



Exploring African Leadership: Traditions, Values, and Contemporary Practices

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

african traditions, cultural heritage, elders, servant leadership, sustainability, ubuntu.

Article History:

Received

2024-04-27

Received in revised form

2024-09-24

Accepted

2025-02-04

DOI: 10.22146/jlo.95752

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Main Objectives: This study examines the philosophical influence of African traditions, particularly Ubuntu, on servant leadership in Africa and beyond. It seeks to understand how Africa's rich cultural heritage can shape leaders who prioritize service and employee well-being. **Background Problems:** Leadership models from the Global North often fail to capture Africa's unique cultural dynamics, prompting calls for servant leadership rooted in African values. This study explores the intersection of traditional leadership, contemporary practices, and their impact on governance and socio-economic development. **Novelty:** This study explores the uniqueness of African leadership by analyzing the interplay between traditional values, cultural heritage, modern practices, highlighting how indigenous philosophies can influence contemporary decision-making and leadership dynamics in a global context. **Research Methods:** Using a systematic literature review, the study draws insights from 59 peer-reviewed articles, online databases, reports, and textbooks. Sources include JSTOR, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Scopus. **Findings/Results:** Findings indicate that Ubuntu embodies values such as humanity and collective responsibility, forming a strong foundation for servant leadership models applicable beyond Africa. The literature highlights gaps in Global North models, which often overlook African leadership realities. Additionally, traditional teachings and oral histories contribute to the sustainability of servant leadership in Africa. **Conclusion:** This study underscores the significant contribution of Ubuntu to the global leadership discourse. It demonstrates the potential of this philosophy to foster ethical, community-driven leadership that transcends cultural boundaries and can be adapted and applied in diverse contexts worldwide.

1. Introduction

This study highlights how Ubuntu, a philosophy deeply rooted in African traditions, can influence and shape African leadership. Ubuntu is a significant African philosophy that underscores the interdependence of all individuals, based on the notion that one's identity is formed through relationships with others (Mbigi, 2007). Ubuntu embodies the conviction of collective humanity, encapsulated in the expression "I am because we are" (Dowdeswell & Hoobler, 2022). It advocates for compassion, community, mutual respect, and collective responsibility, urging leaders to prioritize the group's welfare over their self-interests (Chigangaidze et al., 2021). Ubuntu contests the idea of solitary existence, suggesting that personal fulfilment is achieved through contributions to the collective welfare, fostering a sense of unity and ethical concord within society.

Matete, as cited in Lerutla and Renier Steyn (2017), along with Walumbwa et al. (2011) and Kuada (2010), also highlight that while Africa's rich traditions and values contribute positively to shared development principles, an African leadership identity remains limited in the global leadership discourse because of the dominance of the Global North leadership models.

The Global North leadership paradigms typically denote leadership models and practices that emerge from economically advanced countries, primarily in Europe and North America. These models frequently highlight characteristics such as individualism, hierarchical structures, rational decision-making, and competitive market-oriented methods. They prioritize efficiency, innovation, and profit-oriented results, mirroring the political, social, and economic frameworks of the Global North.

Conversely, they diverge from leadership paradigms in Africa that prioritize communal values, social equality, and collective decision-making for the greater good.

While leadership models from the Global North currently influence and are widely adopted in African organizations, they fail to adequately address the unique challenges faced by African organizations (Zvavahera, 2022). Studies by Chatbury et al. (2011), Bolden and Kirk (2005), and Littrell and Nkomo (2005) illustrate the limitations of the Global North leadership models in African realities and emphasize the necessity for leadership models that resonate with African norms and values which are widely shared in most parts of the continent. As a result, there is growing interest in exploring how traditional and cultural models can shape leadership practices and processes both within Africa and beyond (Mbigi, 2000; Van der Colff, 2003; Zvavahera, 2022). This study assumes that for leaders to achieve optimal outcomes, they must stay adaptable, drawing on insights from diverse models and blending them with the nuances of specific cultural contexts.

