

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Culture at the Core in Leadership Learning and Development: Experiences from Western Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in Africa remains an elusive and contested phenomenon on which general agreement is highly unlikely. Despite this understanding, few studies have taken into account the possible cultural influences on leadership styles, the differences in leadership approach that are practiced, and how generalizable they can be in national and continental development. The aim of this paper is to examine how culture is core in influencing western Kenya leadership for national and continental development. The study utilized Complexity System Leadership Theory, which confirmed that leadership is a system function that operates to change the rules of interaction among people or groups within a complex adaptive system of interactions, both in terms of ends- where the system is going; and means- how to get there. The study used descriptive and cross-sectional designs and relied on a mixed methods approach. The target population was two cultural groups of western Kenya (the Luhya and the Abagusii, found in two administrative Counties of Kakamega and Kisii in Kenya. A sample size of 361 respondents from the general population, 25 Key informants, 16 focus group discussions and 25 direct observations were used to generate data. Methods of data collection included: Questionnaire, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Observation checklist. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and using inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS software. Qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis and constant comparative meaning oriented analysis using thematic means. Quantitative and qualitative data were presented in a mixed way that reinforces each other. The study found that cultural values, beliefs and expectations influence how leaders are identified, chosen, developed and the leadership styles they adopt. Traditional leaders are also regarded as both County and National leaders especially by Abagusii people in Kisii County. For both study sites, and soundly in Kakamega County, patriarchy had a very high influence on leadership learning and development and on men who wanted to become leaders, but surprisingly reports showed that this was not regarded in women leaders since patriarchy does not accommodate female leaders in both communities. The study recommends that cultural structures that mold leadership in western Kenya should be embraced and adhered to. This is because they promote good and effective leadership for development at national and continental levels.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Leadership, Western Kenya, Development.

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Introduction

From the writings of Tylor (1871) culture is that complex whole that include knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a human as a member of society. Important to this paper was to understand how culture influences how one becomes a leader, regardless of other important parameters such as education and wealth, Culture is the basis upon which one's character and behavior is built, and as to be discussed in this paper, individual behavior is important in leadership choice, selection and even learning and development. Leaders' characters are molded by elders using cultural values, norms and expectations. Adopted by the UN, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda commits the world on a course to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure health and prosperity for all (United Nations, 2016). But in order to drive this forward, there must be effective leadership. Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomenon on the globe (Burns, 1978), and has had various overtones. The topic of leadership has since been the most debated subject in organizational psychology, social sciences, management studies and behavioral sciences. Leadership is however, manifested in all spheres of human life, and that is why leadership is studied in cross-cultural contexts, and a mostly discussed topic in all spheres of an organization.

In recent times, leadership discussion has focused more on contemporary forms of leadership in relation to socioeconomic development. To some scholars (such as Adams et al. 2019; Burgoyne, 2010; and Cooper et al. 2012), contemporary leadership is an invention of the west. This is confirmed by Kuada (2010) who observes that contemporary African leadership was a colonial invention to oppress Africans, while for other scholars, leadership has its roots in traditional culture (indigenous knowledge). In this paper, leadership is both traditional and contemporary, and the researcher is interested on how culture is manifested in leadership forms, styles and contemporary practices.

Jogulu (2010) notes that culture is the software of the mind, which greatly influences the leadership skills of an individual in the society. In this study, culture is operationally defined as attitudes, ideas, morals, values, norms, standards, regulations, symbols and customs that are common to a typical African society. If this is the case then, we argue that the nature of the interdependent relationship between leadership styles and cultural underpinnings cannot be ignored or underestimated, in the true sense that, culture influences what a leader is and how they serve in practice. The thesis thereupon is that, culture determines how leadership is learned and developed, and therefore, culture has likelihood to develop leadership positively and also negatively.

The approach taken in this study is grounded on the assumption that cultural values, beliefs and expectations influence leadership styles through a complex set of behavioural processes involving culture-specific roles and responsibilities that are deemed appropriate for leadership and development. However, recent researches indicates that modern leadership styles in most African set ups are adopted from the West, but are not homegrown, tend to sideline indigenous knowledge/culture by adopting western ways of leadership, which is not compatible with development particularly, in Africa. Why should we worry if leadership practices are adopted or homegrown? This is because leaders are crucial actors for socio-economic development, social wellbeing and quality of life. We argue that, it is

imperative to study how cultural contexts in which leaders are born and raised influence their praxis worth.

Leadership in Africa is becoming more and more interesting because, it determines if African nations and regions develop or not. Thus, we must comprehensively understand contexts that engender African leaderships. Worrying supposition classifies African leaders as ineffective, weak and stymied. We wish to explain if culture influences and estranges African leadership. Much of the leadership research completed over the past several decades has enabled scholars to gain better insight into the history of leadership styles and approaches and their impact on society. However, with a long history of debate, leadership has remained a rather contested topic not only in Africa, but also beyond (Day and Atonakis, 2012).

From a development perspective, for countries to achieve national development (*in terms of technological, social, environmental, political, cultural and economic prosperity*), how then do we prepare future individuals for the global leadership in a world with mixed cultures?; how do we prepare local leaders who can use the software culture to steer national development in specific local contexts, for example, in Counties in Kenya?

