THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON LEADERSHIP IN 21st CENTURY SOCIETY.

A CASE OF KENYA'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

By

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Introduction

- This paper seeks to delve into an understanding of the influence that culture has on leadership.

- The first section will look into background information regarding leadership practice across the world, in Africa and finally in Kenya.

- Theoretical and conceptual framework that guides the study will also be presented.

1.1 Background- Meaning of culture

- Generally, culture refers general practices that a group or community which shares common experiences which shape the way its members understand the world they subscribes to(Pinker 1994)).

- Political behavior according to Robbins et al 2008:447,are those activities influencing the distribution of 'goodies' the goals, criteria or processes used for decision making

1.1.3 The influence of a leader's culture on their performance

- A political culture refers to a systematic and explicit formulation of a general orientation to politics. It includes explicit doctrinal structure and implicit orientation which characterize political following.(Weil D.F 1994:126).

- . It combines with social organization and economic structures to create a system of political regime (Hackman M.Z et al 2008:2)

1.1.3 The influence of a leader's culture on their performance

- Whereas culture has several positive influence on and organization,it has its own liabilities. It can become a barrier to change when shared values are not in tandem with those that will further organization's effectiveness especially when the organization's environment is dynamic (Sorensen in Robbin et al 2008:582).

African cultures in fostering positive leadership culture

- Adopting an experiential approach involving apprenticeship, mentoring and coaching. Emphasis, articulation and inculcation of values

- Use of proverbs, rituals and ceremonies as part of the leadership development processApplying individual leadership development to the benefit of the organization.

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1.1.5 Challenges to leadership in Africa

- Loyalty to kinship may develop into tribalism;
- The belief in chiefs and kings ruling for life could lead to leaders not respecting term limits in office.
- Fear of unpredictable futures may motivate leaders to try to accumulate as much wealth as possible, or succumb to corruption while in office;

Challenges contd.

- Values attached to relationships at the expense of personal progress.

- The value of respect for elders may lead to a blind loyalty to old ideas.

- The desire for 'continuity or survival   of the village or clan' may undermine the need for radical change in response to rapidly changing task environments

1.2 Kenya's political leadership

- **1 Historical background**
- Kenya gained independence in 1963 with a clear development agenda of eliminating ignorance, disease and poverty. However, the political intrigues of Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, agents of the West (read Capitalism) and East (read Communism) respectively, seriously undermined the development of Kenya

2 The Kenyan constitution and political leadership

- The Kenyan Constitution requires that for a president to win s/he requires among other things to garner at least 25% of votes in 5 of the 8 provinces in Kenya

- A candidate needs to woo the votes of many Kenyans, there is need to forge alliances to create winning coalitions. This has been the scenario since 2002.

Factors that precipitates greed for power to political leadership

- 1 Economic injustices
- 2 Social injustices
- 3 Lack of a common culture
- 4 Cultural stereotypes

Statement of the problem

- Leadership is a key factor for development.if we do not learn about the influences that culture has on our mainstream history we are missing out on an accurate view of society.

- In as much as African culture is rich, wholesome and informative,it's a pity that the continent is marred by political instability, insecurity, exploitation , poverty and general state of deprivation and worse disillusionment

1.3 Objectives of the study

- To find out if leadership behavior, attributes and organizations' culture impact on performance in a leadership position.

- To investigate if leader behavior attributes and organizational practices universally accepted are embraced in the kenya's political context.

- To interrogate if the attributes of societal cultures affect the economic, physical and psychological welfare of the society.

1.4 Research questions

- Does leadership behavior, attributes and cultural practices impact on the performance of leaders in Kenya's political leadership?

- Do Kenya's political leaders' posses attributes that are universally accepted?

- Do the societal cultures in the Kenyan context affect the economic, physical and psychological welfare of the ordinary members of the society?

1.6 The scope of the study

- It is a fact that leadership is a complex phenomenon.This study attempts to shade light in only one aspect believed to greatly influence leadership behavior namely culture .Although culture in itself is a complex whole, this study will confine itself to the cultural dimension that can influence leadership style and its effectiveness in transforming the lives of Kenyan citizens.

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1.7Theoretical Framework

- **1. Relationship Theories**
- **contingency Theories**
- **Participative Theories.**
- **Behavioral Theories**

Thank you