This aligns with Zvavahera's (2022) assertion that the development of accountable and ethical organizational leaders is hindered by the Global North's leadership orientation, which often overlooks essential African values. Similarly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) challenges the applicability of Global North leadership models for addressing African challenges. It is essential to incorporate African ethos in the discussion of African leadership, which is generally perceived as inclusive, ethical, accountable, and empathetic. Thus, this study seeks to explore how African traditions, particularly Ubuntu, can assist in

developing sustainable African leadership models.

Ubuntu values are perceived to be synonymous with servant leadership, demonstrating its strong alignment with organizational values. African servant leadership, which has its roots in Ubuntu, mandates that leaders put their subordinates' needs and well-being ahead of their own. These leaders are committed to elevating and helping others. They encourage teamwork and active engagement which boosts output and provides for the needs of everyone (Nsamenang, 2006; Zvavahera & Tandi, 2019). Despite the vast diversity of African cultures, the Ubuntu principle of leadership serves as a unifying thread among them.

As noted by Mbaku and Nyamongo (2016), servant leaders foster humility and treat others with respect regardless of their status or position. They recognize their limitations and are open to learning from those around them. In the context of this study, this approach emphasizes the importance of cultivating a learning culture within the organization.

Gyekye (1995) highlights the significance of prudent leadership in harnessing the combined knowledge amassed by forefathers and elders (both stakeholders and employees). This information serves as a valuable resource for decision-making and is often transmitted orally through proverbs, rituals, and oral traditions that embody collective organizational cultures, knowledge, and lessons. By utilizing this vast amount of information and knowledge, leaders may solve complicated problems and make wiser decisions that are context specific.

The research gap in this study lies in the limited integration of indigenous African leadership values with contemporary

leadership models amidst the continent's dynamic socio-political and economic challenges. Existing literature predominantly emphasizes Global North leadership models, highlighting a deficiency in exploring how traditional African leadership principles—such as communalism, servant leadership, and consensus-building—can effectively adapt to modern African contexts. This gap inhibits our understanding of how these principles could foster sustainable development and address regional challenges like post-colonial governance systems, economic inequality, and social cohesion within Africa.

To address this gap, the study seeks to address the following objectives:

1. Analyse how African traditions and values can shape African leadership models.
2. Analyse how Ubuntu is applied practically in African leadership practices.
3. Explore factors that support Ubuntu's adaptability and sustainability in African organizations and beyond, and
4. Provide insights for global leadership discourse.

The subsequent sections of the study cover the conceptual framework for the study, review of related literature, methodology, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework

This study proposes an African leadership model based on the Ubuntu philosophy (see Figure 1). The model highlights that effective leadership in the 21st century requires blending modern approaches, cultural traditions, and conventional wisdom. The African idea of Ubuntu, which emphasizes the interdependence of all people and the duty of

leadership to further the common good, offers a strong foundation for its acceptance in the leadership discourse globally. This model may trigger a global conversation about its applicability and adoption. The following section addresses the components of the model.

Empowerment and collaborative decision-making are encouraged by contemporary leadership approaches. This is in line with Ubuntu's emphasis on group accountability and the value of taking into account different viewpoints.

