

Title:

“Transformational Leadership: Cultural Contexts and Educational Impact, Case of Africa”

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## **Introduction:**

There is always a leadership mishap of one kind or another, at any given period. For example, shortages, incompetence, crooked, inadequate, evil, manipulation, you name it. Even though most organizations recognize the need to improve and enhance their leadership techniques, those that do something about it often receive mixed results. Today's Leadership holds different meanings in different social, political and cultural contexts, according to Nance Lucas and Tony Chambers.

Culture is an important factor in understanding organization leadership. For any organization to effectively operate, it must have a general set of beliefs, customs, norms, values and assumptions. The evolution of charismatic leadership introduced by Max Weber (1947) transformed and changed the world until they were ousted by bureaucratic or traditional powers. Sir Mac Gregor Burns (1978) studied Weber and thought that transactional leaders were like the bureaucrats, while transformational leaders were charismatic. Burns who settled on the Isle of Transformational Leadership called it charismatic leadership, just like Weber. Burns confirmed that moral values were important to leadership but transformational leaders focused on *ends*, while transactional leaders rest on the *means*. When examined the historical, social, political and economical context of leaders, Burns dismissed Machiavelli and Nietzsche's theories of power as being amoral. Burns favored the moral leaders as those without "Will To Power."

The moral value leader emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations and values of the people. Unlike the amoral leader, the moral leader is both transactional and transformational but in different ways. Transformational moral leader lead with moral values- means over ends, honesty, responsibility, fairness, commitment and addresses the needs of the followers.

Understanding the cultural organizations of any country would affect the ways the diverse workforces operate. According to Barbeschi (2002), the process of making an organization is simultaneously the growth of relationships among individuals who are working towards a common goal and the actual accomplishment collectively. In any organization, like countries, there exists a cultural and political dimension (Barbeschi, 2002). Muir (1996) points to effective leader fundamental to organizational change processes, whereas Doka (1996), perceives managing diversity as culture related. Despite our understanding about influences of culture, western nations' view on leadership continues to dominate and take leadership development to different directions.

## **Problem:**

The problem that Douglas Mitchell and Sharon Tucker (1992), stated is that humans think of leadership as the capacity to take charge and get things done. As a result, we focus on the importance of group norms and synergy. We need to stop thinking of leadership as aggressive action and acquisition of power, and more as a way of thinking about our lives, education, jobs, and credibility. Researchers have conducted some comparative studies about leadership in various countries but more is needed in Africa, to enhance understanding of how leadership is transformed from social, political and cultural perspectives in developing countries. The 21<sup>st</sup>

century is the time for a critical mass of transformational leaders who would commit to creating dynamo within. During the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ghana's Independence, Nwalimu Julius Nyerere (1959) said that "Together we the people of Africa will be incomparably stronger internationally than we are now with our multiplicity of unviable states. The needs of our separate countries can be, and being ignored by the rich and powerful. Shaping a new democracy, understanding the role institutions play, and attending to how competence is reproduced are all goals of a critical postmodern pedagogy (Dickelman 1999) The result is that Africa is marginalized, unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated...My generation led Africa to political freedom.

The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick up the flickering torch of Africa freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm and determination, and carry it forward.”

Several issues should be considered for those who are or want to be future leaders within other developing countries especially in Africa. Based on Peter Drucker’s (\*\*\*\*\* ) in the Age of Transformation Book, he stated, “Families need rebuilding. Jobs are scarce. The cost of living is increasing... children do not have a level playing field for every intellectual, social and emotional development. We are flooded with evidence at the need for societal transformation everywhere we look ...” When leadership is redefined within the context of these multi-tribal settings, it will be seen not as holding a position or title, but as a style of performing duties to accomplish the mission of that country. When leadership is redefined, attention can be focused on how to challenge and tap into the countries’ societal problems to benefit communities. “Citizenship for the next century is learning to live together. This 21<sup>st</sup> century city will be a city of social solidarity... we have to redefine the word leadership,” according to Federico Mayor, former Director General of UNESCO.