In Australia, self-ratings showed a preference for a transformational leadership style, suggesting there is a culturally-linked preference. This closer match between one's leadership style and cultural profile is open to interesting interpretations. Since leadership is a process of influencing others to agree about what needs to be done and how it can be completed effectively, managers' behaviors facilitate the outcome and efforts for accomplishing shared goals.

In Malaysia, for instance, the high power distance is argued to have determined the leadership style because strong power distance cultures prefer an autocratic leadership approach (Hofstede, 1980). The culturally contingent leadership style also suggests interesting possibilities. There appears to be a strong culture-specific influence in the nominated style of leadership. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) and Alves et al. (2006) have indicated that, there are explicit differences between cultures, particularly in terms of the values, attitudes and behaviors of individuals, and this divergence has implications for leadership in organizations.

In egalitarian cultures, leaders are most concerned about the communal benefit that accrues to each individual in society disregarding equity but propagating equality in resource distribution and redistribution. Therefore, leadership is mindful of the common good for society members. In most traditional societies leaders are expected to be visionary and to provide intellectual stimulation and articulate goals to subordinates and identify with culturally-linked leadership styles.

In Kenya, for instance, traditional communities consider leadership as a very important institution. This is because leadership tends to influence, if not to dictate, all the activities and affairs of cultural groups. Thus, traditional cultures in Kenya attached great importance to the qualities of good leadership. This is in spite of the fact that almost all these cultures did not have centralized systems of government. As Gardner (1990) laments, combining both historical and environmental forces create conditions that allow leaders to emerge. At whatever level of leadership, whether as individuals or members of

councils of elders, the leaders had to possess certain qualities that were acceptable to the people as characteristics of good leadership such as seniority in age, wealth, and reputation as a warrior.

In western Kenya, since pre-colonial times, the region has had and maintained a history of strong and visible cultural traditions manifest in people's beliefs, norms, values and behaviors. This strong cultural basis we assume is instrumental in leadership learning and development. Western Kenya manifests strong ethnic identities, patriarchal systems, strong kinship and extended family ties, high regard to affinal and consanguinal ties, rituals relating to identities and definition of productive, administrative, leadership and reproductive roles and strong traditional normative identities. The Luhya people that we propose to study in addition to these cultural traits, develop in adult and elderly men and do not consider the youth and women for leadership of all forms. For example, each clan has clan leaders, and from a hierarchy of clan leaders, a council of elders are chosen to culturally lead the Luhya ethnic nation (tribe). This structure of leadership is common say for most and is not all Kenyan ethnic communities (44+ in number), thus we may generalize to Kenyan communities from our study. Despite this understanding, few studies have taken into account the possible cultural influences on leadership styles, the differences in leadership approach that are practiced, and how generalizable they can be in national and continental development. The aim of this paper is to fill this gap on how culture is core in influencing western Kenya leadership for national and continental development.

The Problem

Since the late twentieth century, scholars, governments and non-state actors have become increasingly aware that locally produced historical and contemporary knowledge and wisdom not only sustain development, but also empowers leadership. Giddens (2003) notes that our runaway world is out of control, filled with risks and culturally complex. Taking the lead has always required talent, skill, preparation, and practice. When the complexities and vagaries of a different culture are added to the mix, the leader must expand his or her leadership repertoire. The question here is how then do we prepare future individuals for leadership in a world with different cultural orientations? Even when culture adapts to external, global influences, the changes are often only cosmetic (Perkins, 2009). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) compare the expressions of culture to the layers of an onion. Even though the outer layers such as symbols, heroes, and rituals are fairly easily peeled away, the values that comprise a culture's core remain virtually intact and unassailable. Recent research has always aimed at a better and more thorough understanding of what makes an effective leader (Eagly, 2007; Holt et al. 2009). Although, leadership was regarded as an inherent ability to influence others by controlling the behavior of other members of a group, leadership styles have evolved and extended beyond influence, to include motivation and enabling of others to help achieve their goals (Dorfman & House, 2004; Caldwell & Dixon, 2010). Notwithstanding, the study was interested in cultural specific and structural predispositions that determine how a Luhya or a gusii leader is identified, developed and how they learn to practice leadership both culturally and along the administrative and political dichotomies of leadership in Kenya. The study was not oblivious of the question, lead what?

Literature Review

Culture embraces mental capabilities-thoughts, and behavior-actions. People learn culture, and it must exist within a group and as integrated whole. Ananda, Ngigi and Kuria (2016) observe that whereas it may be difficult to measure culture directly, the resultant behaviors and practices can be used to

identify and measure this beliefs and values of the community. Culture within the context of a community acts as a source of identity, creativity and innovation. It is made up of both tangible and intangible assets that are often fragile and may be lost through modernization.

Leadership is one of the important themes of study for social scientists worldwide. Over the years, there is no consensus on a common definition of leadership. The concept of Leadership has been since the most debated in organizational psychology, social sciences and management studies. Much debate focuses on cross cultural context in all spheres of an organization. When the leadership studies field first started to develop at the beginning of the 20th century, leadership was viewed as residing in the properties of an individual leader (Yukl, 2012). Though, this approach became problematic as many studies identified different sets of traits that were key for effective leadership. However, no consensus could be reached on the most important leadership traits to possess (Bolden et al. 2011). This view of leadership also neglected to consider situations in the enactment of leadership.