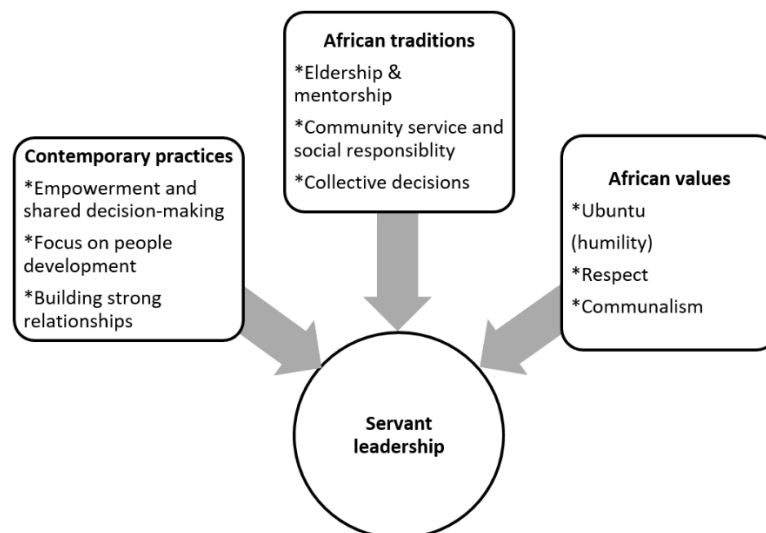


Figure 1. Research Framework

By encouraging open communication and including everyone in decision-making processes, leaders can empower teams (Ewuoso et al., 2021). Servant leaders make growth investments in their people. In line with Ubuntu's value of human potential, leaders can mentor others and provide learning and development opportunities for team members (Mangaliso, 2001). Ubuntu emphasizes the value of interpersonal relationships and social cohesiveness. By actively listening, exhibiting empathy, and appreciating each team member's contribution, leaders can promote trust and

create ever-lasting connections (Botha & Claassens, 2010).

Elders or those who have been a part of the organization for a long time and uphold its basic ideals and principles are traditionally valued for their institutional memory and counsel. In line with Ubuntu's emphasis on fostering the organization's well-being, leaders can imitate this by guiding and developing talent (Amoah, 2012). Ubuntu and community service emphasize how interrelated people are and how important it is to work together toward the common good. By including

volunteerism and social responsibility programs, leaders can promote a servant-leader mindset, which is critical for sustainable development (Mangaliso, 2001).

The Ubuntu ideals may assist in understanding how traditional African values and cultural heritage can shape and inform contemporary leadership practices, while also addressing the need for an African leadership identity in the global context.

A lot of African societies have a history of making decisions by consensus and the same can be emulated in organizations that seek growth and trust from their employees. By encouraging inclusive dialogues and appreciating different viewpoints, leaders can apply aspects of this strategy that align with Ubuntu's values of harmony and group efforts for the good of everyone (Ewuoso et al., 2021; Mangaliso, 2001). By appreciating group and individual contributions and fostering a secure environment for candid dialogue, servant leaders show respect for their stakeholders and followers (Botha & Claassens, 2010).

Leaders can develop a servant leadership style influenced by Ubuntu ideals by fusing modern leadership techniques with African customs and values. This approach cultivates a cooperative, people-focused milieu whereby personal development and group achievement are inextricably linked.

African servant leadership has a strong foundation in cultural values and traditional forms of government. Elder-led decentralized leadership and consensus-building were the hallmarks of pre-colonial society, emphasizing a collaborative approach (AEFJN, 2017; Zvavahera, 2022). These principles which place a strong focus on collaboration, service, and group well-being, are in line with fundamental African philosophies like Ubuntu. Parallel to this, the

Swahili expression "Harambee" (pulling together) and the Shona expression "Zunde raMambo" (working together in the communal field) both reaffirm these principles and stress the significance of harmony, involvement, and teamwork (Mararike, 1999).

African leaders are more than just obedient workers. They manage to strike a balance between meeting the requirements of the community and adjusting to contemporary demands (Zvavahera, 2022). This is consistent with the servant leadership concept of putting the needs of others first. Harambee and Ubuntu both place a strong focus on opposing the "dominator" form of leadership. Rather, leaders are seen as collaborators and facilitators by both Harambee and Ubuntu. Moreover, customs such as Zunde raMambo are reminiscent of the ancient wisdom transfer associated with servant leadership. This custom guarantees that these principles will be upheld for many years to come by preparing the next generation of leaders in organizational and community service (Mbigi, 2007).

The aforementioned activities provide an insightful perspective on the innate relationship between traditional African leadership and servant leadership. Through the promotion of communal spirit and cross-generational education, they offer pertinent role models for modern leaders navigating a multifaceted work environment. These traditional customs still have an impact on contemporary leadership, helping us better understand servant leadership in the African context and to adapt to new challenges and realities.