To say that Africa has not however, produced leaders committed in creating a synergy and power within their circle of influence to reach the new level of social, economic, organizational and spiritual success is not an exaggeration. To reach such a level, Africans need to un-tap the leadership potential of skillful, virtuous leaders such as men and women who are successful and committed to their various professions. According to Rada, transformational leadership involves leaders and followers working together virtuously, to develop mutual goals, to recognize and achieve higher order needs, postulated by developmental theorists, and to make substantive change for the good of mankind. Burns (1979) confirmed that transformational leadership is not the purview of a few but select individuals at all levels of organizations that provide the routine tasks of everyday life. This means that anyone can be a transformational leader.

### **Hypothesis and Research Questions:**

This article will explore the understanding of the relationship between leadership and culture; explore the concept of leadership management in the African communities and the impact of transformational leadership in varying cultural, political and social contexts.

The question is how can people of Africa independently be most effectively educated to be adequately prepared to live peacefully, happily, socially and be able to transform leadership skills to impact on the lives of people irrespective of their demographic construct? Other relative questions will be asked for clarification such as;

- Do you have the competencies to transform organizations?
- Is your leadership style transformational or transitional or both?
- What level of leadership have you reached in your organization?

Culture, communication and society are the primary notions that underlie the conceptual development of transformational leaders. Culture includes languages, beliefs, norms, attitudes, values, and role relationships. Culture, in this article, will be used to refer to the sum total of the learned behavior of a group of people, which are transmitted from generation to generation, as a tradition and principles that guide humans to action. Communication is the skill to design, inform and advise people through verbal and non-verbal messages. Communication cannot be separated from community, leaders cannot be separated from the people.

Participants in communication transactions must have effective codes, ethics, contents, resources and situations. Critical to the future of any country is to develop approaches to thinking strategically and longitudinally about how to transform leadership at all levels for effectiveness in a cultural, social, political and economical context as we travel toward the new millennium.

### **Methodology/Research Design:**

The principal thesis of this article is that properly managed, organizational change efforts will lead to better development of the African countries through leadership *transformation*, *transactional* and *people management competencies*.

This paper will also examine five (5) issues with regard to the approach and method of this study: 1) Three West African countries will be randomly selected, 2) Selection of the respondents, 3) Questionnaire construction/completion, 4) Conduct of the interview for clarity, and 5) Research problems to be addressed with a follow-up study. Some research problems include, instruments and interview bias, contact with respondents, and unfavorable circumstances in the countries selected for the study.

The researcher has only three (3) months to complete the fieldwork for this study. There will be a comparative analysis within the French, British, and Portuguese speaking democratic African countries. The study will determine the role and effects of these colonial powers (past and present) leadership reinforcements. It is believed that three countries located in the West Sub-Saharan Africa would provide a rough overview of leadership techniques (sampling for all other countries), if the study were to have validity and reliability.

Transformational leadership is the ability to take your organization to the next level through specific leadership skills. Studies have shown that leaders who are trained, and practice transformational leadership techniques increase organizational performances; reduce employee stress, increase employee well-being and instill a higher level of commitment in the workforce, according to Kevin Kelloway, facilitator at the St. Mary's University Seminar, January 2005. Transformation Leadership on the other hand, involves a transformation not only in an organization or group, but also in those persons involved in the leadership process. The interpersonal and cultural dimensions of leaders include the change of environmental needs. As Dess, et al (1998) stated, "Today's organizations face increasingly demanding challenges. Leaders must... engage in a process of transformational change" (p. 722). Burns (1978) theory is summarized, amoral values drive people who can wield power but not by means the "evil" brut power" while the moral is Saints. Burns set up a duality, a dichotomy between "saints" and a "sinner" (p.10).

It is important to note that the leader can embrace different kinds of leadership techniques based on situation, culture, times, and conditions. This typology is a duality in that amoral leaders are not real leaders, and the real leaders are either transactional or transformational.

Any generalize results; the respondents would have come down from within the same general political, tribal, and social (local) representation. The Creative Leadership Questionnaires (CLQn) will be utilized and administered to those randomly selected countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon and Benin. Things to bear in mind when using CLQn instruments are that it is a self-report questionnaire, it is not infallible. The scores will come by comparing responses to a "norm" group of leaders at different levels and working in different organizations. Finally, each score lies in a range of one point and both sides will be reported. Other variables will be clarified. This assessment is created to help amplify view of respondents and suggest some ideas that could be used to focus on development.

