

Investigating Stereotypes with Regard to Leadership in Africa: An Exploratory Study in Kenya

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Abstract: Leadership failure is often advanced as the reason for the lack of socio-economic advancement on the African continent. It is often said that personality traits such as unbridled narcissistic self-love, Machiavellian manipulation and power hunger, and the behaviors that emanate from them, are the drivers of the inability of African leaders to create environments conducive to socio-economic growth that would reduce poverty in Africa. Many of the afore-mentioned are perceptions and speculation about leadership in Africa. No empirical studies have as yet been done to provide scientific proof of these speculations. The present study therefore sought to find scientific proof for the truthfulness or otherwise of these stereotypes. The study was conducted on a sample of 256 senior managers drawn from 53 public enterprises in Kenya. The study investigated the relationship between personality traits and leadership styles, on the one hand, and the performance intent of these managers, on the other hand. The empirical results showed that Kenyan public enterprise managers exhibited high levels of transformational leadership style and feminine personality traits, as well as low levels of narcissistic personality traits. The results also revealed that transformational leadership style and feminine personality traits were positively related, while narcissistic personality traits were negatively related to the job performance intent of these managers.

Key words: leadership personality and style; performance intent; public enterprises

JEL codes: H83, Z00

1. Introduction

Leadership failure is often advanced as the reason for the lack of socio-economic advancement on the African continent. This has often been the recurring answer to the question of why, given the mineral wealth of the continent, Africa is still burdened with rampant poverty and disease. It seems that while in the rest of the world leadership thought has advanced from early leadership perspectives, such as the focus on leader personality and behaviors (transactional and people-orientated) to a focus on higher-order leadership theories (for example, servant and conscious leadership), perspectives about leaders in Africa became stuck in the focus on leadership personality and behavior. It is often said, for example, that personality traits such as unbridled narcissistic self-love, Machiavellian manipulation and power hunger, and the behaviors that emanate from them, are the drivers of the inability of African leaders to create environments conducive to socio-economic growth that would reduce poverty in Africa. It is further proposed that these dark side leadership traits and behaviors underlie the

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clinging to political power by African leaders and the trend to solve problems through military means. These leadership failures create an unhealthy business environment, which results in low economic growth and the inability of African states to effectively address poverty and hunger on the African continent.

Many of the afore-mentioned are perceptions and speculation about leadership in Africa. No empirical studies have as yet been done to provide scientific proof of these speculations. In the absence of such proof, wrong stereotypes might persist and inappropriate interventions might be implemented, relegating Africa to an already existing perception that nothing good can be expected to come out of Africa. Such negative stereotyping is clouding and will cloud all dealings between Africa and the rest of the world, especially in the business arena, unless the truth or falsehood about them is empirically established. Only on the basis of an empirical study will proper leadership development interventions be conceptualized, constructed and implemented. The present study therefore seeks to find scientific proof for the truthfulness or otherwise of these stereotypes so that (1) these stereotypes can be debunked if necessary and (2) so that proper leadership theories and developmental interventions can be pursued to change the fortunes of African states.

The paper is constructed as follows: (1) Theories on leadership are briefly reviewed, (2) perspectives on leadership in Africa are discussed, (3) the problem statement of the paper is explained, (4) the case study is presented, which provides a basis on which the hypotheses of the paper are investigated. This section includes a discussion of the research design of the study and the empirical results that emanated from it. (5) The empirical results and their attendant implications of the example study are discussed in the light of the research objectives of this paper.

2. Leadership Theories

Daft (2008) traces the evolution of leadership theory through the following stages: (1) Great Man theories, (2) trait theories, (3) behavior theories, (4) contingency theories, (5) influence theories and (6) relational theories.

The Great Man theories suggested that leaders “were born with heroic leadership traits and natural abilities of power and influence” and that these leaders “put everything together and influenced others to follow along based on the strengths of inherited traits, qualities, and abilities” (Daft, 2008, p. 20). The trait theories placed the emphasis on leadership traits such as physical appearance (height and strength), intelligence and personality, on the basis of which it was thought that successful leaders could be predicted. Research has however failed to identify a list of traits that would successfully predict good leaders. Despite this failure, research in leadership trait theory has persisted, while the focus shifted to the study of leadership behaviors.

Leadership behavior theory suggested that what leaders do determines their success. Effective leaders behave differently from ineffective ones, consequently by identifying the behaviors of effective leaders and training people in accordance with these behaviors, more leaders could be produced. Furthermore two important leader behaviors were identified, namely task and people orientated behaviors. Maintaining a balance between these two behaviors is important for effective leadership. However, research could not successfully identify a universally accepted list of behaviors that would predict effective leaders. This led researchers to the contingency theories of leadership.

According to the contingency theories of leadership, the situation in which the leadership occurs plays a significant role in the effectiveness of that leadership. These theories suggested that situational characteristics surrounding the followers (their needs, maturity, training and cohesiveness) as well as elements of the situation itself (for example the task structure and therefore required task behavior, and the work environment variables

such as the extent of formalization, group cohesiveness, power position and physical separation) all determine what type of leadership style will be adopted to suit a specific situation.