2.2. Colonization's Disintegration of African Governance Systems

Globalization and colonialism significantly undermined the integrated communities that were unified under respected leaders in pre-colonial Africa. Zvavahera (2022) notes that the embrace of individualistic Global North principles that were at odds with cultural values and beliefs resulted from the undermining of African traditional values, which placed a strong focus on community and collaboration. The 15th century saw the start of this cultural estrangement, which drove Africans to give up their customs, beliefs, and modes of governance. Mbigi (2007) underscores the significance of cultural sensitivity in leadership, contending that a failure to do so leaves communities without agency and identity.

Chiefs lost some legal autonomy when they were incorporated into colonial and post-colonial governance systems that were designed to advance the interests of the colonialists. However, the chiefs continued to be the guardians of the African identity and cultural values, which were transmitted orally from one generation to the other (Iguisi, 2014). To continue advancing its interests, colonialism dismissed these customs as archaic and disregarded their capacity to inspire and uplift the African people.

The complete disrespect for customs in Africa caused indigenous civilizations to disappear. Traditional leaders lost their land and cultural heritage, which disenfranchised chiefs and entire communities. Iguisi (2014) highlights how the imposition of the Global North governance systems overlooked Indigenous values and customs, a point also echoed by Pwiti and Ndoro (1999). Indigenous traditions deteriorated as a result

of the neglect; land and rituals were taken away by force, marginalizing tribes and leaders alike. This illustrates how African values and customs were disregarded, with Global North paradigms being imposed on Africa and other parts of the world.

Though commonly used in Africa, the leadership models from the Global North have limited relevance in African contexts. Williamson (2000) contends that these models are devoid of the particular cultural complexity and methods required to handle African challenges. The following section contrasts leadership models in the Global North and those from Africa.

2.3. Contrasting Global North and African Leadership Models

Differentiating themselves from Africa, Global North leadership models frequently emphasize individual charisma, power dynamics, and competitive accomplishment. Leaders are expected to possess particular traits and skills (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). However, African servant leadership places a higher priority on serving the community, promoting group well-being, and upholding moral principles (Mbiti, 1969).

As stewards and servants, leaders are trusted to protect societal and organizational values and act in the best interests of their organizations and stakeholders. A fundamental component of this is Ubuntu, a philosophical idea that emphasizes interconnectivity and common humanity (Ramose, 1999). Leaders are not impersonal entities; rather, they are part of a broader community and answerable to their constituents. This is consistent with the idea of Africa's heritage and the more significant subject of servant leadership. The following section discusses the methodology of the study.

3. Method, Data, and Analysis

The relevant literature for this study was gathered using the systematic literature review approach. The systematic literature review was used to ensure a comprehensive, unbiased, and structured synthesis of existing research and allow for a more reliable study analysis. (Sataloff et al., 2021). The literature was drawn from fifty-nine academic peer-reviewed journals, academic databases, conference proceedings, and books. Databases such as JSTOR, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Scopus were utilised to search for pertinent literature for the study.

The literature that was included in the study met the following criteria:

- Relevance to African leadership
- Literature on Ubuntu
- Literature on servant leadership
- Relevance to the Global North leadership
- African cultural and historical context
- Scholarly and peer-reviewed sources
- Theoretical and comparative works
- The currency of the literature.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Outdated sources
- Articles not peer-reviewed
- Articles which lacked cultural or historical depth
- Literature not related to leadership.

Given the importance of reliability and validity in research, this study drew upon scholarly publications, peer-reviewed articles, books by respected academics, and official reports (Chetwynd, 2022). The study prioritised resources that offered comprehensive insights into African cultural

viewpoints and leadership approaches. The researcher underscored the significance of accessing data ethically, guaranteeing adherence to indigenous knowledge and cultural sensitivity, and tackling ethical dilemmas. The researcher made sure that the right citation styles were followed and gave credit to everyone who contributed.