The (CLQn) instrument assesses where you are now by measuring twenty dimensions of leadership and management style covering transformational, transactional and people management competencies. The overall evaluation of the leadership position reached is based on the total score on all twenty dimensions. To gain a high score, a leader must be competent on all dimensions covered by the questionnaire. Collins (2004) believes that it is possible to develop from level I through level 5 where leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the goals of building a great and reputable company.

An effective leader is committed to and vigorously pursues a clear and compelling vision; while stimulating the group to high performance standards. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: transformational leadership, transactional and people oriented. Transformational section of competencies covers the “will” end of leadership which includes achievement, authority, communication, initiative, innovation, decision-making, learning, relationships and risk-taking.

The people management cluster of competencies covers the “humility” end, for example, adaptability, sensitivity, teamwork, motivating and coaching staff, while the transactional cluster of competencies covers basic administrative skills needed in your career. For instance; analysis, planning, customer-focus, business awareness, quality control and resilience. The most relevant of the three clusters are transformational and people management because it states the issues of “humility” and “willingness”.

Based on Jim Collin’s (2004) leadership framework, the Creative Leadership Questionnaire (CLOn) will be utilized. This questionnaire instrument, according to reports, has fostered well over 20,000 managers and professionals and has proven to be authentic for leaders of third world countries. The feedback report provides the strengths and limitations together with a comprehensive report. The respondents take only twenty minutes to answer the questions. This assessment instrument is intended also to help clarify the views of “self” as a leader and offer some ideas about where to focus future development efforts. If this instrument is properly disseminated might yield result of about 74% of the maximum possible total score on questionnaire. If the questionnaire responses are true reflection of the way leaders work, then they are operating as effective leaders which Jim Collins (2004) called a level-4 Executive. “You achieve commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision and stimulate people to high performance standard.

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### **Literature Review**

An integrative theory of leadership confirms that throughout human history, social and political leaders have recognized the importance of leadership skills and the most appropriate forms. Even though the conceptions were not scientific findings communicated to other scholars, rather, it was the beliefs of social philosophers, practitioners of leaderships, and or the followers who observed leadership, as was the case with Plato or Hubbes. These philosophers employed principles inductively through observation of exemplary leaders of the past, as expressed by Macchiavelli or Confucius.

Transformational leadership is valued centered, sharing of vision, values, respect, and trust, between the leader and followers and achieving unity in diversity (Fairholm, 1991). Human relationists confirmed that the coming together of the values of the leader and the followers is morally acceptable only if it comes from participative decision-making with consensus between leaders and the led. According to (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969) whether a leader is participative or directive is not a matter of morality; it is a matter of the experience of the followers and many other societal and cultural considerations.

One may argue that there is much moral justification for authentic transformational leaders trying to achieve value-congruence between themselves and those they lead. When such congruence is achieved, both the leaders and the followers are more satisfied culturally, psychologically and socially (Meglino, Ravlin & Adkins, 1989). There is a lack of scholarly written documentation from the colonial period in Africa. Several transterritorial political cultures have affected the internal and external politics of the post-colonial African states. As a result, the participants of the new westernized strata of African communities are the educated, exposed, intelligent and those elites who occupy influential positions. As a result, those elites excluded the poor masses or the politically unsophisticated Africans in their leadership role. At this point, the leaders go through the process of acculturation; the followers are socialized also into the organization (O’Reilly et al, 1991).

Transformational leaders can play important roles in organizational developments of any country. White and Wooten (1986) supported that sometimes data may be misused and misrepresented in the process. In assessing the ethics of the leader, we need to understand the reality of democratic participative processes and be able to separate the authoritative personality and the directive leader. For the common good of any country or organization, the leader may be directive as well as a good leader. Transformational leaders find ways to align those conflicting interests.