The influence theories of leadership focus on how leaders influence followers. The study of charismatic and visionary leadership features strongly in this school of thought. Charismatic and visionary leaders influence their followers through the visionary qualities and charismatic personality of the leader and not through the formal authority that comes with their organizational position.

Finally, relationship theories of leadership study the interactive relationships between leaders and followers, in other words, how leaders influence followers and vice versa. Examples of relationship leadership theories are transformational leadership and servant leadership.

The above-mentioned leadership theories support the generally accepted definition of leadership as the ability that some people have to influence, motivate, support, facilitate, empower and encourage others to act together towards achieving a common goal (Lefrey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Friel & Duborff, 2009; Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). This influence is exerted through behaviors that often originate in individual personality and situational imperatives.

To be a leader, there must be others who follow the leader's direction (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Followers can be individuals, groups or members of organizations. In other words, leadership has the potential to influence the successes of individuals or groups of people and the effectiveness of organizations. Individuals, group and organizations constitute communities and communities form nations and countries. Leaders therefore have the potential to build or destroy countries. This is evident from Greek, Egyptian and Chinese classical history and Biblical scriptures (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). The actions of Biblical leaders, such as King David, Moses, Joseph and other leaders like Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi etcetera, have been linked to the performance of nations and countries. It is in this vein that leadership influence is a recurring refrain in the African situation.

3. Perspectives on Leadership in Africa

There is the general perception that leadership personality plays an important role in the performances of individuals, groups, organizations and nations on the African continent. For example, Maisiri (2009) suggests that one of the biggest failures in Africa is the unwillingness of political leaders to accept political reformation. In other words, these political leaders do not embrace change. Secondly, Sirleaf (2006), Makhanya (2010) and Tabane (2010) suggest that unbridled narcissistic personality tendencies underlie the self-enrichment, power hunger and lavish life styles of African leaders. The prevailing self-importance at the expense of the poor population also suggests a moving away from a personality predisposition of collectivism to individualism. Thirdly, an approach to life based on the aggressive pursuit of material wealth suggests a masculine, as opposed to a feminine (caring for the needs of others) personality (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

The perception also prevails that influence leadership, more specifically charismatic leadership, with origins in the colonialization of Africa, plays a big role in the African context. Prior to the 17th century, kingdoms and chieftains ruled the land all over Africa. During the 17th century, these kingdoms and chieftains were overthrown by colonial powers who came to Africa. Much of Africa was under colonial rule up to the mid-20th century when many states started agitating for independence (Bienen & Herbst, 1996; Schmidt, 2005; Mazrui, 2007; Maisiri, 2009).

During colonial rule, the political leadership in Africa evolved in three phases, namely the era of passivity, the military era and the current era (Maisiri, 2009):

In the era of passivity (17th and the 18th centuries), the colonists encountered little or no effective resistance in many parts of Africa due to their inferior weaponry and lack of resources. The colonialists claimed large tracts of land for themselves and pursued mining and manufacturing while the indigenous people were downgraded to second class citizens in their countries. Maisiri (2009) argues that the African leadership then was passive to the colonialists in order to preserve their people.

By the middle of the 20th century (the military era), the situation changed. The education levels of the Africans had increased and they began to resist through military means the subjugation of the indigenous people. This era (1950s and 1960s) saw the gaining of independence of many African countries with Ghana and Kenya leading the way. After independence, African countries experienced coups and counter-coups which instituted military governments in some countries. The military leadership concentrated on spending large amounts of resources in beefing up the military at the expense of socio-economic development. Leaders were chosen on the basis of their military prowess and their ability to lead nationalist resistance movements (Maisiri, 2009, p. 8; Schmidt, 2005; Sirleaf, 2006). In other words, the charisma surrounding the military achievements of leaders was a strong determinant in the choice of those leaders.

After independence (the current era), the new national states were expected to settle down and provide services to their citizenry. Poverty, high rates of unemployment and little or no economic growth however were the order of the day (Maisiri, 2009; Schmidt, 2005). Many initiatives were taken to resolve the problems. These include the structural adjustment programs prescribed by institutions like the World Bank and IMF in the 1970s and 1980s which yielded little or no solution to Africa's problems.

Maisiri (2009), Adeyemo (2009), Yew (2008) and Obasanjo and D'Orville (1990) are of the view that political leaders in many African countries have continued with a military focus in an era that now requires equity, and economic and social development. Obasanjo and D'Orville (1990) argue that most African governments spend too great a portion of their annual budget on military expenditure and they therefore call for a drastic revision of that state of affairs.