During the literature search, the researcher identified key themes, concepts, and patterns related to African leadership, traditions, and values (Naeem et al., 2023). The study used thematic analysis to organise data, categorising information into sub-themes such as communal leadership, ethical principles, and leadership practices rooted in African cultural contexts. Critical discourse analysis was also employed to evaluate how Global North leadership practices contrast with African traditional values, providing insights into the continuity and shifts in leadership paradigms over time. This method allowed the researcher to interpret and contextualize findings, drawing connections between African leadership and Global North leadership models. The themes that emerged further matched the objectives of the study and the conceptual framework. This methodology made it easier to compare African leadership concepts with Western ones, highlighting both differences and similarities. The following section discusses the findings of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. *How African traditions and values shape African leadership models*

African traditions and values, fundamentally grounded in communalism, respect, and connections, influence African leadership paradigms. The ideology of Ubuntu, which underscores the notion that "I am because we are," is central to its effect

(AEFJN, 2017). This concept promotes a feeling of communal responsibility, empathy, and collaborative decision-making, setting African leadership approaches apart from the more individualistic forms common in the Global North. Fundamental African traditions, including reverence for elders, communal engagement, and consensus-driven decision-making, compel leaders to prioritize collective welfare over individual aspirations (Mbendera, 2020). According to Ubuntu, leadership is perceived not as a solitary quest for power, but as a communal responsibility, wherein the leader is anticipated to serve the organization, directing it towards prosperity while preserving harmony and social cohesion.

Furthermore, African leadership prioritizes relational contacts over transactional ones. Leaders are expected to build relationships, guide others through mentorship, and model behavior that promotes trust and accountability. In contexts where extended family and community are fundamental to social structure, leadership is perceived as inclusive, emphasizing the elevation of others rather than exerting control over them. These ideals influence African leadership paradigms by fostering a more comprehensive, ethical, and people-oriented approach, in contrast to hierarchical, authority-centric ones. This effect is evident in political, business, and social leadership throughout Africa, where leaders who adopt these values typically cultivate stronger and more resilient organizations.

The underrepresentation of African leadership models in international frameworks presents a significant challenge to integrating these principles into global leadership discourse. This assertion is corroborated by Mbigi (2007), who argues

against the perception of leadership as a monolithic and immutable phenomenon. Rather, he puts forth a dynamic model that is molded by a variety of clay materials, including political astuteness, social dynamics, emotional intelligence, spiritual convictions, and logical thought. This multi-modal approach acknowledges that logic is only one thread and challenges the Global North leadership approaches based on the Cartesian worldview. Expanding upon this notion, this study proposes methods that acknowledge the intrinsic complexity of leadership from an African perspective. It is imperative to transcend the confines of just rational thinking and recognize the important impact of several elements, including spiritual aspects, conventional values, social dynamics, and reasoned thought.

This study presents a new viewpoint on leadership as a science of understanding, challenging the conventional view of leadership as a manipulative instrument (the Global North approach). This change focuses on understanding the subtleties of interpersonal relationships and promoting group development and well-being, which forms the cornerstone of servant leadership.

The study recognizes the role that traditional culture plays in developing sustainable leadership models (see Figure 1). The approaches from the Global North place more emphasis on organization and control. African servant leadership, however, contends that distinct cultural norms and values influence leadership philosophies. As a result, a one-size-fits-all strategy is impractical, and a greater understanding of the complexity of leadership requires accepting cultural diversity. Mbigi (2007) and Zvavahera (2022) agree with this idea.

The findings of this study demand a paradigm shift in leadership practice, particularly in Africa. It offers a more thorough and sophisticated understanding that is founded on the African ideology, going beyond the constraints of the Cartesian framework. This comprehension recognizes the complex and culturally heterogeneous character of leadership, influenced by a range of elements such as the composition of clay. To promote organizational well-being, this change requires embracing a science of understanding and transcending pure reason.

The growing voice of Ubuntu-infused servant leadership is challenging global patterns of exploitative leadership that is self-fulfilling. A new approach, one in which humanity, selflessness, and the well-being of the whole are prioritized over individual gain, is provided by the rich heritage of the African continent.