In addition what is of particular concern with this approach is the way it is homogenizing rather than inclusive and/or encouraging diversity in leaders (Ashikali et al. 2021). Significant to this study, the researchers are viewing leadership as residing in a key set of traits which leaders learn through socialization, which renders them the ability to work effectively and gain acceptance. Our study refutes in part Yukl's position, arguing that although leadership resides in individuals both interpersonal and population, for this matter community and even the constitution influences who and how to become a leader, and as we see in our theoretical underpinning and findings, all these factors form a complex of systematic leadership influences and outcomes.

Cooper and Nirenberg (2012) defines leadership effectiveness as a fundamentally the practice of following various principles which include but not limited to building a collective vision, mission, and a set of values that help people focus on their contributions and bring out their best. Grint (2005) examines key leadership texts and from these suggests four ways that leadership is traditionally viewed; as person, result, position and process. In a similar manner, Zheng, Diaz, Zheng, and Tang (2017) examined leader inclusion in China and found that leader inclusion moderates the relationship between deep-level similarity of the supervisor and subordinate (personality, interests, and values) and taking charge such that leader inclusion was especially important when deep-level similarity was low. Adams, Meyers, and Sekaja (2019) combined authentic, inclusive, and respectful leadership into a single measure they called positive leadership and concluded that such leaders are particularly good at fostering an employee's work group inclusion and simultaneously reducing discrimination in both Western and non-Western contexts. Bolden et al. (2011) defines leadership as a property of leaders, as a relationship between leaders and followers and as a social process.

In contemporary times, for an organization to be successful, leadership is a requisite growth and development. We observe that effective leadership gives directions to the efforts of all workers in accomplishing the goals of the organization. Without leadership and guidance, the link between individuals and organizational goals may become tenuous. According to Covey et al. (2006), a leader is a person who has the ability and motivation to influence the behavior of the followers in a group endeavor. For Burbach et al. (2003), leadership is a significant attribute in the social relationships of groups at work. Groups need leaders and leaders need followers. Burbach and colleagues further assert that a people-centred leadership approach is essential for effective leadership characteristics to

be meaningful for the attainment of workers' job satisfaction particularly when the leader is regarded by the workers as the inspirer and the motivator.

Myatt (2014) found that organizations invest significant resources in leadership development and in the same year, it was estimated that approximately \$170 billion is spent annually on leadership learning and development activities on a global scale. Astonishingly, given the scale of multi-billion dollar investment, little attention has been paid to understanding the relationship between culture and leadership and how the two variables are integrated to promote effective leadership in organizations and community (Burgoyne et al. 2004; Hannum and Craig, 2010) or in practice, where leadership development evaluation is often treated as an afterthought (Anderson, 2010; Burgoyne et al. 2004). Evidently, Constable & McCormick, 1987) view leadership development investment as "*an act of faith*" since it is considered complex to evaluate. However, as Hannum and Craig (2010) argue, careful evaluation of leadership development is essential to enable us to better understand the manner in which leadership learning and development interventions contribute towards individual, group, organizational and community performance and growth.

Due to the demands that organizations and communities are facing in the current socio-economic environment and increased competition, it could be argued that they are under increasing pressure to justify any initiatives in terms of the value that they provide to the organization and community (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Furthermore a better understanding could lead to better or more effective interventions, which in turn carries with it benefits for organizations and those responsible for delivering initiatives. However, the issue of how to define and consider the value of leadership learning and development is complex. From the forgoing literature, despite leadership being significant in building organizational culture, not many studies have looked at it from the cultural (socialization) point of view. The researcher argues that by focusing on how individuals are culturally socialized to adopt and practice effective leadership, there is need to interrogate how culture influences personality of an individual to act and interact internally and externally while representing the community to the outside world.

Research Methodology

The study used descriptive and cross-sectional designs and relied on a mixed methods approach. The target population was two cultural groups of western Kenya (the Luhya and the Kisii, found in two administrative Counties of Kakamega and Kisii in Kenya. Using the Morgan and Krejcie (1970), formula for sample estimation, 384 cases were selected using stratified simple random sampling for questionnaire administration to the general population. Out of the 384 sampled cases, credible data was collected from 361 cases, rendering a response rate of 94%. Sixteen (16) focus group discussions were held in communities, 8 in each of the two Counties. Participants in each FGD were recruited purposively using convenience sampling. In addition, 25 purposively enlisted key informants were interviewed, 13 in Kakamega and 12 in Kisii Counties. Key informants were enlisted using purposive sampling, based on objectives of the interviews. Finally, 25 observations were made, 13 in Kakamega and 12 in Kisii Counties. These details are summarized in the table below:

Two Counties & two Cultural Groups	Data source	Sample sizes per group (Kakamega + Kisii)	Totals
Kakamega County: The Luhya People Kisii County: The Kisii People	Questionnaire (Krejcie & Morgan (1970), confidence=95%). 94% Response Rate	201 + 160	361 of intended 384
	Key Informant Interviews	13 + 12	25
	Focus Group Discussions	8 + 8	16
	Observation	13 + 12	25
Sampling Procedures: Questionnaire: Stratification/ Simple Random/Including both sexes Key Informants: Purposive based on knowledge and experience on culture and leadership Focus Group Discussion: Purposive based on knowledge and experience on culture and leadership Observation: Purposive and Convenience based on phenomenon observed			

Table 1. Sample size Determination Table

The researcher neither restricted to clan nor tribal leadership, the researcher interrogated how administrative, political, health, development, and religious leaderships are enabled and also how they are inhibited by Luhya and Kisii cultural norms, values, beliefs and (behavioural) practices. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KII) Focus Group discussions and Observation. A sample size of 361 respondents from the general population, 25 Key informants, 16 focus group discussions and 25 direct observations were used to generate data. Methods of data collection included: Questionnaire, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Observation checklist. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and using inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS software. Qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis and constant comparative meaning oriented analysis using thematic means. Quantitative and qualitative data were presented in a mixed way that reinforces each other.

Method	Research question	Key variables
Questionnaire	-structures that build leadership -forms and types of leadership -western Kenya leadership in the national leadership grid (RQs- 1,2,4)	-socialization, initiation, ritual, leadership styles, inequalities, vulnerability, patriarchy, ethnicity, regionalism, poverty
Key Informant Interviews	-forms and types of leadership -cultural, lifestyle and technological factors that influence leadership (RQs- 2,3)	-leadership styles, norms, values, beliefs, practices, motivators, attitudes and perceptions
Focus Group Discussions	-structures that build leadership -cultural, lifestyle and technological factors that influence leadership (RQs- 1,3,4)	-governance, economics, resources, development, social wellbeing, lifestyles
Observation	-structures that build leadership -forms and types of leadership (RQs- 1,2)	-socialization, initiation, ritual, leadership styles. The case of the Nabongo Kingdom

Table 2. Matrix depicting method of data collection and variable to be examined

Concept of Culture and Leadership

This study holds that leadership can only be effective if the leaders are nurtured in a cultural way that hold morals and values expected in any given society. Culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses several domains. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines culture as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2001:3). Whereas it may be difficult to measure culture directly, the resultant behaviors and practices can be used to identify and measure these beliefs and values of the community.

The researcher argues that, through these normative beliefs and practices, leaders are identified, created and even developed. Among ethnic communities of western Kenya, it is common to find clans from which leaders are expected to come. This lends to the posturing that in such regions and socio-cultural environments, leaders are born and not developed. One of the few African ethnic kingdoms, which was studied, the *Mumia of Wanga* is in western Kenya and continues to uphold its unique Kingdom leadership hegemony. It was interesting to describe such unique leaderships together with other unique variants of structural leadership that places people in role and function specializations including and not limited to resource distribution, spirituality, education, administration, governance among other forms of leaderships.

During focus group discussions, it was revealed that specialized leaderships for example, rain makers and traditional healers is not given prominence. Besides these phenomenological aspects of leadership in western Kenya is not documented and as a matter of fact, this project revealed underlying overt and covert symbolic understandings of such forms of leaderships. It was of great interest to explain the contribution of culturally-linked leadership from western Kenya in the national and continental structures of political, economic and cultural leaderships. It became clear that despite how a leader is molded, culturally or not, they end up practicing leadership forms and styles that interpret people's social wellbeing, health and socioeconomic development.

Recently in Kenya, a set class six boys recently crowned as warriors (*Morans*), senselessly beat up their female teachers to revenge their support of female classmates. How is the Moran developed to lead? Among the Luhya, what is the position of male dominance arising from strong and dismissive patriarchies, equitable and beneficial leadership? In one Luhya group where the study was conducted on male circumcision, once circumcised, the young adult is expected to look down upon all women indiscriminate of their age and relationship. This a way of exhibiting manhood. A few studies also reveal that different leader behaviours and actions are interpreted and evaluated differently depending on their cultural environment, and are due to variations in people's ideas of the ideal leader (Jogulu and Wood, 2008), with some approaches being favored and others perceived as less effective.

In this paper, it is evident that culturally-linked leadership is the blending of traditional knowledge on leadership and conventional knowledge on leadership to produce a compatible leadership approach that is inclusive and acceptable for development in the society. This implies that leadership that is

culturally and contextually driven in the sense that; *'the leader portrays the aspirations and goals of the led subjects'*. This is important if the leader has to lead context driven development that is relevant to destined recipients. In western Kenya, clans have clan leaders, who for example, *'lead by fronting cultural and socioeconomic aspirations of the clan'*. There is also councils of elders in all ethnic groups of western Kenya, who veto any leadership decision for the interest and wellbeing of the community. The paper presents that leadership forms and styles are culturally-contingent and that cultural expectations constrain the role of leadership, making it culture-specific. In so doing, variations in leadership styles are attributable to cultural influences because people have beliefs and assumptions about characteristics that are deemed effective for leadership. The data from the field revealed that culture plays an important role in influencing leadership behaviours. For instance, cultural norms and beliefs exert an influence on the views and expectations of individuals in a given community with respect to the way things ought to be done.