The preceding literature review on historical periods in Africa reinforces the perception that leadership personality, particularly the charismatic military hero, played or is still playing an important role in how leaders are selected on the African continent. It is believed that some of these leaders plunder the economic resources of their countries and are responsible for the fact that natural resources of gold, diamonds and other minerals, as well as huge rivers to produce hydro-electric power are not productively used in these countries (Adeyemo, 2009; Maisiri, 2009; World Bank, 2009a). It is further believed that Africa has the potential to be the world's food basket; it's about 900 million people can provide the labor for food production and manufacturing; and its people can provide the market for the goods produced (World Bank, 2009b). The belief that the negative behaviors emanating from dark side leadership personality traits retard the socio-economic development of Africa therefore needs to be investigated, because such an investigation can contribute in three ways. Firstly, if it is indeed found that perceptions about these dark side behaviors are true, programs of action could be developed to prevent such leaders from taking up leadership positions, or alternatively reduce or address the impact of such behaviors should these leaders be elected. Secondly, if it is found that these perceptions are false, more energies could be exerted in identifying the true reasons which retard the socio-economic development of Africa.

4. The Problem Statement

Political leadership is an important determinant of the macro environment in which the economy and businesses operate. The interaction between political and business leaders therefore has the potential to build or destroy countries. Given the persistent levels of poverty in African countries, despite the claims of business successes on the continent, it is not unfair to argue that both political and business leaders do not play their desired roles in finding solutions for the socio-economic problems of Africa.

It is argued that African leaders have not graduated from charismatic leadership of the negative kind to leadership that serves African nations to prosperity (Maisiri, 2009; Adeyemo, 2009; Yew, 2008). It is also suggested that many of these leaders exhibit negative personality traits such as unbridled narcissistic self-love, Machiavellian manipulation and power hunger which are perceived to be the drivers of the inability of African leaders to create environments conducive to socio-economic growth that would reduce poverty in Africa (Sirleaf, 2006; Makhanya, 2010; Tabane, 2010). These dark side leadership traits are perceived to underlie the clinging to political power by African leaders and the trend to solve problems through military means.

It is also suggested that African leaders are not open to change and therefore lack transformational leadership (Luiz, 2006; Maisiri, 2009). The prevailing self-importance at the expense of the poor population also suggests a moving away from a collectivistic to an individualistic personality predisposition. According to Pierce and Newstrom (2008), an approach to life based on the aggressive pursuit of material wealth suggests a masculine, as opposed to a feminist (caring for the needs of others) personality. These however are all perceptions which have not been empirically verified.

On the other hand, there is a school of thought that argues that perceptions about African leadership occur through Western lenses. In other words, many stereotypes about African leadership are based on Western values or definitions of concepts from a Western point of view. These Western concepts are often out of sync with the African reality and often result in management failures in African business organizations. For example, Blunt and Jones (1992) suggested that the reason why job motivation strategies are often failing in businesses in the African context is that such strategies have Western biases that are misaligned with the African beliefs and values. It is therefore of critical importance that wrong perceptions about the African reality are corrected so that businesses can flourish and the socio-economic conditions in Africa be improved.

Against this background, the present study investigates to what extent leadership personality and style play a role in business leadership in Africa. A study of Kenyan public enterprises is used as an example to investigate the veracity of popularly held views about African leadership.

5. The Kenyan Case Study

5.1 Background to the Study

A study was done to investigate what factors influence the performance intent of managers in the Kenyan public enterprises. The Kenyan government delivers services to its population through state corporations, also referred to as public enterprises. These enterprises constitute virtually the entire Kenyan public sector. The Report on the Evaluation of Performance of Public Agencies for the Financial Year 2006/2007 indicates that by 2007 there were 134 public enterprises in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2007). There were 17 public enterprises operating in the financial services industry, 33 in the commercial and manufacturing industry, 26 as regulatory institutions,

23 in the university, tertiary education and training industry, 29 in the utility industry and six as regional development authorities.

A public enterprise is an organization which is organized by the State, or in which the State owns a majority interest (Efange, 1987). The activities of such organizations are of a business nature, they provide services or produce goods and they have their own distinct management (Adeyemo & Salami, 2008). In Kenya, the State Corporation Act of 1987 defines a state corporation (or public enterprise) as a corporate body established to perform the functions specified in the Act (Republic of Kenya, 1987). This Act specifies that the President of the Republic of Kenya has a mandate to establish a state corporation which will have perpetual succession; can sue and be sued; be capable of holding and alienating movable and immovable property; to assign Ministerial responsibilities; and to appoint a board of directors. Kenyan public enterprises are therefore managed in accordance with business principles but under the governance of the State. This study provides the opportunity for this paper to investigate the interaction between political and business leaders in as far as their personality traits and leadership style influence their behaviors in these enterprises. There is the perception that personality traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism and masculinity (versus) femininity influence the behaviors of African leaders. It is also perceived that a transformational leadership style (versus transactional) is not akin to African leadership and that African leaders are increasingly acquiring individualistic personalities.

In the case study, performance intent was used as a predictor of the actual performance behavior of the Kenyan public enterprise managers. Many researchers believe that intent is a strong antecedent of actual behavior. For example, Hampton, Summer and Webber (1982) suggest that performance intention is the employee's most immediate and direct motivational determinant of task performance, while Carkhuff (1986) believes that a continuous expression of the intention to improve job performance is a strong indication of motivation to actually produce. According to Sumerlin and Norman (1992), performance intention is not only an immediate and direct determinant of employee productivity, but it is also a necessary prerequisite for peak performance. Shore, Newton and Thornton (1990) also believe that performance intention is a strong precursor to actual job performance.