It is necessary to review leadership scripts that do not accurately represent African culture. African academics must take the initiative to introduce a fresh global dialogue on leadership, challenge preconceived beliefs, and actively engage in the discourse. Global North models that are less successful should be replaced with leadership models that embraces Ubuntu's ethos of community. It is feasible to have an inclusive and equitable future where African leadership prioritizes service over self-serving ambitions.

The goal of spiritual leadership (SL) is to foster individual potential within an organization by emphasizing human wholeness. According to a study by Sutumo and Javlean (2022), SL develops intrinsic worth, which results in a strong sense of responsibility and ownership. This is in line with African traditional thinking which

holds that making decisions as a leader involves introspective soul-searching informed by life experiences and spiritual contemplation. Using this wisdom to guide decision-making in modern organizations can result in a more satisfying and meaningful work experience for everyone.

Consequently, religion influences the cultural views of leadership among group members, as evidenced by AEFJN (2017) and Nugroho and Pratiwi (2023), thereby affirming the connection between culture and leadership comprehension as noted by Fernando and Jackson (2006) and Simon (2000). With its spiritual core, religion provides leaders with a guiding purpose to go along with their reason, which includes both cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Gümüşay, 2019).

Furthermore, by encouraging a sense of moral identity, cultural values indirectly influence leadership behavior, especially through concepts like ethical, servant, and authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2011). An internalized moral perspective that fosters self-awareness and self-acceptance is a defining characteristic of authentic leadership. This perspective is strongly aligned with the concepts of morality and servant leadership.

While we recognize the diversity of African cultures, there are common principles in Ubuntu that apply to all of Africa. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021), many African cultures resonate with the Ubuntu ideology, which makes it a solid platform for implementing servant leadership even beyond the continent.

4.2. Application of Ubuntu in Modern Leadership Practices

According to research, Ubuntu is widely practiced in most parts of Africa. Intellectuals such as Khoza (2006), Luhabe (2002), Mandela (2006), and Tutu (1999) concur that the African continent is known for its acceptance of reciprocity, mutuality, dignity, and maturity for the good of communities. This idea is further supported by Rwelamila et al. (1999), who point out that Ubuntu is practiced throughout Bantu-inhabited Southern, Central, West, and East Africa. Because of this common understanding and the fact that many communities on the continent currently apply its tenets in daily life, Ubuntu is a compelling contender for a leadership model in Africa and beyond.

Initiatives for servant leadership in Africa are examples of distinctive and powerful leadership styles based on traditional values that provide modern answers to pressing issues. The initiatives described below demonstrate this paradigm.

The African Servant Leader Development Initiative (ASLEAD), established by Peter Njoroge, is a Kenyan organization whose mission is to advance strong servant leadership dynamics in families, churches, communities, local government structures, and the country in general. Through seminars, conferences, and online platforms, the approach emphasizes ethical ideals, including integrity, respect, compassion, and character development (ASLEAD, n.d.).

The US Department of State oversees the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), which offers several programs, including a specialized course on servant leadership. The program covers servant leadership foundations, tenets, and real-world applications enabling students to contrast it with other leadership philosophies and

develop servant leadership skills (YALI, n.d.). Because Ubuntu is ingrained with all these principles and behaviors, it is a strong contender for acceptance in Africa and elsewhere.

Serving Rwanda, Zipline is a prime example of servant leadership ideals, employing drone technology to transport essential medical supplies, especially to isolated locations effectively. This program emphasizes servant leadership which is on providing fair access to essential resources and empowering communities (Zipline, n.d.).

Nelson Mandela founded the Mandela Institute - Leadership for a Changing World, which is dedicated to developing moral and revolutionary leadership in Africa and beyond. The program emphasizes principles like compassion, service, and social accountability while incorporating elements of servant leadership.