For Graham (1995), transactional leadership is as Kohlberg's (1981) "preconvention" level of moral development as it articulates job requirements and contracts, principles of justice and the interests of all stakeholders in the organization (Turner and Barling, 1998).

The study asserted a theoretical framework of transformational leadership and its effects on many processes and results among Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans. Results and analysis confirmed that effects of transformational leadership were positive but generally stronger among Asian Americans than their counterpart due to individual differences. Yet research on the ethnic group in management has been scarce (Cheng and Thatchenkery, 1997; Yammairino and Jung, 1998).

Like the African continent, previous leadership research on Asian Americans has been very limited. For example, research on demographic diversity and leadership Hooijberg and DiTomaso (1996) concluded that previous studies on this issue have been predominately focused on the difference of whites and Blacks. Actually, transformational leadership was first created by James McGregor Burns (1978). According to (Leithwood, 1992) research on transformational leadership concluded that there has been a shift from A to Z organizations. Evidence shows that transformational leadership is the same whether it is in a school setting or a business environment. (Nancy Hoover and et al. 1991; Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi, 1990).

However, according to (Sagor, 1992) the concern is who makes which decisions. Rather, it is finding a way to be successful in collaborating and defining the essential purpose of reaching and learning and then empowering the entire community to become energized. It has been found that teaching and learning have become transformative for everyone in schools where such a focus is practiced. Heroic (charismatic) is what is today most referred to as transformational leadership. For Burns, Moses is the epitome of charismatic (heroic) leadership.

Moses as a leader of the Hebrew people, the Israelites, was surrounded by an endless number of needs, peoples' demands requests for decisions, and how to solve hypothetical problems. Moses become the judge and the people stood to support him until he led them out of slavery in Egypt. In Exodus, Moses was depicted as a vigorous and decisive leader. According to reports, the role of a leader in Israel is not only to defend, redeem, govern and preach, but also to nurture. Moses became the savior of Israel and their teacher and legislator, but also their "raaya mechemna" meaning "faithful" according to biblical sources. Transformational leadership has a strong sense of vision, mission, value and purpose. In case of Martin Luther King, was a master of rhetoric. He has a grip of ideological change through discourse.

### **Cultural Contexts**

Cultural context is a set of circumstances or situations. This situation includes shared beliefs, values, norms, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of the society use to cope with one another and with the world. (Marshall R. Singer, 1982). An intercultural communication researcher maintained that what people see, hear, taste, touch, and smell are conditioned by their culture and controls the way they lead the people.

Culture is an important factor in understanding any organization, and plays a vital role in the transformational leadership process. When leaders understand the culture of the people, such as attitudes,

customs, values, beliefs and ethics, they become conscious of their leadership styles. According to Barbeschi (2002), the process of a good organizational relationship among individual members of a group is to work collectively towards a common goal.

For most groups to work effectively, some structure is necessary. Hackman and Johnson (1991) define leadership as a process of using communication to influence the behaviors and attitudes of the group to meet group goals. Leadership, therefore, is enacted through communication and persuasion, not through physical force or coercion. For transformational leadership process to be more effective, Muller and Haase (1994), and Allen (1995) stated that race, ethnicity and gender have to be among organizational diversity.

The structure of roles of any nation should strengthen the organizational issues whether it is addressing regional, cultural, political and/or social problems. Motivation, enhancement and enrichment, on the other hand, depend on the vision of the organization (Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999).

Culture also includes shared norms, rites, rituals reminiscences, and stories. Confucianism, the primary element of Chinese philosophy is aimed at teaching each individual to take to his place with the least possible friction in his duties to bring the greatest benefit to the group as a whole. For a leader to impact transformation, he must learn the peculiar culture of the country especially the continent where people worship all types of rites and rituals. Rites and rituals reinforce the country's cultural contexts, and highlights leadership styles. Plaques, for example, given to groups for their accomplishments are a means of rewarding cultural behavior.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century that recognizes female roles in the society also accounts as part of the transformation (according to a well known adage, "for every successful man, there is a woman.") Nevertheless, in most African countries, some rituals exclude some groups of people. In some third world leadership roles, for instance, women are often excluded from socializing after work in predominantly male-dominated groups. One executive of a New England-based insurance firm who was not overjoyed by the prospect of female competition said, "Women do all right, but they don't jog at lunch with the boss. They miss out on hearing what is going on and how the boss feels about it." According to Deal and Kennedy (1982), this type of exclusion by rituals can be detrimental to leadership transformation because it keeps valuable talents on the outside looking in.