5.2 The Selected Leadership Personalities and Style

The present study investigates to what extent selected personality traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, masculinity, femininity and collectivism) and leadership styles (transformational and transactional) drive the performance intent of managers in the Kenyan public enterprises. Masculinity, femininity and collectivism are usually seen as expressions of cultural orientation. In the present study, however, they are viewed as personality traits in accordance with Robbins's (1998, p. 50) conclusion that personality is the combined result of heredity (determined at birth) and the individual's interaction with his or her environment. These selected dependent variables are briefly discussed and the relevant hypotheses formulated.

5.2.1 Narcissistic Leadership Personality

Narcissism refers to excessive or unbridled love of self. Narcissistic leaders think highly of themselves and exhibit overt grandiosity, self-focus, and behavior of self-importance and are usually not humble but have a high self-opinion. They love being recognized and being admired by others (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Conger and Kanungo (1998) assert that most charismatic leaders possess characteristics associated with narcissism. These characteristics can lead them to promote highly self-serving and grandiose aims. When this happens, the leader's behavior can be exaggerated, lose touch with reality or become a "vehicle for personal gain" (Conger and Kanungo, 1998, p. 211) even as they exaggerate their levels of achievement. These tendencies are not conducive to team work and affect the performance of the individual and the organization negatively.

As indicated in the literature review above, it is believed that the narcissistic personality trait drives the behavior of African leaders. If this is the case narcissism should be positively related to the performance intent and the following hypothesis was therefore formulated:

H1: Narcissism would be positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

5.2.2 Machiavellian Leadership Personality

According to the Marriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (1964), Machiavellianism is characterized by shrewdness and manipulation or the capacity of an individual to modify the behavior of others in a manner which he/she desires and at the same time resist modifying his/her own behavior in a manner which he/she does not desire (Miles, 1961; Calhoun, 1969). Machiavellianism is perceived to be a conniving and cold-blooded means of arriving at selfish ends (Calhoun, 1969, p. 205). It reflects on a person's general strategy for dealing with people in a manipulative way, in other words, by flattering people and by telling them what they want to hear, regardless of whether it is the truth or otherwise (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 428).

Leaders with a Machiavellian personality are cunning, sly and believe that cutting corners is the only way to get along in life (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Such leaders believe only the stupid get caught in a criminal act or when cutting corners. To them, cunningness and getting away with it is the order of the day. In fact, Nicollo Machiavelli himself believed that the success or failure of governments depended on the quality traits of leaders (Conger, 2008). African leaders are also perceived as exhibiting Machiavellian personality traits, especially as a means to cling to power and self- enrichment. It was therefore hypothesized that:

H2: Machiavellianism would be positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

5.2.3 Feminine and Masculine Leadership Personality

Different communities around the world have different roles for females and for males and therefore there are stereotypes of what females are capable of or nor capable of doing. The cultural differences between femininity and masculinity are based on the various traits leaders exhibit and not on gender or sex issues (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Engen, 2003). Masculinity in this context is represented by assertiveness, acquisition of money and property/things and not caring for others, or quality of life or people. Masculinity is also associated with strongly defending one's beliefs. On the other hand, femininity is associated with personal relationships, a concern for others and high quality of life (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). It is believed that many African leaders do not care for their followers in their pursuit of money and things, which led to the following hypotheses:

H3: Masculinity would be positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

H4: Femininity would be negatively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

5.2.4 Collectivistic Leadership Personality

In the present study, collectivism and individualism are used as descriptions of personality types. The present study suggests that a collectivistic leader's behavior is determined by his/her collectivistic cultural orientation and that the combined effect of culture and behaviors projects a collectivistic personality.

Collectivism is often better understood if it is compared with individualism. Individualism implies a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. An individualist believes that involvement with an organization is calculative (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Collectivism, on the other hand, is characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-group and out-group. They expect their in-group to take care of them. The in-group could be their family, their clan, the organization or the government which they support. In exchange for the support they feel they owe

absolute and unquestioning loyalty to the organization or the entity. Collectivists believe that there is a moral basis in their involvement with an organization (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

A leader with a collectivistic orientation feels more satisfied when contributing to a group effort; places more value on the comfort and mutual support of a group; is more cooperative; prefers harmony and humility in pursuit of goals; and prefers recognition of group rather than individual performance. Leaders in Africa are often perceived as having moved away from the tenets of leading for the benefit of all. It was therefore hypothesized that:

H5: Collectivism would be negatively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

5.2.5 Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles

Bass (1985) defined a transformational leader as one who motivates followers to do more than their original expectations. They motivate followers through communicating a shared vision and getting the followers to prioritise larger organizational goals rather than individual interests. Transformational leadership behaviors include intellectual stimulation of and individual consideration given to followers (Hancott, 2005); encouragement of new ways of solving problems (Xenikou & Simosi, 2006); adaptability to change (Bass, 1985); and engendering trust and respect (Yukl, 1989).