The expanding acceptance of servant leadership in Africa is further highlighted by Forbes Africa, which features perspectives from notable individuals such as Acha Leke, the founder of Terenga Capital, who emphasizes the significance of empathy and cooperation in propelling Africa's development agenda (Mahia, 2023). Through supporting and absorbing knowledge from these various African initiatives—including the Ubuntu philosophy—the study helps to develop African leaders that place a high value on service, empowerment, and the well-being of their organizations and the workforce.

4.3. Factors that Support Servant Leadership's Adaptability and Sustainability in Africa and Beyond

In any organization, a strong sense of community is essential. Interconnectedness is essential to Ubuntu as it increases staff vibrancy and productivity. According to Hallencreutz (2011), leaders who adopt Ubuntu can unite people, foster tolerance, and establish a common organizational identity to achieve common goals. This aligns with Murunga's (2012) opinion that inclusive development plans can only be achieved through encouraging candid communication on matters of shared interest with all relevant stakeholders (Mandela Institute, n.d).

Ethical governance is critical in understanding how traditional African values and cultural heritage can shape and inform contemporary leadership practices while also addressing the need for an African leadership identity in the global context. Ethical servant leadership emphasizes ethical behavior, integrity, and trustworthiness. In African contexts where ethical leadership is critical for legitimacy and trust, servant leadership principles contribute to organizational legitimacy and sustainability. Servant leadership focuses on long-term goals and sustainability rather than short-term gains. This perspective is crucial in African organizations aiming for sustainable development and community impact, aligning with broader developmental goals and societal needs.

Servant leadership encourages flexibility and adaptation to changing environments. In Africa's dynamic business environments, marked by economic and political volatility and social change, leaders who embrace servant leadership are better equipped to navigate uncertainty while

fostering organizational resilience and growth.

Corruption weakens public faith in leaders. An ethical governance framework can be built around the African principle of Ubuntu, which emphasizes justice, compassion, and respect (Gyekye, 1995). Strong anti-corruption measures, whistleblower protection, and the incorporation of Ubuntu principles into leadership codes of conduct can all help reinforce moral behavior in organizations (Buchanan, 2008).

Ubuntu encourages teamwork and a common vision, which are essential for tackling difficult challenges. Collaboration is emphasized in Ubuntu, which is consistent with sound corporate governance frameworks and concepts (Kayange, 2020). In line with Ubuntu, servant leadership prioritizes trust and transparency to combat corruption which is a recurring issue in many African organizations as well as other parts of the world. Achieving economic growth and shared prosperity requires actions that foster trust and transparency, as the World Bank (2020) emphasizes.

4.4. Insights for Global Leadership Discourse

This study questions popular leadership paradigms in the Global North that strongly focus on personal charisma and power relationships. Instead, it highlights how important it is to have shared accountability, common understanding, and cultural guidance ingrained in African traditions (Bolden et al., 2017; Zvavahera, 2022). This viewpoint supports the developing movement for distributed leadership by promoting a global shift towards more collaborative and contextually based leadership styles. This study also emphasizes how crucial respecting and absorbing

knowledge from our cultural heritage and customs is. It underscores the need for intergenerational communication, valuing different points of view and life experiences in leadership, and using collective knowledge to make well-informed decisions.

Unlike other places where power-driven leadership narratives predominate, the study highlights how important service and humility are to African leadership frameworks. It presents a novel perspective on the core duty of leadership, which is to further the common good. This viewpoint is consistent with the growing acceptance of servant leadership concepts that are gaining traction on a worldwide scale (Liden et al., 2014).

Furthermore, African leadership traditions place a strong focus on community well-being, as this study demonstrates. Given the growing concerns about ethical leadership in today's linked world, this insight can motivate leaders everywhere to prioritize social responsibility, ethical considerations, and the long-term well-being of the organizations they serve (Ciulla, 2019).

The study also emphasizes the importance of modifying servant leadership concepts to fit particular cultural contexts. It advocates for sensitivity and adaptability in leaders' approaches and exhorts them to be aware of cultural quirks and avoid imposing universal leadership styles that may not be applicable.