From the findings, a leader's personal background (*in this case socialization*) including items such as religion, geographic location, morals, beliefs, norms and even ethnicity, shape their leadership style (Luthans et al., 2004). For instance, leaders who hail from a collectivist culture might implement more group-oriented practices and incentive plans, and leaders from an individualistic culture might favor individual incentive plans. Personal culture also can affect whether a leader promotes a participative organizational culture, and organizational decisions based on personal history can have a significant effect on the organization's success. Ibukun (1997), Leithwood, Tantzzi and Steinbach (1999) have cited empirical evidences suggesting that transformational leadership must embrace both leadership attributes and culture.

We argue that many leaders base their leadership on a combination of organizational and personal (societal) cultures, which eventually affect the direction and overall success of the leader and the community and/or a given organization. At the same time, leaders rely more on cognitive and humanistic relational skills to achieve their goals than on their authority to tell others what to do. This findings concur with Gardner's (1990) who argue that leaders have *"mature wisdom,"* that allows them to provide clear direction and purpose to their followers know the needs, concerns, and expectations of their followers and develop a *"social compact"* with their followers. From this view, once the social compacts are formed, followers will obvious willingly entrust their future hope and welfare to the leader, which inversely influence the achievement of the organizational goals.

However, culture can also cause friction when a leadership style is applied contrary to established norms, and some leaders might attempt to change an existing culture in organizations or communities they operate from. For instance, according to the National Defense University, an educational offering of the U.S. Air Force, organizational culture plays a key role in the strategic decisions that leaders make. Edgar Schein, a professor of management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, observed that leadership strategies cannot succeed if they run contrary to the organization's existing culture. Moreover, strategic initiatives to change an organization's culture too quickly, and especially in an organization with a strong and conventional culture, habitually fail.

Culture, Leadership Learning and Development

The researcher was interested in determining the ways in that cultural features influence learning of culturally endorsed leadership behaviors. The researcher starts with presenting the cross-tabulations below to broaden the readers' understanding of the relationship between patriarchy and masculinity and how they influence men and women to become leaders. The results are present in tables 3, 4 and 5 below.

How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Men who want to become leaders? Cross tabulation

				How does the above affect Men who want to become leaders?					
				Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high	
How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya?	Very low	Count		23	12	6	1	16	58
		% within patriarchy influence?		39.7%	20.7%	10.3%	1.7%	27.6%	100.0%
	Low	Count		2	6	17	5	7	37
		% within patriarchy influence		5.4%	16.2%	45.9%	13.5%	18.9%	100.0%
	Average	Count		5	7	42	13	21	88
		% within patriarchy influence		5.7%	8.0%	47.7%	14.8%	23.9%	100.0%
	High	Count		2	3	12	33	12	62
		% within patriarchy influence		3.2%	4.8%	19.4%	53.2%	19.4%	100.0%
	Very high	Count		28	4	8	9	67	116
		% within patriarchy influence		24.1%	3.4%	6.9%	7.8%	57.8%	100.0%
Total	Count			60	32	85	61	123	361
	% within patriarchy influence			16.6%	8.9%	23.5%	16.9%	34.1%	100.0%

Table 3. How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does patriarchy affect Men who want to become leaders?

Table 3 shows that majority 23(39.7%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had very low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further, it indicated that patriarchy's very low influence resulted to very low effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 16(27.6%) very high effect, 12(20.7%) low effect, 6(10.3%) average effect and 1(1.7%) high effect. Besides, majority 17(45.9%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the patriarchy's low influence resulted to an average effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 7(18.9%) very high effect, 6(16.2%) low effect, 5(13.5%) high effect and 2(5.4%) very low effect. Majority 42(47.7%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had average influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the patriarchy's average influence resulted to an average effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 21(23.9%) very high effect, 13(14.8%) high effect, 7(8.0%) low effect and 5(5.7%) very low effect.

Majority 33(53.2%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the patriarchy's high influence resulted high effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 12(19.4%) very high effect, another 12(19.4%) average effect, 3(4.8%) low effect and 2(3.2%) very low effect. Lastly, majority 67(57.8%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the patriarchy's very high influence resulted to a very high effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 28(24.1%) very low effect, 9(7.8%) high effect, 8(6.9%) average effect and 4(3.4%) low effect. Generally, most (57.8%) of the respondents who reported very high effect of patriarchy on men who wanted to become leaders were those who indicated that patriarchy had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya.

How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders? Crosstabulation

				How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders?					Total
				Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high	
How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya?	Very low	Count		20	10	11	7	10	58
		% within patriarchy influence		34.5%	17.2%	19.0%	12.1%	17.2%	100.0%
	Low	Count		7	14	10	5	1	37
		% within patriarchy influence		18.9%	37.8%	27.0%	13.5%	2.7%	100.0%
	Average	Count		17	15	40	6	10	88
		% within patriarchy influence		19.3%	17.0%	45.5%	6.8%	11.4%	100.0%
	High	Count		12	11	19	8	12	62
		% within patriarchy influence		19.4%	17.7%	30.6%	12.9%	19.4%	100.0%
	Very high	Count		47	6	10	8	45	116
		% within patriarchy influence		40.5%	5.2%	8.6%	6.9%	38.8%	100.0%
	Total	Count		103	56	90	34	78	361
		% within patriarchy influence		28.5%	15.5%	24.9%	9.4%	21.6%	100.0%

Table 4: How does patriarchy influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders?