Transactional leadership refers to leader behaviors that emphasize the accomplishment of tasks' objectives through the minimization of role ambiguity and conflict. This would include assigning and defining of tasks, defining procedures and generally showing followers how things should be done as well as detailing the measure of performance (Davenport, 2010; Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Sala & Halpin, 2006).

According to Bass (1997), transactional leadership also manifests in four behaviors: (1) good work is rewarded and non-conformity to performance is penalized, (2) management by exception (passive) whereby leaders wait until something goes wrong and then act on the errors, (3) management by exception (active) where leaders actively look out for deviations in order to take corrective action immediately, and (4) laissez-faire whereby leaders abdicate their responsibility to manage performance.

It is believed that African leaders are not transformative enough and therefore do not exhibit transformational leadership. It also believed that African leaders are either passive or laissez-faire managers. In other words, they often wait until something goes wrong and then act on the errors and they often abdicate their responsibility to manage performance. According to Kets de Vries and Miller (1985), narcissistic individuals exhibit strong transactional leadership, but the latter is of instrumental nature. In other words, a narcissistic leader would show high levels of transactional leadership to the extent that those transactions serve the interest of the leader. In the context of the present study, it is therefore expected that transactional leadership will be positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers.

Against this background, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H6: Transformational leadership would be negatively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers

H7: Transactional leadership would be positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers

5.3 Additional Research Propositions

The preceding literature review suggests that current African leaders are highly narcissistic, Machiavellian, masculine and transactional as far as their leadership personalities and styles are concerned. The review also suggests that current African leaders exhibit low levels of feminine and collectivistic leadership personality traits,

as well as low levels of transformational leadership style. Attributing these leadership styles and personality traits to all African leaders suggests that these stereotypes hold for all leaders across the gender, age, education, job tenure, job experience and economic sector they are coming from. The study therefore also investigated the truthfulness of the above-mentioned propositions.

6. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceived personality traits and leadership styles, on the one hand, and the perceived performance intent of managers in the Kenyan public enterprises, on the other hand, in order to empirically assess the truthfulness or falsehood of stereotypes surrounding African leadership. More specifically, the study investigated the influence of narcissism, Machiavellianism, masculinity, femininity and collectivism (personality traits) and transformational and transactional (leadership styles) on the performance intent of these managers.

7. Methodology of the Study

7.1 The Research Paradigm

Two broad approaches to research are generally distinguished in the literature, namely the positivistic and the phenomenological approaches (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The positivistic or quantitative approach assigns numeric values to observed phenomena and by counting the frequency of those phenomena, some conclusions about the characteristics of the populations are inferred (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In the positivistic approach clearly constructed hypotheses are formulated about the relationship between two or more variables; data about these variables are collected through methods such as questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, case studies and experiments; and the relationships between the variables are measured by means of statistical methods such as multiple regression analysis, structural equation analysis and the Pearson product-moment correlational analysis (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

The phenomenological or qualitative research paradigm suggests that social reality is within the unit of research, and that the act of investigating the reality has an effect on that reality. This paradigm pays considerable regard to the subjective state of the individual. Researchers applying the phenomenological approach focus on the meaning rather than the measurement of social problems (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Qualitative research concerns itself with approaches such as ecological psychology, symbolic interactionism and postmodernism and employs data collection methods, such as observation, archival source analysis, interviews, focus groups and content analysis (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

In the present study, clear hypotheses were formulated, a questionnaire was used to collect the data and the relationships between the variables were measured by means of a multiple regression analysis. The present study therefore followed a positivistic research design.

7.2 The Sampling Procedure

A bundle of five questionnaires was mailed to a chief executive officer (CEO) or managing director (MD) of all 134 public enterprises with a request that the questionnaires be distributed to any other four senior executive managers of that enterprise. The request was that the CEO or MD plus any other four senior executive managers complete the questionnaire. These participants were further requested to return the completed questionnaires in a prepaid self-addressed envelope that was provided for that purpose. In this way, 670 questionnaires were issued,

but only 256 usable questionnaires were returned from 53 enterprises. This translated into a response rate of about thirty-eight percent (38.2%).

Table 1 Demographic Composition of the Sample

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	172	67.2
Female	84	32.8
Total	256	100.0
Age in years		
20-29	8	3.1
30-39	76	29.7
40-49	110	43.7
50-59	59	23.1
60+	1	0.4
Total	256	100.0
Level of Education		
Secondary/matriculation	15	5.9
Graduate	126	49.2
Master's degree	110	43.0
Doctorate/Prof	5	1.9
Total	256	100.0
Economic sector		
Financial	58	22.7
Commerce, manufacturing & agriculture	74	28.9
Regulatory	34	13.3
Education & Training	44	17.2
Services & Utilities	40	15.6
Regional developmental authorities	6	2.3
Total	256	100.0
Job level		
Officer	42	16.4
Assistant manager	12	4.7
Manager	81	31.6
Senior or Chief manager	64	25.0
Deputy Director or Head of Department	10	4.0
Director	42	16.4
Chief Executive Officer	5	1.9
Total	256	100.0
Tenure in years		
Less than 5	133	51.9
5-9	48	18.8
10-14	0	0.0
15-19	45	17.6
20+	30	11.7
Total	256	100.0
Job experience in years		
Less than 5	87	34.0
5-9	28	10.9
10-14	5	1.9
15-19	68	26.6
20+	68	26.6
Total	256	100.0

