affect emotionality and behavior in adulthood; hence leadership behavior (exercise of authority) is many a time influenced by childhood experiences (Obi Nwosu, 2012). This implies that in selecting leaders, as much as possible the child hood background should be considered. Other factors that must be considered are personality, locus of control, and responsibility attribution, intelligence; including emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, embarrassability, assertiveness and positivism. These qualities are usually elicited through psychological testing and assessment, which is indispensable in the military.

Conclusion

This military organization in Nigeria has a well-structured leadership system just like its military organization counterparts in other parts of the world. The military ranking is equally well structured-commissioned and non-commission officers and the arrangement is hierarchical. Despite the formal nature of the organization, officers in the organization are expected to perform certain roles like enforcement of discipline, unit cohesion and positive emotional control, which helps in moving the organization forward. But to achieve the above goals of the organization psychologists play important role in selecting the effective leader.

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