Table 4 shows that majority 20(34.5%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had very low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the patriarchy's very low influence resulted to very low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 11(19.0%) average effect, 10(17.2%) low effect, another 10(17.2%) very high effect and 7(12.1%) high

effect. Majority 14(37.8%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the patriarchy's low influence resulted to very low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 10(27.0%) average effect, 7(18.9%) very low effect, 5(13.5%) high effect and 1(2.7%) very high effect.

Moreover, majority 40(45.5%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had average influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the patriarchy's average influence resulted to average effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 17(19.3%) very low effect, 15(17.0%) low effect, 10(11.4%) very high effect and 6(6.8%) high effect. Majority 19(30.6%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the patriarchy's high influence resulted to average effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 12(19.4%) very low effect, another 12(17.7%) very high effect, 11(17.7%) low effect and 8(12.9%) high effect.

Lastly, majority 47(40.5%) of the respondents who stated that patriarchy had high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the patriarchy's very high influence resulted to very low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 45(38.8%) very high effect, another 10(8.6%) average effect, 8(6.9%) high effect and 6(5.2%) low effect. Generally, most (38.8%) of the respondents who reported very high effect of patriarchy on women who wanted to become leaders were those who indicated that patriarchy had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya.

Table 5. How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Men who want to become leaders?

How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Men who want to become leaders? Cross tabulation									
				How does the above affect Men who want to become leaders?					
				Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high	Total
How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya?	Very low	Count		24	6	5	1	12	48
		% within masculinity influence		50.0%	12.5%	10.4%	2.1%	25.0%	100.0%
	Low	Count		2	12	16	5	2	37
		% within masculinity influence		5.4%	32.4%	43.2%	13.5%	5.4%	100.0%
	Average	Count		1	4	21	10	6	42
		% within masculinity influence		2.4%	9.5%	50.0%	23.8%	14.3%	100.0%
	High	Count		5	2	6	37	15	65
		% within masculinity influence		7.7%	3.1%	9.2%	56.9%	23.1%	100.0%
	Very high	Count		25	8	8	8	80	129
		% within masculinity influence		19.4%	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%	62.0%	100.0%
Total		Count		57	32	56	61	115	321

% within masculinity influence	17.8%	10.0%	17.4%	19.0%	35.8%	100.0%
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Analysis in Table 5 shows that majority 24(50.0%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had very low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the masculinity's very high influence resulted to very low effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 12(25.0%) very high effect, 6(12.5%) low effect, 5(10.4%) average effect and 1(2.1%) high effect. Besides, majority 16(43.2%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the masculinity's low influence resulted to average effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 12(32.4%) low effect, 5(13.5%) average effect, 2(5.4%) very low effect and another 2(5.4%) very high effect.

Moreover, majority 21(50.0%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had average influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the masculinity's average influence resulted to average effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 10(23.8%) high effect, 6(14.3%) high effect, 4(9.5%) low effect and 1(2.4%) very low effect. Majority 37(56.9%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the masculinity's high influence resulted to average effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 15(23.1%) very high effect, 6(9.2%) average effect, 5(7.7%) very low effect and 2(3.1%) low effect.

Lastly, majority 80(62.0%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further indicated that the masculinity's very high influence resulted to very high effect on men who wanted to become leaders, 25(19.4%) very low effect and 8(6.2%) each, indicated average effect, low effect and high effect. Generally, most (62.0%) of the respondents who reported very high effect of masculinity on men who wanted to become leaders were those who indicated that masculinity had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya.

Table 6. How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders?

How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya? * How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders? Cross tabulation				How does the above affect Women who want to become leaders?					Total
				Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high	
How does masculinity influence leadership learning and development in western Kenya?	Very low	Count		25	8	6	3	6	48
		% within masculinity influence		52.1%	16.7%	12.5%	6.2%	12.5%	100.0%
	Low	Count		8	14	10	3	2	37
		% within masculinity influence		21.6%	37.8%	27.0%	8.1%	5.4%	100.0%
	Average	Count		5	7	18	8	4	42
		% within masculinity influence		11.9%	16.7%	42.9%	19.0%	9.5%	100.0%
	High	Count		16	13	14	11	11	65
		% within masculinity influence		24.6%	20.0%	21.5%	16.9%	16.9%	100.0%
	Very high	Count		41	11	16	9	52	129
		% within masculinity influence		31.8%	8.5%	12.4%	7.0%	40.3%	100.0%
	Total	Count		95	53	64	34	75	321
		% within masculinity influence		29.6%	16.5%	19.9%	10.6%	23.4%	100.0%

Table 6. shows that majority 25(52.1%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had very low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the masculinity's very low influence resulted to very low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 8(16.7%) low effect, 6(12.5%) average effect, another 6(12.5%) very high effect and 3(6.2%) high effect. Majority 14(37.8%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had low influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the masculinity's low influence resulted to low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 10(27.8%) average effect, 8(21.6%) very low effect, 3(8.1%) high effect and 2(5.4%) very high effect.