7.3 The Demographic Composition of the Sample

Table 1 shows the demographic composition of the sample. The sample consisted of 67.2% males and 32.8% females. Most of the respondents were aged between 40 and 49 years, representing 43.7%, with 29.7% in the 30-39 age bracket and 23.1% in the 50-59 age bracket. Most of the respondents (49.2%) had a first degree qualification and 43.0% had a master's degree.

Most respondents (28.9%) come from public enterprises in the commerce, manufacturing and agriculture economic sector, followed by financial (22.7%), education and training (17.2%), services and utilities (15.6%) and regulatory authorities (13.3%). About fifty-seven percent (56.6%) of the respondents were managers and senior managers, while 22.3% held positions higher than senior managers. Nearly fifty-two percent (51.9) of the respondents had job tenures of less than five years at their current employers, but most of them (53.2%) had job experience exceeding 14 years.

The sample is a fair reflection of the executive management profile in Kenya. Most of these managers are males and well qualified and have many years of job experience in the public sector. These managers came from 53 of the 134 public enterprises and included the following sectors: financial (13), commercial manufacturers (9), education (5), utilities (15), regulatory (10) and regional development (1).

7.4 The Measuring Instruments

The Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) instruments were used to measure transactional and transformational leadership. The transactional leadership instrument consists of four items, while the transformational leadership instrument consists of fourteen items. Both instruments were anchored to a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Podsakoff et al. (1990) reported that these instruments exhibited acceptable psychometric properties. In the present study, the transactional and transformational leadership instruments produced Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.59 and 0.75 respectively, consequently only the latter instrument was used in subsequent analyses.

Machiavellianism was measured with the instrument developed by Christie and Geis (1970). The instrument comprises eight items and is anchored to a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree and was also successfully used in the Drory and Gluskinos (1980), and Gemmill and Heisler (1972) studies. In the present study, the instrument produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.45 and was therefore not retained for further analyses.

Two subsets of eight femininity and seven masculinity items were selected from the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) to measure these variables. These items were adapted to serve the purposes of the present study. The anchoring scales, "never, or almost never true" to "always, or almost always true", were changed to (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree and the questionnaire statements were prefaced accordingly. Reliability coefficients ranging from 0.90 to 0.94 were reported for the above-mentioned instruments in the Kent and Moss (1994) study, but in the present study Cronbach alphas of 0.39 (masculinity) and 0.71 (femininity) were recorded. Only the latter instrument was therefore used in further analyses.

The instrument developed by Matsumoto, Weissman, Preston, Brown and Kupperbausch (1997) was used to measure collectivism. Twelve items were selected from the original 25 items of the Matsumoto et al. (1997) instrument. These items are constructed in such a way that low collectivist scores indicate high individualist scores. In the present study the questionnaire statements were anchored to a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Triandis, McCuskr and Hui (1990) reported an inter-rater reliability of 0.97% for the above-mentioned collectivism instrument, but the adapted instrument in the present study produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.56. The instrument was therefore excluded in subsequent analyses.

Narcissism was measured by using the modesty scale from the NEO-PI-R instrument. The instrument consists of eight items anchored to a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Reliability coefficients ranging from 0.87 to 0.92 were reported for the NEO-PI-R instrument (Sharpe and Desai, 2001). In the present study, the instrument produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.73, which warranted its use in further analyses.

The perceived performance intent of managers was measured with the instrument developed by Arnolds (1995). This instrument produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.74 in the Arnolds (1995) study. The instrument consisted of four items which were all anchored to a five-point scale, which ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. In the present study, the instrument produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.63, after one of the items was deleted in order to improve the item-total correlation.

8. Data Analyses and Empirical Results

Using STATISTICA Version 10.0 (2010), the following statistical analyses were conducted:

Descriptive statistics in order to investigate the perceived prevailing levels of the latent variables among the Kenyan public sector managers;

Independent samples t-tests in order to investigate whether gender groups differ significantly with regard to transformational leadership style, narcissistic personality traits and feminine personality traits as the dependent variables;

One-way ANOVAs in order to investigate whether age, education, job level, tenure, job experience and economic sector groups differ significantly with regard to these dependent variables;

Multiple regression analyses in order to investigate the relationships between transformational leadership style, narcissistic personality traits and feminine personality traits on the one hand, and performance intent on the other hand.

8.1 Descriptive Statistics

The empirical results (Table 2) show that the Kenyan public enterprise managers exhibit high levels of perceived transformational leadership style (average mean, 4.05), high levels of perceived feminine personality traits (average mean, 3.77) and low levels of narcissistic personality traits (average mean, 2.68). These results do not support the propositions that African leaders would exhibit low levels of transformational and caring (feminine) leadership.