The study enhances the global discourse on leadership by offering a non-Western perspective on leadership and broadening our understanding of it. It also encourages critical analysis and reflection on dominant leadership narratives, opening the doors to more inclusive and responsible leadership practices. Leaders are inspired to confront global challenges with humility and service

at the forefront by the emphasis on intergenerational wisdom, community well-being, and ethical leadership.

It is crucial to refrain from fully implementing Global North models in African contexts where their efficacy has been demonstrated. Because African leadership practices are inherently diverse, they should not be standardized. As previously indicated, success in various settings depends on one's ability to adjust to local conditions. Constant learning and communication are essential for bridging cultural gaps and developing truly inclusive leadership globally, as stressed by House et al. (2002).

4.5. Challenges and Considerations

Due to its ambiguous character, Ubuntu may have many cultural interpretations (Hallencreutz, 2011). Determining and operationalizing its ideas in leadership requires careful consideration and adaptation to particular settings. Moreover, the emphasis on community cohesion can be exploited as a cover for sub-par leadership.

It is necessary to establish clear methods to ensure that leaders who profess to support Ubuntu values are held accountable (Pieterse, 2015). Thus, Ubuntu provides an invaluable structure for a more moral and human-focused leadership style in Africa and beyond. African countries can develop a leadership culture that promotes social cohesion, shared prosperity, and a more promising future for the continent by incorporating its tenets into their organizational processes and practices.

4.6. Strengths of the Global North Leadership Models

Even though the Global North leadership models have their misgivings when applied to other contexts, they also offer valuable strengths such as prioritization of innovation, efficiency, and strategic cognition which are key for organizational success (Ehrnrooth et al., 2023). By implementing these strategies, African leaders can embrace innovative management methodologies, including agile and transformational leadership, enhancing organizational competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Models from the Global North, particularly those grounded in democratic values and principles of good corporate governance, promote the adoption of openness, accountability, and ethical conduct. These ideas can enhance governance frameworks in Africa, combating corruption and fostering more accountable leadership. Nadeem (2023) argues that by integrating leadership paradigms like servant leadership, transformational leadership, and participative management, African leaders can better align their organizations with global standards.

This alignment can enhance competitiveness internationally and attract foreign investment. Numerous Global Northern leadership paradigms emphasize leadership as a vocation necessitating ongoing development and education. This approach can facilitate the professionalization of leadership in Africa, promoting continuous learning, mentorship, and leadership development initiatives that augment capacity and improve leadership effectiveness.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study acknowledges the presence of cultural bias in current models and emphasizes the critical role that cultural diversity plays in understanding the intricacies of leadership. As a result, the study makes the case for eschewing one-size-fits-all strategies and embracing diversity. African customs, particularly Ubuntu, provide insightful lessons on servant leadership by first placing the needs of humanity and the group at large. This presents an alternative perspective and opposes exploitative models originating elsewhere. In addition, the study urges African academics to actively influence the discourse on global leadership by challenging irrelevant Global North models and advocating for Ubuntu-centered leadership that is based on inclusivity and community.

This study imagines a day where leadership promotes fairness and inclusivity by working together, exchanging knowledge with varied perspectives, and jointly developing innovative leadership models that effectively tackle current issues in Africa and beyond. This promotes continued investigation and discussion to understand and value how these legacies influence leadership in Africa and assist in developing effective leadership worldwide. The study further advocates for a transition from the science of manipulation to the science of comprehension in leadership. This approach prioritizes the enhancement of collective welfare and the comprehension of interpersonal dynamics.

Subsequent studies could examine the subtleties associated with African customs and servant leadership in African countries and cultures. By analyzing social, religious, and historical contexts, the study has the potential to uncover fascinating differences in these notions of leadership.

It is suggested that African leadership viewpoints could be compared with those from different cultures worldwide in a global comparative analysis. This approach aims to promote chances for cross-cultural communication and learning by identifying distinctive components and common themes.

Finally, research in the future can look into how traditional leadership concepts are used and understood in modern African organizations. An evaluation of this kind might determine how well-suited conventional leadership models are to deal with challenges facing organizations today and in the future.

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