Moreover, majority 18(42.9%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had average influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the masculinity's average influence resulted to average effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 8(19.0%) high effect, 7(16.7%) low effect, 5(11.9%) very low effect and 4(9.5%) very high effect. Majority 16(24.6%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the masculinity's high influence resulted to very low effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 14(21.5%) average effect, 13(20.0%) low effect, 11(16.9%) very high effect and another 11(16.9%) high effect.

Lastly, majority 52(40.3%) of the respondents who stated that masculinity had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya, further stated that the masculinity's very high influence resulted to very high effect on women who wanted to become leaders, 41(31.8%) very low effect, 16(12.4%) average effect, 11(8.5%) low effect and 9(7.0%) high effect. Generally, most (40.3%) of the respondents who reported very high effect of masculinity on women who wanted to become leaders were those who indicated that masculinity had very high influence on leadership learning and development in western Kenya.

Furthermore, women asserted that the constitution talks about "*mila yetu*" (our culture); that the constitution upholds our culture and values our cultural systems; that the Kenyan constitution provides guidelines how leaders are supposed to be elected and the process and qualifications of leaders for different leadership posts. They further assert how the new constitution (2010), opened leadership opportunities for both males and females. It allows communities with their parochial leadership structures to apply them such as the case for the Nabongo Kingdom. They argued on that the current constitution strongly prescribes democratic election of leaders;

The constitution, fully supports the selection of leaders through elections which has led to the growth of other leaders other than the Kings. Kwa hivyo tunafata hio tu (we only follow that). The Kenyan constitution has created equal leadership opportunities for both the young and the old, both women and men on equal basis. (FGD with Women, Kisii)

Notwithstanding, both men and women in Kisii condemned the constitution for banning female circumcision, traditionally practiced by Abagusii. They argue that such rites enhanced the chances of women's recognition and participation in leadership for example. Only circumcised women can lead communities;

However, the constitution has ruled out female circumcision, ambayo ni yetu kuanzia zamani (which is ours time immemorial), our cultural practice despite the fact that, it contradicts the Kenyan Constitution. The Kisii community believes that they will not stop doing what their culture demands- mwacha mila ni mtumwa- (whoever does away with culture is a captive). (FGD with Women, Kisii)

The study found that women can become leaders. It was shared that in most situations women cannot become or recognized as leaders. The reasons why women are or are not chosen for leadership are cultural, and relate to gender role differentiation; Men in Kakamega FGD said that:

No, a woman cannot be a leader in some our communities since different genders are prescribed different roles and for women, not leadership. And reasons being that women cannot keep a secret or even protect a family leave alone a community. Our cultures even stipulate that a woman cannot stand before men and in our culture it is a taboo, to keep respect. But in the West they choose women, even in Kenya today. (FGD with Men, Kakamega)

Divergent from above, findings from the study revealed that women even in traditional set ups, were accorded leadership relating to specific roles to lead and even guide and mentor other women to become women leaders of women for example, on good morals and behavior and even sexuality matters. This is how it could happen;

Yes, women can be chosen in elective post and also administrative posts, but traditionally it was a taboo. Long time ago they used to interrogate a women who wanted to become a leader so they used to prepare local brew in a guard then put in a traditional straw, so the woman comes and sits between her husband's legs his husband picks up the straw and drinks some brew via the straw same straw with her. That woman who is not promiscuous, now that one is accepted as a leader. Her role will be to talk to her fellow women and leading them on how to live; but she cannot and will never lead men. But some women are the reason why women are not chosen to lead... they say that "now she is going to fight with men, does she want to be a man? (FGD with Men, Kakamega)

Key informants gave a more open view that both males and females can be chosen to lead;

Yes, the assistant chief is female (leader) the community doesn't look at your gender as long as one is capable and above 30 years of age. There are several seats reserved for women, (gender consideration). (KII with Clan Elder, Kisii)

Both males and females are chosen to be leaders; in my areas one lady is an area Sub Chief, in Shikoti, three village elders are women among many other leaders who are men. (KII with Chief, Kakamega)

Anyone can be a leader women or men; in the traditional societies Leaders were used to be born in particular clans long time ago but nowadays anybody can be a leader irrespective of where he/she is born.; people unanimously agreed that Yes! Anyone can become a leader'. (FGD with Women, Kakamega)

Women attest to the fact that leaders are no longer chosen just because they belong to a particular gender or age or clan. Importantly, too was the aspect of territorial jurisdiction of traditional leaders. A clan leader for example, confined their leadership to their clan and they do not cross over to the adjacent clan. As already stated above, leaders can be either males or females so long as they have the desired qualities and more so educated. This was reported in Kisii, *"even now our assistant chief is a woman"*. In addition, amongst Abagusii, two attributes apply for a woman to lead in the community-marriage and circumcision;

"Yes they are mixed leaders (men and women). You are chosen as a leader when you are married; when a woman is married she can be a leader. But not hereditary. Unanimously they must be circumcised (both men and women) and should be married to lead. (FGD with Men, Kisii)

Several quotes in the section above present a paradigm shift. Although traditionally women were and still are restricted from leadership, there are certain specialties of leaderships that they were confined to traditionally, for example, to lead other women. Notwithstanding, with change in times, women today are mandated to lead and as we read from the quotes, there are examples of women Chiefs; a post that previously a preserve of men.