Studies show that systems theory describes human behavior in terms of interdependencies of persons engaged in regular interaction. Based on systems theory, a change in any person's behavior brings about a change in the behavior of other members of the system. A group, when transformed, must feel motivated, supported, admired, respected and trusted as members of the group.

Evidence has shown that some of the leadership variables and behavior are universal while some are contingent on culture of that country or organization. Hofstede (1980, 1997) cited a simple framework for analyzing culture in terms of universal accepted values, and practices. As noted, friendship, work, fairness, ownership and love are universal values found in diverse culture throughout the world. However, the social customs and practices vary from country to country. (Legg and Redding, 1990; Steidlmeier, 1995) concluded that transformational leadership proved to be effective across organizations and countries because it confronts or challenges traditional ethics of leaders, and provides for a balance of power and "due process" especially in a democratic society.

## Political/Ethical Issues

It is appropriate that culture plays a vital role in the leadership of any organization. A leader must understand the culture of the society to be able to lead or transform. The next question is why is Africa lagging behind? President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda asked. He also mentioned that leaders couldn't chart Africa's progress without looking at why Africa has marked time for the last 500 years. Is Africa relying on the borrowed colonial mentality without the consideration of their cultural construct? Can Africans lead themselves truthfully and peacefully in the phase of emerging economical globalization?

The observation of the researcher is that this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century with all the elites from this valuable and resourceful continent. *Why can't Africa claim this technological, industrialized and globalized age to be able to control the natural resources?* The answer could come from internal and external forces. **First**, the policy of the organization or country may be legitimate but the attitude toward it could be pathetic. **Second**, another alarming politic in Africa is that the higher level of the hierarchy has formed an old boy's network.

**Third**, these positions have been transformed as that of a “**Royal Family**,” (passing leadership roles from generation to generation) rather than sharing leadership. The reality is that the political value system relates to possession of control and influence including rank-order prestige and social position that is regarded as a means of control and influence (authority power). Like any organization, there are problems with the working conditions in African politics. There are some favoritism, internal and external politics, such as changing roles without proper documentations, imposing people to accepting roles, rules and regulations, consensus, fear of separation from political relationships, fear of loosing jobs without a valid reason, and unequal distribution of powers, especially the rural communities are not accepting change.

## **Differences between these Styles of Leadership**

One may ask, how does transformational leadership different from transactional and instructional tht has been in use for decades? It is an assumption that instructional leader is supposed to know the best form of instructions and closely monitors teachers and students work. One of the problems with this says Mary Poplin (1992), is that great administrators are not always great teachers and vice versa. This form of leader looks at students' growth, such as retention and graduation rather than growth of teachers. As a result great teachers are not retained.

Instructional leaders in school setting have become the servant of collective vision, editors, cheerleaders, problem solvers, resource finders, as well as instructional experts. Naturally, transactional leaders are experts in exchange of services, customs versus customer representative relationship, teacher or faculty versus the school systems, receiving various kinds of rewards, such as salary and compensations. The leader in this venture is largely in control of the exchange of services.

However, transactional leadership is complementary with transformational leadership. Thomas Sergiovanni (1990) considers transformational leadership a first stage and central to getting day-to-day routines carried out. But Leithwood says it does not stimulate improvement, while Mitchell and Tucker add that transactional leadership works only when leaders and followers understand and are in agreement about which task are important. Here is a real story adapted from the Harvard Business Review 14: (January- February, 1997) p. 124-134. To stay alive, Jack Pritchard had to change his life. A Tripple bypass surgery and medication could help, the heart surgeon told him, but Pritchard has t carry out his responsibilities by changing the habits of lifetime.