8.2 Independent Samples T-tests

The empirical results (Table 3) reveal that males and females do not significantly differ with regard to Kenyan public sector managers exhibiting transformational leadership style, narcissistic personality traits and feminine personality traits. The mean scores in Table 3 show that both males and females exhibit high levels of transformational leadership and feminine personality traits, but low levels of narcissistic personality traits.

8.3 One-way ANOVA

Table 4 shows that age, education, job level and job tenure groups do not significantly differ with regard to the exhibition of transformational leadership style, narcissistic personality traits and feminine personality traits by Kenyan public sector managers. The job experience and economic sector manager groups also do not significantly differ with regard to the exhibition of transformational leadership style. The various economic sector manager groups also do not differ significantly with regard to exhibiting feminine personality traits.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Questionnaire Statement	Mean	SD
Transformational leadership		
I have a clear vision of where I want the firm to go	4.57	0.70
I am always seeking new opportunities for my firm	4.02	1.01
I inspire others with my future plans for the firm	4.05	0.79
I am able to get others to be committed to my vision for the firm	3.78	0.84
I lead by doing rather than by telling	4.14	0.96
I insist only on the best performance	4.05	0.83
I behave in a manner thoughtful of the personal needs of others	3.91	0.77
I stimulate others to rethink the way they do things	4.03	0.79
I often suggest ideas that challenge others to re-examine some of their basic assumptions about work	3.87	0.86
Average	4.05	0.84
Narcissistic leadership personality		
I don't mind bragging about my talents and accomplishment	2.87	1.18
I like to talk about myself and my achievements	2.65	1.15
I'm better than most people, and I know it	2.95	1.22
I am not a humble person	2.52	1.40
I have a very high opinion of myself	3.59	1.22
I feel that I am better than others, no matter what their condition	2.38	1.23
I would rather be praised than praise others	1.95	1.20
I'm a superior person	2.52	1.14
Average	2.68	1.22
Feminine leadership personality		
I have a cheerful nature	4.00	0.83
I am an affectionate person	3.91	0.77
I am a very loyal person	3.64	1.08
I have a sympathetic nature	3.79	0.88
I am sensitive to the needs of others	4.06	0.72
I have an understanding nature	4.00	0.75
I have a gentle nature	3.91	0.93
Average	3.90	0.85

Table 3 Independent Sample T-Test Results

Grouping variable: Gender					
Dependent variable	Mean score males	Mean score females	t-value	Df	p-value
FORM	4.03	4.08	-0.697	254	0.486
NARC	2.64	2.72	-1.341	254	0.181
FEMIN	3.90	3.90	0.082	254	0.934

Table 4 however indicates that some job experience groups differ significantly with regard to the exhibition of narcissistic and feminine personality traits, although the partial eta-squared scores reveal that these differences are not practically significant. The empirical results also indicate that some economic sector manager groups differ significantly with regard to the exhibition of the narcissistic personality trait, but that this too is not of practical significance.

Table 4 One-Way Anova Results

Dependent variable	F-value	Df	p-value	Partial eta-squared
Grouping variable: Age				
FORM	0.289	249	0.885	n/a
NARC	1.012	249	0.402	n/a
FEMIN	1.034	249	0.390	n/a
Grouping variable: Education				
FORM	1.558	252	0.200	n/a
NARC	1.176	252	0.319	n/a
FEMIN	0.438	252	0.726	n/a
Grouping variable: Job level				
FORM	0.874	249	0.514	n/a
NARC	0.590	249	0.738	n/a
FEMIN	1.309	249	0.254	n/a
Grouping variable: Tenure				
FORM	0.480	252	0.699	n/a
NARC	2.379	252	0.070	n/a
FEMIN	0.460	252	0.711	n/a
Grouping variable: Job experience				
FORM	2.003	251	0.095	n/a
NARC	2.797	251	0.027*	0.043**
FEMIN	2.717	251	0.030*	0.041**
Grouping variable: Economic sector				
FORM	1.683	250	0.139	n/a
NARC	3.595	250	0.004*	0.067**
FEMIN	0.944	250	0.453	n/a

Note: * Denotes significant differences among groups; ** Denotes however that the differences are not practically significant.

To summarize: demographic differences (age, gender, education, job level, job tenure and job experience) do not play a practical significant role in the extent to which the Kenyan public sector managers exhibit transformational leadership style and narcissistic and feminine personality traits. In other words, the Kenyan public enterprise managers exhibit high levels of transformational leadership style and feminine leadership personality traits, as well as low levels of narcissism to the same extent across these demographic variables. This means, that the proposition is not true that all African leaders are highly narcissistic and deficient in feminine (caring) and transformational leadership.

8.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationships between perceived transformational leadership style, feminine personality traits and narcissistic personality traits, on the one hand, and perceived performance intent on the other hand. The empirical results are reported in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that feminine personality traits ($b = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) and transformational leadership style ($b = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) are significantly positively related to performance intent. This means that the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers is driven by caring and a need for transformation. The empirical results therefore do not support hypotheses H4 and H6.