More interestingly, women leaders mentioned along special leadership roles included; women who lead other women on behavior; cooking special traditional meals; marriage and sex counseling and teaching especially to co-wives by the elder first wives. In Kakamega, it was reported that traditionally, they even prescribed what younger wives cook for the husband and who was ready for sex with the husband. From the key informants, who also included females, several interesting reasons were given why women traditionally and even today cannot or are less preferred as leaders to men locally and in; women had no voice; were confined to important roles of taking care of the family; were considered physically weak and *"never fought for independence"*.

From the literature, Kenya has a poor track record of fairly involving women in leaderships. Still, there are unequal distributions of women in representation in both community and political leadership. This is despite Kenya having pioneered and provided leadership to the post-1990 multi-party women empowerment programmes in the East African region. In Kenya and as is the case in other African countries, the basic constraints women face as they attempt to participate in politics, though occurring in varying magnitudes, tend to be broadly similar. It has been argued that Kenya has some unique aspects that continue to keep the numbers of women in politics low, such as lack of an affirmative action law, and the gender insensitive male political culture, which continues to dominate key social

and political institutions. Furthermore, even though Kenyan women had certain powers in the pre-colonial times, the Kenyan traditional culture is predominantly patrilineal and patriarchal. In this cultural environment, men are the predominant force (Odinga, 1967), and thus, chances for women in leadership is continually stymied.

One of the interesting findings was that households, from which the respondents came from, reported realistic experiences with leadership and how it interacts with culture. All the key informants for the study were leaders of various traditional, cultural, administrative and political leaderships and they reported phenomenological experiences they had with leadership. Especially from Kakamega County, the family, lineage and clan, and in addition, socialization and apprenticeship highly contributed to how the leader was chosen in the community, and in addition, how a leader learns the leadership practice and importantly, how one is developed into a leader. This finding attests to the researcher's conceptual thought that sets of cultural beliefs, norms, values, people's experiences, practices and behaviors influence how leaders learn the art of leadership and practice. Further to this argument, these are various and multiple factors influencing leadership and not a single strand of relationship; which confirms Hazy's (2008) leadership theory of complex systems that posits how leadership is too complex to be attributed to the acts of only an individual or individuals, but rather a complex relationship of many interacting forces including learning and socialization.

One typical example of traditional leadership was studied from the Nabongo Kingdom, one of the few Kingdoms still found in the East African region. Cultural instruments of leadership, regalia, signs and symbols of leadership were observed from the Nabongo Cultural Center which holistically expresses the Kingdom, as mostly described in vignette narrative and pictorially shown in the appendices. Both study sites; Kakamega and Kisii Counties reported how cultural institutions of initiation influence who is chosen as a leader. Leaders are expected to be circumcised and be brave. In addition, people consider behaviour, family background, education, social status, wealth and merit to choose a leader. Seldom do we have hereditary leadership in contemporary western Kenya, albeit occasional incidences of clan, lineage and familial leadership legacies.

Traditional leaders are also regarded as both County and National leaders especially by people in Kisii County. For both sites, and soundly in Kakamega County, patriarchy had a very high influence on leadership learning and development and on men who wanted to become leaders, but surprisingly reports showed that this was not regarded by women leaders and this is because patriarchy does not accommodate female leaders in the first place. Importantly, leadership learning and development was realized through socialization; personality formation; apprenticeship; initiation rite; education and training and by character molding and grooming for leadership qualities. Qualitative findings overly reported the role of elders in directly instilling leadership skills, qualities and competencies in upcoming leaders. In addition, elders played a significant role in training leaders, mentoring leaders, role modeling for leaders and further to it, in the coronation and installation of leaders. Traditional leaders and surprisingly contemporary administrative, public and political leaders still learn and develop from elders. The case of the Nabongo Kingdom epitomizes traditional leadership still valued and relevant in modern times.

Conclusions

The paper concludes that presently in Kenya, leaders are predominantly chosen through the electoral process; especially for political leaders including County Governors, Senators, Members of National Assembly (MPs) and Members of County Assembly (MCAs). Notwithstanding, potential leaders are identified at childhood by parents and family and even peer and secondary socialization institutions such as schools and churches. Once identified, such persons are molded by society into leaders regardless of the kind of leader they end up being. This study corresponds with existing knowledge domains on culture and leadership. Dorfman & House, (2004), Jogulu (2010) and Inyang (2009) contend that contextual, national and international studies are necessary to examine to what extent culturally-linked leadership styles are associated with effective leadership and how effective leadership can be learnt and integrated in development. Edwards and Turnbull (2013) also argued that deeply embedded nuances of learning to lead and unintentional outcomes of leadership development have not been explored in sufficient depth in both academic and management literature.

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