First, he had to stop smoking, change his diet, get some exercise, take time off to relax and take daily breathing exercise. The doctor wants Pritchard to improve his long-term health. The doctor faced the leadership task of mobilizing his patient to make critical behavioral changes. Many organizations face a

similar challenges to the ones confronting Pritchard and his doctor. Leaders of these organizations should adapt challenges such as changes in societies, markets, customers. Competitions, technology, communication and relationship around the globe by clarifying their values, develop new strategies learn new ways of operating and mobilizing people throughout the organization or country to do adaptive work. Because the beliefs, cultures, values and norms have become less relevant. Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted a study of ninety leaders traits such as empowerment, self-control, logical thinking and persistence. Transformational leader was found to be different from transactional managers. One of the disparities is that transformational leaders make followers into self-empowered leaders and into agents of change. In addition, they articulate vision and values clearly so the new-empowered leaders know where to stand. Other findings were that transformational leaders have idealized influence as they become role models, inspirational and motivational as they become experts. Finally, the findings confirmed that they have human feelings as they continue to mentor followers.

To show the validity of transformational leadership style, another study of 345 metropolitan branch managers was conducted (Carless, 1998) found that self-ratings by female managers indicated that they perceive themselves as more likely to use transformational skills than their male counterparts. Even though studies show that women develop a “feminine style leadership” which is characterized by caring and nurturing, while men adopt a “masculine style of leadership”, which is dominating and task-oriented (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky, 1992). Based on this female managers report indicated that they use more interpersonal oriented leadership behaviors compared to male leaders.

Transformers as superman or superwoman have the enthusiasm for new “ends” to transform the world, out of the box (welding over others). Transactional leader is enthusiastic for bargaining and negotiating “mean” to attain higher efficiency and staying inside the box but making it comfortable (will to serve).

Mostly bureaucrats and transformational leaders such as prince hood, play the politics of power in modern organizations. Transactional leaders tend to ignore the routinization of charisma. Burns (1978) categorized transactional leadership as opinioned, legislative and party leaders. Bureaucratic leader believes in the patterns of normative rules. This leader is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office. There is a clearly defined hierarchy of offices. Persons exercise the authority of their office and are subject to an impersonal order while transformational leaders (hero) rest on devotion to the specific character of the person, be it hereditary or monarchy, patriarchal authority, religions, charismatic and military hero.

The goal of transformational leadership are three folds; enhancing collaborative efforts, fostering visionary people for development such as motivating employees for professional growth; and improving problem solving by sharing genuine belief and working as a group to come up with better solutions strategies. Transformational leaders matches the means to the ends, Burns, (1978, p. 170)

## **Conclusion**

Occupying official positions of authority should not be confused with moral leadership. Characters matter in leadership. If borrowing from the traditions of the “moral sage” and “social prophet which have enjoyed prominence in our cultures, perceived as agents of change. The sage and prophet did not have official office but were against the moral corruption of the “principalities and powers.”

The Chinese moral tradition rest upon foundation of individual virtue and that the individually virtuous persons transformed others, as well as the social environment (Schwartz, 1985; Lin, Rosemont and Ames, 1995). The moral person in any tradition or culture would sacrifice anything for the sake of virtue. Base on Aristotelleian rhetoric, virtue is noble, since virtue is a faculty of beneficence (Cooper, 1946, p. 46).

For example, Confucian tradition noted that “wealth and honor are what every person desires. But if they have been obtained in violation of moral principles, they must not be kept.” Poverty and humility are what every person dislikes. In Socrates’ terms, one finds a striking similarity; the moral person does not “put money or anything else before virtue” (Apology, 42A). Transformational leadership influences followers by serving as a mentor, coach, and a teacher to empower and elevate others to a higher level.

According to Burns, transformational leaders have four behaviors, idealized influence that arouses followers to feel a strong pathos/powerful identification that magnifies the group; intellectual stimulation that exposes the group to possible problems; awareness and provisions of solution appropriately; inspirational motivation having a vision, and belongingness and love; and individualized consideration, the leader supports, coaches and encourages followers of all levels. Transformational leaders are known as agents of change as well as people to be emulated, as leaders of others, not followers. Leadership of reform requires participation of a large number of followers with many goals and collectively transforms part of the society to realize moral principles.

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