The empirical results reveal that narcissistic personality traits are negatively ($b = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$) related to performance intent. This means the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers is negatively influenced by their narcissistic personality traits. The hypothesis H1 is therefore not supported.

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Dependent variable: PERFORMANCE INTENT $R^2 = .32700762$ $F(3,252) = 40.816$, $p = 0.000$						
	b*	Std.Err. - of b*	B	Std.Err. - of b	t(252)	p-value
Intercept			1.22314	0.39777	3.07498	0.00233
FFEMIN	0.17673	0.05856	0.24719	0.08191	3.01766	0.00280*
FFORM	0.41696	0.05915	0.62231	0.08828	7.04914	0.00000**
NNARC	-0.1654	0.05230	-0.1673	0.05289	-3.16377	0.00174*

Note: * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 also indicates that the three independent variables explain about 33 percent ($r^2 = 0.327$) of the variance in the performance intent of these managers. Explaining almost one-third of the movement in performance intent means that these variables are important determinants of the Kenyan public enterprise managers' performance intent.

9. Discussion of Results

The empirical results found no support that African leaders, with Kenyan public enterprise managers as proxy, exhibit unbridled narcissism. According to the results, the Kenyan managers instead exhibited low levels of narcissistic personality traits (see Table 2). In other words, they generally did not like to talk and brag about themselves and their achievements; they were humble people; they would rather praise others than be praised themselves; they do not believe that they are better than others no matter what the others' condition; and they do not believe they are superior people. They do however have a very high opinion about themselves. The empirical results revealed these low narcissistic personality traits prevail across gender, age, education, job level, job tenure, job experience and economic sector groups. This means this Kenyan case study results do not provide support for the stereotype that African leaders are narcissists of the power hungry and excessively preoccupied with self and self-interest type.

The empirical results further showed that these low narcissistic behaviors were negatively related to the performance intent of these managers (see Table 5). This means that narcissism has a negative influence on the performance intent of these managers. In other words, narcissism does not motivate the Kenyan public enterprise managers' intent to improve their job performance. Their performance intent is however driven by an inclination towards transformational and caring, disproving the perception that African leaders are not transformational and uncaring.

The empirical results revealed that the Kenyan public enterprise managers exhibited high levels of transformational leadership attributes (see Table 2). The Kenyan leaders had a clear vision and always sought new opportunities for their enterprises; they inspired others with future plans for their firms and got them committed to their vision and future plans; they insisted on only the best performance; they behave in a manner thoughtful of the personal needs of others; they stimulated others to rethink the way they do things; they lead by doing rather

than telling; and they often suggest ideas that challenge others to re-examine some of their basic assumptions about work. The empirical results also indicated that the transformational leadership style of Kenyan managers was positively related to their performance intent (see Table 6). This augurs well for business leadership in Kenya and should be encouraged for the benefit of better business enterprises, because it means that these managers acknowledge the importance of transformational leadership and that this acknowledgement drives their intent to increase their job performance. By identifying and supporting transformational leaders in business enterprises, increased managerial and therefore organizational performance could be achieved.

The results (see Table 2) also showed that Kenyan managers exhibited high levels of feminine personality traits, as they regarded themselves as affectionate, cheerful, loyal, sympathetic, sensitive, understanding and gentle people. The empirical results suggested that such feminine personality traits should be encouraged, as they are positively related to the performance intent of Kenyan public enterprise managers (see Table 6). This result disproves the stereotype that African leaders generally are crass materialists who enrich themselves at the cost of their fellow citizens. It could be that dark side narcissism and materialistic self-interest are personality traits found in a minority of African leaders and should be addressed from that perspective. It also means that positive socio-economic change is possible provided the proper leadership is identified, selected, developed and supported.

The present study also revealed space for future research. Further research is needed in the following areas: (1) improved instruments to measure the latent variables investigated in this study, as variables such as Machiavellianism, masculinity, collectivism and transactional leadership could not be investigated due to inadequate data reliability properties; (2) replication of the study in other African countries, as Kenya could not be seen as the only reflection of the African reality; and (3) replication of the study on African leadership strata other than public enterprise managers.

10. Conclusion

Stereotypes without empirical foundation about African leadership have been suggested as truth. These stereotypes have informed a negative image of African leaders to such extent that a description such as “dark continent” has come to mean everything except good could come from Africa. Trade and political dealings with Africa reflected these negative perceptions. Empirical research was necessary to determine the truth about these perceptions.

This rigorous statistical study, although at an exploratory level, has shown that good aspects of leadership prevail in Africa to the extent that Kenyan managers could be regarded as proxy for African leaders. These good aspects include high levels of transformational leadership style and feminine personality traits, as well as low levels of narcissistic leadership personality traits. Armed with these empirical research findings, African leaders should resist negative stereotyping and instead develop leaders exhibiting the traits and behaviors highlighted in this study, namely transformational and caring leadership.

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